

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Studying the Ancient Israelites: A Guide to Sources and Methods.* By Victor H. Matthews. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007, 232 pp., \$24.99 paper.

Victor Matthews's new volume offers a most refreshing and innovative guide to the study of the ancient Israelites. Matthews utilizes contemporary social-historical methods and synthesizes findings from other scholars in this area of study. In this way, the book represents a step forward for the discipline and an essential tool for properly interpreting the OT/Hebrew Bible.

General overviews and specific area works related to Matthews' topic are numerous. The first scholar to explore this discipline in the modern era was Harry M. Orlinsky in his work *Ancient Israel* (1960). Other noted works include John H. Walton, *Ancient Israelite Literature in Its Cultural Context* (1994); Ronald de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institution* (1997); Niels P. Lemche, *The Israelites in History and Tradition* (1998); John Bright, *A History of Israel*, 4th ed. (2000), William G. Dever, *What Did the Biblical Writers Know and When Did They Know It?: What Archaeology Can Tell Us About the Reality of Ancient Israel* (2002) and *Who Were the Early Israelites and Where Did They Come From?* (2006); Martin Sicker, *The Rise and Fall of the Ancient Israelite States* (2003); Don C. Benjamin and Victor H. Matthews, *Social World of Ancient Israel: 1250–587 BCE* (2005); Lester L. Grabbe, *Ancient Israel: What Do We Know and How Do We Know It?* (2007); Israel Finkelstein and Amihai Mazar, ed. by Brian B. Schmidt, *The Quest for the Historical Israel: Debating Archaeology and the History of Early Israel* (2007); Rainer Kessler, *The Social History of Ancient Israel: An Introduction* (2008); and Nathan MacDonald, *What Did the Ancient Israelites Eat? Diet in Biblical Times* (2008).

Matthews's book helpfully navigates the past and current studies of the world of the ancient Israelites. It supplements current scholarly sources and methods. Given the large number of works, Matthews rightly stresses the importance of studying the world of the ancient Israelites within its literary, social, and historical context.

Matthews's analysis is important because the world of the OT is different from ours. The textual and archaeological evidence in this book clearly provide a basic background to the political, cultural, literary, and social settings of the ANE and Israel so as to guide the reader to a proper understanding of the OT world. Many scholars working in the arena of ancient Israel studies in the past have been narrow in their focus, analyzing separately a variety of topics, such as religion, culture, politics, priests, education, and the economy. On the other hand, Matthews surveys a broad range of basic issues, including historical geography, archaeology, literary study, social scientific methods, and Israelite history and historiography. This leads the reader to see a broad picture of the ancient Israelite world, grasping the proverbial forest rather than a single tree.

In chapter 1, entitled "History Geography," Matthews presents the historical-geographical features in Israel, along with the related topographical, ecological, and climate elements that shaped the culture and identity of ancient Israel. Chapter 2 is entitled "Archaeology." Here, Matthews discusses relevant archaeological artifacts. He discusses how these findings reveal the origins of the ancient Israelites and this period of history. In "Literary Approaches" (chap. 3), Matthews focuses on the interpretive methodologies applied to the OT/Hebrew Bible, including literary, folklore, structural,

rhetorical, reader-response, tradition, narrative, canonical, and ideological criticisms. Matthews introduces various social science models in chapter 4 (“Social Sciences”). He uses the “structural-functionalist” social science model to reconstruct of the world of ancient Israel in this section. In chapter 5, entitled “History and Historiography,” Matthews recognizes the ancient Near Eastern and biblical data as valuable historical information (p. 181).

Through this work, Matthews methodically surveys a number of important issues that have been dealt with in academia. By investigating five areas—historical geography, archaeology, literary approaches, social sciences, and history/historiography—Matthews effectively succeeds in his stated goal, which is to investigate “the biblical and ancient Near Eastern sources and anthropological, geographical, historical, literary, and sociological methods that will make the study of the ancient Israelites more complete” (p. 7).

The strength of Matthews’s writing style is that, when needed, he provides a clearing in the forest through which to see an individual tree. This functions to promote a more complete understanding of the world of ancient Israel. The broader approach of Matthews, however, guides the reader and helps one to see the whole picture of ancient Israel. To accomplish this, Matthews brings archaeological and non-biblical data from other ancient Near Eastern world studies. Furthermore, this study does not remain theoretical; rather, it provides examples of the tools and approaches applied to biblical passages such as the stories of King Omri, Absalom’s revolt, and David and Goliath. In these examples, Matthews provides actual applications to promote our understanding of the world of the ancient Israelites.

Matthews enhances the understandability of his work by utilizing visual aids such as shaded boxes, maps, diagrams, graphs, and black-and-white photographs along with the main texts. He also provides a well-balanced and well-referenced summary of earlier and current scholarship on the ancient Israelites.

One weakness in the book is the fact that Matthews only focuses on one time period in Israelite history. This book only includes sources and data in the second period of Israel, the monarchy (1000–587 BC), while early Israel (1250–1000 BC) is neglected. When one deals with the world of ancient Israel, one should cover this important foundational era in Israelite history as well. The reviewer looks forward to seeing another guide to this earlier time period with an equally well-balanced perspective to understanding the ancient Israelites. Matthews’s work could also be strengthened with an inclusion of a description of the ethnographic aspects of the ancient Israelite society.

In chapter 5, the history and historiography of Western society is applied to reconstruct the society of ancient Israel. When Matthews discusses the benefits of the social sciences to the study of the OT/Hebrew Bible, he introduces a number of the basic issues to beginners. However, the sociological and anthropological terminologies and models (such as emic/etic distinctions, socially shared cognition, liminal, endogamy and exogamy, and structural-functionalist) are not clearly defined for the beginner. Thus, he provides the beginner little guidance (pp. 124–25, 130) in navigating these more difficult topics. Finally, a few minor corrections should be made to the reference section, such as the addition of diacritical marks on names. However, this in no way detracts from the great value of this volume.

This book would be a useful supplement for assisting “students, laypeople, and their instructor” (p. 9). It is highly recommended to anyone who seeks a clear, concise, easy to follow guide to the study of ancient Israelites before jumping into the deep ocean that is the study of the ancient Israelite world.

Daegyu Jang

Korea Baptist Theological Seminary, Daejeon, South Korea

*Mothers of Promise: Women in the Book of Genesis.* By Tammi J. Schneider. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008, 235 pp., \$21.99 paper.

Tammi J. Schneider, professor of religion at Claremont Graduate University, has produced a monograph that focuses on the women of Genesis by means of a methodology labeled as “verbing the character.” This approach examines characters from four grammatically oriented perspectives: the character’s description (via adjectives and nouns applied to the character); the character as a subject of verbs; the character as the object of verbs; and the character’s relationships with other characters in the narrative. While the focus of this work is on the women of Genesis, the methodology can be applied to any character of the biblical text—male, female, or even divine. The author suggests the method has pedagogical value in the classroom as well to illustrate a character under discussion by using merely a whiteboard and different colored markers for each perspective. The monograph presents the results of the application of this methodology on each female character in Genesis.

The presentation of women characters is comprehensive. Each female character of the Genesis narrative is included, whether named or unnamed. Characters are discussed in four parts. The first of these may be called the “matriarchs,” a title used by Schneider to signify not only those who are the wives of the three patriarchs of Genesis, but more importantly who give birth to the heirs of the promise of God. The methodology employed reveals some striking similarities among the four “matriarchs” Sarah, Rebekah, Leah, and Rachel. The significant role played by each is that of mother to the chosen heir of the promise made to Abraham. However, in each case, success in this role is threatened by issues of fertility. For each of the matriarchs the threat is overcome by an appeal to God. (This is usually an appeal to “the Deity,” Schneider’s way of representing reference to God by the covenant name. When the covenant name is not used, Schneider uses “Elohim.”) Thus, it is often the matriarch who gives greater expression to dependence upon God for the continuation of the promise. God is also seen as the champion and protector of each of the matriarchs, in contrast to the patriarchs, who often appear unwilling or unable to provide protection to their mates.

It is in the first section that characters are most fully developed and discussed. By contrast, the nine characters of the second part—mothers of potential heirs—receive less discussion, proportionate to the lower level of development in the canonical text. Hagar receives the most discussion, as her relationship with Sarah is prominent in the narrative. Each of these characters consists either of servants or concubines given to a patriarch for procreation, or daughters and daughter-in-laws through whom the promise did not descend. This is a much less compact and cohesive group than that of the matriarchs, and it is difficult to find commonalities among its characters.

The two other parts presented are mothers who predate the promise and women who do not bear. The first of these includes women who appear in Genesis 1–11, but also Lot’s wife and daughters. In each case the significant aspect of each character is related to her offspring. Eve is the mother of all, and Adah and Zillah bear the originators of the civilized arts. Milcah provides an appropriate ancestral line for the future heirs of the promise. Lot’s wife may be the mother of the daughter of Lot destined to figure into the line of David.

The discussion of the women who do not bear is problematic, both because its component characters are diverse (consisting of “the woman in the garden,” Dinah, and Potiphar’s wife), and because Schneider has for methodological reasons divided the character of Eve between “Eve,” who bears as the mother of all, and “the woman in the garden” who does not. Consequently, the significant actions and relationships of the woman in the garden focus entirely on the eating of the fruit and its consequences,

resulting in a character with an unsatisfying, indistinct, and vague story line without an adequate conclusion.

In general, Schneider's work illustrates well the strengths and weaknesses of the methodology she has employed. By "verbing the character" she has observed depth and development in characters who have often been received as rather unexciting. The relationship between Sarah and Hagar is shown to be more complex than often portrayed. Leah's legitimacy as Jacob's wife is defended. At times the presentation is repetitive, and it is difficult to isolate the women characters from the males who shape much of their lives. However, the result clearly shows that "verbing the character" has methodological value.

James R. Lowther  
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Ft. Worth, TX

*Disability in the Hebrew Bible: Interpreting Mental and Physical Differences.* By Saul M. Olyan. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008, xii + 188 pp., \$80.00.

Saul Olyan reconstructs the Hebrew Bible's ideas of disability and its potential social ramifications (p. 1) and the way biblical and Qumran literature formulate hierarchical structure privileging some groups over others. In particular, Olyan notes that the Bible does not provide a term for "disability," but tends to categorize people on the basis of physical or mental conditions, appearance, vulnerability, and the presence or absence of disease. Such conditions result in exclusion from social, economic, and religious life (p. 1) through the deployment of strategies such as denigrating comparisons with negative character types (p. 6), affirming their weakness and vulnerability (p. 7), and the association of idols with disability language (p. 8).

Chapter 1 examines biblical notions of beauty and ugliness and their function as antitypes, identifying "particular physical and nonphysical qualities and characteristics" esteemed by biblical writers and the vocabulary used to express their concurring or dissenting concepts of physical appearance (p. 15). Olyan concludes that notions of beauty and ugliness are culturally specific. He notes the indirect association of "terms for good and bad with a specialized meaning of beautiful and ugly" (p. 25).

Olyan then investigates in chapter 2 why only some physical disabilities are classified as defect in biblical literature while others are socially and ritually enabling. Acknowledging the significance of defect toward social stigmatization, Olyan's purpose in this chapter is "to identify the rationale behind what constitutes a 'defect'" (p. 26). However, Olyan is unable to identify a rationale for categories of defect except for their being visible and permanent. Notwithstanding, Olyan concludes that "defect" in biblical discourse was devaluing and stigmatizing.

Chapter 3 further explores somatic conditions not classified as defects and their differing but lesser social ramifications (such as cult restriction). According to Olyan, these non-defective conditions were also subject to marginalizing strategies such as the ascription of uncleanness, imprecatory discourse, and association with marginal social groups (pp. 47, 60). He concludes that limited stigmatization of non-defective persons took place "through the discourse of severe pollution alone" and was "based on a sense of a common somatic dysfunction" and shared adjectival morphology rather than through an affiliation with devalued classes of persons (pp. 62–63).

Mental disability is the subject of chapter 4. Olyan recognizes that terminology in biblical texts is both technical and poorly understood, but he observes that biblical authors grouped various mental disabilities under common classification (that being a

real or apparent perception of loss of self-control) and deployed similar strategies of stigmatization and marginalization as those deployed toward other classes of disabled persons (p. 62). He concludes that although mental disability is not classified as “defect” in biblical texts, it is, nevertheless, associated with others of devalued physical qualities through their common weakness, vulnerability, and poverty.

Chapter 5 addresses disability language in prophetic utopian vision and the central role disability plays in the prophets’ model of “a world of ideal relations . . . characterized both by the restoration of things lost and by the creation of a novel reality never seen before” (p. 78). These texts share a common interest in “promoting Yahweh as an incomparable deity who is able to change the order of things, accomplishing profound, transformative deeds” and function to display Yahweh’s power and preeminence (pp. 78–79).

Chapter 6 evaluates non-somatic parallels between bodily wholeness and defect. Specifically, Olyan looks at prohibitions regarding altar and temple building materials (Exod 20:25; Deut 27:5–6; Josh 8:30–31; 1 Kgs 6:7). He also looks into the analogies used with reference to these non-somatic representations, noting that although the technical vocabulary is different, these terms carry the same meaning as those used toward the disabled.

Chapter 7 explores Second Temple literature from Qumran and how it perpetuated, elaborated, or reconfigured biblical notions and classifications of disability for their own contexts and purposes (p. 101). Olyan notes that the Dead Sea Scrolls “include the notion that at least some ‘defects’ and other disabilities are generally incompatible with the holy,” increasing the stigmatization and marginalization of disabled persons (pp. 117–18). His final chapter is a synopsis of his research data and conclusions and their application to contemporary issues.

Olyan generally accepts Mary Douglas’s thesis regarding the paradigmatic function of wholeness and the association of holiness with wholeness in biblical thought. This forms the basis for his assessment of non-somatic representations of wholeness in chapter 6. This discussion indicates an awareness of parallels existing between positive and negative representations that has been noticeably lacking in the area of disabilities studies. Perhaps this will generate further studies regarding somatic representations of bodily wholeness. An equally important contribution to disabilities studies is Olyan’s examination of Qumran literature. Of concern, however, is that he perpetuates the automatic assumption that biblical literature ascribes stigmatization and shame on weakness and physical flaw. Although Olyan recognizes that biblical texts (Lev 19:14; Deut 27:18; 1 Sam 2:8; Ps 72:4,12–14; 146:8; Isa 56:3–7 [esp.]) challenge the characterization that the disabled were stigmatized and marginalized and express Yahweh’s concern for them, he does not address these texts thoroughly.

Michael D. Fiorello

Columbia International University, Columbia, SC

*Temple Themes in Christian Worship.* By Margaret Barker. New York: T & T Clark International, 2007, xi + 286 pp., \$29.95 paper.

In her various publications, Margaret Barker has developed the concept of a “Temple Theology,” which involves a number of radical reinterpretations of biblical texts as well as major reassessments of traditionally held views concerning the development of ancient Judaism and early Christianity. The present volume continues to work out the implications of Barker’s “Temple Theology” for our understanding of the origins of Christian worship.

Chapter 1, "The Temple Tradition," charts the course for much of the book by arguing for the existence of an authentic though unwritten temple tradition that builds upon St. Basil's claim to know of unwritten mysteries pertaining to divine worship (e.g. eastward orientation in prayer, the sign of the cross, etc.) that were handed down from Jesus Christ. Barker argues that this "secret teaching" about the temple—only hinted at by obscure references in the canonical Scriptures—was known only to a few, and for reasons that become evident later in the book, was a teaching that originated specifically in the early Solomonic temple rather than the temple of later eras.

Chapter 2, "Temple and Synagogue," argues against the commonly held view that the origin of Christian worship is to be located in the synagogue. Instead, as indicated in the previous chapter and now developed more fully, Barker argues that it is to be sought in the Solomonic temple. That early Christian communities viewed themselves as the new temple is borne out explicitly by NT and patristic writings that make this connection (e.g. 1 Pet 2:9), and the point is made implicitly by the vast theological importance attached to Christ's atonement in the NT, which is obviously drawn from the imagery and language of the temple rather than the synagogue. In this connection she argues (e.g. p. 32) that the Day of Atonement ritual is the proper context for the theological interpretation of the Last Supper, a point she revisits later in the book.

Chapter 3, "Sons and Heirs," discusses how Christians viewed themselves from the earliest days as a restored, messianic temple and, consequently, as the rightful heirs of the temple tradition. She expends considerable effort arguing—unpersuasively in my opinion—that there was something "seriously wrong" with the second temple and even with the first temple of the late Judean kingdom, which was under the sway of the Deuteronomistic movement and thus was motivated by a strongly anti-temple sentiment.

Chapter 4, "Lord and Christ," deals with early Christian understandings of Jesus' divinity and his relationship to the OT Scriptures. The pattern of early Christian worship, she claims, was "binitarian" in nature, giving worship to God the Father and to Jesus the Son. (The person of the Holy Spirit is discussed in later chapters.) In an unexpected twist, however, she claims this "binitarian" pattern of worship is to be viewed as the restoration of the Solomonic temple cult (p. 92). That is to say, Barker claims that when the OT text is properly restored and interpreted the picture that emerges is not that of Jewish monotheism as traditionally understood but rather one in which the OT presents the divine Yahweh who is the Son of God Most High. She bases her view on the Qumran and LXX readings of Deut 32:8, reading "sons of God" or "angels of God" instead of "sons of Israel."

In chapter 5, "Baptism and Resurrection," Barker argues that the origins of Christian baptism are to be sought not primarily in the rite of circumcision, nor in Jewish proselyte baptism, but rather in the initiation and ordination rituals of the royal high priesthood. She argues that this view was eclipsed at the end of the fourth century AD when "there was a change of emphasis, and the pattern of baptism became the dying and rising with Christ that Paul set out in Romans 6:4 and which was enacted dramatically by Easter baptism, especially in Jerusalem" (p. 133). To be sure, Barker does argue for the presence of a resurrection motif in Christian baptism, but instead of relating it to the *unio mystica* she connects it to the temple tradition in which resurrection meant an "ascent to the heavenly throne" (p. 111).

Chapter 6, "Transformation and Transfiguration," focuses on the theme of "seeing the face of the LORD," which she argues held a central place in the worship of the Solomonic temple (p. 135). She claims that while the initial temple tradition held that the LORD could be seen in the temple, this concept was later denied by the Deuteronomistic school and was only restored in early Christianity.

Chapter 7, “Cup and Covenant,” discusses at length the question of the origin of the Eucharist: did it originate in the Passover meal or elsewhere? Barker’s answer is that its basic roots lie in the Day of Atonement ritual. Building upon the preceding chapter, chapter 8, “Bread and Wisdom,” focuses specifically on the element of bread in the Eucharist. Having already distanced the Eucharist from the Passover, she explores other possible OT roots of the eucharistic bread and eventually concludes that the Bread of the Presence is the intended association: “Jesus joined the Bread of the Presence to the blood of the Day of Atonement, thus combining the two roles of the high priest” (p. 219). An additional theme associated with the Bread of the Presence is that of Wisdom, which she claims is another one of the important differences between the first and second temples (p. 214). She reaches this conclusion by means of a radical re-reading of Josiah’s temple reformation which turns the narrative on its head. She suggests the removal of the woven hangings for Asherah (2 Kings 23) actually represents the rejection of Wisdom, also known as the Queen of Heaven and the mother of Immanuel, who is ultimately to be identified as the Holy Spirit (p. 216). According to Barker, Wisdom was symbolically represented in the Solomonic temple by the lamp stand, and she argues that in his reform Josiah in fact removed both the lamp stand as well as the Bread of the Presence. She argues that in the Last Supper, Jesus was restoring the wisdom aspect of the temple tradition that had been excised by the Deuteronomists.

Finally, chapter 9 (“Music and Unity”) draws out the significance of music for the temple tradition, emphasizing in particular the connection between music and the vision of God. This important role of music in the Solomonic temple was suppressed by the Deuteronomists but again restored in early Christianity: “These two—the music and the vision—are connected, and they seem to represent what the Deuteronomists sought to deny. Christianity was clearly rooted in the non-Deuteronomic strand of Israel’s religion, and so the music and the vision were important in the Church” (p. 221).

It is often extremely difficult to follow the author’s train of thought, as she moves rapidly and in a fairly haphazard fashion between biblical texts, rabbinic literature, the Dead Sea Scrolls, patristic sources, and Gnostic texts. The method of argumentation seems to be essentially a “shock and awe” approach intended to overwhelm the reader. But when many of the texts—whether canonical, rabbinic, or otherwise—are examined in closer detail, they often fail to sustain the conclusions she draws from them. The frustrating style, coupled with weak argumentation filled with logical *non sequiturs* and the highly disputable nature of many of her conclusions, do not commend the book to anyone but the most dedicated and critical reader. This is unfortunate, since I believe the most fundamental thesis of her work—namely, that the OT temple exercised a formative influence upon the origin of early Christian worship—is a valid one that deserves far greater attention than it typically receives.

Max J. Rogland  
Erskine Theological Seminary, Columbia, SC

*More Than Meets the Ear: Discovering the Hidden Contexts of Old Testament Conversations.* By Victor H. Matthews. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008, xii + 198 pp., \$30.00 paper.

Victor Matthews, the widely published and highly respected Professor of Religion at Missouri State University, challenges the reader to apply a variety of modern communication theories to an interdisciplinary examination of OT conversations and their

textual settings (p. viii). Five chapters engage the reader with discussions of the potential that various elements of sociolinguistic theory (e.g. discourse analysis, positioning theory, spatiality, frame analysis, and more), have for better understanding dialogue embedded in OT narrative.

The work encourages a listening ear particularly when read with an awareness of the author's rich background of study and writing on ancient Near Eastern life, culture, customs, and thought. In addition to the engaging discussion, which develops along the two lines of theory and application of theory to biblical text, the author has provided well-placed text boxes in which key elements of theory and application are explained, developed, or in some way illustrated. Accompanying the text boxes is documentation particular to the focused discussion. Another very useful feature of the work is the "Glossary of Technical Terms," a four-page appendix that provides concise definitions/explanations of the technical terminology associated with the various sociolinguistic theories. The book also includes a 19-page bibliography, a subject index, and a Scripture index.

Chapter 1 considers OT dialogue through the grids of sociolinguistics and discourse analysis. Matthews's exploration of these is accompanied by concise but thought-provoking excursions into narratives such as Elisha and the Shunammite Woman (2 Kgs 4:8–37), David and Barzillai (2 Sam 19:31–40), and Ahab and Naboth (1 Kings 21). Matthews opens the door on a major question that the chapter and indeed, the entire book, raise for this reader. Much of modern linguistic theory is based on "observable behavior" (p. 12), and unless the narrator has included reference to gestures, raising/lowering voice, facial responses, and related features, much of the interpersonal dynamic of dialogue is lost to OT narrative. Should we rely on these techniques, which are based on observation of modern behavior, to help in reconstructing dynamics of dialogue that is part of an OT narrative? Two additional observations seem in order. First, some OT narratives refer to or describe such details when they are clearly necessary to understanding a narrative. Abraham "stretched out his hand" (Gen 22:10), Ehud reached with his left hand to his right thigh (Judg 3:20–21), Jacob crossed his arms when reaching out to bless the sons of Joseph who have been positioned before him (Gen 48:13–14). Second, since writers could, and did in places, include such details, should the reader assume, when they are lacking, that they are not necessary to understand a narrated event in the way and for the reasons the narrator intended the narrative to be understood?

Chapter 2 is devoted in its entirety to probing the Judah-Tamar incident through discourse and cognition theory. An examination of this enigmatic (both because of its content and location) narrative event introduces "cognitive triggers," social identity, mental space theory, disguise, discursive authority, and spatial considerations. Matthews's treatment of Genesis 38 stimulates both thought and question. In introducing the discussion, he observes, "The story is primarily focused on marriage customs, inheritance rights, and in particular the levirate obligation that family owes to a deceased, childless son" (p. 27). While those factors certainly appear to be critical to one's understanding of the narrated event, there are other major narrative interests and concerns as well. A theological probing of Judah's character, for example, is of great consequence in the Genesis 38 narrative—especially when read in its broader, redacted, context of the Joseph narrative.

Chapter 3 turns the reader's attention to analysis of conversation embedded in OT narrative. The familiar Moses and Jethro narrative (Exodus 17) is examined through the lens of the various levels of conversation analysis; the David and Michal narrative (2 Samuel 6) and the David, Nabal, and Abigail incident (1 Samuel 25) are probed for the potential of frame analysis and "frame busting" to provide greater contour for one's understanding of these accounts that are sometimes seen as "interesting but curious." His treatment of these texts stimulates thought beyond the point where most analyses have taken them. The writer alludes to the "cognitive opportunities or minefields" (p. 69)

that confront the reader of such texts—that is, they are minefields if the reader attempts to “fill in the blanks” (p. 69) in the narrative apart from contextual analysis and research into linguistic characteristics of the culture represented by the literature. With that basic principle, I would agree; however, does the application of modern, western linguistic theory to ancient Israelite literature set up the potential for another kind of minefield? At the conclusion of his discussion, Matthews calls for a “broadening of perspective beyond the literary realm and a willingness to explore the findings and theories developed by the disciplines in the social sciences” (p. 99).

Modes (first-, second-, and third-order) of positioning are first applied to Daniel 1, 3, and 6, then to the 1 Kings 22 narrative in chapter 4, where Matthews takes up positioning theory. The 1 Kings 22 narrative of Ahab, Jehoshaphat, and Micaiah is pregnant with inherent descriptive dynamics and dialogue that is mined in the author’s analysis. However, while the formal labels that define “positioning theory” might not be identified as such, to the careful reader who is somewhat attuned to the functioning of OT narrative, much of Matthews’s conclusions seem accessible apart from a formal application of the theory.

Spatiality (first-, second-, and third-space, equations of spaciality, “F-Formations,” and more) constitutes the focused discussion of chapter 5. Matthews looks at the Lot narrative in Genesis 19 against the background of “F-Formations”—the narrative positioning of bodies within a physical setting. His discussion concludes with an application of spatial theory to the theologically charged Jeremiah 36 account. Discussion of sacred space has played a larger role in analysis of OT texts than has the more general spatiality as Matthews addresses it. His directing attention to the role “spatial concerns” play in a fuller understanding of various narratives is clearly on target; but is application of modern, western theory the best or only way to mine that data appropriately?

By applying sociolinguistic tools to OT narrative, Matthews has proposed a way to reduce the cultural and chronological distance between a present-day reader and this ancient literature. Nearly 60 years ago, Mendenhall proposed that the application of Hittite treaty models to the reading of various OT texts would enlighten our reading of those texts. Matthews’s discussion proposes somewhat analogous possibilities with narrative, but through the use of modern western theories. This reader is left wondering if modern Middle Eastern sociolinguistic analyses of Middle Eastern cultures and literature are available that might provide the basis for a more “culturally parallel” testing. The nagging question that remains for me is, “Has Matthews’s application of modern, western sociolinguistic theory to OT narrative overreached in its ‘filling in the blanks?’” To be sure, Matthews encourages his readers to hear, see, and think behind the words on the page, and for that we are in his debt.

John I. Lawlor  
Grand Rapids Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, MI

*An Introduction to the Hebrew Bible: A Thematic Approach.* By Sandra L. Gravett, Karla G. Bohmbach, F. V. Greifenhagen, and Donald C. Polaski. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008, xvii + 486 pp., \$49.95 paper.

This introduction is written to be an undergraduate text; it assumes no knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures. The publisher’s catalogue offers a companion website with tests and pedagogical aids for teachers. The book is about the world of the Hebrew Bible as conceived by the authors, rather than an introduction to the Hebrew Bible itself. The text offers a flow of topics in line with secular studies of ancient literature and culture.

The concepts of the Hebrew Bible are presented through art, photography, literature, and popular culture. A list of illustrations and credits numbers seventy-five. The text has a short glossary and two indices: Hebrew Bible citations and a list of subjects. Each chapter ends with discussion questions and suggestions for further reading. Throughout the book the discussion of each topic begins with rudimentary information that serves as an orientation for the novice. Sidebars present subjects of related interest or discussions of particular questions. These range from biblical issues (e.g. the meaning of the name "Hebrew") to contemporary analogies.

The text proceeds from a socio-political ideology, which makes identity and power the primary questions in understanding canonical Hebrew literature. Chapter 1 introduces the geographical area and historical periods of the Hebrew Bible under the rubric of space and time. Chapter 2 provides an introduction to reading translations of the Hebrew Bible. It includes a section on the Hebrew text, discussion on source theories, form criticism, and redaction, and concludes with examples of contemporary ideological readings. The first major section deals with identity. It begins by providing an overview of identity issues both in the Hebrew Bible and for readers today, using the story of Moses as an illustration. Moses is treated as nothing more than a character in the narrative (p. 80). Subsequent chapters treat distinct aspects of identity: family, gender, the body, ethnicity, and class. Each of these chapters explores how the Hebrew Bible constructs these features by examining selected biblical texts that are deemed relevant to them. The authors look for main themes in these topics as well as ways these might be called into question, challenged, or undermined. Throughout there is a comparison to how cultures of different times and places construct these identity features and on how these constructions relate to the Hebrew Bible.

The second major section of the book takes up the theme of power. It opens with an examination of the biblical presentation of David. David's rise to power is described with a water analogy as "surfing the power web" rather than "holding power." "In his selection of a capital city, in the installation of a patron deity, and in the establishing of a house of heirs capable of extending the rule he initiates, David generates for himself a position from which he can express power as a king" (p. 288). Power stays in constant motion, shifting as relationships and circumstances vary. The succeeding chapters treat specific topics pertaining to and expressive of power: nation, ideology, media (temple imagery and writing practices), and deity. A final summary chapter investigates identity and power in a reading of Job. The restoration of Job is a reinstatement of his identity as the head of a household and its holdings. The capricious act of the deity in restoring Job indicates that the authors of Job are imagining God as king modeled after the arbitrary rule of the emperor (pp. 451–52). The conclusion is ambiguous; the authors of Job do not state clearly whether God has secured his power against the challenges that have been raised.

The choice of structure is itself indicative of the highly ideological nature of the textbook, as it itself claims: "An ideology is a basic set of assumptions that describe the way reality operates" (p. 323). The authors quote Louis Wirth's comment from the preface to *Ideology and Utopia* by Karl Mannheim: "A society is possible in the last analysis because the individuals carry around in their heads some sort of picture of that society." The authors of this textbook have their own evident set of assumptions concerning the function of western society and the role the Bible has had within it. This is a very sophisticated textbook that develops and articulates the functions of ideology and power in western society as perceived by the authors. The manner of presentation within the book is to leave open questions of religious belief and to examine the Hebrew Bible as another example of religious studies. The Hebrew Bible itself is regarded as complex and ambiguous. Written from a variety of social and ideological perspectives, its characterization of God twists and turns, as well as its understanding of what it means to

be Israelite. While the diversity of the Bible may lead to various conclusions about its presentation of identity and power, the authors are not ambiguous in their view of the significant role the Bible has in determining identity and power in society.

Aside from its social political agendas, the book presents an interrelationship of topics from complex biblical material in a very comprehensible manner. Perhaps some oversimplification is unavoidable in an introductory text of this nature (e.g. the meaning of "Canaan," p. 17), but for the most part there is a conscious attempt to make the reader aware of diversity of opinion. The "Family" section includes discussions on marriage; adultery; prostitution; polygyny; widows and orphans; primogeniture; education; and religion. The chapter on body offers poignant observations on the ways the body is a social and symbolic construction. Body parts signify a variety of desires, emotions, and social relationships. The text adopts a viewpoint of God being visibly and directly present in the earliest presentations, only later being replaced with dreams and visions. The text explains well the ideal of an egalitarian social economic system in the Hebrew Bible, the emergence of the elite, the prophetic defense of the poor, and the criticism of the elite. The chapter on state begins with a helpful distinction of nation and state; it is informative on the function of the state and its various officials, and on the eventual dissolution of the state in Israel. The geographic location of Israel and Judah and the mixed nature of their populations made the longevity of state difficult from the beginning. The wealth of information in the textbook is a valuable resource in understanding the content of the Hebrew Scriptures.

The quantity and diversity of material, the clarity of the presentation, and the skill with which the world of the Bible is integrated with the world of the contemporary reader all combine to make this textbook an impressive accomplishment. Though in many contexts it will not serve well as a textbook to introduce the Hebrew Bible given its ideological orientation, it can serve as a useful resource in relating the Hebrew Bible to western culture and modern values in the function of society.

August H. Konkel  
Providence College and Seminary, Otterburne, MB, Canada

*Exodus*. By James K. Bruckner. New International Biblical Commentary. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008, xvi + 348 pp., \$16.95 paper.

The NIBC series is so named because it is based on the widely used New International Version of the Bible. At the same time, by not reprinting the actual NIV text in the commentary, Hendrickson is able to avoid paying royalties and provide a reasonably priced book. This makes the series more palatable to students, pastors, and others who may lack book reimbursement accounts.

Instead, words, phrases, and sentences from the NIV are set off in bold font. The commentary was designed this way, as Bruckner puts it, "to be read beside an open Bible" (p. xiii). Theoretically, this "open Bible" could be any version, but the "Additional Notes" portion at the end of every section presupposes the reader is using the NIV. However, Bruckner does not limit his comments to the NIV text alone; he quite frequently interacts with the Hebrew, transliterating words and phrases and giving literal readings in many verses. Bruckner's careful attention to the Hebrew makes this commentary valuable for scholar and student alike.

The NIBC series proposes to offer the best of contemporary scholarship by eschewing "precritical," "anticritical," and "critical" approaches for a more desirable middle ground of "believing criticism." Some ETS members may not be comfortable with the

brief definitions offered by the editors for these approaches (pp. xi–xii) or the premises behind “believing criticism” (see e.g. Mark A. Noll, *Between Faith and Criticism*, 2d ed. [Baker, 1991] 158–60).

Contributors to the NIBC are encouraged to employ the “full range of critical methodology and practices” as “people of faith who hold the text in highest regard” (p. xii). As an ordained minister in the Evangelical Covenant Church and professor of Old Testament at North Park Theological Seminary in Chicago, Bruckner certainly qualifies in that regard. Bruckner has previously published two books: *Law in the Abraham Narrative* (Sheffield, 2001) and *Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah* (NIVAC; Zondervan, 2004).

Bruckner follows the standard NIBC format for the Exodus commentary by providing a general introduction (pp. 1–17) followed by verse-by-verse expositions on forty-eight sections of the text (pp. 19–331). An “Additional Notes” section of a more technical nature is appended to the end of each expository section. It concludes with a list of recommended readings (pp. 333–38), indices of authors and subjects (pp. 339–42), and OT and NT Scripture citations (pp. 343–48).

The introduction is short and addresses briefly and less than adequately some of the typical pre-matter of a commentary such as outline, literary elements, theological themes, and history of composition. Bruckner favors an early thirteenth-century date for the exodus, but allows the reader to decide the route of the exodus and the location of Sinai/Horeb. After a short discussion of the Documentary Hypothesis, Bruckner declares that the book “was likely redacted from diverse sources in the crisis of the sixth century, in view of deliverance from Babylon” (p. 9). ETS readers will likely take issue with this conclusion, as well as with Bruckner’s evaluation of the contribution of liberation theology to the study of Exodus (pp. 10–12).

Bruckner’s motivation for writing the commentary arises from a desire to challenge the readers “to live as the Lord’s delivered people.” By means of close readings, he wants “to explain the text so that readers will more fully understand the depth and breadth of that hope” (p. xiii). In order to accomplish this he builds the interpretation of the book on six perspectives (pp. 5–6).

First, the purpose of the exodus is missional. That is, the exit from Egypt provided freedom to serve and worship the Lord. Second, Exodus highlights one stage in the fulfillment of God’s promise to bless all cultures through the descendants of Abraham. Third, the law at Sinai was preceded by God’s delivering grace in the exodus and the victory at the Red Sea. The law provides the order for community life through a personal relationship with God, but it was not the means of Israel’s salvation. Fourth, the book of Exodus describes the formation of the “emerging people of God.” The exodus is not only deliverance from an oppressor, but from sin as well. Fifth, the creation of the tabernacle means God’s glory would now be accessible daily. God would now dwell in their midst in the journey. Finally, Exodus creates hope. The Lord’s act of deliverance provides his people with inspiration and hope for the future.

The outworking of Bruckner’s “perspectives” can be seen in his recognition of the theological importance of the “Name” trilogy in Exodus (3:14–15; 20:1–7; 34:6–7). In the revelation of the divine name, “God demonstrated a desire for a personal relationship with this emerging people” (p. 13). Each revelation expanded God’s reputation.

Through the play on words in 3:14–15, the Tetragrammaton identifies the Lord as “a living, acting being” (p. 45). The Lord would gradually earn a reputation with this name “in relation to what transpires between God and the people.” Recalling the name meant remembering God’s mighty acts of salvation and deliverance.

The first three commandments (20:1–7) expand on the importance of the divine name. To mention the name after Sinai “was also to declare that God’s laws were formative for the new community of faith” (p. 184). To speak the name without reference to the ethical provisions for the community was to take the name in vain.

The self-revelation of the name to Moses in 34:6–7 contains the fullest description of the divine characteristics and attributes of Israel's God. For Bruckner, these verses are "the theological core of Exodus" (p. 301). They function as a confession of faith because they state that the Lord's "identity itself became the basis for Israel's continued existence as a sinful and forgiven people." This credo on the Lord's name is echoed extensively elsewhere in the OT (Num 14:18; 2 Chr 30:8–9; Neh 9:17, 31; Ps 86:5, 15; 103:8, 12; 111:4; 145:8–13; Lam 3:18; Hos 2:19–20; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2; Mic 7:18; Nah 1:3).

Stephen J. Andrews

Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, MO

*Esther*. By Debra Reid. Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries 13. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2008, 168 pp., \$16.00 paper.

Debra Reid is the Director of Open Learning at Spurgeon's College in London, England. Reid's research interests lie in OT languages and translation work. In addition to authoring this commentary on Esther for the Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (TOTC) series, she has been involved with the publication of a variety of Bible editions and has contributed articles to the *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (Zondervan); the *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (IVP); and the *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch* (IVP). Reid also authored works on Ruth and Esther as well as Psalms 73–150 in the Crossway Bible Guide series.

By its own admission, the TOTC is not a critical analysis of the biblical text. This revision of the original TOTC series is committed to "a desire to engage [the text] with a full range of interpretive issues as possible without being lost in the minutiae of scholarly debate" (p. 7). The series is focused upon explaining the OT text to a generation in light of the many new ANE discoveries, models of critical scholarship, and changing emphases in exegesis. The format of the new TOTC series has also shifted from examining shorter segments of text to covering larger blocks of text.

Each chapter of the commentary is divided into three segments: "Context," "Comment," and "Meaning." First, the context of the passage under review is investigated. Its literary setting within the work is considered along with any historical issues relevant to interpretation. The comment segment follows, offering a brief but thorough exegetical examination of the text. Finally, the meaning segment attempts to communicate the message of the passage under consideration by highlighting its key theological themes for the purpose of exegetical application.

Reid suggests that the "meaning [of Esther] is to be found most clearly in its wholeness" (p. 9). She approaches her examination of Esther with an understanding of its themes: "the importance of rest, learning, community, trust in times of insecurity and uncertainty, and maintaining a sense of destination" (p. 9). Furthermore, she contends that the "value and meaning of Esther lies in its testimonial value" (p. 20). Reid states, "The author of Esther is calling readers to do theology—to reflect on God's nature and his seen or unseen role in history" (p. 55). Due to what she terms as carefully constructed literary designs that "are hidden in translation," she frequently comments on the Hebrew text itself.

The introduction to the commentary presents a thorough but non-critical assessment of the book of Esther. It is divided into seven sections: the nature of the book of Esther; the origin and date; the historical background and setting; the canonical status, with subsections that delve into Esther's position within the canon and its relationship to the rest of the canon; the literary issues of Esther including genre, structure, and style; the textual issues of Esther with a cursory examination of the Hebrew Masoretic

text, the Septuagint (LXX) or 'B-text,' the 'A-text' or Lucianic, as well as the version of Josephus; and Esther's theology and purpose with subsections that investigate the different themes. Reid offers a fair and balanced presentation of the facts of Esther.

The introduction is followed by a section entitled "Analysis," which is an outline of the book of Esther. This section provides the framework by which the "Commentary" section is organized. Reid has divided the commentary of Esther's text into eleven major sections/chapters. True to the TOTC philosophy, Reid examines larger literary units in the commentary section. Each chapter is written with an economy of words that provides for an easy and compelling read.

An added feature found peppered throughout the commentary section is short articles that Reid has entitled "Additional Notes." These notes add to the value of the commentary as a whole. Often these notes deal with additional information concerning ANE discoveries (e.g. the Palace of Susa), relevant contemporary theological issues (e.g. the feminist interpretation of Esther), and/or linguistic notes (e.g. the *pur* ["lot"]). Reid also includes an appendix on the Greek additions following the commentary section.

While Reid's commentary is neither devotional nor technical, it is an accessible and thought-provoking reference work. I would recommend this commentary to a layperson teaching a Sunday school class or to a pastor who also has access to more technical and detailed commentaries. Reid's commentary, however, would not satisfy the preacher versed in Hebrew who is seeking a more detailed interaction with the text. This book will be preferred by those who want commentators to focus on the main point of the passage and do not mind if various scriptural phrases are set aside with little comment. Still, the commentary is what it professes to be, both in the series title and in the explanatory preface.

Robert Andy Gowins  
Inglewood Baptist Church, Nashville, TN

*Introduction to the Prophets.* By Paul L. Redditt. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008, xv + 404 pp., \$26.00 paper.

Paul L. Redditt, professor emeritus of Old Testament at Georgetown College in Kentucky, has produced an introduction that is the result of long career of interaction with the prophetic books in the classroom and in academia. It is advertised as conversational in tone rather than scholarly. It is intended for the college or seminary student and assumes no particular knowledge of the OT by the reader (preface). Redditt writes as a believing Christian and believes the prophets were speaking to their contemporaries, not specifically to or about twenty-first century people or events. Their contemporaries included scribes/editors who recorded and preserved their words. Later editors also added their words to keep the messages alive and relevant to subsequent generations.

After an introduction that addresses the question "What is a prophet?" Redditt presents the prophets in the order in which they appear in the English Bible. For each prophet he covers the following topics: Introduction to the Book and Its Time, which includes sections on Place in the Canon; Setting (time and place); Structure; Integrity; and Authorship; Main Genres; Special Issues; Introduction to the Prophet; Basic Themes; Problems Raised by a Study of the Book; Conclusion; Questions for Reflection; and For Further Reading. The book concludes with a seven-page glossary of terms that likely would be unfamiliar to the college student.

Redditt's understanding of what a prophet is appears rather standard. He does distinguish between what he describes as central or professional prophets and peripheral

prophets. The former were those who played a significant role in the cult, mostly in Jerusalem (Isaiah, Haggai, Zachariah, and maybe Joel and Nahum). These would have been from the upper class, on the payroll of the temple, and supporters of the status quo. The latter lived at edge of the cult, derived their authority from a charismatic experience, belonged to the lower class, and earned their living from a profane occupation (Amos, Jeremiah, Micah, and others). Redditt does admit that for some prophets, the line between the two classes would have been blurred.

In a long section entitled "Approach to the Major Prophets," Redditt surveys the "reading strategies" or methods that have been used to read the prophets (and the OT). Thus, he surveys the various criticisms: text; source; form; tradition history; redaction; historical; rhetorical; canonical; social-scientific; structural; narrative; reader; deconstructive; and ideological criticism. These are brief, clear, and useful descriptions of the various criticisms. Redditt presents the strengths and weaknesses of each as well.

Redditt's presentations on each of the prophets are clearly written, sensitive to the canonical structure of each book, and include a comprehensive description of the various genres that occur in each book. In the "Special Issues" section, he often discusses texts that have challenged the scholars. For example, on Isaiah he discusses the relationship between Isa 2:2-4 and Mic 4:1-3 and between Isaiah 36-39 and 2 Kgs 18:13-20:19. I especially appreciated the attention paid to intertextual issues, both within the longer prophets like Isaiah, and between the prophets, as in the Book of the Twelve. His section on the themes in each of the prophets is well done. He is able to highlight several central themes for each book, which is a useful aid to the student who is trying to grasp the big picture of each prophet.

Redditt has published earlier works on the Book of the Twelve that inform his comments in this volume. He is convinced the book was deliberately assembled with a specific "plot" in mind, which he references often. Briefly, the plot is punishment to restoration. Hosea opens with the threat of divorce and the following prophets promise punishment and anticipate the fall of Assyria, Babylon, and Jerusalem. By the end of Zephaniah a new Judah is envisioned, with the restoration of Israel's important institutions. Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi address why this restoration did not happen exactly as expected. Malachi then returns to the issue of divorce, although it is personal divorce, not national.

An example of his insight on interconnections between the Twelve is the observation that Joel is the proper book to follow Hosea because Joel 1:2 ("have such things happened?") presupposes Hosea 14 and shows that repentance has not occurred. The call to repent in Hos 14:1 is then repeated in Joel 2:12. At the end of Joel we find 3:16a, which refers to Yahweh roaring from Zion. Just seven verses later in Amos 1:2a, we find the phrase repeated. Thus Joel is firmly linked to both the preceding and succeeding books in the OT canon. These examples are typical of the sensitivity Redditt shows to the canonical shaping of the prophetic books.

On issues of authorship and date Redditt accepts what have come to be the majority scholarly view. Editors or scribes played a significant role in each book and in the prophetic collection. All the books have been edited over time and additions were made. Although he presents the views of "traditional scholars," he always concludes that the majority view is the best one. For example, there are two distinct authors (and more) of Isaiah; Amos 9:7ff is a later addition; Jonah is post-exilic; the material in Micah covers 200 years; Jeremiah reflects "tradition-bearers"; and Daniel is the hero of the book, not the author. Also, Third Isaiah, Joel, Malachi, and Jonah were completed in the Persian period.

I was disappointed in the sections on each prophet that addressed the NT use of texts from that prophet. Redditt did not refer to the significance of the messianic "grid" the NT authors were using when quoting from the OT. Theirs was not an *ad hoc* hermeneutic

(as Redditt implies) but an interpretative model based on the teaching of Jesus himself. For example, Jesus is seen as the new and real Israel by Matthew, so Matthew's use of Hos 11:1 needs to recognize this fact. Redditt does not make this clear.

Overall, this book might be useful in an introductory upper-level college class or a seminary class, but I would like the student to have a grasp of content first. If I used it, I would be constantly interacting with Redditt on certain critical matters, but that might provide a good challenge for students to think about the issues. The questions for further reflection at the end of each section would be especially useful in such a circumstance.

One factual error is inexplicable (p. 9). When discussing the case of Micaiah in 1 Kings 22, Redditt asserts that one more twist in the story is that it was not Ahab, but Jehoshaphat who was killed in the battle! Another error occurs when he is discussing the NT citations of Isaiah (p. 54). He seems to say Deuteronomy is the most cited book in the NT, when actually the order is Isaiah, Psalms, then Deuteronomy. Finally, he includes a discussion of the Book of Baruch and the Letter of Jeremiah apparently because some Christians have considered them canonical.

Gary H. Hall  
Lincoln Christian Seminary, Lincoln, IL

*Ezekiel*. By Steven Tuell. New International Biblical Commentary. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2009, xv + 368 pp., \$16.95 paper.

Culminating nearly thirty years of "wrestling with this exasperatingly odd prophet" (p. xi) and building upon his doctoral dissertation and specialized studies in Ezekiel, Steven Tuell now offers a full-scale commentary. In keeping with the objectives of the NIBC series, he guides the reader through the maze of modern scholarly opinion concerning this "strange book" (p. 1), all the while seeking to elucidate its theological message. On the whole, I give Tuell high marks for both endeavors. This commentary will serve admirably to bring college, university, and seminary teachers up to speed on recent trends in Ezekiel research.

Tuell brings to the task an engaging, felicitous writing style, avoiding overly technical discussions in the body of the commentary. Following NIBC format, he reserves a more detailed examination of various issues and conclusions for the "Additional Notes" appended to each section. He does a commendable job in selecting which aspects of the text require a more in-depth discussion and validation. Especially helpful for readers is the generous amount of the biblical text quoted in the commentary proper, thereby cutting down the number of times one must refer back to the biblical text in order to follow his remarks. Introductory issues are spelled out in a succinct six pages.

A strength of this commentary is the careful way in which Tuell assists the reader to grasp how the book is organized and how the various subdivisions relate one to another (e.g. pp. 7, 228, 234, 276–81). Each major section of the commentary begins with a brief introduction that identifies the discrete units and suggests how each contributes to the overall message of the book. In a masterful way, Tuell makes sure the reader does not lose sight of the forest for all the trees. He also calls attention to themes and motifs that characterize each section and those features that link it to the larger composition. The commentary displays the fruit of discourse analysis for understanding an author's work.

Another strength is the attention given to inner biblical exegesis (e.g. Leviticus, Jeremiah, and Daniel) and how NT authors utilize Ezekiel in their own compositions.

Especially helpful are the copious references to the Gospels. Few readers of the NT are aware how many allusions, images, and metaphors are indebted to Ezekiel. Jesus was clearly influenced by this prophet of the exile. For an intriguing link between Jesus and Ezekiel, see Tuell's comments on Oholah's cup in 23:32 (p. 159). Of course, the book of Revelation takes pride of place in this regard, especially chapters 21–22, which draw heavily from Ezekiel's imagery in chapters 47–48 (p. 329).

Tuell devotes a considerable amount of space to compositional questions. In each section, he engages various scholarly opinions on sources, redaction, and setting. He resists the overly atomistic views of primarily earlier critical scholars who posited large amounts of later editorial interpolation. He argues persuasively that the book of Ezekiel is largely attributable to the prophet himself, with some later priestly editing (see pp. 1–3). He does, however, posit three major, post-Ezekiel, priestly insertions (43:7b–27, 44:3–46:24, and 47:13–48:29) into the so-called "Law of the Temple" (43:10–46:24). These he traces to priestly circles of the post-exilic restoration period, during the reign of Darius I (pp. 276–81, 301–23). In this regard, much weight is placed on a decree Darius issued in his third year (519 BC), recorded in the Demotic Chronicle, to codify Egyptian law. Tuell suggests something comparable was carried out in Judah, even though "we have no record of a similar command being given in Judah" (p. 302). He further hypothesizes that in post-exilic Judah, tension existed between those championing a strictly Zadokite priesthood and those favoring a more inclusive Levitical priesthood. According to Tuell, Ezek 44:10–15, with its subordination of the Levites, stems not from Ezekiel, but from the post-exilic Zadokites, a stance also reflected in P (but not D or DtrH). Tuell concludes that the composition of the final form of Ezekiel is close in time to that of the final editing of the Pentateuch; in fact, he suggests the final form of Ezekiel 40–48 may be a "first draft" of the Torah (p. 303). This hypothesis rests in large measure on his view that "these nine chapters [especially 43–47] stand in tension with the remainder of the book" (p. 279) and on differences between the "Law of the Temple" and Pentateuchal priestly material. That there are differences is undeniable; that they are best explained by Tuell's hypothesis is, in my judgment, unlikely. (See D. A. Garrett, "Levi, Levites," *DOTP*, pp. 519–22 for a better explanation of the evidence.)

I wish Tuell had devoted relatively more space to theological reflection, because he offers some penetrating insights. For example, in commenting on the false prophets who sought to whitewash a flimsily built wall (13:1–16), he recalls a situation in which his wife worked for a company having a serious mildew problem in the basement. Rather than addressing the problem head-on, they simply covered it up with paneling (p. 73). I think he is right on in his comments about the women false prophets of Ezekiel's day. They were not denounced because they were women; they were denounced because they were liars (p. 75). In 16:35–43a, he draws attention to a disturbing parallel between torture in the ancient Near East and "evidence of stripping, sexual abuse, and torture of prisoners of war by the U. S. military" (p. 92). His comments about our modern credit system and economic justice are balanced (p. 113) and his reflection on the collapse of Tyre and the events of 9/11/2001 resonates (p. 185). While I found his discussion of unfulfilled prophecy in the Bible less than satisfactory (p. 207–8), his closing line, echoing the message of Ezekiel, deserves to be quoted: "wherever the people of God are, they are never alone or abandoned, for God is with them" (p. 342).

Larry R. Helyer  
Taylor University, Upland, IN

*An Introduction to the New Testament Manuscripts and Their Texts.* By D. C. Parker. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008, xxx + 368 pp., \$34.99 paper.

With this introductory text, David Charles Parker announces a new age in the textual criticism of the NT: "The advent of digital imaging heralds a new era, in which scholars and students everywhere will be able to view pictures of any page in any manuscript" (p. 1). "This book offers an account of textual criticism today," he explains to his readers. "I have tried to write a book with as original a shape and as fresh a content as possible. I am more interested in explaining the questions than in providing the answers" (p. 2).

Parker stands at the forefront of those who have envisioned the unbelievable possibilities and the nearly limitless potential for electronic media and digital imaging in the field of textual studies. Most notably, he has worked for the past quarter of a century on the International Greek New Testament Project, now serving as co-editor with William J. Elliott and Ulrich B. Schmid. He has been the director of the Principio Project (working on the text of the Gospel of John), the director of the Centre for the Editing of Texts in Religion, and now co-director, with Peter Robinson, of the Institute for Textual Scholarship and Electronic Editing (ITSEE), all based at the University of Birmingham in England, where Parker is a professor in the Department of Theology and Religion. No one is better qualified to write an up-to-date introduction to this difficult and highly technical field than Parker.

Parker organizes his book into three main sections. In part 1 (pp. 11–130), Parker deals with "The Documents" themselves as artifacts. Starting with the birth of the codex, he details the various witnesses to the text of the NT, including manuscripts in Greek, Latin, Syriac, and Coptic. He also includes here an important section on how to make a transcription of an ancient manuscript in either a paper or an electronic format (pp. 95–107). He concludes this section by describing other types of witnesses, like patristic citations, the various versions, and unusual witnesses that are often overlooked, such as talismans and inscriptions.

In part 2 (pp. 131–223), Parker shifts his focus from the physical description of manuscripts to an analysis of their wording and content. He begins with the premise that manuscripts are "tradents of the text" (p. 133). Here Parker seems to be coining his own special use of this term (see his definition of "tradent" on p. 353). Normally the term "tradent" (from the Latin *trado*, to "hand over," "hand down") refers to "a person who delivers or hands over any property to another" (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 2d ed., 18.351). In biblical studies, this term has been used to describe "a person or community that hands down a sacred text to the next generation." However, in Parker's use of the term, he is not referring to people but to the manuscripts themselves as "tradents." He sees the text as a "living" entity, hence the title of his earlier book *The Living Text of the Gospels* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). In fact, the plural "texts" is no accident in the title of the present book, *An Introduction to the New Testament Manuscripts and Their Texts*, since Parker is not really interested in the text (singular) of the NT. I will come back to his presuppositions in this area later.

In part 3 (pp. 225–347), Parker presents a detailed history of the textual transmission of the NT. Here Parker purposefully divides his discussion into four parts: the book of Revelation, which he treats first (pp. 227–45); then Paul's epistles (pp. 246–82); Acts and the general epistles (pp. 283–310); and finally the four Gospels (pp. 311–47). For Parker, "There is no longer such a thing" as "the textual criticism of the NT" (p. 6). Indeed, such a notion is "misleading" (p. 7). While his segmented approach does have some advantages (e.g. "harmonization" or cross-contamination is a transmission problem encountered primarily in the Synoptic Gospels, pp. 6, 314, 338–40), it nonetheless betrays a certain bias about the nature of the NT writings.

This book has a number of strengths. Parker has packed his text with a lot of practical information that is either neglected or hardly mentioned in other introductions to

this field. For example, he takes the time to explain the value of Aland's *Kurzgefaßte Liste* and how to make full use of it, along with noting some of its shortcomings (pp. 38–46). He does the same with Richard's *Répertoire* (pp. 46–47), Elliott's *Bibliography* (pp. 47), the series "Text und Textwert" (pp. 50–51), and a number of other works too numerous to mention here (note esp. pp. 81–87, where he integrates all of these works in gathering information about minuscule 724). There is a large section where Parker shares valuable insights on locating and then evaluating patristic citations of the NT (pp. 110–18). Parker's instructions for providing a detailed description of an ancient Greek manuscript (pp. 90–94) along with a proper collation (pp. 95–100) are priceless. In every area, Parker shows that he is up to date with the latest advances in his field.

However, the real strength of Parker's introduction lies in its information about what is now already available with electronic technology and what will soon be available in the near future. Computers and digital imaging have completely revolutionized the field of textual studies, and sweeping changes are still underway. Parker lists websites where one can view high-resolution images of actual Greek and Latin manuscripts of the NT, images that can be magnified several times on the computer screen for an unbelievably minute examination (e.g. pp. 48, 62, 218, 221). He also provides websites for databases that list ancient manuscripts (pp. 47, 53, 60, 62) and other related matters (pp. 52, 60, 62, 66 [on Syriac], 67 [on Coptic], 103, 219–20). Without doubt, making electronic collations of manuscripts, from which one can easily and accurately generate transcriptions, is now the only way to proceed (pp. 100–106, 221–22). Most impressive is the online version of Codex Sinaiticus (see pp. 48, 218).

Yet there are weaknesses. Parker's book provides no photographs of manuscripts. Instead, he directs his readers to a website, where they can view the images that he is referring to (p. xv). I find this inconvenient and unnecessary. Parker should have provided both: black and white photographs in the printed book along with high resolution digital images on a website. Another weakness: Parker prefers using bibliographical sections (in a small font) interspersed throughout his text rather than using conventional footnotes (p. 10). I find his system confusing and difficult to use. To take one example, "Jülicher's *Itala*" (p. 62), it is not until pp. 135–36 that the reader is instructed to refer to section 10.5.2 (p. 328), where for the first time the full bibliographical information is provided.

Several errors in fine details like diacritical marks detract from the book. Such errors can be found scattered throughout the book, but especially in the last third: for example, on p. 5, line 8 from the top, τοῦ should be τοῦ, as in the previous two instances of τοῦ ὄχλου; and near the end of the book on p. 345 (middle), the name "Gunther" needs an umlaut. Sometimes several mistakes occur on the same page: on p. 209, παραλαμβάνει (twice), ἀνάφερει, and ἄναγει are all accented on the wrong syllable, as is προσευχέσθαι on the next page, where also αυτοῦς needs a breathing mark (p. 210). Sometimes it is merely the placement of the accent and/or breathing that is wrong, as with ὅτως and Πᾶυλος (p. 247). Of course, such errors can easily be corrected in a reprint. Yet at the risk of "seeming rather crusty," to quote Parker himself, "neither the editing nor the proof-reading are of the standards we would expect from" Cambridge University Press (David C. Parker, review of *The First Edition of the New Testament*, by David Trobisch, in *JTS* 53 [2002] 304). Such minor errors in detail "weaken our trust in the book as a piece of scholarship" (*ibid.*).

Some of the errors, however, are of a more serious nature and will surely bewilder the beginner in textual criticism. On p. 38, one finds the prefixing of a zero ("0") before the Gregory-Aland number for minuscule 108, so that "0108" is given as the Gregory-Aland number for *both* the majuscule *and* the minuscule. This situation is contrary to what the reader has just been told on the preceding page (p. 37). Fortunately, one finds these very same Gregory-Aland numbers correctly given at the bottom of p. 105. In discussing the variants at Rev 1:15, Parker puts πεπρωμένος for πεπρωμένης (p. 245). He

does this twice. This error can only confuse the beginner, who expects accuracy in trying to follow the reasoning as to why the other variants were created in the first place. This blunder blurs the apparent genitive absolute as the original reading (sc. τῆς κομίνου; but see BDR<sup>17th ed.</sup> §423.10).

Here Parker misses a perfect opportunity to explain how *πεπυρωμένης* is not only the *difficilior lectio potior* (“the more difficult, preferable reading”) but also the reading that best explains the origin of the others. Yet, then, this is the most glaring weakness of all in Parker’s introduction to textual criticism: he is strong on the *textual*, but weak on *criticism*. One looks in vain for a special section treating the causes of error in transmission, even though he insists that “the mechanics of copying must be carefully considered” (p. 152). He offers no adequate treatment of parablepsis or homoeoteleuton, of haplography or dittography, or of any of the other common errors in transmission that one would usually find in an introduction to textual criticism.

Parker’s presuppositions are to blame. They even account for his apparent blurring of the important distinction between “conscious alteration” (i.e. a deliberate change in the text) and “unconscious alteration” (i.e. an accidental error). Here he retreats into a sort of textual agnosticism: “On what grounds,” he asks, “may we decide what was in a scribe’s mind?” (p. 152). Parker is one of those textual critics who believe that the original wording of the NT has been lost and is now irrecoverable. So he is more interested in what some scribe wrote than he is in what Matthew or Paul originally wrote. In consequence, his book teaches its readers to become mere collectors of textual data rather than discerners of textual error.

In order to understand Parker, one must read his earlier book *The Living Text of the Gospels*, where he expounds on the utter futility of seeking the original text of the NT. For example, in commenting upon Jesus’ statements about divorce, Parker writes, “The recovery of a definitive ‘original’ text that is consequently ‘authoritative’ cannot be presumed to be an attainable target” (*Living Text*, p. 91). Again, “The main result of this survey is to show that the recovery of a single original saying of Jesus [on divorce] is impossible” (p. 92). Later, he revealingly remarks, “The question is not whether we can recover it [i.e. the original text of what Jesus said], but why we want to” (p. 209, italics his).

Parker’s disinterest in what the NT writers originally wrote has significantly affected *An Introduction to the New Testament Manuscripts and Their Texts*, and those who do not share his disinterest should use Parker’s book with caution. It is packed with information, but it has its pitfalls. As for Parker’s denigration of the original text of the NT, he faces a formidable foe in Daniel B. Wallace, the executive director of the Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts ([www.csntm.org](http://www.csntm.org)). Wallace is not one who stands behind Parker when it comes to the new technologies in textual studies, and Wallace is a good counterweight to offset Parker’s ponderous presuppositions (see Daniel B. Wallace, “Challenges in New Testament Textual Criticism for the Twenty-First Century,” *JETS* 51 [2009] 79–100, esp. 81–85).

David H. Warren  
Heritage Christian University, Florence, AL

*How Did Christianity Begin? A Believer and Non-believer Examine the Evidence.* By Michael F. Bird and James G. Crossley. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008, xviii + 206 pp., \$19.95 paper.

As its title suggests, this book presents a dialogue between an evangelical Christian scholar and a secularist biblical scholar on the origin of Christianity. The evangelical

co-author, Michael Bird, is lecturer in New Testament at Highland Theological College. The secularist co-author, James Crossley, is lecturer in New Testament at the University of Sheffield. Both are members of the editorial board for the *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus*. The book presents two very different perspectives on the historical Jesus, the resurrection, Paul, the Gospels, and the early church. At the conclusion of the book, Scot McKnight and Maurice Casey offer critiques of the views of Crossley and Bird respectively.

In his treatment of the historical Jesus, Crossley agrees with evangelical scholars that Jesus referred to himself as “son of man” and “son of God,” practiced healing and exorcism, predicted his own violent death, and even thought that his death accomplished atonement. He quickly clarifies, however, that these features of Jesus’ life and teaching were not out of the ordinary in Jesus’ first-century context. The term “son of man” was an Aramaic phrase that simply meant “human being.” The title “son of God” merely hinted that some of Jesus’ early followers believed he was a Jewish holy man who had the ability to perform miracles much like Hanina ben Dosa or Honi the Circle-Drawer. Jesus’ alleged exorcisms and miracles of healing were helpful responses to mere psychosomatic illnesses rather than supernatural acts. Jesus saw his death as having some atoning function due to the influence of Jewish martyr theology, which saw the sacrifice of martyrs as bestowing divine forgiveness on fellow Jews. In summary, Jesus’ claims, teaching, and actions were unremarkable in the first-century Jewish world.

Bird’s treatment of the historical Jesus demonstrates the plausibility of Jesus’ virginal conception. He chides Crossley for his casual dismissal of the Synoptic birth narratives as “imaginative storytelling” (p. 2) and presents four lines of evidence defending the historical plausibility of Jesus’ miracles. In his preaching about the “kingdom of God,” Jesus was proclaiming that “God was at last becoming king and displaying his kingship through this particular Jewish prophet to achieve the renewal and restoration of Israel” (p. 25). The promises of an imminent coming kingdom were connected to events other than the end of the physical order. Thus Jesus’ teaching regarding the kingdom was not in error, as Crossley claims. Jesus used messianic titles like “the son of man” to refer to himself. He even claimed divine authority, exercised divine prerogatives, and saw it as his mission to embody the presence of God in Jerusalem. Bird charges that Crossley’s dismissal of much of the material in the Gospels is a byproduct of his materialist worldview.

Chapter 2 treats the issue of Jesus’ resurrection. Bird demonstrates that no good reasons exist for doubting Jesus’ death by crucifixion since it is so well attested in the NT and by non-Christian historians. Contrary to J. D. Crossan, the evidence for Jesus’ burial is also compelling. This evidence includes multiple independent attestation with the Gospels, the Pauline tradition, the discovery of a buried victim of crucifixion, and Jewish laws requiring that executed criminals be buried before sunset. Bird also defends the Christian claim that Jesus’ body disappeared from his tomb. Lack of scriptural echoes suggests that the account of the empty tomb was not constructed from an imaginative use of OT texts. The claim that women first discovered the empty tomb was not likely fabricated, since the testimony of women was viewed with much skepticism in the ancient world. The Jewish retort that Jesus’ disciples had stolen his body presupposes that the tomb was indeed found empty and that Jewish opponents recognized that this was undeniable. Bird enumerates several features of Mark 16:1–8 that suggest the text was “rooted in early Palestinian tradition” (p. 43). Bird suggests that the divergences between the Gospels in recording Jesus’ resurrection appearances add to the realism of the narratives since, as E. P. Sanders stated, “Calculated deception should have produced greater unanimity” (p. 44). Bird interacts with the most popular objections to Jesus’ resurrection and gives an especially thorough response to the claim that the resurrection appearances were visionary experiences prompted by the disciples’ grief. Bird dares to appeal to his own religious experience as evidence for Jesus’ resurrection.

Crossley responds that the earliest possible sources, Mark 16:1–8 and 1 Cor 15:3–8 are “very, very weak witnesses” (p. 52). Paul and others believed that Jesus had risen and experienced what they believed were post-resurrection appearances of Jesus. However, Paul documents no witnesses to an empty tomb. This suggests that these experiences were mere visionary experiences that were misinterpreted by early Christians due to cultural and religious influences such as the expectation of the resurrection of martyrs in intertestamental literature. Mark’s account was likely “a story invented to explain why no one knew any details about the empty tomb” (p. 55), not a report of eyewitness testimonies. Crossley argues that the incredible fiction preserved in Matt 27:52–53 demonstrates that the first Christians did invent resurrection stories. The fact that the later Gospels, Luke and John, insert Peter into the empty tomb scene demonstrates that they were not guided by historical concerns. Crossley concludes, “If something like the resurrection stories were from some other religion in the ancient world, ancient historians would rightly be judging the resurrection stories for what they more or less are, creative retellings of the past, or what we might call fiction” (p. 58).

In the chapter on Paul, Crossley argues that Paul was largely responsible for three of the features of Christianity that eventually distinguished it from Judaism: the abandonment of the Law, the inclusion of the Gentiles, and the full deification of Jesus in a monotheistic system. Although Paul’s teaching was the foundation for the view that Jesus was fully equal to God, Crossley insists that Paul elevated Jesus to an extreme but never fully equated Jesus with God. Full deification of Jesus was not apparent until the late first century, the time of the composition of the Gospel of John. Bird claims that the major contours of Paul’s message were defined by the Christophany that he witnessed on the Damascus Road. Rejection of the Law as a means of salvation was pre-Pauline and had its roots in Jesus’ own practice and teaching. Furthermore, Paul clearly affirmed the deity of Jesus in a number of ways.

In the debate over the Gospels, Bird argues that all four canonical Gospels belong to the *bios* genre and are generally reliable accounts that preserve eyewitness testimony. Bird affirms the generally accepted dates of composition for the Gospels. Crossley argues that the internal evidence of Mark suggests that it was composed in the 40s. He suggests that all three Synoptic Gospels portray Jesus as Law-observant, but that in John Jesus is portrayed as the replacement of the Jewish Law. Furthermore, the Synoptic Gospels portray Jesus as an exalted man but only John portrays Jesus as God. Consequently, the portraits of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels and John are irreconcilable, and John is to be read as a theological rather than a serious historical document.

In the treatment of earliest Christianity, Crossley discusses the broader factors that led to the emergence of Christianity as a major world religion and prompted the development of its distinctive view of God. In particular, Crossley argues that monotheism was an important factor in pre-Christian imperialism. The development of empires required the abandonment of local cults and acceptance of a single God who reigned through his emissary over all the peoples of the empire. Because of the popularity of the Jesus cult, Constantine wisely chose Jesus as the god of Rome and gave Christianity the momentum needed to become a world religion. Bird argues that although sociological and political factors played a role in the expansion of Christianity, “the rise of Christianity is so miraculous and so amazing that the Christianizing of the Roman empire itself constitutes a miracle sufficient to evoke faith” (p. 159). He insists that worship of Jesus as deity developed in the environs of Palestinian Christianity rather than as a response to changes in social and political situations.

Bird and Crossley have provided a helpful and engaging introduction to evangelical and secular perspectives on the origin of Christianity. Their lively interaction, sharp wit, and extensive knowledge of the field will be sure to captivate student and scholar alike. The book also serves as a useful summary of the authors’ other works in which

they have blazed new trails in NT scholarship. Students, apologists, and NT specialists will profit from a careful reading of this work.

Charles L. Quarles  
Louisiana College, Pineville LA

*The Social World of the New Testament: Insights and Models*. Edited by Jerome H. Neyrey and Eric C. Stewart. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008, xxiv + 295 pp., \$24.95 paper.

Neyrey and Stewart have edited a fascinating book on social-science approaches to the NT. Neyrey (University of Notre Dame) has been a well-known contributor to the field since the mid-1980s, and Stewart (University of Indiana at South Bend) has recently joined its ranks. The occasion for this book is the twentieth anniversary of the Context Group (started in 1986; [www.contextgroup.org](http://www.contextgroup.org)), a group of international scholars dedicated to exploring the use of the social sciences in biblical interpretation. One of the group's first publications was a collaborative handbook, *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), which demonstrated the potential of social-science approaches in reading Luke-Acts. The current publication aims to provide a more mature perspective by collecting previously published articles into one volume, each with a brief methodological introduction. I read the book with growing enthusiasm but also with a growing awareness that the biblical world is stranger than it often seems.

In the introductory methodological essay, "Social Science Criticism," Bruce J. Malina tells his personal story of training within the historical-critical tradition and of his growing awareness that the social context of Scripture was largely ignored. Socially shared conceptions of reality interpret one's experience, and thus an author generally attempts to affirm or change the conceptions. The task of the interpreter is to understand these shared conceptions and the effect of the author's message on them in order to avoid anachronistic or ethnocentric readings. The rest of the book bears this out.

The rest of the articles follow models from cultural anthropology. The first major section of the book deals with three ancient institutions: kinship, benefaction, and agrarian debt. K. C. Hanson reviews the basic constitution of Palestine's agrarian kinship system, with illustrations from the Herodian family. He applies his findings to the genealogies of Matthew and Luke, showing how they ascribe divine honors to the family of Jesus by the way they are structured and by the people they mention. Next, Alicia Batten distinguishes between general benefaction and patronage in her study of James. James is seen to criticize patronage with its concern over wealth, honor, and status, and to present God as benefactor and friend, ready to uphold even the lowest in the community regardless of the return in honor. Third, Douglas E. Oakman points out that Palestine's agrarian economics was increasingly dominated by ever larger elite landholdings and an unavoidable spiral of peasant indebtedness. The Lord's prayer takes on a different dimension if one reads the petition for forgiveness as a release from this spiral indebtedness, which would be a serious threat to one's daily bread—the next petition.

The second major section of the book is the largest and deals with culture: honor, purity, social location, the *paterfamilias*, space, healing, evil eye, and limited good. Space limitations prevent even a brief summary of every chapter, so at the risk of being subjective, only some articles are selected for comment.

Neyrey argues that honor was determined by the collective wealth of the family and that individual loss would usually be compensated by one's kinship group. Thus, an

ostracized individual was not just *πένις* (“hard working poor”), which includes most peasants, but *πτωχός* (“destitute, begging poor”), since he has lost all recourse to family or land. Luke’s beatitudes (6:20–23) may well address the situation of a destitute and thus literally hungry disciple who mourned the loss of family and land while he wandered with Jesus.

Oakman approaches the parable of the Good Samaritan from a peasant’s perspective. The traveler is a member of the elite, through whose exploitation some peasants lost their land and were forced into banditry. Jesus’ peasant audience thus cheers for the bandits. The Samaritan is a trader (he has oil and wine) who risks his business by helping the beat-up man, delivers him to an inn where prostitution and robbery are likely fortunes, and gives a blank check to the inn-keeper who is sure to extort more money. This is rather a parable of the foolish Samaritan, which demonstrates the recklessness of God’s grace in the unlikeliest of places.

John J. Pilch defines illness in Luke-Acts as a lack of wholeness, culturally defined. Illnesses can be categorized according to three overlapping taxonomies: one based on spirit involvement, one based on affected symbolic body zones (heart-eyes, mouth-ears, and hands-feet), and one based on purity. Interestingly, women are only reported with hands-feet illnesses (relating to their domestic gender roles) or with specific feminine impurities that “disappear” in Acts. Also, mouth-ear illnesses are no longer reported in Acts as if true understanding and speech have been restored.

S. Scott Bartchy contrasts the almost unlimited authority of the Roman *paterfamilias* with the way Jesus shockingly disregards the duties of filial piety towards the father and with the way Paul addresses wives, widows, and daughters as independent moral agents without reference to the significant male who has authority over them (1 Corinthians 7). When Paul speaks sternly (e.g. in 1 Cor 4:21 or 2 Corinthians 10–13), he challenges arrogant males in a culturally expected way (thus getting their attention) but immediately downplays his “fatherly” authority by speaking of his own weakness and suffering. These observations open doors in understanding Paul’s practice of authority and leadership, where egalitarianism and patriarchy are not to be considered as opposites.

John H. Elliott identifies witchcraft as background for Galatians in Paul’s interaction with his opponents. The evil eye, a widespread phenomenon in a world of limited good, refers to a staring look that is interpreted as envy and as casting a curse. From the language of vision in Galatians, it appears that Paul’s opponents accused him of possessing the evil eye, which would effectively neutralize his influence in Galatia. Paul returns the accusation, defends his physical appearance, and reminds the Galatians of the welcome reception and profitable ministry he had among them.

Other articles discuss purity and pollution in a rhetorical analysis of James, social stratification in Palestine as key to Mark’s audience, perceptions of limited good and envy in John the Baptist’s attitude towards Jesus (“He must increase”), and ancient classifications of public and private space to understand Paul’s teaching “in public and from house to house.”

The final section of the book deals with “modal personality” and contains one article, differentiating a collectivist person from the modern, individualist personality of western culture.

It is virtually impossible to summarize adequately the diverse contents and still convey the excitement of reading these chapters. The benefit of such a collection is the in-depth treatment of each method and its application. They invite the reader to apply the method to other passages as well. The drawback is that the arrangement of chapters does not always appear very logical (e.g. by Bible book or by social methodology) and that the variety of methods and passages sometimes overwhelms the reader. About two thirds of the articles date from before 2000, and an occasional chapter reflects critical remarks about the historicity of the biblical text. Yet, this collection is certainly worth

the price for making such texts conveniently available for use in both personal study and the classroom. The book features indexes of author, subject, and ancient sources, and its editing and layout are well done.

The Context Group is to be congratulated on this anniversary volume, which records the admirable progress in applying social-science methodologies to NT studies. Clearly, much work remains to be done. One could only wish that topics such as city politics, voluntary associations, the military, meals, social memory, group identity, and leadership models could also be addressed. I gladly commend this volume for enhancing our understanding of the socio-cultural setting of early Christianity. Yet be warned: the book offers ready-made interpretations for only a handful of Bible passages. We are invited to extend social-science methods to the biblical passages that are next on our own agenda in an interpretive exercise that is sure to challenge our exegetical skills.

Jack Barentsen

Evangelische Theologische Faculteit, Leuven, Belgium

*Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament's Christology of Divine Identity.* By Richard Bauckham. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008, xii + 285 pp., \$34.00 paper.

When I first heard that Richard Bauckham had completed a new volume discussing his Christology of divine identity, I assumed that it was the expansion of Bauckham's argument promised in the preface to *God Crucified* ([Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998], ix). However, to my disappointment, *Jesus and the God of Israel* is not Bauckham's definitive study, but rather it contains *God Crucified* in its entirety along with several essays that treat similar themes. After reading the book, however, my disappointment was greatly relieved, for, while the actual content of *God Crucified* itself is little changed in *Jesus and the God of Israel*, the new chapters advance Bauckham's earlier arguments on several fronts. In this review, therefore, after summarizing the content of the book, I will focus my attention on these expansions of Bauckham's earlier work.

In addition to a repackaged version of *God Crucified* appearing as the first chapter of *Jesus and the God of Israel*, chapters 2–3 are also available elsewhere. Moreover, although versions of chapters 4–5 are also found in other places, they are considerably expanded in this volume. Finally, while some of their content will be included in forthcoming books, chapters 6–8 are seeing their first publication in this volume. Therefore, since all of the chapters save one (chap. 6) are or will soon be available elsewhere, one might be tempted to ask, "What is the value in releasing this volume?" In short, this collection provides the reader with a consolidation of Bauckham's arguments concerning monotheism and the divine identity to this point.

While each chapter in *Jesus and the God of Israel* has its own internal logic, the chapters are also part of a single larger argument. Therefore, while it is not possible to examine every essay in detail in a review, it is important to summarize the central argument of the book and two important corollaries of this argument.

The argument in both *God Crucified* and *Jesus and the God of Israel* is built around Bauckham's understanding of Jewish monotheism in the Second Temple era. Bauckham argues that the key feature of early Jewish monotheism is the "divine identity." In choosing this term, he distinguishes himself from those who argue for "functional" or "ontological" monotheism. While he explains it in many places in *Jesus and the God of Israel*, perhaps the best summary of what Bauckham means by "divine identity" is found on pp. 233–34, in the introduction to his chapter on Jesus' divinity in Hebrews.

Bauckham begins, "For Jewish monotheistic faith what was most important was who God is, rather than what divinity is" (p. 233). He next lists some commonly agreed upon features of who God is (i.e. the divine identity): God is the creator and the ruler, is known through his revelation to Israel, will one day be acknowledged by all creatures as the one true God (in the eschaton), is known by his name Yhwh, is the only entity that may be worshiped, and is the only eternal being (pp. 233–34). Therefore, when one or more of these features is ascribed to someone or something, it may be assumed that this being shares in the unique divine identity. Yet the features of the divine identity listed above are not an exhaustive list. Elsewhere in the book, Bauckham, expanding on a concept introduced in *God Crucified*, summarizes his understanding of monotheism from three angles: creational monotheism, eschatological monotheism, and cultic monotheism (pp. 184–85). In another place, Bauckham expands the idea of worship to include prayers, doxologies, and hymns as phenomena that may be directed only to the unique God of Israel. Additionally, he argues that the heavenly throne is reserved for the only God. Any being that shares in these phenomena is assumed to share in the unique divine identity.

The most obvious application of these observations to Christian theology is that Jesus shares the divine identity of Israel's God. This is the first and most important implication of Bauckham's understanding of Second Temple monotheism: "Early Christology was framed within the familiar Jewish framework of creational, eschatological and cultic monotheism. The first Christians developed a *christological* monotheism with all three of these aspects. From this perspective, I call the Christology of all the New Testament writers, rooted as it was in the earliest Christology of all, a Christology of divine identity, proposing this as a way beyond the standard distinction between 'functional' and 'ontic' Christology" (p. 185).

A second, and closely related, application of Bauckham's argument is that it denies that Jewish intermediary figures set a precedent, allowing for early Christian acceptance of Jesus' full divinity. Bauckham responds to such arguments with a single key question: "Is this figure included within the unique divine identity or not?" (p. 158). In both *God Crucified* and in the additional chapter "The Throne of God and the Worship of Jesus," Bauckham answers that these figures must either be included in the divine identity or they must serve the one God yet not be part of the divine identity and "in no way qualify or threaten its uniqueness" (p. 159). Thus, Bauckham considers the intermediary figures an illegitimate category. From this, he argues that, since the focus in the first century was uniqueness and not the "unitariness of God," the possibility for "real distinctions within the unique identity of God" was present. This, and not intermediary figures, is a better way to explain the high Christology of the early Christians.

I cannot leave this summary without mentioning the final chapter, for in it Bauckham presents several brief but powerful theological reflections on the cross. Since Jesus, who shares the identity of the one true God, went to the cross, it is there that God's love and sacrifice and his identification with the plight of humanity are on full display. Bauckham sounds a fitting call for his readers to consider seriously the implications of God crucified.

By way of evaluation, apart from recourse to critiquing the exegesis of some of the texts cited in this volume, I have little to criticize. One lingering question in my mind is the precise relationship between creational, cultic, and eschatological monotheism and the divine identity. While all of the features of the divine identity that Bauckham lists could fit under one or more of these headings, are these headings exclusive to his divine identity monotheism, or could an understanding of monotheism that uses the categories "functional" or "ontological" also employ these three headings? It seems that the latter could be the case; however, it is not clear how that would affect Bauckham's larger proposal, if at all.

It is also possible to raise other, less significant, questions. For example, one particularly important group of texts to which he could have devoted more attention is the collection of Son of Man passages in *1 Enoch*, since he cites them as the only possible exception to his claim that intermediary figures are never included in the divine identity. Given the possible background in Daniel 7, where such a figure seems to be included in the divine identity, it may be that this figure is not the exception that Bauckham claims. However, *1 Enoch* is not determinative one way or another for Bauckham's argument. Another claim that warrants further attention is that "real distinctions within the unique identity of God" were possible (p. 159). Bauckham mentions this only in passing and comments that different texts may have different perspectives on whether these distinctions are literary or actual hypostatizations. Which texts do which? Can those that do the latter be compared with early Christian binitarian or trinitarian texts?

Both of the questions cited above and others like them, it seems, lead to an inevitable conclusion. While this book is a helpful expansion of Bauckham's argument in *God Crucified* and fleshes out some of his claims, his fuller argument remains incomplete. By this, I am not saying that his work is unpersuasive, since the evidence that he cites is largely compelling to me. However, while *Jesus and the God of Israel* is a helpful expansion of Bauckham's arguments, I continue to await his much anticipated fuller study, where I hope that some of my lingering questions will be addressed.

Christopher R. Bruno  
Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL

*Jesus and the Feminists: Who Do They Say That He Is?* By Margaret Elizabeth Köstenberger. Wheaton: Crossway, 2008, 253 pp., \$19.99 paper.

In parts 2–4 of the book, Köstenberger surveys different feminist views of Jesus grouped under three main categories: (1) radical feminists who reject Christianity wholesale due to its perceived "patriarchy"; (2) reformist feminists who opt to stay within the Christian tradition to reform it; and (3) evangelical feminists who emphasize the full equality of men and women while professing commitment to scriptural inspiration and authority. Before launching into this survey and critique, Köstenberger first lays the foundation (in part 1) by chronicling the history of feminism in general and outlining the hermeneutical issues underlying the feminist debates. After the survey of the various feminist views of Jesus, she then provides (in part 5) an evangelical non-feminist reading of Jesus and the Gospels, concluding that, while Jesus "broke with male chauvinism and a derogatory, discriminatory treatment of women," he did not obliterate gender-related distinctions in the church altogether, especially with regard to leadership roles. To Köstenberger, "[t]his is the critical balance Jesus found, and believers would do well to strike the same balance in the church today" (p. 214).

Clearly Köstenberger's own views on women and ministry fall within the complementarian position championed by members of the Council for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood and others. In addition, she repeatedly (pp. 16, 217–18) states that her chronicle of the feminist quest of the historical Jesus shows the large variety and even contradictory nature of the portraits. She also asserts that "[t]hese divergent understandings of Jesus found among feminists, in turn, raise concerns regarding the viability of feminism at large. Since feminists are not able to come to an essential consensus on Jesus' true identity, the validity of feminist biblical interpretation itself comes into question. The evidence shows that the feminist quest for self-fulfillment and self-realization leads to a distortion of the message of the Bible" (p. 16).

These assertions seem largely supported by the evidence Köstenberger presents. Given her conclusion and her stance, feminists in general probably will tend to dismiss the book or reject its main tenets. However, evangelicals of whatever persuasion on the issue of women's position at home and in the church would do well to give the book the serious attention it deserves. It evidences thoroughness of research, provides (both in the text and in summary boxes) information on individual feminists of various stripes in an engaging way, and its critiques are balanced and irenic in tone. Thus we have here a brief account of the persons and events associated with the 3 waves of feminism, as well as information on radical feminists (Mary Daly, Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, Daphne Hampson), reformist feminists (Letty Russell, Rosemary Radford Ruether, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza), and numerous (about 17) evangelical feminists/egalitarians. She also helpfully distinguishes between evangelical feminists who argue for a "developmental hermeneutic" from those who claim that God's intentions are egalitarian from the beginning. As such, this book will prove to be a helpful resource on feminism and the church.

Moreover, the book highlights fundamental issues underlying all the disputes over feminism. Thus Köstenberger says: "As will be seen later in this book, the definition of *equality* is at the very heart of the controversy surrounding women's roles. Is 'equal' to be understood in terms of equality in worth or does it encompass what God has called women to do in the church and in society?" (p. 20 n. 7). In addition, along the lines of Wayne Grudem, Köstenberger draws attention to the affinities in exegetical practice between reformist feminists and evangelical feminists, suggesting the influence of the former on the latter. One such practice is to view authority as intrinsically negative and irreconcilable with a servanthood model for leadership (p. 219). Again like others within the complementarian camp, in connection with her evaluation of the radical feminists, Köstenberger comments thus: "Like Mary Daly and other radical feminists, Mollenkott began in a more conservative vein and moved gradually to a radical viewpoint, illustrating the slippery slope of feminism that tends toward increasing radicalization" (p. 48).

Given the broad scope of the book, it is perhaps inevitable that some feminists or movements receive an inadequate treatment. Thus both in the text (p. 24) and in Table 1.1 (p. 18), the central concern of the Third Wave of feminism is stated as "radical pursuit of feminine self-realization." The scanty description and the use of the word "feminine" could obfuscate the fact that women of the Third Wave may seek unbridled sexual satisfaction and advocate various causes beyond those of relevance to women only.

Contrary to Third Wave feminism, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza features prominently in Köstenberger's book, and her evaluation is generally fair. However, occasionally the subtlety of Fiorenza's position is lost in her presentation. To be sure, in the opinion of Fiorenza, "the Palestinian Jesus movement understood the mission of Jesus as the prophet and child of Sophia" and Sophia as the driving force behind Jesus' pursuit of a "discipleship of equals." Nevertheless, Fiorenza would not crudely envisage Sophia as "the female deity" as Köstenberger claims (pp. 91, 101). Rather, Fiorenza says: "The earliest Jesus traditions perceive this God of gracious goodness in a woman's *Gestalt* as divine *Sophia* (wisdom)" (*In Memory of Her* [New York: Crossroad, 1983] 132).

Köstenberger's evaluation of Fiorenza also illustrates the difficulties in charting historical developments both of a person's views and of feminist movements in general. To Köstenberger, "Fiorenza has moved from a revisionist stance to an increasingly more radical position" (p. 112). This observation seems borne out when one compares Fiorenza's earlier writings with later ones. However, it is uncertain whether "[h]er [later] search for a new canon and new texts amounts to an implicit admission that her quest to find in Scripture an 'egalitarian Jesus' has been unsuccessful" (pp. 111–12). First, when Fiorenza penned her *In Memory of Her* (first published in 1983), she already sought to find traces of Jesus' "discipleship of equals" in apocryphal Acts (e.g. Acts of

Paul and Thecla) and in texts/practices of Gnosticism and Montanism. Second, while Fiorenza's historical reconstruction of an original discipleship of equals has come under severe criticism and in subsequent writings she cites with approval other people's feminist readings of scriptural passages, it is doubtful whether she has conceded failure in her historicist approach, judging from the preface to the second edition of *In Memory of Her* (1994). It is also unclear whether it is really due to the crumbling of her paradigm that feminists have taken a literary turn by focusing on the writing of texts on biblical texts. One must remember that Fiorenza was the editor of *Searching the Scriptures* (2 vols.; New York: Crossroad, 1993–94) and that some essays in volume 2 and in the *Feminist Companion to the Bible* series follow her lead in historical reconstruction (e.g. on Luke–Acts). Moreover, literary approaches may not be “closer to the middle” as Köstenberger claims (p. 217). For instance, Stephen Moore's deconstructive reading on John has the Samaritan woman at the well outstripping her male teacher Jesus (discussed by Kevin J. Vanhoozer in *Hearing the New Testament* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995] 322–24).

In addition, readers may wish for clarification or nuancing on a number of matters. For instance, one may disagree with her for ascribing to all evangelical egalitarians/biblical feminists the belief in biblical inerrancy as traditionally understood (see Pamela D. H. Cochran, *Evangelical Feminism: A History* [New York: New York University Press, 2005]). Others may wish to include in the discussion those evangelicals who advocate women's equal roles in church and society but not in the home. Still others may want her to acknowledge the presence of post-modern feminists who are engaged in deconstruction of the biblical texts. One may also wish for some interaction with the imaginative reconstruction of the ministry of Joanna/Junia and Mary (wife) of Clopas by Richard Bauckham in *Gospel Women* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), which regrettably Köstenberger nowhere discusses. Such criticisms, however, are minor in importance and do not affect the validity of the main thrust of her arguments.

Esther Yue L. Ng  
Christian Witness Theological Seminary, Milpitas, CA

*Matthew*. By David L. Turner. BECNT. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008, xix + 828 pp., \$49.99.

David Turner's commentary on Matthew's Gospel has been a long time in coming, but it does not disappoint. It is a fine commentary that will provide help to pastors, teachers, and students who are concerned to understand the message of the first Gospel. At its publication, Turner's commentary appeared as the ninth volume in the Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (BECNT), a series that seeks “to provide, within the framework of informed evangelical thought, commentaries that blend scholarly depth with readability, exegetical detail with sensitivity to the whole, and attention to critical problems with theological awareness” (p. xi). Turner has fulfilled that objective well. This is clearly a commentary written by a committed evangelical scholar who seeks not so much to dabble with speculative theories as to provide a trustworthy tool for the interpretation of Matthew's Gospel. This is not to say that Turner is unaware of the latest interpretative theories. He interacts with current critical scholarship and helps the reader navigate the various scholarly and exegetical options, but always with an eye to exposing the message of Matthew.

In the current sea of excellent commentaries on Matthew's Gospel, Turner helpfully isolates the five-fold “distinctive aspects of this commentary” (p. 3). This listing helps focus my review of the significant features of Turner's commentary.

First, he employs narrative criticism to understand Matthew's developing story-line in its own right, not just as a rewriting and expansion of Mark's Gospel (p. 3). This approach reflects Turner's hesitancy to adopt the majority view of Markan priority in solving the Synoptic problem, which he believes could lead to atomizing tendencies in interpreting Matthew. Instead, his use of narrative criticism focuses on the meaning and theology of Matthew's Gospel by comparing the various parts to the whole (pp. 6–8). This is a nuanced form of narrative criticism, which avoids some of the a-historical tendencies of radical literary approaches to the Gospels. It is also nuanced in that Turner at various points does treat differences in the Synoptic Gospels when they serve to provide a better understanding of the message of Matthew as a whole. An example is his detailed comparison of Matthew's and Luke's genealogies of Jesus in the introduction to the commentary (pp. 28–32), which does not deter the commentary proper (pp. 57–59). Similarly, Turner does not let the distinction between the Synoptic and Johannine accounts of the clearing of the temple sidetrack him from his central concern to understand the incident within Matthew's narrative. One might wish for fuller discussion of the interpretative options, which he notes, but Turner's terse statement of his preferable view (two clearings) sends readers on their way without being sidetracked (p. 502). One will need to consult other recent commentaries (e.g. Nolland, France, Davies and Allison) for a fuller interaction with scholarly discussion of Gospel differences.

Second, Turner attempts to explain Matthew's Gospel in the context of Second Temple formative Judaism(s) (p. 3). He generally regards Matthew as a Christian Jew writing to Christian Jews who are still in contact with non-Christian Jews within the synagogue. This is consistent with the probability of an early date of writing, while "Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, followers of Jesus, and others were presenting somewhat diverse competing versions of Judaism" (p. 3), hence before the unification of Judaism under the Jabneh (Jamnia) rabbis after the AD 70 destruction of the temple. Turner leans therefore toward a pre-AD 70 writing of the Gospel, with the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24–25) being an authentic dominical prophetic logion and Matthew perhaps not being dependent upon Mark (p. 14). This, along with patristic evidence and evidence internal to Matthew, is consistent with the traditional view of authorship being that of the apostle Matthew (pp. 11–16). Assuming that Matthew is writing to a Christian Jewish community (or communities), Turner understands that among the purposes for the writing of the Gospel were the need to explain how the life of Jesus "fulfilled" the Hebrew Bible (Matt 5:17–48), why Jewish leaders were not to be emulated (Matthew 23), and how a Gentile mission is to be undertaken (Matt 28:19; p. 15).

This second significant feature of Turner's commentary is to be recognized as a real strength. His doctoral training in both Christian and Jewish graduate schools enables him to have insights into both historical traditions. This permits him to undertake an examination of passages such as Matthew 23, with Jesus' biting woes upon the scribes and Pharisees, and demonstrate how OT prophets had similarly decried the excesses of those in the religious establishment of Israel. Turner demonstrates how Jesus' critique is often in line with various talmudic critiques. For example, when commenting on the fifth and sixth woes (Matt 23:25–28), Turner comments, "Jesus's critique of those whose external focus causes them to neglect internal matters agrees with certain talmudic insights (*b. Ber.* 28a; *b. Yoma* 72b)" (p. 556).

Third, Turner provides both analysis and synthesis in his running commentary, which is in keeping with the objectives of the BECNT series. On the one hand, he provides a relatively thorough analysis of grammatical, syntactical, and historical details of the text, but this does not come at the expense of his overview of Matthew's synthetic/narrative purposes. This is not an easy balance to maintain. In some places it works, such as in his discussion of the Beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount, where Turner

captures the essence of Matthew's shift of grammatical details to highlight both the present and future significance of Jesus' teaching on the kingdom of heaven (esp. pp. 145–53). However, occasionally Turner's penchant for narrative vs. comparative analysis may cause him to overlook items that would be instructive for readers. For example, the well-known distinction between Matthew's and Mark's narration of Jesus' explanation for speaking to the crowds in parables, where Matthew has ὅτι βλέποντες οὐ βλέπουσιν ("because while seeing they do not see" NASB; 13:13) while Mark has ἵνα βλέποντες βλέπωσιν καὶ μὴ ἴδωσιν ("so that, 'they may be ever seeing but never perceiving'" NIV; 4:12) barely surfaces in Turner's treatment of the passage. This may cause the reader to miss a gem of a distinction in the varied perspectives of both authors. Yet overall, Turner captures well the narrative purposes of Matthew's Gospel.

Fourth, Turner reflects the theological perspective of "progressive dispensationalism" in his attempt to interpret Matthew's theology (p. 4). This is a movement away from classical dispensational approaches, but not abandoning central dispensational tenets such as the imminence of Jesus' second coming and a future national conversion of the Jews. This is not a sudden recent movement by Turner. His 1989 review essay on the Olivet Discourse, his 1992 essay on Revelation 21–22, his 1992 essay on the Beatitudes of Matthew's Sermon on the Mount, and his 2002 essay on the future of Israel in Matt 21:43 all reveal his steady adoption of progressive dispensationalism; so this present commentary is a mature version of this theological perspective. To his credit, Turner does not carry on a negative dialogue with the classical version of dispensationalism but instead typically acknowledges it as one interpretative option, demonstrates its deficiency, and then moves on to his preferred interpretation in the light of mainstream evangelical thought (e.g. the interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount, pp. 143–44). This keeps Turner's commentary on track with Matthew's narrative. His interpretation of the notoriously difficult 21:43 seems a bit forced ("Matthew's community . . . will bear such fruit and will replace the current Jerusalem religious establishment as the leaders of Israel"; p. 518), since it appears to restrict too narrowly those to whom the kingdom of God will be given, but overall his exegesis rises naturally from the text and does not force his theological perspective. This is noticeable in his balanced approach to the Olivet Discourse, as he denies a simply futuristic dispensational interpretation but also disagrees with a simply preterist interpretation (pp. 568–69, 583–84). Instead he sees the events of AD 70 as "a picture that anticipates the eventual end of the world" (p. 567).

Fifth, Turner's translation (which each author in the BECNT series supplies) reflects his attempt to provide the reader with a "readable dynamic-equivalence, or functional-equivalence, translation" (p. 4). By this he means that he attempts to attend to the ideas (deep structure) of the text, with sensitivity to its idioms, as opposed to a formal-equivalence translation that attempts to reproduce as much as possible the words and phrasing (surface structure) of the text. This is a strength of his commentary in that it reflects the meaning of the Greek text of Matthew's Gospel as he guides the readers to a clear interpretation in his English translation.

I commend Turner for producing a fine commentary that will be of significant value especially to pastors, teachers, and students as one of the first commentaries they reach for when they attempt to unpack this Gospel. He does not become bogged down in minute detail or in tendentious scholarly debates but carefully surfaces the important issues. He has a warm spirit, a pleasant style of writing, and a pastoral heart to guide readers into the essential message of Matthew's Gospel.

Michael J. Wilkins  
Talbot School of Theology, Biola University, La Mirada, CA

*David in Luke-Acts: His Portrayal in the Light of Early Judaism.* By Yuzuru Miura. WUNT 2/232. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007, xix + 305 pp., €59.00/\$83.00 paper.

Yuzuru Miura's *David in Luke-Acts* is a revised version of his doctoral dissertation, successfully defended at the University of Aberdeen, Scotland under the supervision of Andrew Clarke. The book attempts to fill a perceived lacuna in Lukan studies related to the function of the figure of David. While Mark L. Strauss's recent and important work on the theme of Davidic messianism represented a needed contribution to Lukan Davidic studies, Miura's research attempts to address the issue more comprehensively than Strauss. The comprehensiveness of Miura's study is evinced in two ways.

First, his study is focused on the figure of David, not on the Davidic Messiah. Thus, Davidic Messianism is a secondary consideration and not the primary object of the inquiry. This broader research focus allows Miura to examine *all* the references to David in the Lukan corpus (Luke 1:27, 32, 69; 2:4, 11; 3:31; 6:3; 18:38–39; 20:41–42, 44; Acts 1:16; 2:25, 29, 34 [Peter]; 4:25 [disciples]; 7:45 [Stephen]; 13:22, 34, 36 [Paul]; 15:16 [James]) and not only the ones where the Davidic Messiah theme is present—however more widespread Strauss has convincingly shown the theme to be in Luke-Acts. Second, Miura attunes his ear to both the “genealogical” and “typological” aspects of Davidic Messianism in Luke-Acts. By studying the latter with the former, a more robust picture of Luke's use of David comes into view than has been previously appreciated. Miura summarizes his purpose clearly: “Examining all of Luke's references to David, we will consider (1) Luke's understanding of the picture of David from the perspective of first-century Jewish understandings, (2) the overall function of Luke's use of the figure of David in the narrative, and (3) how the analysis from this new perspective enriches our understanding of the relationship between David and Jesus” (p. 6).

After a brief introduction (pp. 1–12), the book is divided into two parts. Part 1, consisting of six chapters (pp. 13–138), is a study of David in the OT (LXX) and ancient Judaism (Miura labels it “early” Judaism, but I find that adjective needlessly biased): Chapter 2 addresses David in the Old Testament; chapter 3, David in the Old Testament Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha; chapter 4, David in the Qumran Manuscripts; chapter 5, David in the Writings of Philo and Josephus; chapter 6, David in Early Rabbinic Thought; and chapter 7 concludes part 1 with a synthesis of the portraits of David discussed.

The major objective in this first section is to discover whether or not ancient Judaism used David typologically in messianic conceptions. The question is answered in the affirmative and this conclusion forms the basis of Miura's discussion in part 2. Miura summarizes the literature's portrait of David under nine categories: (1) David as ideal king; (2) David as religious authority; (3) David and Moses in parallel; (4) David and Solomon in parallel; (5) David as a sinner; (6) David as a psalmist; (7) David as a model for the Jews; (8) David as a prophet; and (9) David as an indicator of Messiah.

What should we make of part 1 of Miura's work? First, it needs to be said that part 1 is not well written and at times the presentation appears more like a list of evidence than a piece of prose. The flow of his argument is often disrupted by intrusions mostly in the form of outlines or lists. While those interested in the topic will have their own initial intrinsic enthusiasm for the material, Miura's writing style will not invite less interested readers to consider his arguments. Furthermore, there are some idiosyncrasies that make reading difficult. For example, Miura often uses the word “characters” in an unusual and jolting manner: in the phrase “both genealogical and typological *characters* of Davidic messianism” (e.g. pp. 32, 56, 133, italics mine), he writes “characters” rather than the more natural “characteristics” or “elements.”

Notwithstanding the above criticism, I think Miura makes a useful contribution to the study of both the Second Temple period and the NT by bringing together the evi-

dence for conceptions of David in the Second Temple period. While much of this evidence and analysis was available elsewhere, we ought to thank Miura for bringing together in one place primary evidence and scholarly discussion. He has made a contribution by providing a comprehensive overview that synthesizes disparate pieces of material and, thus, has provided a handy resource for all future study of David.

In addition, I found the most interesting and significant information to be the discussions of David as a legal authority and a prophet. Also, related to both of these is the role of David as the cult-founder. This latter portrait, first espoused in Chronicles, is related to the two roles mentioned above: David gives new laws for the conduct of the temple in parallel with Moses and his prophetic activity confirms his authority as a psalmist—the Psalms being the hymnbook of the Second Temple.

The topic of Davidic messianism remains significant for Miura's work, as his concluding statement on the function of Luke's use of the figure of David demonstrates: "[the points show] Luke's efficient and well-organized use of the figure of David in the writings to legitimize Jesus as the Davidic Messiah" (p. 241). Yet, on the issue of Davidic messianism I find Miura confusing and in need of more thorough thinking. It is perhaps more the fault of those upon whom Miura's work rests and with whom he is dialoguing; yet by not thinking critically enough, Miura's work evinces the same weaknesses. The central issues revolve around the question of definition.

First of all, I find it difficult to imagine that a text that contains an expectation of a restoration of the Davidic dynasty, as 1 and 2 Chronicles does, is considered a text in which Davidic Messianism is "not attested" (pp. 132–33). What kind of definition of Davidic messianism excludes a text that celebrates the Davidic covenant and David's relationship to the temple and at the same time contains the hope for the restoration of the Davidic dynasty? We should point out that Miura's view is in the vein of Hugh Williamson and as such represents an advancement over Kenneth Pomykala, who denies any Davidic or "royalist" eschatological expectations in Chronicles. Yet, the terms "royalist hope" and "messianic hope" are a case of distinction without difference.

Related to this, and perhaps what is most difficult for me to understand, is the attempt to divide genealogical and typological elements within Davidic messianism. Much of his book is given to establish the complementary nature of the "genealogical" and "typological" elements of Davidic messianism. The former referring to the biological relationship between the Messiah and David (i.e. one coming from his posterity). The latter being more figurative of the "kind" of Messiah (i.e. one who acts as David acted—chosen, pious, warrior-like, and righteous king; p. 19).

Thus, after Miura's analysis I am left without a clear definition of Davidic messianism. Perhaps this is not exactly a fair critique since he does offer a definition: "we propose a careful definition of Davidic messianism: it has two elements: (1) the genealogical and (2) the typological characters" (p. 133). For me, however, this definition is much too elliptical to be useful, and we are confronted with the confusing language of "characters."

What Miura seems to be saying is that Davidic messianism, properly understood, comprises both a genealogical and a typological element. In other words, the Davidic Messiah will not only be a descendent of David (genealogically Davidic) but also will be David-like (typologically Davidic). If this is in fact the case—and it seems right, I find Miura's categorization of David messianism by the two elements to undermine his very definition (see pp. 133–36). It seems to me that Davidic messianism is *not* expressed by two *different* categorical elements, since the two elements are *inextricably linked and indivisible*. I would simply ask: (1) Can you have the genealogical character but not the typological character in an expression of Davidic messianism? (2) Conversely, can you have a typological character but not the genealogical character in an expression of Davidic messianism? If in every kind of writing that exhibits the genealogical element,

the typological element is also present, there is no arguable reason to divide them and every reason to present them together. I find the whole characterization of Davidic messianism in this manner to be severely deficient and lacking in textual support.

Furthermore, I have to disagree with Miura's analysis, at least as far as it goes, that Second Temple Judaism contains a concept of *David redivivus*. While it may be true that later Jewish tradition evinced *David redivivus*, Miura's only Second Temple evidence (and this is obviously debatable) is a less than clear text from Targum Jonathan (*Tg. Sam.* 23).

Part 2 is comprised of only two chapters (pp. 139–233) and presents research on Luke's portrait of David first in Acts (chap. 8) and then in the Gospel of Luke (chap. 9). The book is brought to its conclusion in chapter 10 with a summary of Luke's portrait of David in light of the ancient Jewish evidence (pp. 234–42). In addition, the function of the figure of David in Luke-Acts is described, and the new propositions are presented for understanding the relationship between David and Jesus as a result of the study.

Part 2 is better written, and Miura's analysis is razor sharp. There is much by way of solid exegetical discussion and engagement and the presence of real contributions and fresh thinking on several fronts. One such example is his persuasive critique of Richard Bauckham's understanding of τὴν σκηνὴν Δαυὶδ ("the tabernacle of David") as a reference to the eschatological temple and not the Davidic dynasty (see pp. 190–94). Furthermore, Miura's discussions of Paul's speech in Acts 13 (pp. 177–87) as well as the agreement represented in Acts 15 among Peter, Paul, and James (pp. 187–94) raises important questions about the place of Davidic messianism in Paul's theology; a concept that is grossly underappreciated in Pauline studies, that is, if we take Acts to be a useful source for recovering the historical Paul.

In sum, Miura's book is uneven in the quality of its writing, but that should not diminish one's appreciation for its important contribution. Miura has performed a service to NT scholars by pulling diverse threads together into a synthetic presentation of Second Temple evidence and scholarly discussion on the figure of David. Moreover, Miura has, more thoroughly than previous scholarship, underlined the importance of David and Davidic messianism for a significant portion of the NT, namely the writings of Luke. His foundational work could usefully be carried on to great effect in other parts of the NT, not least in Matthean and Pauline studies.

Joel Willitts  
North Park University, Chicago, IL

*Father, Son and Spirit: The Trinity and John's Gospel.* By Andreas J. Köstenberger and Scott R. Swain. NSBT 24. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2008, 369 pp., \$22.00 paper.

Confessional evangelicals, particularly those who trace their theological heritage back to Calvin and the reformed wing of the Protestant movement, have influenced broader evangelicalism in at least two ways. First, they have tended to embrace a hermeneutic that emphasizes the unity and continuity of the OT and NT. Such an emphasis is articulated in the commitment to the Bible as one coherent story from Genesis to Revelation, with all of its parts contributing to the whole to produce the four-act story of creation-fall-redemption-consummation. It is this basic hermeneutic, with its assumptions of unity and continuity, that serves as the foundation for a coherent biblical theology. If these assumptions disappear, which is what happened with continental liberalism, the possibility of a coherent biblical theology also disappears. It is no sur-

prise, therefore, that those who have contributed lasting work in the area of biblical theology, such as Geerhardus Vos and Richard Gaffin, herald from the reformed wing of evangelicalism.

A second influence of confessional evangelicals is, at the risk of being redundant, their “confessionalism.” It becomes clear from reading Calvin, particularly in his *Reply to Sadoletto* where he responds to the charge that Protestants were teaching theological “novelty,” that he and the other major leaders of the Protestant reformation did not see the movement as advocating new teaching. Instead, they saw their work as reclaiming the teachings of the early church in a way that acknowledged the importance of the great creeds of the church. They, in no way, took a “No creed but the Bible” approach. In his *Reply to Sadoletto*, Calvin appealed to key representatives of both the eastern and western fathers (Augustine and Chrysostom, respectively), as well as to the early ecumenical creeds, as a way to demonstrate the actual “conservatism” of his own theological teaching. While Calvin drew deeply from the patristics and from the ecumenical creeds, he did so confident that they spoke in unison with the teaching of Scripture in a way that upheld the *sola scriptura* principle.

In many ways, Köstenberger’s and Swain’s book *Father, Son and Holy Spirit: The Trinity in the Gospel of John* bears the marks of these two characteristics of confessional evangelicalism. First, their fine scholarly work assumes a certain unity and continuity to the Bible that permits them to move to and fro with legitimacy not only between the testaments but also within the testaments, as the thought of one corpus in the NT is compared and contrasted appropriately with another in the NT. I use the word “appropriately” here because, in their comparisons and contrasts both between and within the testaments, Köstenberger and Swain are sensitive to the unique message, style, and setting of the various writers. Second, Köstenberger and Swain acknowledge the importance of previous reflection on the doctrine of the Trinity as found in the patristic literature as well as in the early ecumenical creeds. Some may charge that it is anachronistic to utilize later creedal and patristic reflections on the Trinity as an aid to one’s study of the Trinity in John’s Gospel. Köstenberger and Swain respond to this charge by acknowledging that, on the one hand, one *can indeed* inappropriately “import fourth-century discussions into our exegesis of biblical texts” (p. 21). However, on the other hand, it would be inappropriate, according to Köstenberger and Swain, *to disregard altogether* patristic wisdom and creedal statements as one engages in the study of the Trinity in the Gospel of John. The principle that Köstenberger and Swain articulate is that one must remember that it was the Fourth Gospel itself that put pressure “on the fourth-century discussions about the nature of God in such a way that later formulations and terminology should be viewed less as evolutionary developments beyond the NT data and more as attempts to describe and analyze” the data found in Scripture (p. 21–22). Put another way, the creeds “represent a descriptive grammar of the Bible’s own intrinsically Trinitarian discourse” (p. 22).

*Father, Son and Holy Spirit: The Trinity and John’s Gospel* contains three major parts. After an introduction that discusses methodology, part 1 of the book explores the historical context of John’s Gospel—particularly with a view toward understanding the relationship between John’s Gospel and first-century Jewish monotheism. Drawing from Larry Hurtado’s *Lord Jesus Christ*, the authors argue that Jesus’ claims to divinity in John’s Gospel are presented in such a way so as to be sensitive to Jewish monotheism. The language that is chosen, the imagery that is utilized, and the conflict that ensues all seek to maintain the “oneness” of the *shema*, while at the same time including Jesus as the one behind the *shema*. It is this tension—the tension between the oneness of Yahweh represented in the *shema* and the divinity of Jesus, both of which are affirmed in John’s Gospel—that put pressure on early Christians to express monotheism as a trinitarian monotheism.

Part 2 of the book, "Biblical Foundations," has four chapters, each of which is a walk through the Gospel of John with one particular key idea in mind. One chapter explores "God in John's Gospel." A second chapter explores "The Father in John's Gospel." A third chapter analyzes "The Son in John's Gospel." A fourth chapter examines "The Spirit in John's Gospel." Each of these four chapters is a gem and should be required reading in any course on John's Gospel, even at the undergraduate level. A brief conclusion summarizes the findings of this part of the book.

Part 3 of the book, "Theological Reflections," includes four chapters, some stronger than others. The first chapter is titled "Christology in John's Trinitarian Perspective: Jesus' Filial Identity." Here the authors explore the "Son-ness" of Jesus. In an interesting interchange, the authors challenge Giles's (*The Trinity and Subordinationism* [Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2002]) use of the term "subordinationism" to describe the view of those who hold to the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father (p. 123). Giles confuses the heresy of "subordinationism" with the biblical teaching of "submission," according to the authors. A chapter titled "The Spirit Who Rests and Remains on God's Son and His Brothers" makes some helpful observations in relationship to extrabiblical Second Temple texts that state how the Spirit had departed from Israel. In the person and work of Christ, the Spirit comes once again to rest on Yahweh's people. Those familiar with Köstenberger's previous book (*The Missions of Jesus and the Disciples according to the Fourth Gospel* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998]) will recognize much of the content of the next chapter, "Toward a Trinitarian Mission Theology." The final chapter of the book, "The Trinity and John's Gospel," is well worth the wait. Essentially, this chapter is a walk through John 17. The authors' perspective is that John 17 allows the reader a glimpse into the intra-trinitarian fellowship within the Godhead, a fellowship "that reaches back before the world began and that continues even to the hour of Jesus' cross, resurrection and ascension" (p. 170). In other words, using language that reformed Christians would appreciate, John 17 portrays the *pactum salutis* (the saving mission given by the Father to the Son before the foundation of the world—sometimes also called the Covenant of Redemption). The chapter contains this profound statement: "John's doctrine of the Trinity is in a very real sense a function of his doctrine of mission. It is in the Father's sending of the Son (as well as in the Father and the Son's sending of the Spirit) that the three persons of the Godhead are revealed in their personal distinctions and unified purpose" (p. 171). The rest of the chapter unpacks the trinitarian relationship demonstrated in John 17 using the aid of traditional creedal language, as well as language drawn from Augustine. The book ends with a three-page conclusion, followed by words from a doxological hymn.

While there is much to appreciate about this monograph, there are also points of weakness. For example, one gains the impression from reading the introductory reflection on methodology that the writers will interact with a breadth of patristic and early creedal material. Indeed, one of the five stated methodologies was: "We have enlisted the aid of the church in our study, including its official doctrinal pronouncements and its most trusted teachers" (pp. 22–23). However, a cursory examination of the footnotes of the monograph and a perusal of the index of ancient sources (pp. 223–24) indicate a limited explicit use of patristic and creedal material. This was quite surprising given the argument made by the authors for the appropriateness of a proper use of such sources. In fact, it is hard to imagine that given the significance of the Fourth Gospel for the trinitarian discussion of the early church, more use could not have been made of the creedal and patristic sources.

A second weakness is found in the first full chapter, "John's Gospel and Jewish Monotheism." It is quite surprising that more direct use was not made of the ancient sources, particularly of the Dead Sea Scroll materials, in reconstructing a picture of Jewish monotheism in the first century AD. Good use was made of much of the secondary lit-

erature, including Hurtado's and Bauckham's work, but little of the primary material was referenced.

These two weaknesses aside, Köstenberger and Swain have provided a helpful monograph for the church. Pastors and scholars alike will read this book not only to further their understanding of the content of John's Gospel, but also to further their understanding of the precious doctrine of the Trinity—of the Sending Father, of the Sent and Sending Son, and of the Twice-Sent Spirit (using the language of this book).

C. Scott Shidemantle  
Geneva College, Beaver Falls, PA

*Christ and Caesar: The Gospel and the Roman Empire in the Writings of Paul and Luke.*  
By Seyoon Kim. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008, xvi + 228 pp., \$24.00 paper.

In 2006, N. T. Wright delivered a lecture in Durham Cathedral that, in terms of media interest, would prove to be one of his most controversial ever. He argued among other things that the American war in Iraq was an immoral extension of America's imperial ambition to dominate the world. His description of America's war in Iraq reads: "The angry superpower, like a rogue elephant teased by a little dog, has gone on the rampage stamping on everything that moves in the hope of killing the dog by killing everything in reach." Not only does Wright condemn the Iraq war in particular, but he also criticizes the American "war on terror" in general as a "counter-productive" assault on Islam, a religion which in his words "has been an enormous force for civilization in the world." Wright says that "the only way to fight terror is by working for mutual understanding and respect." For Wright, the American empire's wars in Iraq and Afghanistan amount to fighting "one kind of terror with another." Wright's analysis provoked a sharp response from Gilbert Meilaender in the February 2007 issue of *First Things*, who suggested that Wright should stick to theology and avoid politics.

Yet the opinions reflected in Wright's lecture represent more than the mere political musings of a single churchman in England. Wright's frequent and public remarks on this topic grow right out of a whole stream of NT scholarship that understands the apostle Paul's gospel as a message deliberately crafted to undermine the Roman empire. For these interpreters, theology and politics are not neatly divided into separate ideological compartments. Paul's gospel was a theo-political message, and this observation has implications for contemporary readings and proclamation of Paul. In the last ten years or so, this way of reading Paul's letters has been on the ascent, and these interpreters generally hold three things in common: (1) It is assumed that the Roman imperial cult was pervasive in Paul's missionary context; (2) Paul's gospel is, therefore, both theo-political and counter-imperial in that it offers an explicit (and sometimes "coded") repudiation of the Roman empire; and (3) consequently, Paul's gospel confronts all imperial systems, including and especially the current American empire. In this new movement, the analogy between America and Rome is so direct that Pauline repudiations of the "powers" of his day imply a direct confrontation of American imperial power in our own day.

It is this stream of scholarship that Seyoon Kim wishes to engage in his book *Christ and Caesar: The Gospel and the Roman Empire in the Writings of Paul and Luke*. Kim's purpose is not to render a judgment on contemporary political controversies regarding the alleged American "empire." Rather, his basic contention is that Paul's modern, counter-imperial interpreters have gotten Paul wrong. That Kim would come to such a conclusion is striking, given that he began this study being quite impressed by the

scholarship adduced by counter-imperial interpreters (p. xi). The book began as an intended excursus to Kim's commentary on 1 and 2 Thessalonians (p. xi). As he dug more deeply into the biblical text and as he came to see shortcomings in the methodology of counter-imperial interpreters, Kim came to the conclusion that the approach was not helpful for a faithful interpretation of Paul.

Kim's book is divided into two parts: part 1, "The Epistles of Paul," and part 2, "The Writings of Luke." The reason for devoting a section to Paul is obvious, but the second part on Luke's writings may not be as obvious for some. So Kim explains this two-part division in the "Introduction." He writes, "Lucan writings occupy a pivotal place for our question because in his second volume he, like no other author in the New Testament, describes direct encounters of Christian missionaries with Greco-Roman cities and Roman officials" (p. xv). So not only does Kim seek to examine the writings of Paul themselves for this alleged counter-imperial message, but he also wants to see whether or not Luke's depiction of the early Christian movement corroborates the claim that Paul is counter-imperial.

In "Part One: The Epistles of Paul," Kim examines the Pauline texts and the methodology that are cited as the basis of the counter-imperial approach. Chapter 1 focuses on Paul's epistles to the Thessalonians, in which Paul is said to have confronted the Caesar cult in Thessalonica through the use of terms that have parallels in the Caesar cult (e.g. *kyrios*, *parousia*, *epiphaneia*, *epiphanēs*, *apantēsis*, *sōtēr*, *euangelion*, and especially *eirēnē kai asphaleia*, "peace and security" in 1 Thess 5:3). Kim concludes that the parallels do not constitute evidence that Paul intended an "indirect critique" of the Roman empire (contra Karl Donfried, J. R. Harrison, Abraham Smith, and Helmut Koester).

In chapter 2, Kim examines anti-imperial interpretations of other Pauline epistles. He begins by showing that N. T. Wright's counter-imperial interpretation of Philippians does not square with a plain reading of the letter. Kim shows that it is inconsistent for Wright to argue for an *explicit* challenge to the Roman empire in 2:5–11 and 3:20–21, while insisting that the text in between these two passages is a *coded* message against the empire. Kim has particularly sharp words for Wright's methodology on this point: "Wright's resorting to the device of 'code' here for interpreting Phil 3 appears to be only an unwitting admission that with normal exegesis he cannot obtain his desired anti-imperial interpretation" (p. 15). Kim then shows that Wright's counter-imperial interpretation of Romans is equally untenable. The chapter concludes with an effective critique of counter-imperial readings of 1 Corinthians.

In chapter 3, Kim evaluates the methodology of Paul's counter-imperial interpreters. He shows that counter-imperial interpreters exemplify the "parallelomania" that Samuel Sandmel warned against nearly fifty years ago. Moreover, their arguments rely heavily on deductions from assumptions, proof-texting, and an appeal to "coded" messages. Kim's critiques of this methodology are particularly sharp. Consider this assessment of counter-imperial proof-texting: "This looks like a new application of the old-fashioned proof-text method that dogmatists employed to construct doctrines, and dispensationalists used to construct elaborate eschatological scenarios. It is rather curious to see how some sophisticated exegetes as well as those who have an avowed interest in so-called post-colonial hermeneutics use the method for their political interpretation, although they would loudly disapprove its use by dogmatists and dispensationalists" (p. 36).

In chapter 4, Kim sets forth nine factors that make an anti-imperial interpretation of Paul difficult: (1) that Paul nowhere mounts an explicit critique of the Roman empire; (2) that Paul nowhere even mentions the imperial cult; (3) the plain meaning of Rom 13:1–7; (4) Paul's expectation of acquittal before a Roman court in Phil 1:19–26; (5) that Paul seems to favor the political status quo before the *parousia*; (6) Paul's focus on his mission, which would have left him little time to work toward changes in the

Roman imperial order; (7) Paul's ethic of perseverance and non-retaliation in the face of official persecution; (8) Paul's interest in individual and cosmic "salvation"; and (9) the absence of anti-imperial interpretation in the early church (e.g. Clement of Rome, Tertullian).

In chapter 5, Kim summarizes his conclusions from the foregoing chapters. He concludes the following: "There is no anti-imperial intent to be ascertained in the Pauline Epistles. All attempts to interpret them as containing such an intent, as shown above, are imposing an anti-imperial reading on the epistles based merely on superficial parallelism of terms between Paul's gospel preaching and the Roman imperial ideology, while the texts themselves clearly use those terms to express other concerns" (p. 68).

Part 2 begins in chapter 6, which is a brief introductory note about how Luke's writings relate to counter-imperial readings of Paul. Several accounts in Acts suggest that Luke is well aware that Paul's preaching was sometimes perceived as anti-imperial and was even susceptible to the charge of treason (p. 76). Nevertheless, Luke also makes it clear that Felix and Festus knew that Paul's message was not actually anti-imperial (Acts 24:22–27; 25:18, 25; 26:30–32). Moreover, Luke's Gospel emphasizes that the political interpretation of Jesus' messiahship was mistaken and that Pilate knew that Jesus had not actually committed a crime against the Roman empire. The rest of part 2 deals with the texts in Luke's writings that bear out these claims.

In chapter 7, Kim acknowledges the tension between Jesus' messiahship and Caesar's rule in Luke's writings. Luke portrays Jesus as the Davidic King whose rule contrasts sharply with the lordship of Caesar. Nevertheless, chapters 8–10 show that Jesus' messiahship in Luke is no political threat to Rome in the revolutionary sense. This is because Luke does not set up Jesus' redemption of his people as a deliverance from the Roman empire (chap. 8), but as a deliverance from the kingdom of Satan (chap. 9). Moreover, the apostles' ministries recorded in the book of Acts are a campaign not against the Roman empire but against the kingdom of Satan through their witness to the kingdom of God (chap. 10).

Chapter 11 discusses the possible reasons for the lack of a political materialization of redemption in Luke's writings. Among other things, Kim argues that Luke's situation is vastly different from that of the author of Revelation (an unambiguous anti-imperial work). Even though Luke recognizes the diabolical nature of all human kingdoms, he nevertheless considers the *Pax Romana* as "relatively better than some other kingdoms" (p. 177). Kim concludes by locating both Luke and the apostle Paul within the three different attitudes that early Christians exhibited toward the Roman empire: "(1) the completely negative attitude of John the seer, which views it only as Satanic and therefore advises Christians only to resist it and withdraw from it . . . ; (2) the attitude of Clement of Rome and the later early church, which resists emperor worship itself but otherwise is loyal to the empire; and (3) the dialectical attitude of Paul and Luke, which recognizes the fundamentally diabolic nature of the empire and yet, for the sake of Christian mission, is willing to cooperate with it and use its facilities" (p. 190). The final two chapters offer a "Summary and Conclusion" and some implications of Kim's study for today.

The weaknesses of *Christ and Caesar* are few. As Kim himself acknowledges, his engagement with Robert Jewett's 2007 massive and important commentary on Romans is negligible (p. xii). Jewett's entire work is based on a particular historical reconstruction that includes a counter-imperial engagement with Rome. Thus it is a shame that Kim's book could not include more critical interaction with this monumental piece of scholarship. Nevertheless, this lacuna is mitigated by the fact that Kim's methodological critique of other counter-imperial interpreters applies as well to Jewett's work.

My overall appraisal of Kim's *Christ and Caesar* is a positive one. This book could not have come at a better time. Counter-imperial interpretations of Paul have become quite the scholarly fad over the last decade, so much so that some scholars are taking

for granted that Paul's gospel is anti-empire. Whole commentaries have been written based on the premise of an alleged anti-imperialism in Paul (e.g. Jewett and Wright on Romans; Walsh and Keesmaat on Colossians). If Kim's contention in *Christ and Caesar* is correct, then he will have invalidated a whole swath of scholarship in the NT guild. It is not that counter-imperial interpreters have misidentified parallels between Paul's writings and the Caesar cult. Nor is it that they are wrong about the presence of the cult in the areas of Paul's mission. It is that their errant methodology has misled them in their assessment of the parallels. As a result, they make tendentious claims that are not in fact supported by the evidence. They end up assuming what they set out to prove. Kim uncovers all of this while mounting a convincing counter-argument based on the evidence.

This is a timely book, if not a timeless one. I suspect that the anti-imperial fad will diminish over time. To the extent that anti-imperial interpretive fervor has been tied to the desire to oppose an unpopular "imperialist" American president, I suppose the fad will fade even quicker than some are expecting. Nevertheless, anti-imperial interpretations of Paul are so paradigmatic for those who embrace them that introductory students need exposure to the serious methodological deficiencies associated with this approach. For this reason *Christ and Caesar* would be a useful supplementary text for almost any kind of survey course on Paul and his writings.

Denny Burk  
Boyce College, Louisville, KY

*Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies and Methods.* By Eckhard J. Schnabel. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2008, 518 pp., \$32.00 paper.

Eckhard Schnabel, professor of New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, has rightly gained a reputation as one of the leading biblical theologians writing in the area of missions. After the 2004 publication of his monumental two-volume *Early Christian Mission* (with a combined total of 1928 pages!), we can be grateful for this more accessible work on Paul, much of which is condensed from his larger study. Schnabel's stated purpose of his book is "to provide a close reading of the relevant New Testament texts that help us understand Paul's missionary work—proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ and establishing communities of believers—in terms of the goals that he had and in terms of the methods that he used" (p. 30).

Schnabel succeeds admirably. *Paul the Missionary* is an excellent resource that I will be recommending for years to come. I know of no other book that provides such a comprehensive, biblically faithful, and nuanced understanding of Paul and his missionary work.

After a brief introductory section on definitions and the book's organization, the remainder of the text is divided into six chapters. In chapter 1, Schnabel presents a historical overview of the apostle Paul's missionary work. Beginning with Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus in AD 31/32, he proceeds to give a chronological overview of the apostle's missionary work subdivided into fifteen different phases or locations (e.g. Paul in Arabia, Jerusalem, Cilicia, and Syria; Paul on Cyprus and in Galatia; Paul in Macedonia and Achaia, etc.). Far superior to the common but truncated "three missionary journeys" approach to Paul, Schnabel's scheme succeeds in giving a complete picture of the more than three decades of missionary work done by the apostle to the Gentiles. Schnabel's historical judgments are consistently nuanced and textually-based. When he hypothesizes beyond the textual evidence, he presents variant views and notes

the degree of certainty with which he holds his conclusions. His writing is peppered with a number of fresh interpretations and suggestions. For example, Schnabel draws upon extrabiblical sources to suggest that Sergius Paulus (the Roman proconsul who had become a Christian under Paul's preaching in Cyprus, Acts 13:4–12) likely had extended family around Pisidian Antioch (pp. 77–79). The apostle's personal connection with a recent convert's extended family might explain why Paul bypassed the important city of Perge after sailing to southern Asia Minor from Cyprus (Acts 13:13–15).

In chapter 2, Schnabel discusses "The Missionary Task according to Paul's Letters." Running through most of the Pauline letters at a dizzying pace, Schnabel builds a picture of Paul's conception of his missionary work from the apostle's explicit comments. For example, in his discussion of 1 Corinthians, Schnabel notes, "Paul understands himself as a 'servant' (*diakonos* [1 Cor 3:5]). Since Apollos and any other teachers who have been or who are active in the church are also servants, there is no place for arrogance, vanity or self-interest" (p. 131). Many similar points are drawn from Paul's diverse correspondence. Inevitably, in such a rapid overview, the discussion of some issues is extremely brief. For example, more could be said about what it means to "do the work of an evangelist" (2 Tim 4:5) and how this statement applies, in context, primarily to Timothy's congregational responsibilities (p. 150).

Chapter 3 presents "The Missionary Message of the Apostle Paul," drawing upon passages in Paul's letters and Acts that demonstrate the content of Paul's missionary proclamation. Especially helpful is Schnabel's careful comparison of Paul's preaching to Jewish audiences, Gentile audiences, and his civic speeches in defense of the gospel. As in the rest of the book, Schnabel's exegetical and historical judgments are almost always well-grounded and convincing. Unavoidably, because so many texts are discussed, readers will end up having a few quibbles. For myself, I wondered if Luke truly intended for us to read Isaiah 45 as the conceptual background to the apostle Paul's reference to an "unknown God" in his Areopagus speech (pp. 174–75). Also, on what objective basis can Schnabel claim Pauline allusions to "early Christian confessions of faith" in 1 Thess 5:9–10; Gal 1:4; 2:20; and 1 Cor 2:2 (p. 188)? Finally, in light of Paul's rejection of Greco-Roman rhetoric (1 Cor 2:1–5), is it helpful to label portions of his sermons with the Latin terms *narratio*, *argumentatio*, *exordium*, *captatio benevolentiae*, *propositio*, and *peroratio* (pp. 158–70)?

In chapter 4 of the book, Schnabel explicates "The Missionary Goals of the Apostle Paul," that is, the broad strategic focus of Paul's missionary work. Schnabel nicely summarizes: "The goals of Paul's missionary work focus on preaching the gospel to Jews and Gentiles who live in cities between Jerusalem and Illyricum and Spain, entreating them to be reconciled to God through faith in Jesus the messianic Savior and Lord, teaching the new converts the whole counsel of God as he established local communities of followers of Jesus" (p. 210).

In chapter 5, rather than investigating broad strategy, Schnabel looks at specific methods. What guided Paul's moment-by-moment decisions in the midst of his missionary travels? How did Paul select the cities, regions, or provinces where he preached? Which urban venues did Paul choose for preaching and why? To what degree was Paul's mission adjusted to or determined by the ethnic identity, class, and culture of his target audience? Was Paul's preaching shaped by Greco-Roman rhetoric or similar influences? How did he establish his credibility in his constantly changing settings? Schnabel ably answers these and other such questions.

Chapter 6 builds a bridge from the book's previous conclusions to modern missionary practice. Schnabel insightfully comments on everything from missionary preparation and sending to the homogenous unit principle and the use of television. Modern missionary practitioners anxious for the "bottom line" may want to read chapter 6 first, and then go to earlier chapters for more in-depth theological underpinnings.

As I stated at the outset of this review, *Paul the Missionary* is an amazing achievement. At the same time, I will note three criticisms that move beyond the interpretation of specific texts. First, while the book is advertised as being for the “current and aspiring missionary” (endorsement on back cover), Schnabel occasionally assumes a level of specialized knowledge that few current or aspiring missionaries possess. For example, (1) he repeatedly discusses senatorial and imperial provinces without ever explaining the difference; (2) he assumes the reader’s familiarity with the *Decumanus Maximus* (Why not simply add in parenthesis “the city’s main cross-road?”); (3) he assumes the reader’s familiarity with a pagan deity confusingly named “Men” (p. 85); (4) he offers no explanation of the apocalyptic tradition of “messianic woes” (pp. 143–44); (5) he offers no lifespan dates for the Stoic philosophers Cleanthes, Chrysippus, and Posidonius (p. 171; inconsistently, Schnabel does include lifespans for obscure historical figures mentioned elsewhere [e.g. see p. 177, n. 42]); (6) he does not explain the “accessions” of the emperor (p. 212); (7) he assumes familiarity with terms such as prytany, lictors, and fasces (pp. 102, 138). Clearly, a few “real or aspiring missionaries” should have read through a draft of this text and marked words or concepts that were opaque.

A second criticism concerns some theological summaries that I found confusing. When I first encountered a statement in the book that implied that salvation was obtainable in the old covenant era on the basis of keeping the law and offering sacrifices, I felt that I surely must have misread the text. Yet, after running across similar statements several times, I think such assertions should be qualified to prevent the impression that salvation was obtainable by human effort in the OT era. I will list a sample of such statements (italics mine): (1) “As a result of this new reality [in Christ], the Mosaic law *no longer* provides an effective, valid means for the atonement of sins (Gal 2:15–3:18)” (p. 125); (2) “[Paul’s preaching about Christ] implied that circumcision *no longer* guarantees that Jews are the recipients of God’s salvation. It implied that the sacrifices in the temple which the Mosaic law stipulated, *no longer* guaranteed the forgiveness of individual Jews or the holiness of Israel as a nation” (p. 162); (3) “As a result of this new reality [in Jesus Christ], the Mosaic law is *no longer* capable of conveying salvation” (p. 202); (4) “. . . the sacrifices and other rituals that were prescribed in the Mosaic law and were God’s gracious provision for the atonement for the sins of the people and for the individual Israelite *no longer* forgive sins” (p. 217); (5) “God’s righteousness, that is, the gift of righteousness that God gives to his people is bound up *no longer* with the Mosaic law. . . . Divine grace and human works are *no longer* compatible” (p. 218); (6) “Repentance is prompted by the imminence of God’s judgment (Mt 3:10) which nullified all recourse to *the former means of salvation* (Mt 3:9)” (p. 227).

A third and final criticism concerns the text’s sometimes puzzling inconsistency in the use of detail. For example, Schnabel lists cities that Paul might have visited in Illyricum (pp. 112–13), including a detailed map of Illyricum at the time of Paul’s visit (p. 114). Elsewhere, Schnabel takes half a page to discuss the linguistic ancestors of the English word “heathen,” including the etymological cousins in Old Frisian, Old High German, Middle High German, and German. Yet at the same time, when discussing Paul’s missionary work in Thessalonica (Acts 17:1–9), Schnabel neglects to mention the pivotal incident of Jason and his puzzling civic bond (p. 97). Similarly, in his historical survey of Paul’s missionary work, Schnabel fails to mention Paul’s major evangelistic sermon in Jerusalem (Acts 22:1–21). My supposition is that this inconsistency is partly due to the challenge of condensing the author’s more extensive discussion in *Early Christian Mission*.

NT scholars who value careful biblical theology will love this book. I do. More pragmatically oriented readers might desire a bit more variety of presentation throughout the volume (i.e. a mixture of historical study, missionary anecdotes, and modern-day application). Indeed, though Schnabel’s work far surpasses Roland Allen’s classic text

in biblical-theological method, it lacks the personal reflections and immediate application that make Allen so accessible to missionary practitioners. Possibly Schnabel can be induced to write an additional volume in which he mixes the fruit of his fine academic study with anecdotes and application from his own varied missionary career. Until then, *Paul the Missionary* truly is “the new Roland Allen.”

Robert L. Plummer  
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY

*What Must I Do To Be Saved? Paul Parts Company with His Jewish Heritage.* By Barry D. Smith. New Testament Monographs 17. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2007, xiii + 285 pp., \$90.00.

Chapter 1 provides a wide survey of Second Temple literature that points out how obedience to the Law rightly interpreted leads to eschatological salvation. Barry D. Smith, associate professor of Philosophy and Religious Studies at Atlantic Baptist University in Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada, sees a rather consistent teaching within texts concerning God as a righteous judge who will hold people accountable for their obedience or disobedience to his Law. However, God is not only a righteous judge; Smith also detects in these texts a consistent pattern that argues that God is also to be understood as merciful. Thus, God is described as the one “who removes guilt resulting from transgression of the Law on the simple condition of repentance” (p. 34). This forms the basis of the synergistic soteriology that Smith observes in these otherwise disparate texts from the various forms of early Judaism. Central to Smith’s argument is the rejection of “the new perspective on Paul.” Moreover, he contends that “Second-Temple Judaism *was* characterized in part by a legalistic works-righteousness” and that this historical-religious context is a prerequisite for a coherent reading of Paul’s soteriological reflections (p. 71, italics his).

In chapter 2, Smith is convinced that Paul’s approach to soteriology was non-synergistic and thus discontinuous with other expressions of early Judaism, which held that eschatological salvation could be achieved by obedience to the Law. This is the point at which Smith is in direct conflict with the scholarly conclusions of those within “the new perspective on Paul.” These scholars hold that such an understanding of eschatological salvation was not part of the various expressions of Judaism during the Second Temple period. Smith, on the other hand, contends that Paul rejects what “new perspective” scholars argue did not exist—a legalistic works-righteousness approach to eschatological salvation. Paul’s understanding of synergistic soteriology, which, Smith argues, was inherited from his Pharisaic background (Phil 3:6), was transformed into a non-synergistic soteriology in which no one can be declared righteous through obedience to the Law. Jew and Gentile both can only be declared righteous by faith. Thus, humanity cannot boast before God in that their salvation is fully contingent on God’s grace through faith. Smith argues that Paul’s scriptural grounding for this understanding is sourced in his reading of Hab 2:4, “the righteous by faith shall live” (p. 160).

If this summary sounds rather conventional, this is intentional on Smith’s part, because he states in the introduction that the purpose for this book is to offer “a restatement of the traditional formulation of Pauline soteriology in light of recent criticisms of it” (p. 1). Throughout chapter 2 Smith maintains the general contours of the accepted Augustinian-Lutheran understanding of Pauline soteriology. For Smith, Paul’s non-synergistic approach resolves the tension inherent in the existing synergistic soteriological formulations within early Judaism with regard to God’s judgment and mercy by

completely relying on God's mercy. Thus, there is no room for any human works-based contribution with regard to eschatological salvation (p. 75). For Smith, Paul has forsaken his Jewish identity and its accepted paradigm for salvation—a synergistic soteriological scheme in which humanity cooperates with God with regard to eschatological salvation. For Smith, this also includes a “repudiating of the idea that the Law was ever truly intended as a means of life (Lev. 18.5)” (p. 76). Thus, for Paul, who has now rejected his Jewish heritage according to Smith, faith, and not obedience to the Law, is the only way to be declared righteous.

Chapter 3 addresses the issue of coherence with regard to Pauline soteriology in that several passages in his letters appear to indicate that Paul was synergistic with regard to the possibility of being disqualified based on patterns of disobedience (e.g. 1 Cor 6:9–11; 9:24–27; Phil 3:12–14; Rom 2:5–11). Smith, however, argues that these passages do not contradict the Pauline non-synergistic soteriological framework. Rather, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and the lack of free will for Christ-followers guard against any possibility of practical unrighteousness and disobedience (pp. 201, 206). Thus, Smith argues that the same mercy of God that provides eschatological salvation also produces good works in the life of a believer.

A number of strengths emerge from this monograph. First, Smith provides a generous sampling of Second Temple texts that are directly relevant to the broader discussion of soteriological approaches in early Judaism. Second, he bifurcates the positive arguments that occur in the main text with extensive defensive arguments that occur in the footnotes. This allows the reader to follow Smith's argument without too many digressions in the main text of the study. Third, Smith achieves his stated goal of providing a restatement of the traditional Augustinian-Lutheran understanding of Paul, while addressing many of the critiques evident in the writings of, for example, E. P. Sanders, James D. G. Dunn, and N. T. Wright. This rather adventurous monograph is a welcome addition within the field of Pauline studies.

Smith's work, however, is weakened by two issues: his approach to the continuing significance of Paul's Jewish identity and his use of parallel literature. The critique that follows should be read in the context of an appreciation for the general soteriological framework from which Smith argues. Moreover, it is informed by a group of scholars broadly referred to as “beyond the new perspective on Paul” (e.g. Robert Jewett, William S. Campbell, Kathy Ehrensperger, Neil Elliott, and Mark Nanos).

First, it is not clear how discontinuous Paul is with his Jewish heritage. Beyond the soteriological framework, Smith does not provide adequate documentation or argumentation that would substantiate such a strong assertion. It may be that Smith's desire to critique the “new perspective on Paul” has led him to assert more than the evidence allows. For example, in 1 Cor 7:17–24 Paul instructs the Corinthian Christ-followers to remain in the social situation in which they found themselves when they were called. This passage has significant soteriological implications and calls into question this component of Smith's argument. He asserts that the calling in view in 1 Cor 7:20 is not soteriological but he offers no argument for why this view should be accepted (p. 181 n. 13). While it is possible to argue that Paul's previous existence and its relation to his Jewish identity have been reprioritized, it is too strong to argue that Paul has parted ways with his Jewish identity. In Rom 11:1, Paul declares that he is “an Israelite” and “a member of the tribe of Benjamin.” Smith does not address this verse in relation to the continuing significance of Paul's Jewish identity (p. 217 n. 167), nor does Romans 9–11 figure into his argument in any significant way. The last half of the letter is vital to understanding Paul's Jewish identity and the manner in which his soteriological arguments in the first half of the letter are applied in the context of honor/shame discourse, ethnic diversity, and social identities that retain their fundamental significance “in Christ” (Rom 9:1–5; 14:1, 5; 15:7; 16:16a).

Second, Smith's argument in chapter 1 is based primarily on Second Temple texts in which the literary context is often unclear, the dating for some is an open question, and much of the Qumran material is too incomplete to serve as a useful guide for scriptural interpretation. Furthermore, it is not clear why one should employ these texts and not the "canonical" texts for comparisons with Pauline soteriology. Is it possible that a comparison with the "canonical" framework, interpreted in the context of kinship discourse, would reveal Paul as arguing in a manner somewhat more consistently within his Jewish heritage? Smith's book, however, fills a need by providing scholars and students interested in contemporary Pauline studies with a delineation of key aspects of the traditional understanding of the Augustinian-Lutheran framework for Pauline soteriology.

J. Brian Tucker

Michigan Theological Seminary, Plymouth, MI

*Law and Life: The Interpretation of Leviticus 18:5 in Early Judaism and in Paul.* By Preston M. Sprinkle. WUNT 2/241. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008. xvi + 244 pp., \$110.00 paper.

In this slightly revised form of his dissertation under Simon Gathercole at Aberdeen, Preston Sprinkle seeks to explore "the theological significance of Lev 18:5 in early Judaism and in Paul, and how their respective interpretations of this passage compare with each other" (p. 1). After his introduction Sprinkle divides his study into four parts.

The introductory chapter covers the expected territory of the history of research and methodology. Sprinkle reviews selected literature in the broader category of Paul and the Law and the more specific area of research on Lev 18:5. He connects the two by stressing the key role that Lev 18:5 plays in determining Paul's view of the Law, while at the same time noting how few studies explore the use of Lev 18:5 within Second Temple Judaism on its own terms. With respect to methodology, Sprinkle offers five criteria for determining allusions to Lev 18:5: (1) verbal correspondence (are there at least two elements of Lev 18:5 present?); (2) another source (is the proposed allusion closer to another text?); (3) contextual parallels (are there other words from the context of Lev 18:5 elsewhere in the passage?); (4) recurrence (is there a clear allusion to Lev 18:5 elsewhere in the same document?); and (5) syntactical tension (has the author adopted Lev 18:5 without changing the wording and thus creating syntactical tension with its new context?). These criteria enable Sprinkle to distinguish between discussions of the larger concept of "law" and "life" and specific allusions to Lev 18:5.

In part 1 (chap. 2) Sprinkle examines the use of Lev 18:5 within the OT itself. Within its original context in the Hebrew Bible Lev 18:5 is an exhortation to both the Israelites and resident aliens to perform all the laws of the holiness code (Leviticus 17–26); the result of doing so is "life" (i.e. experiencing the covenantal blessings in the land). Sprinkle identifies three clear allusions to Lev 18:5 in Ezek 20:11, 13, 21, as well as additional ones in Ezekiel 18 and 33. From these allusions Sprinkle concludes that Ezekiel "did not believe that Israel was capable of meeting the conditional demands of Lev 18:5; life and obedience to the 'statutes and judgments' will be elicited from the nation through divine agency" (p. 40). A clear allusion to Lev 18:5 is also detected in Neh 9:29, but Sprinkle admits it is difficult to determine whether the language comes directly from Lev 18:5 or has been mediated by Ezekiel 20. As a result, Sprinkle suggests that by this point Lev 18:5 has become a "common stock" phrase. The chapter concludes with an examination of these same texts in the LXX, noting that the LXX of Lev 18:5 clearly portrays life as a result of obedience to the commandments.

Part 2 (chaps. 3–7) examines allusions/citations in Jewish literature from 200 BC to AD 100. There are three identified in the Qumran literature: two in the *Damascus Document* (CD III, 15–16; 4Q266) and another in the *Words of the Luminaries* (4Q504). In the former the “statutes and rules” of Lev 18:5 have been transformed to refer to the specific *halachah* of the Qumran community by which both the individual and community may gain eschatological life. The latter presents Lev 18:5 as “an offer of life forfeited through the rebellion of Israel, but still capable of being met through renewed obedience to the law” (p. 85). The allusion to Lev 18:5 in *Psalms of Solomon* 14:2–3 reveals that the author views eschatological life as being conditioned upon obedience to the law. When Philo cites Lev 18:5 in *De Congressu* 86, he portrays “true life” as “a state of existence attained as a result of virtuous behavior which . . . includes the progress through the encyclical education” (p. 114). The citation of Lev 18:5 in Pseudo-Philo’s *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* 23:10 is more complicated, since the citation presents “future life” as dependent upon the obedience of the nation. However, this conclusion conflicts with the larger emphasis of Pseudo-Philo’s work that God will be merciful to Israel despite her disobedience because of his faithfulness to the Abrahamic covenant.

Part 3 (chaps. 8–9) explores Paul’s citations of Lev 18:5 in Gal 3:12 and Rom 10:5. By pairing Lev 18:5 with Hab 2:4 in Gal 3:11–12, Paul presents these two OT texts as antithetical soteriologies, “two different ways to escape the covenantal curse and attain the blessing of life” (p. 140). The crux of the contrast is between divine agency exercised through the death of Christ (Hab 2:4) and human agency that cannot rescue from the curse of the Law (Lev 18:5). A similar antithesis is present in Rom 10:5, where Lev 18:5 is contrasted with Deut 30:12–14. Paul finds Lev 18:5 inadequate for achieving life because it depends on human agency, while a Christological reworking of Deut 30:12–14 reveals that life is “brought near through the saving message of Christ” (p. 190).

Part 4 (chap. 10) concludes by comparing Second Temple interpretations of Lev 18:5 and drawing implications for Paul’s understanding of the Law. Both Paul and these Second Temple Jewish authors understood Lev 18:5 to refer to eschatological life, though many of the documents reveal an already/not yet dynamic that connects the present and the future. The contrast between divine and human agency in Paul reveals a noticeable difference with his Second Temple Jewish contemporaries, who emphasized a combination of divine and human agency as the means to life. While there are similarities between Paul and his Jewish contemporaries regarding “the necessity of obedience for final salvation,” it is crucial to “distinguish between the *demand* for obedience evinced in Paul and his contemporaries, and the *source* and formal *cause* of obedience in each corpus” (p. 202). As a result, Sprinkle, although acknowledging some helpful contributions, rejects the alternative understanding of Jewish and Pauline soteriology proposed by the New Perspective for three reasons. First, obeying the law cannot be restricted to “staying in” the covenant; entrance into the covenant (at least among some Jewish sects) depended on obedience as well. Second, Paul’s emphasis on divine agency in contrast to human agency reveals more discontinuity between Paul and early Judaism than the New Perspective recognizes. Third, the New Perspective fails to appreciate Paul’s Christological re-assessment of the Law’s failure to bring life and his conclusion that the human plight was so bleak that it required “a paradigm of deliverance that circumvents the Deuteronomic contours of Lev 18:5” (p. 206).

There is much to commend in this monograph. Sprinkle helpfully situates each allusion/citation of Lev 18:5 in the context of each work, enabling him to identify how it functions in the document. His narrow set of criteria enables him to helpfully distinguish between Second Temple texts that discuss the larger concept of “law and life” from those that specifically interact with Lev 18:5. While recognizing a place for exploring how (or whether) an original audience would have understood an allusion to Lev 18:5, Sprinkle’s author and text-centered approach helpfully focuses the attention on the

Jewish and Pauline understanding of Lev 18:5. The result is a fruitful comparison that helps to undermine the unfortunate hegemony that the New Perspective view of Second Temple Judaism has produced in much of the academy.

Aside from the occasional interpretive decision here and there and a few typographical errors, there is one area where the monograph could have been tightened—the explicit use of the methodology. After explicitly working through the criteria for the first citations/allusions in Ezekiel 20, Sprinkle largely uses the criteria implicitly, forcing the reader to determine which of the criteria beyond verbal correspondence validate the citation/allusion. On a related note, the way in which Sprinkle presents criteria two through five gives the impression that Lev 18:5 is the text against which every potential citation/allusion is compared. Yet at several points Sprinkle openly acknowledges that the citation/allusion of Lev 18:5 is mediated through another text such as Ezekiel 20 or Nehemiah 9. This slight dissonance could have been avoided by explicitly acknowledging this possibility in the description of the methodology.

These minor quibbles notwithstanding, Sprinkle is to be commended for making a valuable contribution to our understanding of how Lev 18:5 was understood in Second Temple Judaism and the light it sheds on Paul's use of the same text in his own writings.

Matthew S. Harmon  
Grace Theological Seminary, Winona Lake, IN

*Unlocking Romans: Resurrection and the Justification of God.* By J. R. Daniel Kirk. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008, xiv + 245 pp., \$32.00 paper.

While the “New” Perspective on Paul has been variously tempered in recent years, monographs continue to emerge that take on board significant dimensions of this multifarious view of Paul and the Judaism(s) with which he broke. Kirk's energetic and fascinating project is a revised doctoral dissertation written under Richard Hays and is one such example. The book's main influences have been Hays and N. T. Wright (contra, in particular and repeatedly, Francis Watson and Douglas Moo), though Kirk frequently seeks to align his reading of Paul with that of more traditional Paulinists Geerhardus Vos, Herman Ridderbos, and Richard Gaffin. Kirk's thesis is that the hermeneutical key to Romans is resurrection, through which Paul reinterprets the stories of Israel *en route* to demonstrating God's faithfulness to his promises to ethnic Israel. The bulk of the book is a trek through Romans with eyes peeled for the motif of resurrection.

Chapter 1 paves the way for the study by arguing that the God of Romans must not be thought of in overly Hellenized abstractions but rather, quite particularly, as the covenant God of Israel. Romans must therefore be understood as theodicy—specifically, as an effort to show that Israel's God has not been unfaithful to his people in spite of widespread Jewish rejection of Jesus as Messiah. Chapter 2 examines resurrection in the intertestamental Jewish literature, concluding that resurrection functions in these texts to give hope to the persecuted faithful that one day “the world will be set to rights” (p. 32).

In chapter 3 Kirk moves into Romans, beginning with a discussion of 1:1–7 and 15:12 and seeing these as hermeneutically significant bookends to Romans, both of which speak of Christ's resurrection lordship. Chapter 4 moves on to Rom 4:13–25 after first asserting the “ultimate goal” of Romans 3 to be “a redefinition of the people of God” (p. 57), arguing that Paul's discussion of Abraham shows “that both Jews and Gentiles are included in the family of Abraham based on resurrection faith” (p. 81). Romans 5:9–10

is next (chap. 5), in which Kirk understands Paul to be reinterpreting the final judgment through the lens of resurrection. Chapter 6 argues that Rom 5:12–8:11 replaces the law as that which gives life with the work of the resurrected Christ. The next chapter deals with the remainder of Romans 8, seeing Christ's resurrection as the inauguration of the Jewish eschatological hope of a new creation. Crucial to Kirk's thesis is Rom 10:6–13, discussed in chapter 8, as Paul is shown to read Israel's Scriptures (particularly Deuteronomy 30) in light of Christ's resurrection. Chapter 9 explores ethnic Israel's "life from the dead" in Rom 11:15, and the closing exegetical chapter identifies and analyzes resurrection in 13:11 and 14:9.

A final chapter, "Reading with the Apostle," brings theological synthesis as Kirk proposes a reading of Paul described as appropriately apocalyptic while at the same time thoroughly Christologically circumscribed. This includes a discussion of the relation of his thesis to justification, particularly the currently much-debated question of what remains future in Pauline justification.

Kirk's book has many strengths. His writing is clear and moves along at a good clip without becoming bogged down, even at texts crucial to his argument. He reiterates his central theses time and again in a way that keeps both him and his reader on track, one eye ever on the forest even as he tackles the thorniest of trees. Secondary literature is appropriately consulted yet without letting the footnotes balloon out of hand. An irenic tone throughout—not a foregone conclusion in current Paul studies—is refreshing. The continued recovery of the importance to Paul of Jew-Gentile issues remains timely, and the sustained concluding reflection on the need for a renewed unity in today's fragmented church is a word in season to us all. The self-conscious attempt to read Paul in historically sensitive first-century (and not sixteenth- or twentieth-century) categories is a salutary reminder to us all, especially those of us who cherish what was recovered in the Reformation. Above all, Kirk has put forth an intriguing thesis regarding resurrection in Romans, filling a lacuna in Pauline theology in general and Romans study in particular.

It is just here, however, that the first of two red flags is raised. For while Kirk's study of resurrection certainly unearths a sorely neglected dimension to Romans, it is difficult to escape the sense that he has overpressed his argument. On a macro-level, how clarifying is it to proclaim resurrection to be the interpretative key to Romans (e.g. pp. 33–34) when this entails largely ignoring Rom 1:18–4:8? While previous generations have over-centralized these chapters, the relative inconsequentiality of resurrection in these chapters has not sufficiently sobered Kirk's claim to have unlocked Romans with this hermeneutical key. On a micro-level, Kirk's exegesis is at times strained. Is "the one who is righteous by faith" of Hab 2:4 (pp. 47–48) or the "one who has died" of Rom 6:7 (p. 113) really referring to Jesus? Is the "life" of 8:2 transparently "resurrection life" (p. 127)?

A similar imbalance occurs, second, in Kirk's explication of the "gospel." On the one hand, his emphases are most welcome. He reminds us that for Paul the gospel is not merely a conscience-alleviating salve for the soul but necessarily includes the good news that Christ has been raised from the dead as Lord over all. Again, however, too much is left behind in making his case, and while he identifies legitimate neglects in evangelical Paul scholarship, Kirk's cure, if swallowed, will leave us worse off than the disease. With the focus on solution to the neglect of plight, sin becomes strangely muted, mentioned only rarely (pp. 69, 76–77, 104–5, 207, 222). We must be careful not to ask Kirk to do something outside the scope of his project; his is a book on resurrection in Romans, not a systematic theology. Yet the proliferated discussions of the "gospel" warrant a more penetrating delineation of precisely what it is that resurrection (Christ's and ours) reverses. It seems reductionistic to describe the gospel as good news that God has raised Jesus in accord with God's promises to Israel, promises fulfilled in a church consisting

of both Jews and Gentiles (e.g. pp. 38, 45, 130, 163–69, 206, 217). All this is true enough, and wonderful, but only “good news” to those who acknowledge their treasonous rebellion against God, divest themselves of all self-resourced efforts at partial recompense, and look in trusting faith to Christ. It is in frank and painful view of our wickedness, a plight resolved as divine favor is appropriated solely through faith, that we can now truly live out (for instance) the ethnic openness of God’s mercy.

The problematic nature of these imbalances funnels into theological distortions at various points. Kirk’s explications of the final judgment, for example, frequently obscures soteriological lines in a way that comes perilously close, in its otherwise laudable underscoring of the necessity of a transformed life, to softening the absolute gratuity of divine approbation in Paul’s gospel (pp. 130, 204, 226). The crucifixion, despite an attempt to alleviate this concern (p. 45 n. 57), is unavoidably muted in the hermeneutically controlling fixation on the resurrection; might we not assimilate a rejuvenated appreciation of the resurrection while duly remembering that, for instance, Paul came to Corinth intent to preach nothing but Christ and him *crucified*? And historically, Kirk falls prey to the epidemic of Luther-persecution that has become a veritable initiation rite into the magisterium of NT studies, trotting out the usual caricatures of the reformer and his “abstract” theologizing (pp. 3–4; cf. pp. 7, 10).

Has Kirk “unlocked Romans” for us? His fascinating study certainly gives us one useful and neglected key for unlocking many doors that line the Romans hallway. Yet to speak of resurrection as *the* hermeneutical key creates just the kind of overly controlling single lens Kirk eschews in past generations’ readings of Romans through the single lens of justification by faith. Chock full of illuminating insights and well-argued exegetical proposals, *Unlocking Romans* ultimately fails to provide a cumulatively convincing alternative reading of Romans, pushing an otherwise helpful thesis too far and distorting several crucial elements of Paul’s thought as a result.

Dane Ortlund  
Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL

*Colossians: A Commentary.* By Jerry L. Sumney. NTL. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008, xxvii + 305 pp., \$49.95.

A further installment in the New Testament Library series is a commentary on Colossians by J. L. Sumney. Sumney is well known for his work on the Pauline letters, especially Paul’s opponents, and he here offers a cogent summary of his thoughts on Colossians.

On introductory matters, Sumney recognizes that Colossians seems both continuous and discontinuous with the language and theological themes of the undisputed Pauline letters. However, he is led by the portrait of Paul as the authoritative and trustworthy apostle whose sufferings appear to fit with Jewish and Christian martyrologies to infer that the letter was written shortly after Paul’s death by an associate. That commends a date around AD 62–64, which also explains why Colossians draws so heavily on Philemon. In the absence of Pauline authenticity the intended audience for Colossians becomes uncertain. He doubts that the Colossians were its actual intended addressees; instead (following Eduard Lohse) he suggests that it was addressed more generally to the churches of Asia Minor. Still, Sumney thinks that the matters precipitating the composition of the letter were quite specific. The contents refer to Jewish mystical teachers who regarded certain regulations as a means to attaining heavenly visions of angelic worship, and they were urging others to share the same experience. The author of

Colossians rejects those who insist that such experiences are mandatory and regards their teaching as a violation of a central tenet of the gospel.

Sumney makes several observations about the theology of Colossians. On soteriology, he identifies the main themes as the forgiveness of sins, participation in Christ, and release from the powers, which requires living lives consistent with the character of God. On Christology, he notices the emphasis on Jesus' exaltation and how Christ is identified with God more fully than in the undisputed letters. On eschatology, Sumney recognizes the heavily realized element, but he believes that the world's refusal to recognize Jesus' lordship requires a future eschatological act. In Colossians the *parousia* is certain, but not immediately expected. On spirituality, in contrast to Greco-Roman cultivations of human-divine relations, the author of Colossians understands spirituality to begin with believers being raised with Christ, which is then expressed in their manner of life and not in other-worldly experiences.

The commentary itself includes introductory remarks, a translation complete with text-critical comments, and a verse-by-verse exegesis of the text. Rather than summarize the whole commentary, I will mention the salient features of Sumney's comments on key passages. On the Colossian hymn (1:15–20), he regards the unit as liturgical though not necessarily hymnic. Sumney supports a two-part structure based around verses 15 and 18b, identifies a tacit critique of Roman propaganda, and sees support for the assertion in verses 13–14 that salvation resides in the kingdom of Christ and that the recipients already possess the benefits of redemption and forgiveness in Christ. For Sumney, the rest of the letter to the Colossians engages the implications of the poem.

Sumney regards 1:20–23 as a rhetorical *partitio* containing the main themes of the letter, namely, (1) that the readers are already forgiven and holy; (2) that they must remain faithful to the gospel that they have received; and (3) that Paul is a reliable preacher of the authentic gospel. With regard to 1:24 on Paul filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions, Sumney acknowledges that Paul's sufferings are not expiatory, and he interprets Paul's afflictions in light of the noble-death tradition reflected in Greco-Roman literature (e.g. 4 Macc 6:28–29; 17:21–22). Thus Paul's sufferings are vicarious in the sense that they provide an example that demonstrates the value of the gospel and they exhort readers to maintain his teaching in the face of opposition. The obvious problem here is: how does Paul's vicarious and mimetic sufferings fill up what is lacking in Christ's sufferings? Are Christ's sufferings any less vicarious and any less exemplary than Paul's? I would maintain that the apocalyptic interpretation of 1:24 pertaining to Paul absorbing more than his fair share of the messianic woes is probably more on target.

In regards to Col 2:12 and the "circumcision of Christ," I think Sumney is correct that this does not refer to the death of Christ and instead designates the eschatological event of initiation into Christ with overtones of baptism. In Col 2:14 he identifies the *cheirophon* as "the record of sins that is kept in heaven," and he translates the dative prepositional phrase *en autō* at the end of verse 15 as "in him" (i.e. Christ) rather than "in it" (i.e. the cross), arguing that it functions as an *inclusio* with 2:6.

The enigmatic reference to the "worship of angels" in 2:18 is understood as a subjective genitive indicating worship performed by the angels, which the teachers want to impose in church services. I would point out, following Loren Stuckenbruck, that the worship performed by the angels is significant only because the angels themselves are significant, and a seer may venerate the angel who leads him to behold the angelic liturgy as much as the liturgy itself; thus it is possible to draw the objective and subjective genitive interpretations together. Sumney believes that the word *embateuō* in the verse is borrowed from the broader culture of mysticism, but that tells us relatively little about the actual content of the teachers' practices or experiences.

In chapter 3, Sumney suggests that the ethics of Colossians grow out of the believers' identification with Christ in baptism and the letter exhibits elements of both

personal and corporate morality. The central themes that Sumney finds in the ethics of Colossians are life in Christ and life under Christ's Lordship. There is a lengthy and stimulating excursus on "Reading the Household Code" where Sumney places Col 3:18–4:1 in the literary and cultural context of Christians in the Greco-Roman world. He concludes that the Colossian *Haustafel* "instructs church members about how to behave in the public eye so that the church's life (and that of its members) is sustainable" (p. 237). He also detects a "hidden transcript" in the code whereby certain elements are reinterpreted and gain new significance such as slaves submitting to masters, but as heirs of God.

At the end of Colossians, Sumney thinks that the author addresses the letter to the churches of Laodicea that occasionally meet in Nympha's house. Regarding Nympha in 4:15, he sees her position as "evidence that women held leadership positions in the Pauline churches even after Paul's death" (p. 278). Yet this may go beyond the evidence itself, as Nympha's precise role is nowhere defined.

Amidst the recent surge in Colossian commentaries (e.g. McL. Wilson, Still, MacDonald, Thompson, Witherington, Talbert, Moo, and forthcoming from Beale and Bird), Sumney has written an intermediate-level commentary that is a helpful guide to the argument of the letter and well worth consulting in a study of this magnificent epistle.

Michael F. Bird

Highland Theological College/UHI Millennium Institute, Dingwall, Scotland

*The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon.* By Douglas J. Moo. PNTC. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008, xvi + 471 pp., \$44.00.

For some years, whenever I taught Greek exegesis, I would work through Colossians with the students because I did the same as a seminary student at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, where Douglas Moo taught at the time. I discovered in the preface to Moo's commentary on Colossians and Philemon that he also worked through Colossians in his first Greek exegesis course during his student days at Trinity (with Murray Harris). Pedagogical traditions persist through the generations. As a result, I read Moo's commentary with an "instructor's eye" and came away with many positive impressions (more on this later).

As for introductory matters on Colossians, Moo's work recognizes the strength of Clinton Arnold's proposal on the identity of the "Colossian heresy," which postulates that the false teaching was a combination of "Phrygian folk belief, local folk Judaism and Christianity" (p. 57). Moo's adoption of this understanding places him squarely in the "syncretism" view of the Colossian heresy (though with folk religion, not Gnosticism, as a main source) and away from the more "strictly Jewish" view that held sway prior to the start of this decade (e.g. in the commentaries of F. F. Bruce and James D. G. Dunn). While this position, which is becoming increasingly popular, almost "dictates" a few of the exegetical decisions Moo makes (e.g. the "worship of angels" in Col 2:18 means "worship offered to angels," not "worship offered by angels"), in a few ways, it enables Moo to fashion fresh arguments for old interpretive options that merit reconsideration. For example, when he opts for the "elementary forces of the world" interpretation of the *stoicheia* in Col 2:8 (as opposed to the "elementary principles" or "spiritual forces" interpretation), he draws from features common in ancient folk religion—the worship of earth, water, air, fire, and of luminaries in the sky—as part of his reasoning (p. 191). Moo brings the argument for Pauline authorship up to date by critiquing authors, like Raymond E. Brown, who regard the alleged pseudonymity of

Colossians and other deuterio-Pauline epistles as a “transparent literary device” (p. 39). Moo favors a Roman imprisonment as the place of writing for Colossians but admits certainty is impossible (p. 46), especially in light of the considerations favoring an Ephesian imprisonment recently raised by the study of Philemon (e.g. J. A. Fitzmyer’s 2000 Anchor Bible commentary). On this matter, Moo helpfully directs the reader to *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity*, vol. 8 (1998), which contains recently published papyri pertaining to the distances runaway slaves would go, a pertinent issue relating to the question of Paul’s location.

As for introductory matters in Philemon, Moo leans slightly toward the traditional “runaway slave” hypothesis (the traditional view) in contrast to the more recent “dispute mediation” hypothesis (pp. 368–69). However, since Moo believes certainty is impossible, he refrains from allowing this assumption to play any role in his commentary (p. 369). I thought Moo’s arguments for the traditional view were strong enough to merit greater certainty than he claims, but I found his exercise in careful self-restraint admirable.

Concerning Moo’s more concrete observations and exegetical conclusions, the following random list of highlights are noteworthy. (1) Moo is sensitive to, and notes, subtle OT “echoes” in places like Col 1:6 (Genesis’s call to “be fruitful and multiply”) and Col 1:13 (Exodus’s declaration of “redemption” and “transference”; pp. 88, 103). (2) He calls the unrestrained scholarly speculation about the “Christ-hymn” in Col 1:15–20 a “veritable academic cottage industry” (p. 109)—a delightful turn of a phrase. (3) Moo refuses to “demythologize” the “powers” in Col 1:16 and Col 2:10, 15, so that they are reduced to meaning “societal institutions,” as in the work of Walter Wink (p. 65, 123). (4) Moo (like Harris, unlike O’Brien) has no qualms about saying that Paul “exaggerates” the reach of the gospel in Col 1:6 and Col 1:23 (pp. 89, 147). (5) He argues that the “if you continue” clause in Col 1:23 is an expression of confidence, not of doubt (p. 144). (6) Paul’s reference to “circumcision” in Col 2:11 is “casual” (p. 52), “incidental” (p. 57), and not directly addressing the false teaching at Colossae (p. 197). (7) Moo reads Col 2:16 as calling into question Sabbath observance as a requirement for the NT believer (p. 222). (8) A noted complementarian, Moo is quite sensitive to egalitarian concerns when he acknowledges that the call to wifely submission in Col 3:18 may take different forms in different cultures and that the NT teaching about oneness in Christ “sets a trajectory that leads to a more equal sharing of all dimensions of the marriage relationship” (p. 301). (9) He devotes ample space to the question of whether Col 3:22–4:1 and Philemon 16 endorse or undermine the institution of slavery (pp. 296–97, 308, 370–77). He concludes that these passages undermine the status quo and stops short of condemning slavery outright only because “Paul, and other New Testament writers, did not always recognize all the implications of the theological principles that they themselves enunciated” (p. 377). (10) Moo believes Paul in Philemon 16 does hint at a request for Onesimus’s manumission (p. 424).

Some observations about Moo’s style and the commentary as a pedagogical tool are in order. Moo’s commentary would serve well as a textbook for any exegesis class, as it displays the careful, even-handed exegetical reasoning that we have come to expect from him. Theological students can learn much from Moo’s logic and straight-line thinking. For example, Moo characterizes the investigation into the meaning of *stoicheia* in Col 2:8 neatly and cleanly as a balancing of lexical and contextual concerns. The “spiritual beings” view, as Moo puts it, is strong on the contextual, weak on the lexical (p. 189); conversely, the “cosmological elements” view is strong on the lexical, weak on the contextual (p. 190); the “essential principles” view, as Moo sees it, has some merits in both but suffers from a lack of qualifiers that would make the principal meaning more evident (cf. Heb 5:12; p. 192). Moo ends up choosing the “cosmological elements” view and focusing all his comments on resolving its contextual difficulties (mainly by addressing Paul’s ancient worldview).

My point here is not to commend Moo's conclusion on *stoicheia* but to point out how Moo's presentation is helpful to exegesis instructors, who want to reinforce to their students that they must always think in terms of lexical data and contextual data, as Moo clearly does. His commentary is never an encyclopedic laundry list of unrelated exegetical facts; it is always a sustained line of argument aimed at answering the central exegetical question he poses. Although Moo's commentary was not self-consciously written as an attempt to teach exegetical method by walking the reader through a specific NT book, anyone reading it will learn a good deal about how to do exegesis well, simply by "watching" Moo model it. Along these lines, Moo is also masterful at conveying just the right degree of exegetical certainty and uncertainty, whenever the "answers" are not clear cut. His commentary does provide "answers" (which is what theological students generally want), but it also counsels wisely about how firmly or how lightly one should hold these "answers" (which is what theological students generally need, whether they realize it or not).

I conclude with some reflections on the strength of this latest contribution to Colossians and Philemon studies (and any weakness I perceive is simply "wishing for more"). The editor's preface says the Pillar commentary series seeks "a blend of rigorous exegesis and exposition, with an eye alert to both biblical theology and the contemporary relevance of the Bible, without confusing the commentary and the sermon" (p. viii). While Moo's skills as an exegete are beyond question, he is quite adept at "interdisciplinary" theological writing, matching the concerns of the ancient text with concerns of the modern church.

In addition to Moo's competent treatment of the slavery and marriage issues I mentioned above, there are a few other places where Moo (often, but not always, in the footnotes) hints at where the significant connections with the contemporary world lie. (1) While discussing the cosmic Christology of Col 1:15–20, Moo addresses the inappropriateness of drawing ecumenical, unity-of-all-religions conclusions (p. 64). (2) While discussing cosmic reconciliation in Col 1:20, Moo sees a mandate for social justice and a biblically oriented environmentalism (p. 137). (3) While discussing the slave-master teaching in Col 3:22, Moo rightfully addresses its applicability toward employer-employee situations (p. 308). Brief as these types of "crossover" comments must be, they are nonetheless helpful to pastors and theological students hungry to integrate their biblical knowledge with their mission to the contemporary world.

Having said this, I nonetheless found myself wishing for more of these kinds of insights from Moo's work, without, of course, "confusing the commentary with the sermon." As I mentioned earlier, this "wishing for more" is about as close to a weakness as I could find. All in all, Moo's Pillar NT Commentary on Colossians and Philemon is first-rate. I echo the words of his editor, D. A. Carson: "I shall not be surprised if it becomes a 'standard' among pastors for many years to come."

Frank Chan  
Nyack College, Nyack, NY

*James*. By Craig L. Blomberg and Mariam J. Kamell. Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008, 280 pp., \$24.99.

This is the first volume to appear in this highly anticipated commentary series edited by Clinton Arnold (Talbot School of Theology). Generated by the desire to supply ministers and church leaders who have a working knowledge of Greek with a "one-stop" resource that includes the essentials for preaching and teaching on the text, this

compact but hardbound resource combines a description of the flow of the author's thought with an explanation of relevant Greek syntax. Each section provides an overview of the literary context for the passage at hand, a carefully constructed statement of the main idea of the passage, an original translation, a graphic and syntactical identification of the relationships between the clauses and phrases (a modification of Fee's "Sentence Flow"), comments on the structure, an exegetical outline, an explanation of the text that focuses on meaning with supplementary comment from other commentaries and also textual commentary in the footnotes, all concluded by a generous portion applying the crucial theology of the passage to the contemporary—primarily American—context. That is a lot to do for every passage; yet, at least in this showcase volume on James, the task is pulled off expertly.

Blomberg, Distinguished Professor of New Testament at Denver Seminary, known more for his work in the Gospels and the NT generally, applies his steady hand to James. As he explains in the preface, since he has used James as the primary text in an upper-level Greek class for over twenty years, he has in fact studied James "more intensively than any other book of the Bible" (p. 13). Kamell, a former student of Blomberg who has been involved in the project while completing her Ph.D. on the epistle of James at the University of St. Andrews, adds freshness of thought and awareness of current issues in James. Though Kamell originally wrote the "Explanation of the Text" sections while Blomberg wrote the others, a thorough give-and-take editing process has made the book a truly collaborative product. The end result reveals that they make a good team.

In preparation for this review, I decided to use this text in my own Greek exegesis course at the graduate school of Cincinnati Christian University—the kind of course from which it was born—to see how helpful it would be and how it would match up with the other six or seven major commentaries the students were consulting. My general conclusion is that this is exactly the kind of commentary that both Greek students and ministers with minimally retained knowledge of Greek will love.

Now to the matter of the commentary's treatment of the epistle of James. It begins with a stronger than normal introduction for a commentary of this sort, makes ample use of Greek syntax without cluttering, makes good decisions at many junctures, displays that the authors are well-informed about key discussion points in James, produces a couple of original interpretative suggestions, and contains a couple of interpretations that might be improved.

The introduction starts with a substantial overview of efforts to discern the overall structure of James with a view to arriving at a workable outline. Dibelius's form-critical approach dismissing any authorial intentionality based on the numerous catchword links in James is respectfully introduced (but not criticized) before concentrating on the approaches of Kistemaker, Martin, Johnson, Davids, Wall, and the more recent Greco-Roman rhetorical analysis of Mark Taylor and George Guthrie ("The Structure of James," *CBQ* 68 [2006] 681–705), who all recognize intentional thematic purpose to James's structure. Wisely admitting that "major themes remain intertwined at several places" (p. 26), Blomberg and Kamell land on a consensus that James opens with a long introduction (chap. 1) and short closing (5:19–20), encasing an expansion of three topics: Riches and Poverty (2:1–26); Wisdom and Speech (3:1–4:12); and Trials and Temptations (4:13–5:18).

Other introductory matters are handled likewise with respectful nods to those who have done significant work. Hartin's analysis, for example, is duplicated to arrive at a likely dating of James in the "mid-to-late 40s" (p. 30). Blomberg and Kamell determine from information in James itself (the mention of early and late rain in 5:7) that the letter was written to Jewish Christian congregations around Syria, many of whom were "day-laborers," a category contemporized as current "migrant workers in North America."

The letter fits in the category of paraenetic wisdom literature. The introduction, lastly, gently dismisses those, even as recently as Nienhuis (*Not by Paul Alone* [Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007]), who believe James to be pseudonymous.

The handling of Greek syntax is one of the singular assets of the commentary. Conventional terminology is used but is also explained, as in the comment on 1:11 that “James uses four gnomic aorists, which portray timeless truths rather than past events” (p. 56) or on 1:1 when the Granville Sharp rule is invoked and briefly explained (p. 47). Readers will see mention of such things as genitive of reference (p. 70), objective (pp. 70, 89) and partitive (p. 75) genitive, modal (p. 71) and causal (p. 152) participle, as well as middle voice (p. 73) and perfect tense (p. 223).

Good decisions are made at key points. In 1:25, the “law of liberty” is determined to be the “gospel message” (p. 91). In 2:1, “the Glory” is a reference to Jesus as the “*shekinah* glory of God” (p. 106). In 2:7, “the good name by which you have been called” is viewed as an allusion to being baptized into the name of Christ (p. 115). In 2:8, the “royal law” is concluded to be “the Torah as fulfilled and expanded by Christ” (p. 116). In 2:14, the word “save” in James is recognized to be “the entire process that begins with initial faith in Christ” (p. 129). In 3:12, it is observed that “our tongues, which have been natural conduits of evil ever since the fall, cannot produce good on their own” (p. 162). In 3:18, it is concluded that “peace is the ultimate goal of wisdom” (p. 177). In 4:1, it is recognized that the “wars” and “fightings” amount to “verbal sparring” (p. 187).

Blomberg and Kamell display that they are well informed on many matters peculiar to the interpretation of James. A brief reference in 2:2 to the church-setting or judicial-setting option is followed up by an in-depth, separate discussion of the matter that agrees with the growing scholarly consensus that it is most likely judicial (pp. 107, 110–11). After noting that the expression in 2:16 “Go in peace” means “good-bye,” the authors follow with a discussion of whether it is more outrageous if this is intended in the middle voice or the passive voice (p. 131). The word “workless” in Greek (*ἀργή*) is recognized to be a pun on the word “work” (*ἔργον*) in 2:20 (pp. 135–36).

Probably the most original interpretation in this commentary involves the notorious matter of the interlocutor’s statement in 2:18. After discussing the various options that have already been suggested so far, the authors put forward as the “best option” that the short clause (“You have faith and I have works”) is the statement of the interlocutor, coming not from the perspective of author (James) but from the interlocutor (p. 134). Thus, “you have faith” refers to the interlocutor and “I have works” refers to James, making the point that “the objector sees both faith and works as two separate but equally valid methods of showing genuine Christianity” (p. 134). This approach does satisfy many of the issues here, but it will remain to be seen if future interpreters become convinced.

Suggestions for improved interpretation are few but important. Regarding the “implanted word” in 1:21, Blomberg and Kamell could have pressed the fact that, though this is the gospel, it is now viewed as innate (natural, integrated) within the readers’ new Christian lives, just as much as when God breathed life into Adam at creation. Regarding “blaspheme the good name” in 2:7, they show no awareness that this may well be done by means of dragging the poor “Christians” into court and fraudulently making accusations against them. Regarding the mystifying “quotation” of Scripture in 4:5, they seem to have no knowledge of the valid suggestion of Laws in her commentary thirty years ago that this may likely refer to Ps 42:2 (“My soul yearns for God”) or Ps 84:2 (“My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the Lord”).

Despite one small concern that the Greek syntactical comments seem to go away in chapter 5, the strength of this commentary is the consistency of approach to each section. Students and pastors will find what they need each time in each passage.

Added to this strength are “In Depth” essays at crucial points, posed as questions: “Are the Rich in 1:10–11 Christians?” (p. 57); “Is this a Worship Service or Christian Court?” regarding 2:2–4 (pp. 110–11); “Were the Teachers only Men?” regarding 3:1 (pp. 154–55); “Does Wisdom Equal the Spirit in James?” regarding 3:13–18 (pp. 178–79).

This is an excellent commentary in what should prove to be a useful series format. Like no other commentary available, it compliments what I—and I am sure many others—are trying to teach serious students of the Bible to do in exegesis. It does this without burying them in an avalanche of information they do not need in order to preach and teach in a local church setting. In particular, my class came to rely on the pinpoint discussion of Greek syntax in which Greek exegetical commentaries twice the size never engage, at least in the terminology they are trying to learn (i.e. as in Wallace and other advanced grammars). If the series remains consistent with the work of Blomberg and Kamell, future volumes will surely find welcome slots in Greek exegetical courses and on the shelves of resourceful ministers and church leaders who desire to put their seminary training to good use week after week.

William R. Baker  
Cincinnati Christian University—Graduate School, Cincinnati, OH

*2 Peter and Jude.* By Robert Harvey and Philip H. Towner. IVPNTC. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2009, 249 pp, \$20.00.

This commentary experienced one of the disasters that an editor fears: the death of an author. Robert Harvey had mostly finished writing the commentary on 2 Peter when he died. After receiving a request to help, Philip Towner finished the 2 Peter section and wrote all of the Jude section. Unfortunately, that means the book does not reflect two authors who were consulting with one another during the whole process but rather reflects one author preserving the legacy of another author he did not work with previously and then going on to add his own independent section. This sad fact becomes clear when one reads the book.

2 Peter comes first, and Harvey lets us know right away on the first page of the 14-page introduction that there is no reason to question traditional authorship. While he does discuss (and dismiss) the theories of Richard J. Bauckham and David G. Meade, he seems unaware that Origen and Calvin, among others, struggled with the stylistic differences between 1 and 2 Peter and that it had quite a difficult route in making it into the canon. An author certainly has the right to come to conservative conclusions, but those conclusions appear suspect when there seems to be little acknowledgement of the issues that have caused so many to struggle over the years and when the author seems untouched by and unsympathetic with the reasons that have made others come to different conclusions. Other concerns include: (1) that the discussion of theological themes is decidedly limited, focusing only on theology proper; (2) that the four pages of the introduction on the false teachers are mostly taken up with the denunciation of what the author considers modern false teachers rather than with an analysis of those in 2 Peter; and (3) that the relationship between 2 Peter and Jude is not discussed in a significant manner.

The rest of the 2 Peter commentary (116 pages long) is usually a decent devotional commentary, at times drawing from authors of the 1800s but also referring to contemporary literature. However, Harvey does not usually refer to the more recent literature on 2 Peter, with Bauckham being the most recent that I noticed (although some more

recent works not focusing on 2 Peter are cited, such as a 1996 work of J. I. Packer). Does any of this relate to the date of Harvey's unfortunate demise? That is not clearly stated. There are some more scholarly footnotes; one wonders to what degree they are the work of Philip Towner, although it is also nowhere stated which are Towner's and which are Harvey's. The main problem with the commentary comes along with some of the references to contemporary writers. For instance, Harold L. Bussell appears to be a favorite. Yet that becomes a problem, not because of Bussell's book *per se* but because of how it is used. Bussell's list of characteristics of a cult is given in full (pp. 78–80), but the list is *uncharacteristic* of anything that 2 Peter discusses, since 2 Peter's "false teachers" were far from being legalists and their focus was certainly not on eschatology. Thus the whole section is largely irrelevant to 2 Peter and distracts one from grasping the nature of the "false teachers" whom 2 Peter was actually opposing. Such distractions do not add to the value of the work as a biblical commentary.

The Jude commentary (Philip Towner's work) is quite different. Like the commentary on 2 Peter (p. 23) a brief outline is given, but unlike the introduction to that commentary the outline is discussed (pp 173–74). Furthermore, the relationship between 2 Peter and Jude is examined, even though the issue is more pertinent to 2 Peter than to Jude (Towner makes it clear that the discussion is part of the reception history of Jude). There is an eight-page presentation of theology that, while brief as everything must be in such a commentary, covers a wide range of the theological themes in Jude. Towner is very aware of contemporary work on Jude, right up to the commentary of Ruth Anne Reese, published in 2007, with whom he takes issue on her use of "Others" for those Jude opposes; Towner prefers "neighbors" as a way of "lessening the sociological distance" (p. 161). When it comes to dating Jude, however, he declines to take a position, simply noting that Jude may have lived to AD 90. One wishes to know whether he believes it was written before or after the AD 66–70 war. Does his reference to it possibly being written in the diaspora put it after the war? This vagueness may be judicious, since if 2 Peter was written in Rome (as Harvey argues) and it was written after Jude (as Towner cogently argues), then how early would Jude have to be written to make Harvey's dating of 2 Peter viable? And why argue that Jude may have lived to AD 90 if he must have written his work 30 or 40 years earlier? The two pictures drawn by the two authors do not seem to fit together, although this is never stated.

In the commentary itself (73 pages), a significant amount of contemporary literature is cited. More importantly, there are numerous biblical references and also references to Second Temple Jewish literature. This does not make the commentary unreadable, but it does help for checking out Towner's conclusions. If one is simply interested in his exposition, the commentary reads smoothly. When it comes to controversial passages, such as Jude 19, Towner simply states that at Jude's date the canon was not a fixed entity. Towner avoids reading modern concerns back into the ancient text. All in all, this commentary is quite pleasing, although of course I do not agree with Towner on every point (would any two commentators do so?) and the nature of the series means that the comments are brief. This is not a work to consult for extensive and detailed discussion, but it serves well for a solid, brief, informed exposition.

All in all, then, this book is really two works, a conservative devotional commentary on 2 Peter joined to a brief but decent exegetical commentary on Jude. Both will serve as helpful grist for the preacher's mill (important, given that D. Stuart Briscoe and Haddon Robinson are consulting editors to the series), but it is the Jude commentary that will root the preacher deeper in the biblical text.

Peter H. Davids  
St. Stephen's University, St. Stephen, NB, Canada

*I, II, & III John: A Commentary.* By Judith M. Lieu. NTL. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008, xx + 300 pp., \$49.95.

It seems to me that the field of Johannine studies is in the midst of collapse, with the passing of Raymond Brown and with the new ideas of younger scholars such as Tom Thatcher challenging the paradigm (especially, e.g., his *Why John Wrote a Gospel: Jesus—Memory—History* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006]). In particular, the hypothetical reconstruction of the Johannine school seems to have reached a weight that the sparse evidence in the Johannine corpus can no longer bear. This impression is confirmed when the eminent Johannine scholar Judith Lieu comments in this volume on John's letters in reference to reconstructions of the "Johannine school" that "such an exercise of reconstructing a situation for the letters and then interpreting them in its light involves a degree of circularity that may prove sterile. In the commentary I argue that the letters are best understood as far as possible in their own terms with minimal reference to any proposed setting" (p. 29). This fresh approach to reading the letters unencumbered by extensive historical reconstructions is perhaps the commentary's greatest contribution. However, it is difficult at best to expunge all influence of the previous scholarly traditions while reading Lieu's work.

This is not to say that Lieu rejects any idea of a Johannine community, since she writes that "the whole strategy of the letter [1 John] is to foster a tight communal identity, to create an imagined community whose distance from 'the world' and whose adherence to all that the author represents is beyond question. . . . Yet it is impossible to determine whether that 'imagined community' took shape" and existed in any real congregation(s) (p. 7). She argues that 1 John is intended to "create a relationship" that "presupposes a particular experience of Christian teaching and familiarity with specific ('Johannine') traditions" (p. 7).

Lieu is agnostic about questions of authorship and the relationship of the author(s) to their original readers. Like most modern scholars she rejects the ancient tradition about apostolic authorship preserved in the titles of these letters. She argues that the anonymity of the author of 1 John must be respected (p. 8) and that "1 John nowhere appeals to or assumes knowledge of the Gospel [of John], and indeed that the latter seems unlikely; rather each writing is, largely independently, reworking common or shared traditions" (p. 8). She points to "consistent subtle differences of wording, inference, context, and combination even where parallels [between the Gospel and 1 John] appear close" to indicate only that both writings drew on a common earlier tradition (p. 17). She believes that "2 John is derivative from 1 John" (p. 7), but not necessarily written by the same author. She assesses 3 John to be a genuine letter and that the claim of 2 and 3 John both to be written by the elder "must initially be respected" (p. 7). The "coded" anonymity of 1 and 2 John contributes to "an integral element" of their "ability to offer and to authenticate testimony. Authority lies not in individual status or calling but in the shared giving and receiving of witness," but a sort of witness and authentication that is not based in eyewitness testimony (p. 9).

Lieu does not see the "we" in 1 John 1:1–3 in reference to a group, whether it be a group of apostolic eyewitnesses or of the alleged Johannine community; rather, she reads its force as creating "a sense of corporate unity and of continuity reaching beyond the present situation and players" (p. 39), though it is not clear how her reading would necessarily exclude reference to a definable community. She reads the prominent verbs of sense in this passage not as a claim to personal experience of the historical Jesus but as an intertextual echo of Isaiah LXX (e.g. Isa 6:10; 29:18; 42:7) or possibly of Ps 113:9–26 LXX with its mockery of the idols whose sense organs do not function. As she points out, an allusion to idols in the prologue of the letter would form a nice *inclusio* with

the otherwise enigmatic and abrupt closing statement in 1 John 5:21, "Keep yourselves from idols."

The most difficult statements in John's letters have to do with sin. 1 John 3:9 makes the provocative statement that those born of God are not able to sin, suggesting in logical terms that either no one has truly been born of God or that the sinning that cannot be done is of a very specific type. Lieu rightly warns against lifting this verse and the others on sin from their respective contexts within Johannine conceptual structures and then "seeking a theological harmonization" (p. 132). Rejecting what she describes as anthropological interpretations of the verses on sin, she rightly understands them within the framework of the Johannine dualism. "The point is unequivocal: God's presence and empowerment are antithetical to the presence of all sin" (p. 140). She concludes that 3:9 is neither an offer of false security nor a cruel rejection of the hope of having been truly born of God, but "paints for [the readers] in sharp contrasts a landscape . . . in which they know themselves to be placed, and it leaves them to determine what it means to be there" (p. 140).

However, Lieu's reading of 1 John 3:9, which rejects the sin in view there to be of any specific or limited type, at the same time maximizes its tension with 1 John 5:16–17, where she must recognize that the elder knew of sin that is "death-bound" and sin that is not. Not allowing the sin in view in 3:9 and 5:16–17 to be of a particular nature, such as that of willfully putting oneself outside of the sphere where life is granted (i.e. abiding in Christ), leaves her with few options except to conclude that "it is probably wrong to expect too rigorous a consistency." Furthermore, she argues that a focus on identifying the sin that leads to death probably misses the point of a "more celebratory affirmation" (p. 229) of how "eschatological life is made effective within the experience of the community, even while showing it is never independent of God" (p. 228).

Lieu sees 2 John as having a "close literary dependence" on 1 John as evidenced by 2 John 5–7, which functions for "their rhetorical effect in establishing sympathy and persuasion" (pp. 18, 239). This letter's major theme is instruction "on how to respond to those who may visit the community but who fail to demonstrate that their teaching is 'approved'" (p. 239). She considers the letter form of 2 John to be "a cloak" (p. 240), with its recipients, the elect lady and her children, being a fictional device well suited to the letter's purpose of delivering specific instructions to a neighboring church. Consistent with her claim to let the texts speak for themselves, Lieu resists identifying "the elder" as anyone named John, or as an officer of the church, or even as a member of a previous generation who mediated the tradition that ultimately went back to the apostles; she describes the elder only as someone of "greater age and experience" who is involved in, and who "sees himself as a focal figure in, a network of groups" (p. 241). This acknowledgment of "a network of groups" is as far as Lieu will go in discussing the existence of and the dynamics within the Johannine community.

Lieu considers 3 John to be a genuine personal note, and therefore it presents all the ambiguities that attend reading someone else's mail. However, she warns again that "it would be a mistake to allow an imagined scenario to control attention to the details of the argument" (p. 266). While other such genuine letters of the period are unearthed by "luck and the curiosity of archaeologists" (p. 283 n. 25), Lieu explains the preservation of 3 John "as much because of who he [the elder] was as of what he said," especially during the early times when the church believed the note was written by the same author of John's Gospel, the apostle John. She furthermore argues that the preservation of 3 John is due to having been physically attached to 2 John at some point in its early history, having survived at all because the elder's persuasion was effective and won out over whatever discord Diotrephes represented (p. 283). In it we have evidence of "one of the many controversies that troubled the nascent church," but she

rejects it as a foundational document of the Johannine group (pp. 283, 284). Lieu notes that 3 John shares some of the features of 2 John “but it lacks the latter’s studied anonymity” as well “as the numerous echoes of 1 John” (p. 265), and leaves the issue of the relationship of the three letters otherwise unresolved.

In this commentary Lieu achieves a fresh look at the Johannine letters in which she attempts to free them “from the shadow of the Fourth Gospel, to which they are undoubtedly related” (p. ix). While she rightly argues that interpretation must not be enslaved to reconstructed historical scenarios that exist only in the mind of modern scholars, the value of her approach will be most appreciated by those who agree with her controlling belief that the author(s) of 1, 2, and 3 John had no knowledge of the Fourth Gospel, but only of the tradition from which it independently emerged.

Karen H. Jobes

Wheaton College and Graduate School, Wheaton, IL

*1–3 John*. By Robert W. Yarbrough. BECNT. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008, xix + 434 pp., \$39.99.

Yarbrough highlights six features intended to distinguish his work on the Johannine letters from other commentaries: (1) his presupposition about the historical accuracy of Jesus’ earthly ministry; (2) his application of computer aids; (3) his additional notes dedicated to text-critical discussions; (4) his interaction with the most recent commentaries on the Johannine letters; (5) his incorporation of material from commentators of the past with the help of the *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture* (Vol. 11: *James, 1–2 Peter, 1–3 John, Jude* [ed. Gerald Bray; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000]); and (6) his consideration of culturally diverse thinking that extends beyond Western civilization (pp. ix–xiii). His distinctions are a tall order, with Yarbrough achieving primarily numbers one through four. As for numbers five and six, he favors interaction with Reformers Calvin (66 references) and Luther (23 references), and his discussions about other cultures are merely sprinkled in a little here and a little there. In fact, the subject and author indexes indicate clearly Yarbrough’s slim follow-through for numbers five and six.

Nevertheless, Yarbrough excels in meeting the expectations of the series. Like other commentaries in the Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament series, *1–3 John* blends scholarly depth, exegetical detail, and attention to critical problems (p. vii). The commentary divides into three sections: 1 John (pp. 3–325), 2 John (pp. 329–60), and 3 John (pp. 363–87), with each book being translated, interpreted exegetically with a critical eye, and discussed in a systematic manner.

The section on 1 John begins with an introduction in which Yarbrough argues for the textual certainty of the letters (pp. 3–4), apostolic authorship for the letters (pp. 5–21), a historical and geographical setting around Ephesus (pp. 16–21), a sevenfold literary structure for 1 John (pp. 21–25), and the significance of John’s letters (pp. 25–28). Consequently, Yarbrough finds “it plausible to interpret his [John’s] letters within the general time and setting ascribed to him by biblical and patristic sources” (p. 15). Immediately following this well-articulated understanding for 1 John is the exegesis of the letter.

Based upon “the divisions that came to be standard among scribal copyists through the centuries, particularly in Byzantium” (p. 21; cp. 295), Yarbrough divides 1 John into seven units of thought. These provide the major points of his detailed outline: (1) “The Central Burden: God is Light” (1:1–2:6; pp. 29–92); (2) “Primary Commandment: Embody

the Age-Old Message" (2:7-17; pp. 93-138); (3) "Key Counsel: Abide in His Anointing (Truth) and Receive Eternal Life" (2:18-3:8; pp. 139-90); (4) "Core Teaching: Love, Works, Trust" (3:9-4:6; pp. 191-230); (5) "Foundational Imperative: God's Love" (4:7-14; pp. 231-49); (6) "Illustrative Appeal: Renewed and Expanded Invitation to Love" (4:15-5:15; pp. 250-95); and (7) "Concluding Admonition: Pastoral Counsel, Assurance, and Warning" (5:13-21; pp. 305-25).

Each of these seven divisions receives a systematic and consistent discussion throughout the commentary. First, a contextual orientation for the entire division is provided. Second, every major sub-section of the outline begins with an overview, appearing within a light-gray shaded area, "to assist the reader in locating salient sections of the treatment of each passage: introductory comments and concluding summaries" (p. viii). These introductory comments are followed immediately by Yarbrough's translation of the verses to be discussed, as well as his exegesis and exposition of those verses. He then concludes every sub-section with "Additional Notes." It is in these notes that he "offers remarks on every textual variant in John's Epistles found in NA<sup>27</sup>" (p. x).

The sections on 2 and 3 John also begin with introductions (pp. 329-32, 363-64). Yet they are, as expected, more focused on the issues unique to each letter. For 2 John, the major concern is the recipient, a church that is "in danger of going significantly astray" (p. 332). For 3 John, it is a personal letter that resembles "a brisk note of encouragement to a trusted and well-grounded colleague, not a letter of formal instruction, diplomatic appeal, or christological testimony" (p. 364). Furthermore, Yarbrough points out the epistolary structure (i.e. greetings, well-wishes, body, closing) as a stark contrasting feature to 1 John. Consistent with his treatment of 1 John, Yarbrough systematically provides a contextual orientation for each division in 2 and 3 John and a discussion of the major sub-sections that include translation, exegesis and exposition, and text-critical notes.

Without dispute, the format of the commentary and the presentation of Yarbrough's material are well done. It is difficult to miss what Yarbrough believes to be the threefold driving force for the letters: "historical-theological truth (doctrine), ethical integrity, and relational warmth." He highlights over and over again how he perceives this doctrinal, ethical, and relational focus suits all three Johannine letters (in 1 John, pp. 30, 50, 73, 84, 87, 139, 165, 183-84, 187, 253, 272, 306, 310, 323; in 2 John, p. 242; in 3 John, p. 375). Unfortunately, *1-3 John* is, at times, a cumbersome read. The author-date method, in which the listing of the author's surname, year of publication, and page number(s) is employed (i.e. Fitzmyer 1992: 58), affects readability and distracts the reader. This, however, is a design issue.

Without dispute, Yarbrough interprets syntactical, lexical, theological, and translational issues with great skill. There are, however, two minor disappointments. The first involves his interaction with English translations, which for the most part is invaluable. In fact, his examination of translations is quite impressive (KJV, LB, JB, NASB, NEB, NIV, NLT, NRSV, Phillips, RSV, TEV, TNIV). Yet for a commentary of this magnitude, it seems odd that the NET Bible, with its thoroughly documented notes on the Greek text, was not consulted. Second, Yarbrough entertains Martin Culy's suggestion of "Trinitarian ambiguity," that John was "under no compulsion to distinguish between members of Godhead" in 1 John (p. 176 n. 7; p. 223). Yet elsewhere, Yarbrough sees no ambiguity at all (p. 259). Thus it seems to me that if Yarbrough agrees with this seemingly blurred view of the Godhead in 1 John, he might have helpfully developed Culy's brief comment in the introduction to his *1, 2, 3, John: A Handbook on the Greek Text* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2004).

Without dispute, the Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament series blends scholarly depth with an adequate degree of readability. Yet "a major purpose is to address the needs of *pastors* and others involved in the preaching and exposition of

the Scriptures” (p. vii, italics mine). Herein lies the Achilles heel of this commentary as well as the series. Naturally, Yarbrough assumes his readers are familiar with Koine Greek. In fact, he handles the Greek text well by interacting with, for example, verb tenses and their respective semantic classifications (iterative force, p. 352; epistolary aorist, pp. 162, 296, 377; etc.). He evaluates noun cases according to their respective categories (pendant nominative, p. 160; subjective or objective genitive, pp. 285, 350; the genitive of subordination, p. 378; etc). Discussions about an inclusio (pp. 271, 277), hendiadys (p. 247), and the elliptical ἵνα (p. 147) are extremely helpful, as are the discussions about the cataphoric article (p. 131), the optative mood (p. 335), the prosaic infinitive (p. 374), genitive absolutes (p. 367), hortatory subjunctives (pp. 159, 247), and the passive voice (pp. 177, 194; etc.). Significant structural markers and crucial terms are not only discussed and handled with critical care, but they are presented in the original language throughout the commentary. Yet, how many pastors can really read this commentary with understanding?

With fewer and fewer seminaries requiring Master of Divinity and/or Master of Theology students to work in the Greek NT, *1–3 John* seems to assume too much about the capabilities of most contemporary pastors who stand and preach God’s word every Sunday. Too few seminary graduates who enter a pastoral ministry are able to evaluate and use effectively a commentary like this. Nevertheless, Yarbrough’s commentary is an excellent tool for those seminary students learning exegesis and for those pastors trained in the exegetical method of interpretation. Comparatively speaking, it is a friendlier read than Raymond Brown’s *The Epistles of John* in the Anchor Bible series (New York: Doubleday, 1982). Yet pastors with limited or no Greek background in the syntax or exegesis are better served by using John Painter’s *1, 2, and 3 John* in the *Sacra Pagina* series (Collegeville: Liturgical, 2002) or Glenn W. Barker’s “1, 2, 3 John” in volume twelve of the *Expositor’s Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981).

Herbert W. Bateman IV  
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, TX

*The Witness of Jesus, Paul and John: An Exploration in Biblical Theology* By Larry R. Helyer. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2008, 432 pp., \$32.00.

This book grows out of twenty-five years of teaching biblical theology to undergraduates at the author’s college, Taylor University. The author’s intention matches the style and depth with which the audience of the book is addressed (i.e. it is largely for undergraduates in evangelical institutions). Each chapter ends with a set of study/discussion questions and a reading list of twenty or more books and articles. The style is that of a lecture with many first-person references, such as: “In my opinion,” “I think,” or even “My own tentative conclusions are . . .”.

The book’s eleven chapters are divided into five parts. Part 1 treats prolegomena. In chapter 1 the book offers defining traits of biblical theology and discusses method. The contrast between evangelical and “liberal protestant” biblical theology is a bit too starkly drawn, as a history of the discipline demonstrates. These days it seems that many of the former distinctions bleed into one another. For example, is Brevard Childs an evangelical or a liberal? It is curious that the book commits itself to doing biblical theology from the whole canon while discussing Jesus (who did not write a book of the Bible) and then only Paul and John. In the end, this book makes it appear as though Paul and John, as authors, sum up biblical, or at least NT, theology. Undergraduates will miss the diversity of the NT witness apparent in Luke and Peter and Hebrews if this

book is their main exposure to NT theology. It is surprising that there is no interaction with Räsänen's *Beyond New Testament Theology* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990), since it has had such a wide circulation and influence among NT theologians and sets the stage for discussions of the discipline in the twenty-first century.

Chapter 2 is called "The Problem of the Unity of the Bible." As it turns out the chapter is much more about hermeneutics, ranging in discussion from Origen's allegorical method to James Robinson's New Hermeneutic with many stops in between. The chapter ends with a discussion of an evangelical approach to the relationship between the testaments. Chapter 3 rehearses the century-long debate between covenant and dispensational theologies. This debate was discussed in many places in the previous century, and it appears to be on the wane in the middle of the road evangelical circles toward which this book is aimed. For this reason one might wonder about the value of this chapter in a book on NT theology.

Parts 2, 3, and 4 discuss the theologies of Jesus, Paul, and John. The discussion of the theology of Jesus is divided into chapters on Jesus and the kingdom and dominical ethics. The book does not deal with the problems inherent in producing a theology of Jesus from different Gospels but rather suggests other books that deal with these difficulties. The author claims to recognize that one cannot use a simple red letter edition of the Bible to find the theology of Jesus, but this is how the teaching of Jesus is presented. There are very few times that Matthew's or Mark's or Luke's distinctive approaches to the words and works of Jesus are noted. In my experience, this sort of method proves to be a challenge for university students who take Gospels classes with non-evangelical professors at public universities. To flatten the Synoptic Gospels also tends to lose the rich contribution of each book as it presents dominical teaching. The stance taken in the chapter on Jesus and the kingdom is basically a rehashing of George Ladd's influential teaching among evangelicals of the "now and not yet" approach to eschatology. The chapter on the ethics of Jesus is largely an exposition of the Sermon on the Mount. In this chapter there is also a brief discussion of different approaches to biblical ethics.

The discussion of Paul begins with a chapter on prolegomena. One wonders why a chapter is devoted to methods for discovering Pauline theology but not Jesus' theology. The chapter deals with the sources, background, and methodological problems in Pauline theology. This is important information for undergraduates to know as long as they understand that many people no longer ask these questions in the post-modern world. These debates are often carried on among scholars. Nevertheless, answers to the questions raised can often help solidify people's faith. Paul's gospel is the subject of Chapter 7. After discussing the human plight, the chapter examines different metaphors (sacrifice, redemption, reconciliation, victory, and justification) Paul uses to describe the good news of salvation in Christ. The final chapter on Paul discusses Christology and eschatology. Most of the section on Christology is devoted to "Cosmic Christology," which has been a special project of the author for a number of years. His work is brought together here. This is helpful because cosmic Christology is often not a major subject in biblical theology. After a short section on Pauline eschatology, the chapter ends with a short critique of James Dunn's ideal cosmic Christology.

The last major part of the book deals with the theology of John. Chapter 9 is largely devoted to Christology with a short concluding section on Jesus' death as atonement. The chapter notes that John "combines inseparably Christ's person and mission . . . Jesus is a missionary" (p. 313). This idea is subtly developed in the chapter. The second chapter on Johannine theology highlights Johannine eschatology and ecclesiology. The chapter demonstrates that Johannine eschatology is both realized and future in the Gospel, the epistles, and Revelation. The futuristic eschatology of Revelation is summarized in about a dozen pages using the rubrics of "a moderately futuristic approach"

(p. 352). The ecclesiology of the Johannine writings is discussed under the headings of the community of light, the flock of God, the true vine, and the Holy Spirit.

The concluding chapter attempts to show how the three witnesses portray one message. The unifying theme of this message is the kingdom of God. For the NT writers this theme finds its main thrust in Jesus. Paul mentions the kingdom in some key places, but John hardly uses the terminology although the idea is certainly present. The unifying structure is the narrative of God's saving activity. The focal point of all three authors is the cross-work of Christ. At the end of the chapter it is asserted that the three are also united in their ecclesiology (the creation of the new people of God) and eschatology (the climax of the kingdom). Yet the eschatology is presented by the three authors in tension between restoration and new creation. This last chapter is the most helpful in the book. In fact, if this were not a textbook to be used alongside a set of lectures, the whole volume might be better if the last chapter came first, highlighting the themes of NT theology and then showing how those themes are worked out *seriatim* in the NT (somewhat like George Caird and L. D. Hurst). As it stands, this book is structured similarly to other evangelical contributions to the discipline such as Ladd and Marshall. The book may be useful for undergraduates with some guidance, but it does not replace these other volumes, although the subtitle "Explorations in Biblical Theology" lets the author off the hook for not being comprehensive.

Those who adopt this book as a text need to be aware of one major drawback. Far too often the footnotes refer to tertiary articles in Bible dictionaries, encyclopedias, and even study Bible notes, even to such venerable volumes as those occurring in the four-volume dictionary of the NT published by InterVarsity. It is not that the author is unaware of secondary literature, since this is often noted in the reading lists at the end of each chapter. Often, instead of debating with a particular viewpoint, a Bible dictionary discussion is cited. This flaw is especially visible in the chapters on Jesus, Paul, and John. In my opinion, it is not good practice to model in a textbook this sort of research for students. How often will an undergraduate take the time to read the dictionary? If they do take the time, what is the value of reading this book other than to point them to the dictionary?

David Johnson  
Providence College and Seminary, Otterburne, MB, Canada

*Reading the Old Testament with the Ancient Church: Exploring the Formation of Early Christian Thought.* By Ronald E. Heine. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007, 204 pp., \$18.99 paper.

This book is a lucid, comprehensive, yet succinct treatment of the early patristic use of the Old Testament. The author's motivation for writing this volume in the *Evangelical Resourcement* series (D. H. Williams, ed.) lies "in examining the central role that the Old Testament played in the formation of Christian thinking and life in the early centuries of the church" (pp. 11–12). It is an attempt to remedy the present situation in the evangelical communion, which suffers from a neglect of the OT, as evidenced by infrequent teaching from it. While neither Luther nor Calvin considered both Testaments as less than vital for Christian doctrine, the evangelical tradition has unwittingly fallen prey to the post-Enlightenment attitude of disconnection from, if not disdain for, the OT, which is nothing other than the early church's gospel of Jesus Christ.

Heine introduces his work with a survey of a handful of influential theologians/philosophers and their views of the OT from the Reformation to the twentieth century.

The author does not mention why the medieval era is omitted, but perhaps this is in line with how he evaluates the evangelical self-consciousness: "We who are heirs of the Reformation cling tenaciously to the slogan 'sola scriptura,' and rightly so, for it is Scripture that provides the foundational stories and teachings of Christian faith" (p. 74). Readers concerned with the viewpoints of the patristic writers can safely pass over the first chapter, which is but a terse account of the role of the OT and the formation of the concept of Christian Scripture in the first and the early second century. It is the second chapter that introduces us to the question of how the early church began to justify its use of the OT against the Jews on the one hand and the Gnostics and the Marcionites on the other. The Mosaic law, therefore, clearly becomes one of the prominent issues facing the early church in the second century as it seeks to answer the question of continuity or discontinuity with the God of the OT. The "Law" is the first of the three categories (the "Prophets" and the "Psalms" being the other two) in which all things concerning Christ must be fulfilled (Luke 24:44), and it appears that Heine has conveniently used this three-fold grouping to outline his book: Except for chapter 3, which is inserted as a hermeneutical parenthesis, chapters 4 and 5 resume with the patristic writings on the witness of the Prophets and the Psalms, respectively, concerning Christ.

In the third chapter, the author underscores not only the importance of establishing continuity with the OT, but also the criteria by which it must be done. According to Heine, he performing act of readers of any ancient texts (including the OT) may be captured by the word "reimagining," and this endeavor must be both "responsible and relevant" (p. 76). For Heine the writer of the Fourth Gospel already performs this symbolic reading of the wilderness event (e.g. the eating of manna in the wilderness; John 6) in line with what Paul says in 1 Cor 10:11. Origen and Gregory of Nyssa are then selected and celebrated as prototypical patristic writers who model this performance for the church.

The fourth and longest chapter details the proof from prophecy that the Fathers used to support the veracity of Christianity in six major areas: the deity and preexistence of Christ; the incarnation; the healing ministry of Christ; the suffering and death of Christ; the resurrection and glorification of Christ; and the calling of the Gentiles. This chapter is especially strong because the author draws on a wealth of information from both patristic and rabbinic sources concerning the debates on a number of messianic passages. He further documents balanced and fair viewpoints from typically solid secondary sources in the footnotes.

The fifth chapter stresses how early Christians were "Praying the Psalms" as a way of life, not merely in worship services, at monasteries, and during private devotions several times a day, but also while traveling. Two points of strength are particularly noteworthy in this chapter. First, Heine presents more detailed analyses of different patristic exegetical methods than he does in the previous chapters. Second, besides Origen and Gregory of Nyssa, whom he seems to favor, Heine includes a more balanced selection of the Fathers, incorporating both Antiochian and Latin perspectives.

The final chapter makes the case for rediscovering the spiritual relevance of "Living in the Text" in our day. Taking his cue from Henri de Lubac's statement ("Everything in Scripture is 'spiritual'"), Heine calls his readers to "live in the story of the text" so that "the biblical story functions somewhat like a paradigm into which one fits the circumstances of one's life" (p. 177). He prescribes two stages: (1) "deep familiarity with the text," then (2) "molding life by the text." The first prescription is clear enough; however, the second one leads into more of a circuitous and elusive discussion than Heine intends. In simpler language, he finally elucidates his prescription as what had been taught by Origen and Gregory of Nyssa—daily practicing the virtues in imitation of Christ.

Overall, this book offers a good introduction for students interested in further study of patristic interpretation of the OT. The bibliography at the end of the book, however,

is too limited; and the matters are not helped by the absence of a scriptural index. One major observation from the perspective of balance is in order. Heine's treatment seems to imply that the Eastern Fathers are more important than those from the West. Specifically, Origen and Gregory of Nyssa receive the most empathetic treatment. It is certainly true that the evangelical tradition would be helped by a more symbolic reading of the OT. It is also true that recent scholarship has given attention to the less rigid boundaries between the traditional categories of Alexandrian and Antiochian exegesis. Nonetheless, had Heine also discussed how non-Origenistic interpreters sought to establish continuity with the OT, employing a variety of interpretive tools for multi-layered exegesis different from the allegorical method, it would have been a more balanced treatment consistent with the title of the book. Chapter 5 is a clear exception to this pattern, since the Latin Fathers were allotted a bit more space as interpreters of the Psalms. But again, because the exposition of the Psalms by both Jerome and Augustine had been heavily influenced by Origen, Heine clearly shows most enthusiasm for Origen and Gregory of Nyssa.

This point leads to another comment about maintaining balance. That Origen was a towering figure who exerted enormous influence in the history of biblical exegesis is beyond question. But what is also intimately intertwined with this Alexandrian's exegesis is his notoriety as a biblical scholar who was condemned by the church for heretical doctrines such as the preexistence of the human soul and the *apokatastasis* (here, Gregory of Nyssa as well). On this matter, Heine is silent, especially in comparison to his otherwise staunch orthodoxy expressed in his concern for the rejection of the continuity of the Testaments by heretical groups of the second century as well as by Enlightenment scholars. No doubt a brief introduction is too limited in scope to plumb the complexity and the subtlety of so many patristic writers while also providing an evaluation of their orthodoxy for evangelical readership; nevertheless, a bit more nuanced enthusiasm for a broader patristic contribution would be helpful.

One final remark concerns the synthesis of this book. A brief epilogue brings Heine's central argument to its end: "The focus on Christ as the interpretive center of the Old Testament is the true heritage of the church fathers' reading of the Old Testament" (p. 194). In order to accomplish this task, Heine's selection of texts comes from a wide range of patristic writers grouped under the rubric of three Lukan themes, the "Law," the "Prophets," and the "Psalms." This comprehensive yet simple outline is well chosen, and the author succeeds admirably well in organizing a plethora of diverse patristic writings. That the Fathers affirmed that the OT in each of these three categories testify of Christ is ably demonstrated. The thematic nature of Heine's work, however, would also call for an approach that is comparative in nature. In what ways does the law differ from the Prophets and the Psalms in pointing to Christ, according to the Fathers? In what ways did they understand the role of the Psalms as unique in comparison to the other two? In what manner do these three complement each other in constructing a theological vision? These are a few questions that one wishes had been addressed.

Michael J. Choi

Evangelische Theologische Faculteit, Leuven, Belgium

*Spiritual Formation as if the Church Mattered: Growing in Christ through Community.*  
By James C. Wilhoit. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008, 233 pp., \$17.99 paper.

James Wilhoit, Scripture Press Professor of Christian Formation and Ministry at Wheaton College, where he has taught for over two decades, notes that his book developed from conversations with students on their spiritually formative influences.

Listening to their stories, he gleaned the presence of “formational principles” based upon which he conducted what appears to have been a phenomenological study of spiritual formation in a number of churches—primarily, interviews with church leaders (p. 13). His goal in this book is less to reverse trends than to summon his readers to an intentional approach to spiritual formation. In the preface, Wilhoit is concerned that “patterns of nurture that served us well for several generations have quickly been set aside” (pp. 13–14). These neglected practices include observance of the Sabbath, pastoral visitation, intergenerational socializing, systematic Bible teaching, church services with an emphasis on testimonies and missions, and Bible memorization and reading. It might be too broad an accusation that American evangelicalism *du jour* has been remiss in all of these transactions; nonetheless, Wilhoit’s warm conservative thrust is evident and his passion for biblical spirituality welcome. Equally appealing, as the subtitle indicates, is his emphasis on the role of community in the endeavor of spiritual formation. “Christian spiritual formation refers to the intentional communal process of growing in our relationship with God and becoming conformed to Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit” (p. 23).

Early on, the author declares: “The heart of spiritual formation is to teach and train people to follow the wisdom and instructions of Christ through the enabling power of his grace”—the imitation of Christ (p. 39). To this end a “curriculum for Christlikeness” is proposed, grounded in the “great invitations” (dominical commandments) of Christ (pp. 45–49): the call to love and obey God, to love one another, to steward the gospel (making disciples, employing discernment, living with integrity, using money wisely, practicing detachment), to extend Christ’s compassion (engaging in prayer for others, keeping relational commitments, demonstrating compassion for the less fortunate, extending hospitality), and to worship (celebrating the sacraments, practicing spiritual disciplines, studying Scripture, drawing close to God). Lining up these mandates from Gospel verses is, no doubt, convenient, but it seems to indicate that the scaffolding of biblical spiritual formation is constituted primarily by the “red-letters” of Scripture.

Wilhoit’s “curriculum for Christlikeness” is given four dimensions: *receiving* the grace of God by cultivating spiritual openness and repentance in confession, worship, and prayer; *remembering* who we are and how we are to live by transformational teaching in preaching, evangelism, meditation, spiritual guidance, and small group participation; *responding* to God’s love by serving others in relational commitment, discernment, abandonment of prejudices, and ministries of compassion; and *relating*, i.e., growing in a relationship with God by immersion in community, through hospitality, reconciliation, Sabbath observance, and the wise utilization of time. “These four basic commitments or dispositions summarize the dimensions I found at work in churches and communities of faith where true spiritual formation has taken place” (p. 50). Again, though the phenomenological bases of Wilhoit’s work are evident, I would like to know more about the discovery of these four “dimensions.” How did he abstract these four? What churches were scrutinized and what were the criteria for their evaluation? Why only four dimensions, and why these four? And how do they cohere with the previously encapsulated “great invitations?” Making these connections would have helped the reader ride the trajectory of the book more smoothly.

In the same preliminary chapter, Wilhoit summarizes “six myths or false models of spiritual formation”: the *quick-fix model* that believes one can be “zapped” into spirituality; the *facts-only model* that gravitates towards information as the incentive for growth; the *emotional model* that overbalances into the deep zone of spiritual experiences; the *conference model* that seeks to attain “mountaintop experiences” in large *ad hoc* assemblies; the *insight model* that inclines towards introspection and self-motivated behavior choices; and the *faith model* that emphasizes, simply, surrender and submission to God. Insightfully, Wilhoit diagnoses the shared etiology of these maladies—consumerism: they “are very appealing to those who think their growth is

dependent simply on consuming the ‘right thing’” (pp. 51–55). Having broached the pertinent issue of misconceptions in the process of spiritual formation, Wilhoit would serve readers by showing how his “curriculum” corrects these aberrant foci. But, alas, these “myths” do not reappear in the book.

The bulk of the book—its last eight chapters (out of a total of ten)—focuses upon the four dimensions of the “curriculum”: two chapters are devoted to each dimension, one describing its foundations, and its pair suggesting how those foundations may be fostered in community.

The concepts in the four “foundation” chapters, while not lacking in biblical epigrams and citations, are not particularly driven by exposition of Scripture. Indeed, Wilhoit’s work would be considerably stronger had he engaged, more consciously and deliberately, a biblical theology of spiritual formation. While his initial findings may, as he confesses, have been grounded in what he observed in churches and what he drew from his interviews, placing these discoveries upon a theological substratum of what Scripture views as the *modus vivendi* of spirituality would have lent this work substantial authority. The chapter “Foundations of Receiving,” for example, touches upon the “Depth of Our Sin,” but it lacks a compelling interaction with some of the *sedes doctrinae* of sin and the flesh: Romans 6, for one, is not mentioned, except for a citation of Rom 6:4 elsewhere, in connection with the “central image of resurrection in the New Testament” (p. 22). And Romans 7, unfortunately, does not show up in the book at all. Wilhoit does, however, expend considerable space and energy developing a four-quadrant matrix that categorizes human responses to “sin and yearnings”: sin management, thoughtful self-discipline, realistically trying, and optimistic brokenness—this last state being, according to the author, the optimal one for spirituality (p. 62). I struggle to grasp the nuanced distinctions between these four, wondering at the same time whether aspects of every quadrant ought not to be an integral part of discipleship, not just the particular sector of “optimistic brokenness” that was appraised as being “most open to true spiritual formation” (p. 63). At the end of this chapter, I also wish that Wilhoit had led me back to the “myths” and corrected their falsities rather than point me to yet another taxonomy of attitudes/responses conducive (or not) to attaining Christlikeness.

The second chapters in each pair—those on fostering the particular dimension of spiritual formation in community—are the strength of the book. For instance, the chapter entitled “To Foster Receiving in Community,” helpfully deals with the creation of a culture of spiritual openness and humility, the role of worship and confession, and the practice of spiritual disciplines. Practical suggestions abound, though somewhat unevenly. Prayer, for instance, is well represented, with advice on prayer meetings, retreats, seasons of prayer, prayer chains, “prayer immersions,” benedictions, and the like being offered. However, ordinances, incontrovertibly essential community endeavors, get short shrift; so, too, do small groups. And, while solitude, fasting, and prayer as disciplines that marked Jesus’ life show up in the chapters on fostering receiving and fostering remembering in community, I would like to see, as a single person myself, how Wilhoit envisions these disciplines that are practiced in solitude integrating with those conducted corporately, in community.

“Foundations of Remembering” focuses on constantly acknowledging one’s need of grace. The subtitle of the chapter, “Letting the Cross Grow Larger,” creates a particularly poignant metaphor. Wilhoit rightly avers that our blindness to our need for grace, as well as our futile attempts at self-justification (and self-sanctification, I might add), are nothing but a diminution of the cross. It also strikes me, somewhat tangentially, how powerfully the reality of our self-centered attenuation of cross-size is brought home through the case histories of Sam, Maria, and Simon (pp. 108–12). That, in itself, speaks volumes about spiritual formation in community: identification with others—models and mentors, patterns and prototypes, not to mention case studies of our fellow-pilgrims—is critical for the believer’s learning and growing. In fact, Wilhoit himself declares: “An

important moment in spiritual formation comes when we link ‘my story’ with the ‘our story’ of the church universal . . .” (p. 117). Disappointingly, there are no case histories in any of the subsequent chapters.

“Foundations of Responding” and its corresponding partner “To Foster Responding in Community” provide a timely nudge: looking outwards and seeking to serve is an integral part of spiritual formation. “Christian spiritual formation ultimately is about enabling people to love others more and to help create a just and well-ordered community” (p. 148). While we might carp at the use of the adverb “ultimately,” we cannot but agree with Wilhoit’s sentiments—a needed, urgent corrective for a sensate and self-centered culture and civilization. Responding in community includes keeping one’s relational commitments, forgiveness, engaging in a life of compassion for the poor and marginalized, eliminating prejudice, weeping with the mourning, using one’s resources wisely, and the like.

The section entitled “Time: A Necessity for Community” (in the chapter, “To Foster Relating in Community”) is also worthy of attention. While time, Wilhoit warns, is not a guarantee for solid relationships, it is, at least, essential for that purpose. He expounds on the categories of community time spent together: large gathering time, large social time, midsize congregational time, small formational study-group time, spiritual friendship time, and so on. “The purpose of the above list is to remind us that the effects of the time together are going to be different depending on how it is spent” (p. 190). Indeed! In our fragmented and time-pressured society, this was an appropriate and judicious reminder. A deliberate, intentional sacrifice of time for joint endeavors among believers in the body of Christ is essential if spiritual growth is sought.

Overall, the book is well written, and I was able to remain solidly on track in the main; however, at times, I felt a bit adrift. There is a tendency for subsections in each chapter to be less than cohesive with the larger themes therein. Perhaps that reflects the nature of the work as a phenomenological exercise rather than a discourse on a propounded thesis. Also somewhat distracting (at least to me) is Wilhoit’s inclusion of large amounts of material culled from other works, set in the main text but on a shaded background. A little more than a tenth of the book (by rough page count) is these gray-shaded pages. On more than one occasion I had to strain to find the relevance of those addenda to the thrust of the chapter. Nevertheless, *Spiritual Formation as if the Church Mattered* is worth a read, at least for the chance to look at this age-old subject from a fresh angle. For those interested in pursuing these matters further, I must also mention the utility of the “For Further Reading” sections at the end of each chapter; a very balanced collection of material from a variety of sources is presented. Throughout the book, Wilhoit’s vibrant devotion and his keen pastoral instincts, patent in his writing, make for a good read. Those active in, or planning to enter into, pastoral ministry, as well as those involved in the pedagogy thereof, will find this book a useful addition to the expanding inventory of works on spiritual formation.

Abraham Kuruvilla  
Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, TX

*Donald Robinson Selected Works*. Vol. I: *Assembling God’s People*. Vol. II: *Preaching God’s Word*. Vol. III: *Appreciation*. Edited by Peter G. Bolt and Mark P. Thompson. Sydney: Australian Church Record, 2008.

Too little time is spent in current theological discourse on permanent verities. The new, the different, the so-called cutting edge, and responding to the same seem to take a great deal of our time. Of course, it is appropriate to write books that define

and oppose “enemies of the permanent things,” to borrow a phrase from T. S. Eliot and Russell Kirk. Detailed apologetic writing, therefore, has a valuable place in academic discourse. More positively, it is also right to deepen our knowledge of the enduring truths, even in very small and detailed increments. Thus, the writing of dissertations, monographs, and specialized articles also has an important role in the growth of the evangelical intellectual tradition.

Yet it can become much too easy to fasten attention on newness for newness’s sake, degree taking’s sake, seeking a job’s sake, or receiving tenure’s sake. The results of such pre-occupation with the temporary are many. Perhaps the most damaging of these results is trading deep knowledge of God, God’s Word, and God’s ways for professional gain. But others also come to mind: trading the sufficiency of Scripture for the desires of an audience; trading proven Christian models of intellectual engagement and ethical behavior for unproven substitutes; trading a deep and time-tested heritage for quick-fix theology; trading Scripture-soaked wisdom for theological amnesia; and trading meaty formational books with a long shelf life for books that offer little more than perishable, junk food spirituality.

Given the battles that are waged (on purpose or not) against what lasts, it is important to highlight works that stem the tide of the exaltation of the temporary. These three volumes certainly fall into that category. Therefore, Peter G. Bolt and Mark P. Thompson, both of whom teach at Moore Theological College, Sydney, Australia, and edit *The Australian Church Record*, have served their Australian constituents and the evangelical world in general well by releasing this edition of Donald Robinson’s works and the detailed responses to it.

It should not surprise the readers of *JETS* that a collection of writings by an Australian evangelical would have value for the larger evangelical scene. After all, there is a long and honorable history of evangelicalism in Australia. Indeed, Richard Johnson, the first chaplain to the first fleet that landed in Botany Bay in 1788 was an evangelical Anglican minister. He was followed by Samuel Marsden, Frederick Barker, Howard Mowll, and a host of other orthodox pastors, bishops, and educators who came from the British Isles and elsewhere. In due course persons born in Australia took their places as Australia’s religious leaders.

Readers of *JETS* will be aware of past and present Australian biblical and theological scholars such as Graeme Goldsworthy, William Dumbrell, Peter O’Brien, Peter Jensen, Peter Adam, J. A. Thompson, Paul Barnett, Leon Morris, and Bruce Winter. They may also know of recent works by Paul Williamson, Brian Rosner, Peter Bolt, John Woodhouse, Michael Thompson, Graham Cole, and others. Yet because of Australia’s isolation, some of its important writers are not as well known as they deserve to be, despite the fact that they provide helpful examples of missionary ecclesiastical leadership, academic excellence, and exegetical preaching. D. B. Knox and Marcus Loane fit this description, in my opinion. More to the point for this review, Donald Robinson is an example of an Australian scholar-teacher-ecclesiastical leader that merits more attention.

These particular Australian biblical-theological scholars deserve more notice because they offer the current diverse and sometimes confused evangelical scene some abiding tenets that will aid future advance of the evangelical cause. In particular, Robinson’s work should call evangelicals to gain perspective and endurance from our historical roots, to maintain the priority of the local church, to emphasize the primacy and sufficiency of Scripture, and to persevere in the writing of exegetical theology. The fact that Robinson addresses these matters in an irenic, yet firm, way provides a positive example to hardliners and overly easygoing evangelicals alike.

These volumes’ biographical (III, pp. 9–62) and autobiographical sketches (I, pp. 191–194; 259–271; II, pp. 22–30) provide perspective on Robinson’s ministry within the his-

tory of evangelicalism. Robinson (b. 1922) was educated at the University of Sydney and Cambridge University in the 1940s. Robinson's studies at Cambridge occurred during the rise in the UK of what became the international evangelical movement. In the 1940s Tyndale House was founded, IVF was coming into its own, and leaders such as Martyn Lloyd-Jones made their presence felt. John Stott, Jim Packer, and other young evangelicals Robinson met were completing their educations and/or beginning their ministries. The archbishop of Sydney at this time, Howard Mowll, was an Englishman well known in England for his earlier missionary work in China, and Marcus Loane, also a graduate of the University of Sydney, vice-principal of Moore Theological College, was beginning to have his books published in the UK. Evangelicalism was far from popular in academic and church circles in those days, so Robinson learned firsthand what it meant to hold evangelical convictions under difficult circumstances.

Robinson's education at Cambridge occurred under conditions similar to those that would eventually be shared by more than one generation of evangelicals. These conditions included studying with non-evangelicals dedicated to exegesis and history. For example, Robinson's teachers included C. H. Dodd and C. F. D. Moule. Robinson gained from Dodd an emphasis on apostolic preaching and doctrine that is evident in his work and in the preaching and writing of his students. From Moule he received an emphasis on exegesis and synthesis that appears in virtually every one of his articles (see II, pp. 22–23). Furthermore, from seminars on the history and theology of the early church, he gained a sharp eye for the Jewish component in the early church. All these elements helped Robinson incorporate exegesis, history, and ecclesiology into an interconnected whole.

After returning to Australia, Robinson served on the faculty of Moore Theological College, Sydney, in a full-time capacity from 1952–1972, and in a part-time capacity while serving as Bishop of Parramatta from 1973–1982. During his time at Moore College he taught a core biblical theology course that influenced Graeme Goldsworthy, who in turn incorporated Robinson's ideas into his own and conveyed them to wider audiences. Robinson was chosen Archbishop of Sydney in 1982 and held that position until his retirement in 1992. It is fair to say that he accepted ecclesiastical leadership as a ministry more than as the meeting of a treasured life goal. Many people consider the time he spent away from academic pursuits at least a minor tragedy. Despite his heavy schedule, Robinson published a steady number of articles during and after these years. His only book-length work, *Faith's Framework*, a treatment of New Testament Theology (I, pp. 337–449), was published in Australia in 1985 (2nd ed. 1996). Neither his articles nor his book received much attention outside of Australia.

These types of historical roots are easy for current members of an interdenominational, international movement like evangelicalism to forget. Of course, there is an abiding need for freshness in every setting. Nonetheless, there is no reason to reinvent evangelicalism *ex nihilo* constantly. The ability to stand for biblical faith in difficult settings, to adapt strong methodological details from persons who are sympathetic to, but not adherents of, evangelicalism, and the desire to interpret the Bible in its original context prior to applying it to today's world remain abiding traits of a healthy evangelicalism. The impulse to treat the Bible as a whole and the willingness to give up academic roles for the greater good of the body of Christ should be assumed, and the willingness to toil in isolated academic settings while exhibiting a high degree of academic competence should characterize every generation.

Ecclesiology has been a much-discussed issue in Australia during the entirety of Robinson's ministry (see I, pp. 259–71). In the 1950s, the ecumenical movement was the presenting issue for discussion. During these years Australian Anglicans were also seeking to identify themselves as a national body rather than as the Church of England in Australia. Thus, they debated ecclesiological issues prior to adopting a new church

constitution in 1962 and a new prayer book in 1978. More recently the struggles of the Anglican Communion have required attention. Robinson has played a key role in these discussions, first as a theological educator and then as bishop.

Volume one reflects such ecclesiological concerns as the church's identity, definition, and mission. The first major section, entitled "Jew and Gentile in the Purposes of God" (I, pp. 5–194), consists of thirteen papers written and/or published during 1961–2000. These chapters set forth Robinson's ideas on the implications of the ethnic makeup of believers in the NT era. Thus, they address the church's *identity*, especially in the NT era, which Robinson considers the benchmark for all future eras. Robinson's essential beliefs are evident in the articles dating from the 1960s, though he fleshes out their implications later, particularly in the pieces from the 1970s.

Robinson argues that commonly used terms to describe the church such as "ideal Israel," "true Israel," and "new people of God" are not actually biblical ones (I, p. 47). Therefore, they skew our understanding of the NT teaching about the church in at least two basic ways. First, they minimize the differences between today's churches and the churches of the NT era. Today's churches are typically Gentile congregations, but in the NT era there were both Gentile and Jewish congregations. Of course, Jewish congregations pre-dated Gentile ones. Thus, the NT writers wrestled with how Gentile believers could come to God and what responsibility Jewish believers had to Gentiles and *vice versa*. Robinson argues that neglecting these differences can lead to overly facile applications of NT situations to our own day. Second, and related to the first, is that the usage of misleading terminology obscures the fact that NT writers use terms like "Israel," "the saints," and "the circumcision" to identify Jewish believers and distinguish between them and Gentile believers. Neglecting these matters is to read the NT as if it presents the church as we know it today, a primarily Gentile, post-Jewish institution. It also leads to weakened exegesis of key passages in books like Romans and Ephesians.

In the second major section of the book (I, pp. 195–336) Robinson addresses the *definition* and *mission* of the church. Here he contends that the typical definition needs to be more biblically precise. The word "church" certainly does not mean a denominational entity in the NT. Neither does it denote the totality of all congregations in the NT, nor does it primarily mean "called out ones." Rather, its basic meaning is "gathering." The churches on earth gather around the presence of Christ, while the church in heaven gathers around the throne of God (I, pp. 233–35). Therefore, he claims, "'Church' is not a synonym for 'people of God': it is rather an *activity* of the 'people of God'" (I, p. 223). Thus, the main characteristic of "church" is gathering, being together, teaching one another, sharing in worship, and encouraging one another in the presence of Christ (I, pp. 233–34). If an entity cannot "gather," it cannot be a church.

When the congregation gathers, it does so for some very specific reasons. These reasons constitute its mission. It gathers to praise God, hear God's Word, pray for God's aid, and encourage one another through all of the above and through direct verbal means. It gathers to worship God, and it gathers to learn how to minister in the world when the gathering is over and the world encounters the gathering as dispersed, serving persons (I, pp. 236–37; 241–43). It does not gather primarily to bring lost persons into the fold, so its primary purpose for gathering is not evangelism, though evangelism is often a result of the church's prime reasons for gathering (II, pp. 103–16). The unity of the many gatherings in the world is in Christ and his word (I, pp. 250–51), not in ecclesiastical organizations or in performing tasks set for them by the world (I, pp. 246–47). Congregations and groups of congregations may do well to cooperate together for good purposes, but this cooperation must not be confused with the earthly or heavenly gathering of believers around the throne of Christ.

Robinson summarizes the puzzlement he senses people have over the gathering and the typical definition of the church and of its missions as follows: "The confusion exists

at the *local* level itself when we think of the church as a *set of properties* and a *complex of organizations* presided over by a permanent director assisted by certain full-time or voluntary officials. It exists at the *denominational* level as more of our time and money goes into synods and secretariats and headquarters of various kinds. Our confusion exists finally at the *ecumenical* level with the mighty modern snowball of international conferences and consultations" (I, p. 237). The confusion stops when we understand that the local gathering is primary, and that all denominational and ecumenical structures exist to facilitate the fellowship and work of the local gathering and to coordinate the work local gatherings wish to do together.

This apparent devaluing of ecclesiastical structures by Robinson and his successors has puzzled American observers of the Sydney Anglican Diocese. Accustomed to the Anglo-Catholic structures of the Episcopal Church (USA) and those of some of the groups that have broken away from it, they have considered Sydney Anglicanism little more than congregationalism, as if that were a bad thing or detrimental to Anglicanism!

Perhaps it is better to ask if Robinson and his successors have understood biblical ecclesiology than if they are truly Anglicans in polity. Martin Foord does an excellent job of asking this question in his response to Robinson's views (see III, pp. 225–34). At the very least Robinson, his colleague D. B. Knox, and his most recent successor as Archbishop of Sydney, Peter Jensen, have understood that local congregations, not denominations and ecumenical organizations, are the bedrock of Christian work on earth. They have understood that unity lies in Christ and his word, not loosely defined affiliations of transdenominational groups. Certainly breakaway Anglican groups in North America and elsewhere are acting as if Robinson has a point. How they will act when they become more settled remains to be seen. Though one can express the unity of all believers better than Robinson does, today's evangelicals would do well to underscore the importance of local congregations, for it was to effect renewal of churches that the movement initially began its work.

One of the most impressive characteristics of the Australian branch of evangelicalism that Robinson represents is its emphasis on the primacy and sufficiency of Scripture. Though he has not published an article with these concepts specifically in the title, they are present throughout his work. Because his biblicism is so insistent, it would have made sense for the editors to have made the second volume, which includes most of his articles on Scripture, the first volume of the set. He considers the primacy of Scripture, as opposed to, for example, the primacy of the church, as a necessary foundational principle for asserting its sufficiency.

Robinson asserts that the "principle of *sola scriptura* is logically prior to both *sola gratia* and *sola fide* when it comes to setting out the constitution of the people of God, or of any particular church for that matter" (II, 7). He argues that the earliest churches were formed by apostles who preached the OT Scriptures and their own understanding of Jesus' life and work, which he calls their "gospel," across the Roman Empire (I, pp. 339–87; II, pp. 14–18). The revelation they gave is "objective" in that it can be expressed in understandable sentences and not just felt in experience (II, pp. 19–21). This revelation changes lives. It forms, directs, guides, and teaches people. What it says, God says. What it does in lives, God does in lives. It is sufficient for teaching, preaching, and living. The fact that it can be expressed objectively hardly makes it impersonal.

These beliefs about the Bible's primacy and sufficiency lead to discussions about the nature of Scripture and of preaching. As for the former issue, in an address to the AFES in 1987, Robinson discussed what it has meant to be considered a fundamentalist and an evangelical during his ministry (II, pp. 22–41). He has been willing to wear both labels as needed, for he believes that each can simply mean that one believes the Bible "must remain the ultimate source and the test of all that is believed and done in the name of Christ in Christian activity" and that "it is the supreme authority in all matters

of faith and conduct" (II, p. 31). For him, affirming this view of inspiration means that the main tasks of theology are to understand the Bible on its own terms in its original context, express this understanding in current terms, and use this understanding to build up communities of faith (II, p. 30). It also means concluding that the canon of Scripture we possess is the result of inspiration, which "does not mean that the writing is composed, set up, and that then somehow the Spirit of God invests it. It means rather that the whole process is under God's control, in accordance with the specific purpose of his revelation and that the resultant Scripture can be said to be uttered by the Holy Spirit who also moved the writer in the first place" (II, p. 37).

He notes that these convictions about the canon and inspiration lead naturally to discussions of the Bible's "infallibility" and "inerrancy." Robinson readily confesses that if the Bible is inspired in the manner he believes, then it is infallible, for God's word cannot fail in the sense that "If Scripture conveys a promise of God, that promise will not fail you" (II, p. 37). Working from the conclusion that the Bible is infallible in the sense just described, he then asks, "If Scripture is infallible, being God's word written, can that written word contain any error, say, an error of fact?" (II, p. 38). To answer that question he wisely states that it is important to define "error," to understand the purpose of the portion of the Bible in which the supposed error occurs, and to maintain faith in the Scriptures while examining potential errors (II, pp. 38–39). He concludes that errors of fact of a minor nature such as differing numbers in genealogies that do not affect the purpose of the passage could occur in the Bible, but observes that such minor errors do not affect the clear message of the Bible (II, p. 40). Robinson draws the line in errors of stated authorship. For example, in the case of disputed books like the Pastoral Epistles and 2 Peter, Robinson holds that they are all written (or dictated) by the apostles whose name they bear (I, pp. 339–61). He further concludes that if a book could be proven not to have come from the apostle whose name it bears, then that book should not be considered Scripture. Thus, he denies that a book may be both pseudonymous and Scripture at the same time (II, pp. 64–71).

Robinson's comments aid an understanding of the differences between conservative evangelicals (often in the UK and Australia) who confess the Bible is infallible and conservative evangelicals (often in the US) who confess the Bible is inerrant. Of course, these ways of expressing the matter have separate histories in different cultures. American evangelicals will do well to note when basically "infallibility" is an Australian's way of saying "inerrancy," and *vice versa*. Still, Robinson's approach invites further discussions about what sort of errors one allows the Bible could have and still remain infallible. I do not think he would affirm that the Bible is doctrinally accurate but not historically accurate, which is the direction many evangelicals seem to be moving these days. Nevertheless, the situation in the United States requires more precision than Robinson offers, though Americans may need to realize that going farther than this in the Australian context is to spend time on matters of lesser importance in a culture that is decidedly more post-Christian than the average American setting. Discussions between the various branches of evangelicalism could lead to better understanding of world Christianity and of the doctrine of Scripture. I wish Robinson were more precise in his views on errors in the Bible, but of course I write as an American evangelical.

Given Robinson's high view of the Bible and its sufficiency for the church and for daily living, it is no wonder that he also has a high view of preaching the Bible. Robinson argues that preaching the word and teaching the people to live by the word are the minister's chief tasks. Because they are to be grounded in the Bible, sermons must have as their goal the edification, comforting, encouraging, and warning of God's people. Robinson's chapter, entitled "The Theology of the Preached Word" (II, pp. 136–47), is

simply one of the finest pieces I have ever read on these subjects. Among other things, Robinson's comments on preaching remind evangelicals that preaching the Bible is the best way to show love and concern for people, for preaching the Bible means sharing the words our loving God has sent to us.

Though this section deserves much more space than I will give it, Robinson's views on the Bible and the church lead naturally into his strong commitment to exegetical theology. It is to the Bible one must go when trying to understand charismatic gifts (II, pp. 164–214), the nature of baptism (II, pp. 217–360), the Lord's Supper (II, pp. 367–402), and ordination (II, pp. 405–37). One can and will disagree about Robinson's views on these subjects, but they will need to dig deeper into Scripture than one usually does to do so. Several of Robinson's colleagues, students, and friends do just that in volume three.

Interestingly enough, Robinson does not follow his own usual method in one very significant and recurring ecclesiastical issue, the ordination of women to the priesthood. For reasons left unstated in the book he chooses to argue for male-only elders more from tradition than from detailed exegesis of passages in, for example, the Pastoral Epistles (II, pp. 438–89). Perhaps he felt this was the best strategy for the moment at hand, but it stands out as an unusual example of his argumentation. Tradition is on his side in the discussion, yet he rarely leans on tradition so significantly elsewhere.

The chief aim of Robinson's exegetical theology is to get at the meaning of "the gospel." This aim is also a consistent theme in other Australian evangelical writers. For Robinson the gospel is the good news of Jesus' saving believers from sin and judgment. It is also that message in its whole-Bible context. This understanding of the gospel is spelled out most clearly in his book, *Faith's Framework* (I, pp. 338–449), yet it is inherent in everything he writes. For Robinson, exegetical theology in service of the church means teaching the gospel accurately to every new generation. It means handing on the Bible, God's declaration to his creation—in other words, "the gospel"—to the next generation as pure as the NT writers handed it on to their churches and by extension to us. In this way theology always remains doxology. Robinson does not always reach this goal flawlessly any more than anyone else does, yet volume three of the set indicates that many subsequent writers believe he was faithful in the attempt.

These volumes do have flaws. For example, despite the service they have done all of us by producing the volumes, the editors left dozens of typographical errors that should be removed before subsequent printings occur. One could also argue that the word "preaching" should not be included in the title of the second volume given the subject matter. Furthermore, Rory Shiner's lengthy and helpful treatment of Robinson's ideas (III, pp. 9–62) might better serve the set as a prelude to volume one. And Robinson could well spend more time teasing out the practical implications of his exegetical conclusions.

Nevertheless, I think I have made it clear that I believe all three volumes are well worth reading, for there is much to learn from Robinson. NT scholars will learn from his historical perspectives on the church, the gifts of the Spirit, baptism, and other issues. Systematic theologians will learn from his views on the church and sacraments. Pastors will grow from his teaching on the Bible and preaching. Historians will learn more about a neglected wing of the evangelical movement. Biblical theologians will learn from his whole-Bible tendencies. We need the sort of work these volumes represent if we are to build the future of evangelicalism on the permanent things. Gospel work will not continue by accident, but by faithfulness to the enduring truths revealed by the eternal God.

Paul House  
Beeson Divinity School, Birmingham, AL

*Pedagogy of the Bible: An Analysis and Proposal*. By Dale B. Martin. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008, ix + 130 pp., \$24.95 paper.

Dale Martin's *Pedagogy of the Bible* is a very good book. In fact, in many ways, it is a prophetic book. Some will blithely dismiss his insights in light of some of his conclusions in previous writings. But this book must be seriously considered as all those involved in theological education in North America think deeply about what it means to teach the Bible.

As I prepare for my NT survey class each spring semester, many thoughts enter my mind: Who are these students? What will inspire them to study the NT? What tools will I offer them to inspire their study? What role, if any, does historical criticism have in my teaching?

Martin received a grant from the Wabash Center to study and evaluate the curriculum from ten seminaries that represented a wide denominational and theological spectrum. He says his work comprises "one small attempt to argue that radically altering the way theological schools teach biblical studies is one place to begin—for the benefit of our churches and even our broader culture" (p. ix).

Martin avoids tossing the proverbial baby out with the bathwater: yes, historical criticism does have a place in the interpretation of the Bible. However, what Martin is concerned about is when historical criticism becomes the *sine qua non* interpretative tool for seminary biblical education.

Chapter 2, entitled "Readers and Texts," is worth the price of the book. Here Martin navigates snarly yet essential terrain: he observes that the meaning of a text is inextricably woven into a person's (or community's) interpretation of that text: "Texts are not just containers that hold meaning" (p. 30). So Martin warns against the misleading distinction, often made in seminaries, between exegesis and eisegesis, as if historical criticism would assure a "right" interpretation. Martin gently chides us to remember that "texts do not create meaning; people create meaning" (p. 38). Again, Martin here is not fully dismissive of exegesis and historical criticism. Furthermore, he properly highlights the complexity of the interpretative process, whether one calls it a circle or spiral; it remains, nonetheless, a complex and dynamic phenomenon.

Martin then offers a thumbnail sketch of premodern biblical interpretation beginning with Origen and followed by discussions of Augustine, Bede, Bernard of Clairvaux, and Thomas Aquinas. His point is simple: most of biblical interpretation was not originally dominated by historical criticism. Moreover, what is often forgotten or neglected is the recognition that pre-Enlightenment interpretative methodologies were highly imaginative.

This is Martin's analysis: historical criticism, although a significant and valid methodology, should not be the only (read primary) model for interpreting Scripture for seminary students. What Martin proposes are two specific things, one involving method, the other involving curriculum. Methodologically, Martin espouses the use of narrative criticism—the ability to read texts, to understand genres, and to contextualize the text's message. In other words, instructors must model for students the ability to read texts theologically rather than simply exegetically. (Again, this is not to infer that Martin is anti-exegesis.)

Regarding curriculum, Martin makes one of his most significant contributions, proposing a repositioning of the Bible in the standard seminary curriculum. Instead of completing one's Bible requirements (OT and NT surveys) in the first year, Martin suggests a critical thinking course that covers how to think theologically would be a better use of pedagogical time. He also suggests a historical theology class to assist students in seeing the big picture of many theological constructs and controversies.

Martin suggests a more imaginative approach to interpreting Scripture; I agree wholeheartedly. Yet, here is where a difference of opinion might be registered. One might

glean from Martin's analysis that creativity or imagination is the highest form of theology. However, I would like to wed more intentionally imagination with "creedalness," namely, the ability to think imaginatively about texts within the rule of faith. I would fully embrace what I would call "creedal imagination"—that is, the imagination within the bounds (not barriers) of the early church creeds (e.g. the Apostles' and Nicene Creed). Why is this so? Because the interpreters of Scripture always appear to me to understand Scripture creedally, whether it be the *Shema* of the OT or one of the early Christian creedal statements (e.g. 1 Cor 15:3–8; Phil 2:6–11; Col 1:13–20; 1 Tim 3:16).

In sum, this is a book to be pondered, discussed, and debated among those who administrate and teach at institutions that offer biblical studies as a major. Martin is to be applauded for his candor, insights, and edginess. May we be courageous enough to enter the dialogue.

Joseph B. Modica  
Eastern University, St. Davids, PA

*Believer's Baptism: Sign of the New Covenant in Christ.* Edited by Thomas R. Schreiner and Shawn D. Wright. NAC Studies in Bible and Theology. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2006, xix + 364 pp., \$19.99.

This important volume, which offers a comprehensive case for believer's baptism in distinction from paedobaptism, is one in a series of volumes that aims to provide the church with the fruit of contemporary evangelical scholarship. E. Ray Clendenen, general editor of the series (NAC Studies in Bible and Theology), notes in his preface that the studies will include either detailed exegetical-theological works or biblical-theological treatments of particular topics. *Believer's Baptism*, though it addresses a general topic of importance to the life and ministry of the church, includes chapters that are primarily exegetical, others that are more theological, and some that trace the history of the topic in the Christian church.

In their introduction, the editors observe that the sacrament of baptism is of particular significance to the ministry of the church. The rite of baptism is an initiatory rite that marks a believer's incorporation into Christ and his body, the church. According to the editors, though differences between those who advocate believer's baptism and paedobaptism ought to be treated in an irenic and charitable manner, the significance of the difference between these two viewpoints may not be understated. They are convinced that advocacy of the believer's baptism position is scripturally demanded and constitutes one of the principal foundations of historic evangelicalism. Unless membership in the new covenant church is reserved for those who respond in faith to the gospel of Jesus Christ, the testimony of the gospel will be undermined and the church will become a "mixed community of believers and unbelievers" (p. 3). The integrity of the gospel-call to faith in Jesus Christ, as well as the character of the church as a community of believers who have experienced the work of the Spirit in regeneration and conversion, require that only believers receive the visible sign of fellowship with Christ through baptism.

The outline of the chapters in this volume reflects the authors' conviction that Scripture is the foremost norm for the faith and practice of the church. In the first section of the book, there are four chapters that treat the biblical witness regarding the sacrament of baptism and its proper recipients. The five chapters in the second section of the book address the topic in an historical and theological manner, and evaluate critically a number of historical advocates of the practice of infant baptism. A final chapter concludes the volume with a consideration of the implications of believer's baptism for the contemporary practice and ministry of evangelical churches.

The first of the chapters in the biblical section is authored by Andreas Köstenberger, who treats the subject of baptism in the NT Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and John. After observing that the Jewish practice of proselyte baptism does not constitute a significant precedent for Christian baptism, Köstenberger considers each of the canonical Gospels in succession and offers a summary of their bearing upon the question of the nature and significance of this rite. Upon the basis of his survey of each of the Gospels, Köstenberger summarizes the “major implications” of their witness for the topic of believer’s baptism (pp. 33–34): first, the rite of baptism is “designed for believers who have repented of their sin and have put their faith in God and in his Christ”; second, the Great Commission passage in Matthew 28 links baptism with Christian discipleship, which suggests that baptism should only be administered to converts who are being taught to obey the commands of Christ; third, the Gospel accounts of John’s and Jesus’ baptism suggest that the “mode” was that of immersion; and fourth, baptism with water “presupposes spiritual regeneration as a prevenient and primary work of God in and through the person of the Holy Spirit.” On the basis of his survey, Köstenberger concludes that the Gospels view repentance from sin and faith in Christ to be “logically and chronologically prior to water baptism” (p. 34).

In a second chapter that also treats the biblical evidence, Robert H. Stein, following the order of books in the NT, turns to the data on baptism in Luke-Acts. Since these two books contain almost half of the references to baptism found in the NT, they are of particular importance to the determination of NT teaching and the early church’s practice. The burden of Stein’s argument in this chapter is that Christian baptism is inextricably linked to the way those who are called through the gospel to faith and repentance become Christians and are incorporated into Christ’s body, the church. In Luke-Acts, the rite of baptism is typically represented as an initiatory act that is administered to those who respond to the gospel in repentance and faith, and who do so by virtue of their saving participation in the “baptism of the Holy Spirit.” For the “experience” of baptism to be legitimate, it must be preceded by a reception of the Holy Spirit who is at work in the hearts of believers or converts to the Christian faith. The pattern in the accounts of Luke-Acts is one in which believers who repent at the preaching of the gospel receive the rite of baptism and are assured of the forgiveness of their sins. Without preceding faith and repentance, there can be no reception of baptism as a sign of the baptized person’s participation in Christ. In addition to arguing for this nexus of faith, repentance, reception of the Spirit, and baptism in Luke-Acts, Stein also addresses two further aspects of the debate regarding believer’s baptism: the mode of baptism, and the significance of the “household baptisms” that are recorded in Acts. In Stein’s interpretation, the evidence from Luke-Acts supports the inference that Christian baptism was administered originally by means of immersion. Stein also contends that the references to “household baptisms” do not constitute a sufficient piece of evidence for the practice of “infant” baptism in the early church. In the book of Acts, there is no clear instance where an infant is said to have been baptized. Furthermore, Stein observes that the language for “household” may imply the baptism of younger children who were believers, but does not require the conclusion that infants were recipients of baptism.

Thomas R. Schreiner, one of the editors of this volume, authors the third chapter in the first section that addresses the biblical data that bear upon the subject of believer’s baptism. Schreiner’s chapter treats the subject of baptism in the NT epistles and comes to conclusions similar to those of the previous chapters. A careful analysis of the NT epistles proves, Schreiner maintains, that Christian baptism is an initiatory rite that ought to be administered only to those who already possess through faith the blessings of salvation in Christ that baptism signifies. In his survey of the NT epistles, Schreiner begins with texts that illustrate the centrality of baptism as an initiatory rite

that outwardly confirms the believer's participation in Christ and membership in his body. Thereafter he takes up those passages that offer a more comprehensive theology of baptism. In these passages (Rom 6:3–4; Col 2:11–12), the apostle Paul draws a parallel between the believer's participation in Christ by the regenerating and renewing work of the Holy Spirit and the reception of baptism, which signifies the full spiritual reality of saving incorporation into Christ. Though paedobaptists often appeal to Col 2:11–12 in order to draw a parallel between the OT rite of circumcision and Christian baptism, Schreiner argues that the parallel exhibited in this text is between "spiritual circumcision" and the rite of baptism. Therefore, this text does not constitute an argument for the baptism of children of believers on the basis of the OT precedent of circumcising the children of the covenant. After treating these two kinds of texts, Schreiner turns to epistolary texts that argue against an "overestimation" of baptism, as though the rite were a saving ordinance by itself, and others that speak of the mode and symbolism of baptism. On the basis of his consideration of these kinds of passages, Schreiner concludes that the likeliest mode of baptism in the early church was immersion and that the symbolism of baptism requires the presence of faith on the part of its recipient. Within the framework of the history of redemption, Schreiner argues that the character of the new covenant community differs significantly from that of the old covenant community. The church, unlike Israel under the old covenant, is a community of regenerate people who have experienced the saving work of Christ by his Holy Spirit. Though circumcision was administered to infants and children under the old covenant, the significance of this rite, unlike Christian baptism, was restricted primarily to the identification of a national and ethnic community.

The last chapter in the biblical exposition section of this volume is of particular significance to the argument for believer's baptism and the refutation of the paedobaptist position. Because the principal basis for the practice of baptizing the children of believing parents is the claim that the new covenant is in substantial continuity with the old covenant, the author of this chapter, Stephen J. Wellum, offers an extensive evaluation of this claim on the part of paedobaptists. Observing that paedobaptists are not deterred by the absence of any express command to baptize infants or any record of a clear case of infant baptism, Wellum correctly judges that the argument from the biblical understanding of the covenant is the primary reason paedobaptists insist upon the inclusion of children of believers in the new covenant community. As he notes, "if Baptists want to argue cogently against the paedobaptist viewpoint and for a believer's baptism, we must, in the end, respond to this covenantal argument" (p. 98).

Wellum begins his evaluation of the covenant argument for paedobaptism with a summary of its main features. According to the paedobaptist understanding of the covenant, just as the children were included in the old covenant community and received accordingly the sign of circumcision, so the children of believing parents are included in the new covenant community and receive the sign of baptism. Because the covenant of grace is in substance the same under the old and new covenant administrations, and because the Lord of the covenant has not expressly excluded the children of new covenant believers from membership in the church and eligibility for its initiatory rite, the children of believers ought to be baptized. Baptism, having replaced circumcision in the new covenant as an initiatory rite and sign of incorporation into the church, is a sign that belongs to the children of believers and not to believers alone. In his critical evaluation of this covenant argument for paedobaptism, Wellum challenges its assumptions regarding the continuity between the old and new covenants. Though he does not deny elements of continuity between the OT covenant of grace and the NT church, he specifically contests the paedobaptist claims regarding the nature of the new covenant church and the substantial identity of meaning between the rites of circumcision and Christian baptism. Contrary to the paedobaptist claim that the new covenant community is a

mixed company of true believers and others who are only “externally” members of the church, Wellum insists that the church, unlike Israel, is composed only of true believers who have experienced the saving work of Christ’s Spirit. OT Israel was a national and ethnic people, whereas the NT church is an international community of those who have entered the community in the way of faith and repentance. The problem with the usual argument for paedobaptism is that it flattens out the history of redemption and does not do justice to the newness of the new covenant. An important passage in this respect, according to Wellum, is Jer 31:29–34 (cf. Heb 8–10). This passage teaches that the new covenant community is built upon a “better promise” than the old, because those who are members of the church will experience the fullness of the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. No longer will the people of God be composed of genuine believers and unbelievers alike; now it will be composed only of those who have experienced the fulfillment of this promise. Furthermore, Christian baptism, which signifies the baptized person’s genuine experience of the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, may not be viewed as simply the new covenant counterpart to circumcision. Consistent with the nature of the old covenant community, Israel, circumcision signified the inclusion of its recipients into a national, ethnic people, and did not entail the kind of saving participation in the work of Christ by the Spirit that baptism signifies in the new covenant.

After these opening chapters on the biblical data that are relevant to the topic of believer’s baptism, the remainder of the chapters in this volume treat a variety of historical and theological dimensions of the debate. Because these chapters are of varying degrees of importance to the major thesis of the book, I will only briefly note their contents. In a chapter on baptism in the patristic writings, Steven A. McKinion addresses the disputed issue of the baptismal practice of the early church. Contrary to the claims of some paedobaptists, McKinion concludes, upon the basis of his survey of the historical evidence of the early centuries of the Christian era, that “[t]he ancient practice of the church was to baptize only those who had repented of sin, placed their faith in Jesus Christ, and committed to a life of faithful Christian service following a time of instruction and testing” (p. 188). Jonathon H. Rainbow offers a chapter on the early debates between some of the Reformers, particularly Zwingli and the “Ana-baptists,” and argues principally that the covenant argument for infant baptism was a sixteenth-century novelty that departed from the past and the “believer baptism” tradition. In a substantial chapter on the “logic of Reformed paedobaptists,” Shawn D. Wright presents a theological critique of the arguments of John Calvin, John Murray, and Pierre Marcel for paedobaptism. Wright’s chapter echoes a number of the themes previously sounded in the chapter by Wellum. However, in addition to Wellum’s arguments, Wright alleges that there is a kind of internal inconsistency in the theological arguments of these representative figures in the Reformed tradition. Though these writers all describe baptism in a way that requires a believing appropriation of the saving work of Christ by the Spirit so that only believers truly possess the grace that baptism signifies, they nonetheless insist that non-believers (infants) should receive the sacrament. The final two chapters in this section on the history of the debate regarding believer’s baptism focus upon a narrower field of debate. Duane A. Garrett treats the biblical-theological arguments of Meredith Kline, who maintains that circumcision and baptism are “oath-signs” of the covenant between God and his people, threatening judgment upon those who are covenant breakers and promising blessing to those who are covenant keepers. In his chapter, A. B. Caneday considers the teaching on baptism in the Stone-Campbell restoration movement and argues that the common assumption among Baptists that this movement teaches baptismal regeneration needs to re-examined. Caneday also maintains that a renewed evaluation of this movement may well serve to restore a greater sense of the importance of Christian baptism to the Baptist churches in North America. In the final chapter of

the volume, Mark Dever offers a kind of pastoral manual for the practice of administering believer's baptism in a responsible manner in Baptist churches.

As should be apparent from this sketch of the contents of this volume, it provides a substantial contribution to the literature on believer's baptism. Though there are a number of older books that set forth the case for believer's baptism (e.g. G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament*, and P. K. Jewett, *Infant Baptism and the Covenant of Grace*), this book offers an up-to-date statement of the biblical, theological, and historical dimensions of the debate between credobaptists and paedobaptists. Because the case for paedobaptism has been vigorously pressed in recent years by Reformed theologians who appeal to the covenantal basis for infant baptism, the contributors to this volume are especially interested in an evaluation that engages this argument. As the editors note in their preface, the purpose of the volume is not primarily to address the position of those who advocate a doctrine of baptismal regeneration; rather, the primary purpose of this volume is to make the case for believer's baptism in the face of the challenge that arises from Reformed covenant theology. The high quality of the chapters in this volume, the range of subjects addressed, the irenic yet resolute spirit of the authors, and the importance of the debate, all suggest that this book will become something of a standard point of reference in the debate regarding the proper recipients of Christian baptism. Readers who are interested in a comprehensive defense of believer's baptism in the face of the challenge of Reformed covenant theology will find this volume to be among the best in print.

Though this volume offers a substantial and comprehensive defense of believer's baptism, it has some deficiencies. Like many volumes that include a wide assortment of chapters that are broadly linked by a common topic, this one includes some chapters that are not as germane to the overall argument as others. This is particularly true in the section of the book that addresses various historical and theological facets of the debate regarding the proper recipients of baptism. In the historical section, for example, the chapter on the view of Meredith Kline seems somewhat out of place. Because Kline's defense of paedobaptism is closely connected with his somewhat idiosyncratic theology of the covenant, it is not evident that it deserves a separate chapter. Whenever historic divergences exist within the church, especially on a topic as important as that of baptism, it is best to engage the arguments that have historically been most influential and decisive; this can hardly be said to hold true for Kline's formulations. Likewise, the chapter on the Stone-Campbell restoration movement does not seem as critical to the case laid out in this volume as the other chapters in the biblical and theological section. The most decisive chapters in the volume are undoubtedly the opening chapters on the biblical data and the chapters on baptism in the patristic writings and those on the Reformers and subsequent Reformed theologians.

Perhaps it is inevitable in a volume such as this, but some subjects in the debate seem to be given rather short shrift or are treated inadequately. Though it is not a decisive feature of the historic dispute between credo- and paedobaptists, the issue of the proper mode of baptism, whether by immersion, affusion, or sprinkling, is treated at a few points but in a rather superficial manner. Similarly, the view of the sacraments in Reformed covenant theology tends to be treated only rather indirectly. The authors recognize that the typical form of the covenant argument for the baptism of children of believers does not include a doctrine of baptismal regeneration. However, the Reformed covenant view does regard the sacrament rather differently than the believer's baptism view. In the Reformed view, a sacrament is a visible sign and seal of the promise of God's grace in Christ toward believers and their children. When the sacrament is viewed in this manner, the critical question is not whether the children of believers have already responded in faith to the gospel promise; rather, the critical question is

whether God is pleased to include children as recipients of this promise in some special way (cf. Acts 2:39) so that they should also receive the sacrament that signifies and seals the promise to them. Throughout this volume the authors assume a believer's baptism view of the sacrament as a visible "profession" of the faith of its recipient. By assuming this view of baptism as a rite of visible admission into the body of Christ, the church, that requires faith on the part of its recipient, the authors tend to underestimate the importance of the argument for paedobaptism that appeals to the nature of sacraments, the divinely revealed recipients of the gospel promise, and the pattern of "household baptisms" that emerges in the book of Acts. In their treatment of the paedobaptist appeal to Colossians 2:12–13, the authors too quickly reject the typical paedobaptist claim that a parallel is drawn in this passage between circumcision and baptism. No doubt the spiritual significance of the OT rite of circumcision is in the forefront in this passage, but this does not mean that there is no connection between the rite and what it properly signifies (cf. the traditional Augustinian definition of a sacrament as a "visible sign of an invisible grace").

Though a book review is not the place to engage in detail the argument of a volume like this, I do not believe the authors always represent fairly the Reformed covenant argument for paedobaptism. In the interest of full disclosure, I must acknowledge that I am a covenant theologian who is persuaded by the covenant argument for infant baptism. And so my observations at this juncture may be skewed by my own confessional and theological commitments. However, I offer the following comments on the principal argument of this volume in the interest of clarifying the debate between credo- and paedobaptists.

Central to the argument of this volume is that there is a substantial difference in the history of redemption between the identity of the old covenant community, Israel, and the new covenant community, the church. Whereas the old covenant community was primarily a "mixed" company of persons, not all of whom enjoyed the "spiritual" and saving blessings of communion with God, the new covenant community in Christ consists exclusively of believers who have experienced the regenerating and converting work of the Holy Spirit. The "better promise" of the new covenant is the promise of a greater and richer working of the Holy Spirit, who will grant a new heart to all who are properly members of Christ's church. Though the outward sign of circumcision may have been a fitting sign of membership in a community that is ethnic and national in character, the sign of baptism is suitable only for a community that is spiritual in character. Because the rite of baptism signifies a true and saving communion with Jesus Christ, it must be reserved to those who can attest their faith and saving fellowship with Jesus Christ (p. 112). When paedobaptists admit the children of believers into the church through baptism, they deliberately admit unregenerate members into the community of faith and undermine the gospel summons to faith and repentance.

There are two facets of this argument against paedobaptism that are somewhat question-begging in nature. First, it is not self-evident that the practice of believer's baptism solves the problem of the admission of non-regenerate persons into the new covenant community. To paraphrase a line from Charles Hodge, it should be observed that "all the marks of regeneration can be counterfeited." The history of the evangelical churches does not conclusively demonstrate the claim that the practice of believer's baptism is a secure hedge against nominalism or creeping unbelief within the church community. And second, the assumption of the authors of this volume is that advocates of paedobaptism are guilty of severing the tie between baptism and faith. However, Reformed covenant theology has always insisted upon the response of faith prior to baptism in the case of the baptism of adult believers. Reformed covenant theology also emphasizes the connection between baptism and faith when it teaches that the grace signified and sealed in the sacrament is only communicated to its recipients (whether

adults or children) in the way of faith. Far from undermining the urgency of the gospel summons to faith and repentance, baptism, whether of adult believers or their children, requires the same response as the gospel, namely, faith and repentance. In the argument for baptism on the basis of covenant membership, it is claimed that God works his gracious purpose of salvation in believers and in the line of the generations. In the words of Reformed theologian, Geerhardus Vos, God's grace "is sovereign but it is not arbitrary." God is pleased to call to himself a community composed of believers and their children, and he ordinarily uses the means of grace appointed to that end to save those whom he calls to himself. Though it may well be that many Reformed churches have not lived up to their covenant theology, it is hardly the case that this theology diminishes the obligations of faith and repentance in respect to the children of believers. On this point, the claims of several authors in this volume seem to be overstated.

Despite these weaknesses, this book represents a significant contribution to the literature on the debate regarding the proper recipients of baptism in the Christian church.

Cornelis P. Bennema

Mid-America Reformed Seminary, Dyer, IN

*Jonathan Edwards and the Ministry of the Word: A Model of Faith and Thought.* By Douglas A. Sweeney. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2009, 200 pp., \$14.00 paper.

Douglas A. Sweeney is professor of church history at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. He is eminently qualified to write this volume on Jonathan Edwards, having coedited *The Sermons of Jonathan Edwards: A Reader* (Yale University Press) and authored *Nathaniel Taylor, New Haven Theology, and the Legacy of Jonathan Edwards* (Oxford University Press). He has also contributed to the masterful Yale series, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (vol. 23).

As the title indicates, Sweeney's book is "aimed at fellow Christians, people looking for a state-of-the-art discussion of his life in order to use him as a model of Christian faith, thought and ministry" (p. 17). Furthermore, the author explains he has written his work "with Christians at the forefront of [his] mind: pastors, students and everyone else who wants a brief, accessible book, full of essential information and explicitly Christian comment . . ." (p. 17). With this focus, it was refreshing in the acknowledgments to see a long list of pastors and churches that assisted the author.

Sweeney begins the book by giving a limited chronology of Edwards's life, though he includes a footnote to a more extensive chronology. One may initially question the author's intent for why four out of the fifty-six events listed are excommunication cases in Edwards's church. This emphasis seems out of place as more noteworthy events are omitted, including Edwards's second awakening during his near-death experience (1719); the Robert Breck affair, which Edwards identifies as the main reason the Great Awakening declined (1734–35); the death of Joseph Hawley, Sr. at the end of the Awakening (1735); the preaching of the *Charity and Its Fruits* series (1738) and the *History of the Work of Redemption* series (1739); the denial of Mary Hulbert's membership application (1749); and Edwards's *Farewell Sermon* (July 2, 1750). In the same section, finding Edwards's slaves listed under his family members will again cause the reader to question the author's intent. This issue later presents itself when Sweeney offers a slightly anachronistic projection of Edwards's approval of slavery. While not explaining the redemptive movement concerning slavery in the early eighteenth century, Sweeney wonders how a leader such as Edwards "proved [so] sinful" (p. 67). He later

discusses the life of Edwards's wife, Sarah, and her "sins as a slave mistress" (p. 68). He also unfairly charges Edwards with being "something of a racist" because he wanted to Anglicanize the American Indians (p. 180). While it would be a disservice to Edwards not to show his flaws, this critique must be done tactfully, with balance, and with chronological sensitivity.

The author begins his Preface with a very bold statement: "Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758) is the most influential thinker in all of evangelical history" (p. 17). Although he initially provides the reader no parameters for the beginning of "evangelical history," he later states that Edwards was the "most important founder of the evangelical movement" (ibid). That established, Sweeney then presents fitting qualifications for why Edwards deserves such high acclaim.

The Introduction is a wonderful section that fulfills the author's goal to place Edwards in context. Using vivid language that would have made Edwards proud, Sweeney describes the sights, sounds, and smells of the time. Reading about the population, city size, the interworkings of society, and the traditions of the church, one is able to experience life in eighteenth-century New England.

Chapter one initiates the book proper, which is largely a biography. Sweeney is to be commended for traversing through the extensive life of Edwards and distilling the most pertinent information. Although there are events that the reader may have liked discussed, the author does cover main events and offers a treasure trove of additional gold nuggets along the way. His knowledge of the historiography of Edwards is impressive. Of particular delight are the footnotes, containing a wealth of information that every Edwardsian scholar will find helpful. Sweeney even details unpublished materials from archives such as the Beinecke Library at Yale and Franklin Trask Library at Andover-Newton Theological School.

Throughout the biography, the author gives deliberate attention to Edwards as "chiefly a biblical thinker, a minister of the Word" (p. 83). Aspects of his ministry such as sermon preparation and outline, preaching emphases, and delivery are discussed in light of Edwards's commitment to the power and authority of self-authenticating Scripture. It is refreshing to see Sweeney's affirmation of Edwards's commitment to serious-minded, biblical preaching in view of our contemporary "light and insubstantial mini-sermons" (p. 77). Also of practical importance is Edwards's commitment to Scripture in light of his era of rampant biblical criticism. He was not an isolationist, but fulfilled his calling as a guardian of his flock by interacting with the works of the "biblical avant-garde" (p. 95). An example for future pastors, Edwards "paid close attention to the literary world—not only to orthodox material, but to anything that could help him understand its recent trends and articulate the goodness, truth and beauty of the divine in terms his peers would find persuasive. He loved the Lord with his mind" (p. 145).

The reader may find the author's discussion of Edwards's hermeneutic lacking. Speaking of literal and allegorical interpretation in too general of terms, Sweeney identifies himself within a Protestant movement that exercises "literal exegesis," but then, with questionable language, laments the "destruction caused by such a critical method" that disparages the Catholic "spiritual, and exegetical, barbarism" (p. 97). He provides a brief history of hermeneutics and touches on Edwards's use of literal and spiritual hermeneutics, specifically his use of typology. Although the footnotes are stellar throughout the book, at this juncture it is disappointing not to see a reference to Glenn Kreider's excellent work on Edwards's hermeneutics in the introductory chapters of *Jonathan Edwards' Interpretation of Revelation 4:1–8:1* (University Press of America, 2004).

Sweeney's discussion of the end of Edwards's life involves his most significant and theologically weighty material. Before discussing *Freedom of the Will, Original Sin*, and the *Two Dissertations*, the author warns his readers to "prepare themselves for strenuous mental exertion" (pp. 147–48). Although the general nature of these works

is explained well, those unfamiliar with *The Freedom of the Will* may find difficulty understanding Edwards because terms and concepts are not explained on an introductory level. It was encouraging, however, to see Sweeney mention the impact this work had on promoting missionary work among Calvinists, a fact that often goes unmentioned. Moreover, the paradigm-shifting implications of Edwards's thought in the *Two Dissertations*, as discussed by Sweeney, may cause the reader to wish for further application to the Christian life.

The book concludes with the highly anticipated "Seven Theses for Discussion." Sweeney details some "insights and examples gleaned from Edwards's life and ministry to enhance our Christian faith and fortify our gospel witness" (p. 197). Unfortunately, this section is limited to just over three pages. For example, the thesis that involves the eschatological life of Edwards is only one paragraph, contains no words from Edwards, does not mention the postmillennial basis for his perspective, and does not discuss how he interpreted reality in light of his millennial hope. One gets the sense that Sweeney had to maintain brevity in order to uphold the "brief" nature of the book that ends promptly on page two hundred. Many Edwardsians will feel unsatisfied by the brevity of this main section designated for the target audience.

Sweeney makes no claims to surpass the biographical work of George Marsden (*Jonathan Edwards: A Life* [Yale, 2004]) nor to focus on application to the church (such as Josh Moody's *The God-Centered Life: Insights from Jonathan Edwards for Today* [Regent, 2007]). Rather, Sweeney's main contribution is to combine biography and application into a brief introduction to the most important figure in evangelical history. If one is limited to a succinct book that combines these elements, then one can hardly find a more in-depth and practical volume than this one. In short, Sweeney establishes that Edwards "loved the Lord with his *mind*—more than most of us do today. He really *believed* that God can use the greater ministry of the Word to change the world and bring it in line with its 'original ultimate end.' This faith made Edwards great. People do not regard him today as the most important Protestant clergyman in all of American history because he was well-liked or entertaining. He remains influential, rather, because he invested prayer, sweat, and tears in the life of the mind. Such commitment requires trust that God will use the Word as he says. We ought to ask ourselves today whether we have that kind of trust" (p. 164).

Jonathan Moorhead

Samara Preachers' Institute and Theological Seminary, Samara, Russia

*The Last Word and the Word After That: A Tale of Faith, Doubt, and a New Kind of Christianity.* By Brian D. McLaren. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005, 224 pp., \$21.95; 2008, 336 pp., \$14.95, paper.

[Note: This book review is based on the late Stanley Grenz's "peer review" of Brian McLaren, *The Last Word and the Word After That*, originally commissioned by Jossey-Bass (A Wiley Imprint), and completed November 27, 2004. The review appears here in edited form, used by permission of the publisher and author of the reviewed book. The page numbers are taken from 2008 paperback edition.]

My overall response to this work is very positive. It forms a fitting third volume in McLaren's trilogy, *A New Kind of Christian*. One can anticipate that this book will be widely read and well received. It will also, of course, spark debate—among some readers, even heated debate—and therefore the book will be controversial. On the whole, I would voice a hearty "Bravo!" to the volume. That said, let me fulfill my role as "theological

reader” and offer several critical comments. Some of these are of a more general nature. Others are merely suggestions regarding a few places at which McLaren might want to rethink a detail or two.

On pages 63–66, McLaren engages with the absence of references to hell in the OT. In this context, we are told that “hell was not ‘revealed’ in the Old Testament” (p. 63). He then notes that *sheol* was mistranslated as “hell” in the KJV (p. 64). Although the basic point is well taken, eschatology in the OT is more complicated than one is led to believe by these pages. Whereas the ancient Hebrews did not have the detailed conceptualization that later developed, they too gave thought to the possibility that some people might escape the realm of *sheol*—which was repeatedly viewed as a negative reality, an undesirable destiny—and be brought directly into the presence of God. In this light, I am not sure that one can claim to know so definitively what was meant by several of the OT passages that “Neil” dismisses out of hand (e.g. the Job text on p. 66).

A point McLaren makes on several occasions, beginning on page 86, is that Jesus did not himself believe in hell but merely used the Pharisees’ eschatology as a way of getting his own teaching across. Brian is, of course, correct in declaring that Jesus did not affirm everything about the eschatological picture that his opponents believed (e.g. the details in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus). It is, however, a stretch from this observation to the conclusion that Jesus did not believe in hell. McLaren’s lengthy chart of the appropriate verses in Matthew’s Gospel is helpful here (pp. 161–65). But again, just because Jesus’ main point might have been to call for a change in the present does not mean that he used the idea of hell merely as a teaching tool.

On page 108, “Neil” offers a reinterpretation of eternal life. What is presented in this context (and later as well) sounds like a page out of mid-twentieth century existentialist theology. Although eternal life does indeed refer to a quality of life in the present, the idea that for Jesus or the NT it has no (or little) connection to life in the hereafter is a perspective that has been largely discredited. Page 109 contains “Neil’s” argument that many of the details in Jesus’ description of hell (i.e. Gehenna) are figurative. This is, of course, correct. However, the fact that Jesus paints a picture of eternal damnation that draws from a variety of then-current images of destruction does not necessarily warrant the conclusion that the entire idea of an eternal separation from God is figurative. Here, as elsewhere, the book comes across too dogmatic—too certain that the traditional view is beyond redemption—for a piece that purports to be open to mystery and the paradoxes of biblical materials.

One major tangential problem that arises in the book is its treatment of Scripture on pages 154–55. The split set up between the Bible and the Word of God comes across like a weak attempt to follow a Barthian model (albeit without Barth’s theological sophistication), perhaps mediated through Dave Tomlinson’s highly questionable presentation on Scripture (cf. *The Post-Evangelical*, rev. ed. [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003] 107–22). In addition, this section rings very outmoded. Much work has been done in the doctrine of Scripture in recent years (cf. Stanley J. Grenz and John R. Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology in a Postmodern Context* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001] 57–92).

In this book, McLaren appears to be drawn to “deep ecclesiology” (p. 194). And, of course, the idea has merit. However, it presents a “weak” perspective on the importance of the church, especially the local church, which many readers will likely find unhelpful, especially in the context of the current quest for community. To claim Jesus’ statement, “where two or three are gathered,” as the basis for such an ecclesiology seems to display a superficial understanding of this biblical saying.

Beginning on page 232, Brian offers a short historical sketch of where the church went wrong. Such sketches are inherently suspect. They generally proceed from a “we

know better” stance which does not seek to present the theological moves of our predecessors in their own historical contexts. And they often fail to reflect a sufficiently nuanced understanding of the philosophical and cultural contexts in which our predecessors worked. They are therefore anachronistic. This kind of suspect treatment is evident, I believe, in the wholesale dismissal of the Christian engagement with Neoplatonism, which presents neither a completely accurate portrayal of the Neoplatonists nor a knowledgeable perspective as to why Christian thinkers sought to appropriate this philosophical tradition.

This leads me to my biggest hesitation about the book as a whole. Because it is a “popular” treatment of the topic, the volume simply does not—perhaps cannot—provide the kind of responsible, nuanced engagement with the variety of views on various theological topics (especially eschatology) that one would prefer to see. There are a host of folks troubled by the double predestinarian portrayal of hell that McLaren rightly debunks, but who are attempting to provide cogent, biblical, and helpful ways of speaking about eternal estrangement from God. The stylized approach taken in this book works against allowing those voices to be heard. The direction in which the narrative moves is toward a stereotypical casting of those who are not on the journey that McLaren finds himself on. Perhaps there just might be theological thinkers today who could assist both “Jess” and “Carol,” thinkers who could speak into this complex and crucial issue without jeopardizing the faith of either of these two “women.”

Stanley J. Grenz (1950–2005)  
Carey Theological College, Vancouver, BC

*A Place at the Table: George Eldon Ladd and the Rehabilitation of Evangelical Scholarship in America.* By John A. D’Elia. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008, xxvi + 271 pp., \$45.00.

This fascinating and at times heart-breaking biography documents the life of one of American evangelicalism’s most important figures, G. E. Ladd (1911–1982). As with any good biography, the author not only presents Ladd’s own life and work but also shows how Ladd was a product of and influenced by the broader setting of twentieth-century evangelicalism. In this way, the book speaks beyond the story of one man into a much broader movement, a movement in which most of the readers of this *Journal* will find their own history and identity. Thus, this book is a valuable resource for understanding who we are as evangelicals and how we got here.

The title and subtitle speak to the two key ideas in the book: “A Place at the Table” references Ladd’s own driving ambition to be accepted as a legitimate scholar in the biblical studies guild, a drive that transformed his life in many ways into a tragic story. “The Rehabilitation of Evangelical Scholarship in America” speaks to Ladd’s desire to see evangelicals re-engage and contribute to the academic study of Scripture and theology. As De’Elia explains, “Ladd spent the better part of his thirty-year career attempting to rehabilitate what he perceived to be a weak and irrelevant evangelical movement in the United States” (p. xi). These two overlapping elements of Ladd’s life and work form the main thesis of D’Elia’s absorbing biography.

The difficulty of reviewing a biography is that there are two levels of discourse to address. One is the question of how well done the work of the biography itself is. The other is the content of the material. In non-biographical monographs these are the same, but for a biography these remain distinct. I will begin first with the question of quality

and, second, address the content itself (Ladd's life and work). I will suggest some ways in which readers of this review may benefit from this biographical sketch of Ladd.

First, to the question of how well done the biography is. In short: it is well written, engaging, and a well-researched piece of history writing. The footnotes reveal that D'Elia has done his homework through interviews and document research. Most enlightening—and at times disturbing—is the story that comes from Ladd's own correspondence with various figures of his time. D'Elia makes good use of this material to help us get into the mind of Ladd beyond his public face and writings. My only critique of D'Elia at this point is that at times he does seem to offer a bit too confident of a psychological analysis of Ladd (e.g. pp. 7, 129), and at one point can't resist the juicy suggestions that Ladd was carousing around Heidelberg as a drunkard and engaging in inappropriate behavior toward the wife "of at least one student" (p. 84). Such devastating claims may be true, but the supporting evidence in the footnotes appears to go not much beyond hearsay. This behooves us to caution in making such statements. Nevertheless, in light of Ladd's later-in-life very public psychological breakdown, this suggestion may not be entirely unjustified. Regarding D'Elia's work as an intellectual history biography, he does a sufficient job of analyzing Ladd's writing at various points (e.g. pp. 168–70) and setting him within the broader currents of American fundamentalism and evangelicalism (see especially the interesting interaction with Walvoord and the dispensationalists). Regarding this social, philosophical, and theological background to Ladd, D'Elia is not as insightful or thorough as, say, George Marsden's biography of Jonathan Edwards. However, the latter may be seen as a gold standard to which few other biographies can attain. More could have been helpfully said about the general rise of neo-evangelicalism in postwar America (e.g. Billy Graham and the rise of certain institutions and organizations, such as *Christianity Today*). Nevertheless, D'Elia clearly understands Ladd's ideas and treats him fairly and sympathetically. To whatever degree "objectivity" might be a virtue in historiography, D'Elia seems to possess it.

The concluding chapter is fitting and provides a helpful overview of the long-lasting impact of Ladd. D'Elia calls Ladd "the most important biblical scholar" in the postwar evangelical resurgence in America (p. 176), and this claim is hard to dispute. In his day Ladd did wield an important and formative influence in carving a *via media* between fundamentalist dispensational America and the mainline liberal academy and church. This middle way—originally called "neo-evangelicalism"—is very much the fountainhead of what we as evangelicals understand to be our own identity. This is seen especially in the current impact that Ladd's ideas continue to have on evangelicalism's theology and sensibilities. D'Elia helpfully identifies several significant ways in which Ladd's work opened the door (or provided "a place at the table") for subsequent generations of evangelical scholars and, I would add, more broadly, evangelical thinking even at the lay level. One of these is the relationship of history and theology. Ladd valued historical critical tools but sought to temper them with a refined distinction between *Historie* and *Geschichte*, rejecting closed continuum Enlightenment historicism in favor of a view of history that includes the notions of revelation and *Heilsgeschichte*. On this last notion we see some of Ladd's greatest impact: the introduction of Cullmann's thought into the American evangelical consciousness and its borrowed vocabulary of "already-not yet." This direction provided a significant alternative to the dominant dispensationalism of Ladd's own day. And in this way, Ladd provided a very different understanding of eschatology and the kingdom of God, one that I dare say has come to be far more influential in evangelicalism than dispensationalism is. Indeed, it has positively affected both covenantal theologians and dispensationalists such that it seems most evangelicals today would identify themselves as somewhere between these two extremes and use the ideas of Ladd, even if they do not realize their source. More than anyone else, Ladd is responsible for paving this new way. The tragedy in all this is that despite

the monumental influence that Ladd was to have, in the midst of it he made a wreck of his own life in many ways, and he perceived himself as a failure. This is one of D'Elia's main ideas and he prosecutes this saddening thesis very effectively from the evidence.

We may now turn to a few brief comments about what readers today, especially evangelicals, can learn from the content of this book, the life of one of our progenitors. A very important lesson to learn from 1950s conservative evangelicalism of which Ladd was a part is that militant dogmatism on certain points, albeit presented in the form of "the truth," will often be rightly seen by subsequent generations to be misguided and harmful. An ethos and habit of unwillingness to dialogue, separatist impulses, and the raising of secondary issues to primary status (e.g. pretribulational rapture) will only backfire and drive many away. Ladd saw and experienced this himself. In seeing the intense interaction between Ladd and the dispensationalists, one cannot help but wonder if people like Walvoord at Dallas Theological Seminary had been more irenic, Ladd and Fuller Seminary would not have needed to react so much the opposite way. Also, seeing the many in-house battles among conservatives mid-century (e.g. criticizing Billy Graham; uproar over the Revised Standard Version of the Bible) should give us pause as we prosecute our own passionate positions. For many of these brothers of ours of the past generation, there was little to no difference between shielding America from "the commies," upholding the orthodoxy of pre-tribulationalism, and defending the virgin birth. Most evangelicals today would rightly desire to differentiate these views in value and accuracy. This begs us to examine ourselves as to what sacred cows in our contemporary evangelical tradition should be revisited and held much more coolly. Finally, Ladd's life and history also speak directly to many of us as evangelical scholars as we consider our aspirations and priorities. Ladd was and is rightly respected for his erudition and significant contribution to theological and biblical understanding. Most of us would long to have even half the impact that Ladd has. But at what cost? Ladd was driven to be accepted by the secular academy as a legitimate scholar, and to this end he sacrificed his family relationships. Moreover, his self-perceived failure in this goal (based mainly on a negative review of his *magnum opus* by Norman Perrin) catapulted him into cynicism, despair, and depression. A word of caution regarding the hopes and priorities of younger scholars certainly lies in this story of a flawed but great evangelical man. We are in the debt of D'Elia for providing a good book on this important father of evangelical scholarship.

Jonathan T. Pennington  
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY