

BOOK REVIEWS

Being Human in God's Word: An Old Testament Theology of Humanity. By J. Gordon McConville. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016, 228 pp., \$27.99 paper.

J. Gordon McConville is professor of OT theology at the University of Gloucestershire where he has taught for over twenty years. His objective in this volume is to explore the concept of what it is to be human according to the Bible, specifically the testimony of the OT. He asserts that this is a biblical and theological study rather than an anthropology (p. 1). Yet, McConville also describes his book as an exercise in “biblical spirituality” (p. 5). By the term “spirituality,” he means the ways in which belief is turned into all the dimensions of the practice of living. Indeed, as the author explores the expression “image of God” in its biblical context and not just as a theological expression, he applies it to all areas of human existence. Using careful exegesis, wise theological reflection, and dialogue with other scholarly theological voices, the author illuminates the reader’s understanding of what it means to be human in relation to God, to other humans, and to the non-human creation. The challenge is to reconsider the way in which we view ourselves as human beings. The strength of the book is that it is not just another book for Bible scholars but a book to help one be spiritual and to grow into the image of God.

For McConville, Ps 8:4, “What is the human being that you pay attention to them?” is a guiding question. In satisfying this enquiry certain texts are indispensable. Therefore, chapters 1 and 2 focus on the “creation accounts” (McConville adopts the common practice of seeing these as different accounts) in Genesis 1–3. The concept of the “image of God” is defined within the wider context of the ANE world of ideas, recognizing that early Christian theology tended to be influenced by prevailing philosophical categories “and thus have little warrant on the text” (p. 18). McConville demonstrates, through philological analysis, that the “image of God” implies aspects of human rule, representation, and relationality. Thus, humans may be said to represent the presence of God in the world. McConville takes issue with the notion that the image is lost in the actions of the first humans and proposes a view of the image that has both functional and intrinsic aspects (p. 35). He notes, “While Genesis 2–3 has aspects of loss that have led to the traditional reading of it as a narrative of a ‘fall,’ the reading offered here is concerned rather with an exploration of what is entailed in the idea of the human as divine image in the world as it is. I have proposed too that the exploration continues beyond Genesis 1–3” (pp. 43–44). The author takes Genesis 1–3 as a mandate to further exploration of the OT’s conception of human possibilities and limitations in respect of both rule and creativity (p. 45). This, in fact, is the focus of the volume in the rest of the study.

Chapter 3 considers the ways in which the OT conveys what may be called the human “constitution.” He examines the Hebrew expressions translated “heart,” “soul,” “mind,” and “spirit,” asserting that this characteristic vocabulary, often

based in physiology, does not “map onto separable components of the human life but rather functions in nuanced ways” within the OT (p. 59). Chapter 4 considers some of the ways in which being human is affected by the specific environments in which we live, with their various cultural and cognitive characteristics (p. 81). Chapter 5 is a query of how the OT is to be read. McConville argues that through continual reflections on OT stories as well as “spiritual readings,” the OT writers summon us to join in their vision of God, the land, humankind and the rest of creation (p. 93).

Chapter 6 on embodiment is an emphasis on the physicality of the human body, the physical creation, and the land. Right relationships with others and with the land are inseparably linked to a right relationship with God. Chapter 7 examines the image of God and how it interacts with politics. McConville argues that the OT’s depiction of the human experience is “inescapably political” and there is a fierce democracy at work by virtue of the worth of each human being (p. 119). As Israel and Judah grow faithless and the rich exploit the poor, prophets continually remind them of who they are in relation to God, one another, and the land.

Chapter 9 is an exceptional discussion of the creative aspect of being human as part of bearing the image of God. Chapter 10 takes the various strands of the preceding ideas and weaves them together to their culmination. Using Brueggemann’s structure for understanding the Psalms, McConville perceives a picture of how humans become human. He has argued from the start of the book that the image of God is something we have been given and grow into. Through the faithfulness of God as depicted in the Psalms, he sees this certainty.

McConville’s work is excellent and thought-provoking. It is scholarly and spiritual. It is destined to make an applauded contribution to OT anthropological studies. While at times the writing is a bit difficult to chart, persistence rewards the reader as light breaks and new insights and angles to old concepts are presented in new and fresh ways. Ultimately, it provokes one to ask the question, “Am I growing into and reflecting the ‘image of God?’” This is the aim of the book. It is a good addition to any library. The book includes a helpful set of indexes in the back for reference.

Jerry R. Harmon
Faith Theological Seminary, Baltimore, MD

The Pentateuch: Introducing the Torah. By Thomas B. Dozeman. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017, 736 pp., \$49.00.

Thomas Dozeman (Professor of Hebrew Bible at United Theological Seminary), as co-chair of the SBL Pentateuch Group and author of *The Pentateuch: International Perspectives on Current Research* (2010) and *A Farewell to the Yahwist? The Composition of the Pentateuch in Recent European Interpretation* (2006), is supremely qualified to author this book. Pentateuchal studies have been in a state of flux since the days of the classical documentary theories. Professors who regularly teach critical introductions to the OT/Hebrew Bible or the more-focused Pentateuch/Torah are quite

aware of the multitude of works available. From my perspective, the difficulty is finding an articulate, up-to-date, readable work that presents a succinct history of research, while focusing on the most cogent arguments and issues. Often problems arise when an author attempts to present the contemporary state of research to the uninitiated (beginning graduate students who are just starting their scholarly studies), while he is used to being in dialogue with refined scholars. Dozeman's previous works and his participation in the SBL Pentateuch Group have positioned him better than many of his contemporaries for this task.

To describe the work as "ambitious" is an understatement; yet Dozeman succeeds admirably, incorporating a wealth of information and numerous aids. The book divides into four parts covering thirteen chapters. Part I introduces the Pentateuch, focusing on the literary structure of the Torah. Part II presents a history of research in its discussion of the composition of the Pentateuch. Part III introduces each book of the Pentateuch, providing outlines, central themes, literary designs, and comparisons to the ANE. Part IV explores reading the Pentateuch, illustrating "four different ways in which the readers bring meaning to the Torah" (p. xxvi). In addition, each chapter contains a summary, a bibliography, a multitude of figures, maps, sidebars, and tables, all of which serve to focus the more detailed and complicated arguments into a succinct summary that aids in the remembering of complicated issues. This layout, presentation, and focusing make possible Dozeman's presentation of the vicissitudes of development in Pentateuchal studies to an audience comprised of two extremes—the beginning graduate student and the refined scholar. The summaries of the chapters provide insight into the value of the work.

Chapter 1, "The Literature of the Pentateuch," shows how the "many repetitions in the literature have raised questions about the unity of the narrative and the relationship of law and narrative in the present design of the Pentateuch" (p. 27). The story of Joseph is the connecting link between the narratives of Genesis and those of Exodus/Numbers, while the reader may read Deuteronomy as an independent book. The relationship of the Pentateuch to the Prophets produces a particular issue: "The minimal reference of Moses and the Torah of Moses in the Prophets ... raises a series of questions about the composition of the Pentateuch" (p. 28).

Chapter 2, "The Authors of the Pentateuch: From Moses to the Documentary Hypothesis," shows that while the Documentary Hypothesis was revolutionary, it also created five problems for subsequent research: (1) the literary incoherence of the Pentateuch; (2) the developmental view of religion; (3) tradition, change, and the role of redactors; (4) comparative studies with the ANE; and (5) the place and use of oral tradition in Pentateuchal development (pp. 74–75).

Chapter 3, "The Tradents of the Pentateuch: Comparative Literature, Oral Stories, and History of Tradition," demonstrates that in the twentieth century, "several areas of research combined to erode the shared confidence among interpreters that the original oral traditions of the Pentateuch could be recovered and that they could be anchored in the early cultic life of tribal Israel" (p. 130). First, the relationship between tradition history and archaeology, which early in the research held great promise of recovering the earliest traditions of tribal Israel, broke down.

Second, interpreters failed to recover the social history and structure of the tribes. Third, interpreters failed to identify ancient oral creeds.

Chapter 4, "Contemporary Return to the Literature of the Pentateuch," explores the significant changes in the study of the Pentateuch's composition at the end of the twentieth century and yet is in many ways still at an impasse. Dozeman identifies four areas of debate: "(1) the literary evaluation of the present form of the Pentateuch; (2) the role of redactors in the formation of the text; (3) the view of tradition as stable or undergoing constant change; and (4) the date of composition" (p. 194). The identification of the Pentateuch's Priestly literature is ongoing and has presently settled on the identification of "the Priestly and the Non-P versions to mind" but allows for "further study of its literary unity, date, composition, and the relationship to both post-Priestly editing and the Non-P version of the Pentateuch" (p. 194).

Part III (chaps. 5–9) contains Dozeman's introduction of the Pentateuchal books, providing in each case an outline of the central themes, discussion of the literary design of the book (plot, characters, etc.), and a summary of each book's composition. These presentations are very similar to most current critical introductions to the OT/Hebrew Bible. However, their insertion here places them in the much larger discussion of Parts I, II, and IV, and highlights information that would not otherwise be noticed.

Chapter 10, "Pentateuch and Torah," explores "the transformation of the Pentateuchal literature into the Torah, when it ... [became] the central religious document of post-exilic Judaism" (p. 523). Dozeman subdivides this chapter into three main discussion points: "10.1 Ezra and the Torah" explores the literary evidence for the "promulgations of the Pentateuch as Torah" (pp. 526, 527–33); "10.2 Persia and the Torah" summarizes the current research "on the external social setting that may have influenced the formation of the Torah" (pp. 526, 533–37); and "10.3 Judaism and the Torah" covers "the foundational role of Torah in creating identity among diverse communities in the Second Temple period" (pp. 526, 537–42).

Chapter 11, "Pentateuch and History," explores "the ways in which historical-critical study of the composition of the Pentateuch influenced the evaluation of the history of Ancient Israel" (p. 523). The rise of historical criticism has created a dichotomy in which the literary version versus the archaeological reconstruction of the origin of Israel "has led to the distinction ... between 'Israel' of the Pentateuch and 'historical' Israel" (p. 583). Though not a new idea, it has modified the older view. The older scholars such as Spinoza sought to discover the anonymous authors of the Pentateuch and the "language, social setting, religious outlook, and political aims of the writers" (p. 584). This newer research seeks to identify the "anonymous authors, who are writing in the periods of the monarchy, exile, and post-exile," which challenges not only the "Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, but also calls "into question the history of the narrated events" (p. 584).

Chapter 12, "Pentateuch and Theology," traces "the changing theological interpretation of the Pentateuch in Christian and Jewish traditions from early Protestantism to the present time" (p. 523). The theologies of Sommer, Brueggemann,

and Childs, though different, each focus “on the text as the basis for biblical theology, rather than the historical development of ancient Israelite religion” (p. 659). This methodology produces a view of the Pentateuch as “an anthology representing theological pluralism, whether conceived as the independent J, E, D, P sources or a process of supplementation and inner-biblical revision” (p. 659). Such authors reject “the principle of *sola scriptura*, emphasizing instead the active role of the reader (Brueggemann), the community of faith (Childs) or Oral Torah (Sommer) in the theological interpretation of the Pentateuch” (p. 659). This results in interpretations that do not derive from the text alone, but also depend on the active role of the reader or tradition. Obviously, evangelicals will disagree with these views.

Chapter 13, “Pentateuch and Reception History,” explores “selective themes in the reception history of the Pentateuch, including its influence in the American experience of colonization and the reaction of women to the patriarchal outlook in their struggle to achieve equal opportunity in civil and religious law in America” (p. 523). Feminist interpretation has grown substantially in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The driving force of feminist interpretation has been the “grounding of interpretation in the unique experience of women,” directing the interpretation of the Pentateuch “in many new directions to embrace the lived experience of women around the world” (p. 699). The result is an identification of a slave like Hagar with many modern women, for example, “African American women as African, slaves, surrogate mothers, single mothers, homeless, alien, brutalized by owners, and subject to domestic violence” (p. 699).

Without doubt, this book is a “must read” for all serious scholars of the Hebrew Bible/OT. Individual scholars may disagree with some of the specific issues. Further, the seasoned scholar will find the work very useful in those very areas which challenge beginning scholars the most. This fact alone makes the book useful as a textbook due to the conversation it might create, as well as the fact that it covers such a wide spectrum of issues.

Randall C. Bailey
Faulkner University, Montgomery, AL

Engaging the Doctrine of Creation: Cosmos, Creatures, and the Wise and Good Creator. By Matthew Levering. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017, xi + 372 pp., \$44.99.

In the present book, Matthew Levering engages with the Christian doctrine of creation in Genesis 1–3 from classical and modern points of view. Levering states that the purpose of the book is to defend the Christian doctrine of creation and to show how the doctrine can interface with modern scientific thinking. In seven chapters, an introduction, and a conclusion, Levering successfully argues that the Christian doctrine of creation can agree with modern scientific thinking.

In chapters 1 and 2, Levering examines divine ideas and divine simplicity in creation. In the first chapter, Levering addresses Vladimir Lossky’s and Thomas Aquinas’s arguments on divine ideas and asserts that “God’s infinitely actual intelligence” (p. 70) and his wisdom/ideas make creation *ex nihilo* possible. Levering un-

derscores the notion that God's infinite intelligence/ideas "creates, sustains, and governs" all creation (p. 70) with the help of Aquinas's position on divine ideas.

In the second chapter, Levering defends the creation as a pure act of God and God as the infinite, unconditioned, and free being, performing his creative act. This is the doctrine of divine simplicity and he interacts with David Bradshaw's understanding of Gregory Palamas's and Thomas Aquinas's ideas on creation and divine simplicity. In the chapter, Levering utilizes Aquinas's ideas on the doctrine of divine simplicity to defend the doctrine of divine simplicity on creation and concludes, "If God were not simple, then God could not be infinite actuality, infinite power and fecundity" (p. 107).

Levering opens chapter 3 with the question, "Why has the wise and good God created not only birds, fish, animals, and humans, but also profoundly strange things such as billions of dinosaurs and innumerable strange species that are now extinct?" (p. 109). The chapter tries to show the creation story in Genesis 1 can accord with modern science, which often challenges and denies the relevance of Genesis 1 with regard to such unusual and extinct creatures. In conclusion, Levering reasons that even unusual and extinct creatures such as dinosaurs had a purpose, namely to display God's wisdom and goodness. He does this by referring to several authors, such as Bill Bryson, Martin Redfern, Timothy Ferris, Paul Davies, Michael Benton, the Jewish physicist Gerald Schroeder, and Basil the Great (pp. 111–12).

Levering divides chapter 4 into three sections in his effort to explain the notion of human beings created in God's image. In the first section, he examines human origins according to modern science. In the second section, he engages with Richard Middleton and his idea of the meaning of the image of God as a royal image. In the last section, he draws on Thomas Aquinas on the Augustinian position on the image of God. In the conclusion of the chapter, Levering argues that the image of God illustrates human beings' capacity for wisdom, intelligence, and love and having royal-priestly communion with God and each other in the whole creation.

Chapter 5 discusses God's first commandment to Adam and Eve in Genesis 1: "Be fruitful and multiply." Levering's question in the chapter concerns the relationship between the increment of the human population who are in the fallen situation and God's wisdom in creation: Does the commandment still portray God as wise even if that increment of that human population destroys nature (p. 205)? By engaging with Bill McKibben's idea, Levering finds that the present human beings should not only fulfill the commandment but also produce ecological benefit.

While dealing with original sin in chapter 6, Levering argues that the first human beings, as historical figures, were responsible for original sin, when they rebelled against the first order and the gift of original justice. To support his position, he engages with Karl Rahner, Kenneth Kemp, Peter Enns, Jonathan Edwards, and Thomas Aquinas. Levering adopts Aquinas's idea of the First Mover to illuminate the original sin caused by Adam and Eve, the first human beings.

In the last chapter, a comparison of Nicholas Wolterstorff's argument on satisfactory punishment, which denies the retributive code, with Thomas Aquinas's idea of satisfactory punishment provides the reason for supporting the idea of Jesus

Christ's atonement as being satisfactory. Based upon Aquinas's idea, Levering argues that human beings rebelled against God's order of justice and that to restore the order it is necessary to have retributive punishment. Jesus Christ's atonement satisfied the need for retributive punishment.

Readers may appreciate Levering's questions to and reasoning for the Christian doctrine of creation in the book and his capacity to engage with different works from classical to modern science and Genesis 1–3. Levering tackles some honest questions that readers of Genesis 1–3 might have and provides answers to the questions in this book. In particular, Levering examines possibly different and contrasting ideas to argue for the doctrine of creation. In each chapter, Levering introduces the questions he will tackle and examines different positions on the questions held by scientists, Orthodox/Catholic/Protestant theologians, and Church Fathers. Further, he deliberately structures each chapter to clarify the meanings of the doctrine of creation. For instance, chapter 3 and chapter 4 are divided into three sections: modern scientific thinking, biblical and historical-critical thinking, and Levering's conception of the doctrine of creation. His clear and logical structuring make it easy for readers to see how Genesis 1–3 can accord with the modern scientific mind and be utilized to perceive God's good and unique creation, creatures revealing God's goodness and wisdom, human's ecological responsibility, Adam and Eve's original sin, and Jesus Christ's satisfactory atonement.

However, the book may provoke some questions for readers. The book seems to believe that all modern thinkers accept evolutionism and an old-age-earth theory. For instance, in chapter 3, Levering begins the chapter with an old-age-earth theory without providing any explanation as to why he chose the theory. Also, he begins with the presupposition that God created dinosaurs and innumerable strange species that are now extinct. Rather than answering the question, "Why does Genesis not mention dinosaurs and strange species?" Levering examines the purpose of dinosaurs and strange species that are now extinct in God's creation. If Levering were to say why he chose an old-age-earth theory and what makes him presuppose God's creation of dinosaurs and other strange species that are now extinct, the arguments in his book may be clearer to some readers.

Also, if the book were to engage with other modern evangelical and biblical scholars concerning the doctrine of creation, the book would be strengthened. Levering seems to rely heavily on modern scientists, Orthodox and Catholic theologians, and Church Fathers as opposed to modern evangelical biblical scholars or scientists who examine Genesis 1–3. In particular, his conclusion to each chapter is profoundly contingent on Thomas Aquinas's ideas on the doctrine of creation.

In summary, Levering's book *Engaging the Doctrine of Creation* is a useful and valuable source to motivate scholars and research students who would like to examine the interactions of Genesis 1–3 with modern thinking or vice versa. In particular, his efforts to engage with modern thinking may assist scholars and research

students in perceiving the benefits of reading Genesis 1–3 alongside various modern works.

Timothy Hyun
Faith International University & Faith Seminary, Tacoma, WA

Psalms Old and New: Exegesis, Intertextuality, and Hermeneutics. By Ben Witherington III. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017, xvii + 381 pp., \$34.00 paper.

What are the NT writers doing with Israel's psalms? In *Psalms Old and New*, Ben Witherington addresses this topic with academic acumen along with pastoral and ecclesial instinct. This volume follows a similar path as his volume *Isaiah Old and New: Exegesis, Intertextuality, and Hermeneutics* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017).

After an introduction and a chapter that surveys the use of Psalms in early Judaism, the bulk of the volume revolves around five chapters devoted to the five books of the Psalter. Witherington's pattern in these chapters is to introduce a given book of the Psalter before honing in upon select psalms from that book that are utilized in the NT. Psalms receiving extensive analysis are as follows: Book I (1–41) Psalms 2, 8, 18, 22, and 34; Book II (42–72) Psalms 42–43, 44, 51, and 69; Book III (73–89) Psalms 78, 79, and 89; Book IV (90–106) Psalms 91, 95, and 103; Book V (107–150) Psalms 107, 110, 119, and 145. Witherington begins the analysis of each of these psalms with his own translations from the MT and the LXX. He then walks through the entire psalm in light of its sub-units before examining how particular verses from the psalm are utilized within the NT. After examining several psalms from that book, Witherington surveys other instances where language in psalms from that book of the Psalter occurs in the NT.

There are many strengths in this volume. First, I appreciate Witherington's efforts to incorporate recent research on the arrangement of the Psalter into his discussions. The same goes for his attempt to interpret the entire psalm as it was understood in its original context before moving on to the NT's use of particular verses.

Second, Witherington convincingly demonstrates that the NT authors are often not operating on the prediction-fulfillment model but instead drawing theological *analogies* between texts from the Psalter and the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. As he states in his conclusion, "In the view of those NT writers, God all along intended those ideas and institutions to only fully realize their promise, or come to full expression in the messiah, and in the eschatological age he ushered in. Was this more than the psalmists realized or understood? Probably so. ... They might well be surprised how things turned out and came to fruition, but I doubt that they would have objected to the use made of the Psalms by the NT writers because they would *not* have seen it as *at odds with or contradicting* what they said and meant in the Psalter" (p. 326, emphasis original).

Third, during a time of increasing interest in reading the OT as bearing witness to Christ, this volume exposes some of the challenges of doing so. How does the confession of sin in Psalm 51 bear witness to a sinless Christ? Should requests

for violence towards enemies in the Psalms be used by a church who confesses as Savior one who suffered for his enemies and prayed for their forgiveness? Witherington repeatedly exposes the challenges of relating the Psalms to Christ.

As with any book, questions will naturally arise. For one, some of his selections of psalms were peculiar. For instance, Witherington devotes over twenty pages to Psalm 119 and its handful of debated echoes in the NT while not granting Psalm 118 a full treatment.

Another question for further reflection is whether Witherington is correct that pleas for God to judge enemies in the Psalter are not meant for application in the Christian life. For instance, as he examines the use of Ps 44:22 in Romans 8 (pp. 124–28), Witherington argues that it is only this verse and not the rest of Psalm 44 that applies to the believer: “[Paul in Romans 8] is probably not suggesting the audience go back to Psalm 44, and try to apply the rest of the psalm to themselves. For one thing, some of the psalm would not suit either the Christian gospel or the situation of Paul’s audience. The gospel is not urging God to get back on the job of grinding Israel’s foes into the dust” (p. 218). Or again in Psalm 79, as Witherington reflects upon the request of the psalmist for God to pour out wrath upon their enemies, “This is a true revelation of what is in and on the psalmist’s heart, not at all necessarily what God has in mind” (p. 186). Although I understand the point Witherington is raising, I wonder if Christians living in a context of oppression would have a different view about praying for God to intervene with violence. In addition, although these pleas for God’s divine violent intervention take on a new frame in light of Christ’s death and resurrection, could these prayers still be appropriate for the church to pray in view of the violent coming of Christ the book of Revelation anticipates?

A final issue is that this book gives the impression that only the verses quoted in the NT from the Psalms are applicable to Christ and the church. For instance, after surveying a given psalm as a whole in its original context, there is no consideration of how the psalm as a whole or the verses not used in the NT have any abiding relevance for knowing Christ and addressing the church. Comments such as “Paul is not suggesting Jesus would have endorsed or repeated all of the material in these psalms as his own views” (p. 159) could imply that what is not quoted in the NT does not have relevance for the church today. I recognize Witherington’s aim in the volume is primarily upon what the NT authors were doing. Indeed, the NT authors were selective in which verses they applied to Jesus. At what point, however, are we in danger of passing along the ways of Marcion by giving the impression that only those verses quoted in the NT remain abiding for that Christian today? Would the OT remain necessary for the church? As Christopher Seitz argues (*The Character of Christian Scripture: The Significance of a Two-Testament Bible* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011]), the church that existed prior to the NT canon’s formation lived with the conviction that the entire OT was inspired to make one wise unto salvation and equip one for good works (2 Tim 3:15–16). The NT does not tell us which parts of the OT bear witness to Christ and instruct the church; instead, the NT simply showcases some of the ways this can be done. I would love to see a study on ways

in which the many and varied aspects of Psalms not quoted in the NT can and do bear witness to Christ.

Despite these critical reflections, this is indeed an impressive and commendable book. For those interested in the Psalms and their use in the NT, Witherington's study will prove to be both illuminating and inspire them to further consider how the Psalter addresses the church today.

Andrew T. Abernethy
Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL

Ecclesiastes, An Earth Bible Commentary: Qoheleth's Eternal Earth. By Marie Turner. Earth Bible Commentary Series. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017, 131 pp., \$94.00.

This commentary is refreshing in both its form and content. First, it covers only 131 pages. At a time when biblical scholars produce commentaries of 800 or 1,000 pages, Turner's brevity is most welcome. Second, the author plainly states her hermeneutic. In the vein of Derrida, she attempts to deconstruct Ecclesiastes with an ecological reading.

Reading the text of Ecclesiastes, Turner finds *hābēl hābālīm* (undeniably the *crux interpretum*) to be intentionally ambiguous. This ambiguity leaves "executive force" (à la Derrida) for the reader to determine the meaning of *hābēl hābālīm* (p. 6). Thus, for Turner, the reader disambiguates—not so much by discovering something semantic, syntactic, or historical that brings clarity to a passage, but by making a choice. From this intentional ambiguity, Turner claims, "Qoheleth has implicitly given authority to the reader" to use executive force (p. 7). In short, the reader possesses the power.

In her ecological reading, Turner categorizes the voice of the Earth (her capitalization). For example, she labels texts that speak positively of the Earth's voice as "green." In contrast, she labels texts that denigrate the Earth in some way as "grey" (p. 3). Turner's ecological reading of Ecclesiastes piques interest as virtually the entire book is a "green" text (p. 4).

Turner's commentary stays true to the purposes of the Earth Bible Commentary series. This series understands the Earth "as a subject in the text with which we seek to relate empathetically" (pp. 1–2). The objectives of this approach are to listen to and identify with "the Earth as a presence or voice in the text" (p. 2).

Turner's ecological reading contrasts Earth and economy. At times, she finds these voices waging war against each other. When such battling ensues, Turner undoubtedly cheers on the Earth. She claims that "Earth is eternal but economy is volatile and unpredictable" in Ecclesiastes (p. 5). Such an observation causes no controversy. To do something with that observation, however, requires her to do heavy lifting—theologically, philosophically, and practically.

Turner concludes each of the seven commentary units with a section titled, "Hearing Qoheleth's Earth." In these concluding sections, Turner summarizes and suggests applications for how the Earth in Ecclesiastes can or should affect con-

temporary readers. For example, she considers Ecclesiastes 1 to be a call for the reader to “effect change” by caring for the Earth (p. 35). She also challenges readers not to dwell on uncertainty, but to rest confidently after work and dispense their gain to this and future generations (p. 83). Concluding chapters 6–7, Turner calls for a curbing of consumption (p. 99). Summarizing chapters 8–9, she argues for justice for refugees and animals (p. 105). She concludes her commentary most forcefully by stating that if readers do not give Earth prominence over economy, all work done to care for the Earth may be for naught (p. 121). Turner’s “Hearing Qoheleth’s Earth” serves as a significant contribution to the fields of Ecclesiastes studies and ecological hermeneutics.

There are two issues with which I must quibble. First, while Turner surveys many meanings of Hebrew terms with extraordinary conciseness, this reviewer is often left wanting for explanation of her choices—Why this sense and not another (e.g. “breath” on pp. 25–27)? Second, though I might concede that deliberate ambiguity exists, the so-called ambiguity in Ecclesiastes seems to be the fault of interpreters rather than the aim of the author. In such case, Qoheleth is not implicitly calling for the reader to exercise executive force. Rather, the reader is explicitly taking that authority for oneself, potentially unrelated to the intentions of the author. In other words, it is likely a reader’s ignorance of language, history, and literature—not the so-called deliberate ambiguity—that causes the text to be so elusive. This is not to say polysemy and word plays are not present throughout Ecclesiastes; any reader with steady attention on the Hebrew of Ecclesiastes knows the book is full of complex and rich language.

In sum, this disagreement over deliberate ambiguity is more a matter of hermeneutics than analysis of a specific word or phrase. Turner’s perspective has helped me think more carefully about my own hermeneutical approach, especially when interpreting Ecclesiastes.

Critiques notwithstanding, Turner is to be commended for this innovative, concise, and thought-provoking commentary. I, the son and grandson of farmers, read Ecclesiastes “with new eyes” thanks to Turner’s commentary. She achieves her *raison d’écrire*.

Ethan C. Jones
Scarborough College, Fort Worth, TX

Micah. By Stephen G. Dempster. Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017, viii + 284 pp., \$30.00 paper.

With this commentary, Stephen Dempster skillfully expounds the prophecy of Micah, whom he identifies as “the first person in history to pronounce destruction on the sacred temple of Jerusalem and to announce judgment on the Holy City” (p. 238). Dempster serves as professor of religious studies at Crandall University in Moncton, New Brunswick. In 2003, he released *Dominion and Dynasty: A Theology of the Hebrew Bible* (NSBT 15; Apollos).

Following the preface, the contents of the book unfold in the following manner: "Introduction to the Book of Micah" (56 pp.), "Commentary" (136 pp.), "Theological Themes of Micah" (43 pp.), "Micah's Contribution to Biblical Theology" (3 pp.), "Micah's Relevance to Present-Day Theological Issues" (20 pp.), and the back matter (bibliography and indexes). The section-by-section commentary is organized in light of Dempster's threefold outline of the book of Micah. Subheads in the commentary section address topics such as "Structure," "Literary Features," "Key Words and Expressions," "Interpretation—Micah's Word Then," and "Interpretation—Micah's Word Now."

As the norm, Dempster follows the MT, although sometimes he prefers a LXX reading, such as at 3:3, 6:13, and 6:16 (p. 49 n. 143). Commendably, Dempster cautions against unnecessary emendations of the Hebrew text: "What constitutes bad Hebrew may be a construct in the mind of the interpreter rather than in that of a native speaker" (p. 50). Following the lead of Andersen and Freedman, he suggests that even grammatical abnormalities do not necessarily indicate textual corruptions; rather, they might reflect the emotional state of the writer (p. 50).

Throughout the commentary, Dempster compares the book of Micah to a superbly-performed symphony—a symphony with three main movements that gradually accelerates the tempo as it advances toward a final crescendo (pp. 34, 162). In his analysis, Dempster distinguishes between the book of Micah in its current form, and the oracles of Micah as originally spoken by the prophet (pp. 16–18). For him, "the present form of Micah is that of self-contained speech units that were gradually shaped according to specific design" (p. 48). He suggests excerpts such as 7:8–20 reflect later editorial activity (p. 187).

The author criticizes the discipline of historical criticism and its Enlightenment presuppositions for undermining the historicity of the prophecy: "The acids of historical criticism burned away ... parts of the book from the historical Micah" (pp. 27–28). Historical critics have downplayed or ignored theological outcomes, he observes: "Theology without exegesis is speculation and exegesis without theology is antiquarian" (p. 37).

With great facility, the commentator elucidates the poetic components of the book of Micah. For instance, he discusses the literary feature known as intensification, in which a subsequent line of poetry intensifies the meaning of the prior line (pp. 40–41, 154–55). Moreover, Micah as a book remains "rife with wordplays and various poetic techniques" (p. 181). The numerous toponyms in 1:10–16 work together to create "wordplay 'overkill'" (p. 41; cf. pp. 42, 65–67). Discussions of puns enrich the commentary throughout (e.g., pp. 133–34, 174).

Hermeneutical principles affect the interpretation of prophecy. One such principle employed by Dempster is that a prophecy does not need to be fulfilled according to its details; the generals can override the particulars. For example, 1:6 predicts that Samaria will become a heap of ruins. According to Dempster, "That Samaria was only partially destroyed in the destruction of 722 BCE and was rebuilt does not necessarily invalidate the prophecy, for that is to be woodenly literalistic" (p. 71). In the accompanying footnote, Dempster rejects Walter Kaiser's hermeneutical principle that a prophecy must be fulfilled exactly as stated (n. 42).

Dempster characteristically relates the prophetic fulfillments of Micah to the eighth century BC, most notably to Assyria's invasion of the Northern Kingdom in 722 BC or the Southern Kingdom in 701 BC (e.g., pp. 108, 135–36, 173, 176, 187). The commentator acknowledges, however, that sometimes he was unable to find specific historical synchronisms that support eighth-century fulfillments. "Conjecture" played a role in determining the historical milieu of a prophecy (p. 38). He assures readers that "the precise details are not as important" when seeking a historical setting (p. 38). Concerning 1:2–16, Dempster admits that "virtually all historical references dealing with the particulars of warfare have been blurred in this text" (p. 75).

Furthermore, in 5:5–6 and 7:12, Dempster proposes that the nation of Assyria symbolizes evil forces, thus implying that the word "Assyria," in these literary contexts, lacks any distinction from other nations in terms of geography, ethnicity, or destiny (pp. 140, 183). Within the same literary contexts, however, he suggests that the nation of Israel ought to be understood as a literal nation (pp. 137–38). This brings up the issue of consistency in interpretation: Should we interpret one nation as symbolic (Assyria) but another nation as literal (Israel) within the same context?

The commentator takes 3:12 as a conditional prophecy. It reads, "Zion will be plowed as a field, Jerusalem will become a heap of ruins, and the mountain of the temple will become high places of a forest." For Dempster, this prediction anticipated the Assyrian crisis of 701 BC, even though the prediction was never fulfilled (and never will be fulfilled). "Judgment was averted because of repentance" (p. 117; cf. p. 114).

With great zeal, Dempster challenges contemporary church leaders to stand against sin and serve God wholeheartedly. He asks, "Where are the Micahs who are full of the Holy Spirit and who will call sin for what it is wherever it is, and who do not care for the approval of people, nor for their money because they serve a higher master?" (p. 121).

The volume is well written, scholarly yet accessible, and it contains mature reflections upon the prophecy of Micah. For these reasons, the commentary deserves a wide reading, even among interpreters who do not share all of the author's hermeneutical convictions concerning prophetic fulfillment.

Mark A. Hassler

Virginia Beach Theological Seminary, Virginia Beach, VA

Mark Through Old Testament Eyes: A Background and Application Commentary. By Andrew T. Le Peau. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2017, 352 pp., \$28.99 paper.

Coming from a concern that the OT "for many Christians (today) has ... become a closed book" (p. 25), *Mark Through Old Testament Eyes* is the first in a series of NT commentaries (also edited by Le Peau) that aims at unpacking the NT text with special attention to the impact of the OT on its writers (p. 17). To achieve this goal, Le Peau employs two main types of comments. The majority are presented in

a “verse-by-verse or paragraph-by-paragraph” format, which although occasionally providing some general information, deals specifically with various connections between Mark and the OT (p. 10). For example, in the story of the Gerasene demoniac (Mark 5:1–20; pp. 103–7), Le Peau covers only a few background items such as the location of “the Gerasenes” (5:1), the connection between this story and the “strong man” saying in Mark 3:27 (5:4), Jewish ideas of when day begins (5:5), and the connection in Mark between Jesus’s miracles and the “work of God” (5:19–20). The bulk of his discussion, however, relates to how the OT should inform our understanding of various elements: how Jews were to relate to Gentiles (5:1), the nature of evil spirits and the significance of tombs and death (5:2), the relation of hills to “high places” (5:5), the significance of “falling down” before Jesus (5:6), the nature of “God Most High” (5:7), perspectives on pigs (5:12), the connection between the sea and “chaos or the abyss” (5:13), the deliverance of the man from bondage (5:15), and finally, “proclaiming the work of God” and being “amazed” at what Jesus had done (5:19–20).

The second type of comments consists of three sets of in-depth discussions marked throughout with grayed-out boxes. One set deals with structural elements in the gospel in light of the “Old Testament background” (“What Structure Means,” p. 10). For example, in Mark 2:1–3:6, Le Peau provides a helpful table summarizing the “five questions” brought against Jesus by the religious leaders and their relation to the theme of Jesus’s authority (pp. 60–61). Finally, he notes the connection between these events at the beginning of Jesus’s ministry and the “five questions on the temple grounds in 11:27–12:37” (p. 62).

Another set of discussions feature descriptions of “Old Testament themes and motifs” over larger literary sections—what he calls “Through Old Testament Eyes” (p. 10). One of these corresponds to Mark 2:1–3:6 explained above. Here Le Peau expands on the prevalent background of the “exodus period” and suggests a potential “echo (to) the five books of the Pentateuch not only in number but in content, as each challenge deals with the nature and purpose of God’s law” (p. 75). Further, he highlights issues of forgiveness, the authority of the Son of Man, Jesus as Messiah, and a connection to the theme of “giving and saving life from Deuteronomy” (p. 75). Since each chapter of the commentary follows the chapter of the gospel, these sections also provide a good overview of his understanding of Mark’s overall literary structure.

The final set of grayed-out discussions (“Digging Deeper”), provide contemporary applications based on “Old Testament dimensions uncovered in the text” (p. 11). For example, after the commentary on the death of John the Baptist, Le Peau conveys the gripping story of the Ugandan bishop, David Zac Niringiye, a “modern day John the Baptist,” who has faced opposition in his own country for standing against “wrongdoing in high places” (p. 120–21).

In a commentary market that includes not only some excellent commentaries on Mark but also some well received background commentaries on the NT, Le Peau’s volume (and planned series) occupies a unique place with its almost singular focus on the OT, while still acknowledging the need for a wide range of background material to get the full perspective on the meaning of the text (p. 11).

Though the intended readership of this book and series are “those who teach or preach to others” (p. 25), all readers have much to gain from Le Peau’s insightful observations and applications conveyed in a succinct and highly readable style (endnotes for each chapter are included at the back of the book). This ability can be seen in his compact explanation of the cloud at the Transfiguration of Jesus (Mark 9:7). In one short paragraph, he deftly weaves together various OT passages that describe the significance of clouds as representing the “divine presence” as especially found in the exodus narratives as well as other examples of how the “Lord’s presence filled the temple” from 1 Kgs 8:10, Isa 6:4, and Ezek 10:4 (p. 160).

Despite the value of many such insights, one potential weakness is the occasional tendency to provide too many connections to the OT without sufficient guidance to help the reader reach a conclusion. For example, in his comment noted above on Mark 5:2 about the tombs where the demoniac lived, he not only explains the connection to “ritual unclean(ness)” (Num 31:19), but then includes various OT views on death (Job 17:13–16; Isa 5:14; Hos 13:14) that do not appear to have any significant connection to the story in Mark. And while he does arrive at a conclusion (the contrast between “Sheol” and where God dwells in “the heights of heaven” [p. 103]), the introduction of only somewhat related background material in his explanation could be confusing and end up distracting from the main point of the pericope.

These unfortunate moments aside, contemporary students of the Bible will benefit from the sustained and extensive exposure to the “literary air (of the OT) that Jews breathed at the time of Jesus” (p. 17). One can only hope, along with Le Peau, that this series will motivate the next generation of Bible readers not only to search more diligently the OT for what it contributes to their NT exegesis but to read it also as “valuable in its own right” (p. 11).

Markus Klausli

Columbia Biblical Seminary of Columbia International University, Columbia, SC

The Historical Reliability of the New Testament: Countering the Challenges to Evangelical Christian Beliefs. By Craig L. Blomberg. B&H Studies in Christian Apologetics. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2016, xxxi + 783 pp., \$39.99 paper.

This is a big book. At 783 pages, it is hardly open to charges of brevity. It is also large in scope. While it focuses upon matters of historical reliability, as one reads the impression grows that the book could serve as a primer for the academic study of the NT generally, with winsome reflections upon theology, ministry, and culture dispersed along the way. I think this is a marvelous book. It deserves a place on the shelf of the professor, the desk of the pastor, and could be the perfect gift for the student just beginning seminary.

Blomberg is aware that the history of NT scholarship pertaining to matters of “historicity” is a bit of tangled bramble. Bultmann, because of the corrosive assumptions undergirding form criticism, famously observed that he believed we could know almost nothing concerning the life and personality of Jesus. The hyper-

Rankeanism of the criteria of double dissimilarity yielded only the obscure. The linguistic turn has let loose an assault upon historical method, and many now believe there is no objective ground for preferring one reading of a text over another. Blomberg sensibly notes that while historical skepticism is inherent in the project, it can go too far. There is in the background the observation of the Roman historian A. N. Sherwin-White in his *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963) that NT scholars have too little trust in their sources.

Blomberg recognizes the importance of one's angle of approach to the material: "I am a Christian believer of an evangelical persuasion with a high regard for the accuracy and the authority of Scripture" (p. xxv). Knowing there are a variety of ways evangelicals understand biblical authority, he is clear about his own: "I do not try to *prove* every last word of Scripture: the data are not available inductively for us to do that anyway" (p. xxvii). Instead, Blomberg endeavors to demonstrate that the biblical authors are accurate at least to the level of historical accuracy then standard and that many of the supposed "errors" one might discern are in fact matters of confusion over grammar or a misunderstanding of the basic rule that meaning is composed of sense (what we are saying) and referent (what we are saying it about): "I attempt to limit myself to arguments and the presentation of evidence that does not depend upon being a Christian" (p. xxvii). He aims at sympathetic, yet dispassionate inquiry.

What Blomberg is attempting strikes me as not dissimilar from what Roman historians are doing: trying to understand social history (e.g. Sofie Remijsen and Willy Clarysse, "Incest or Adoption? Brother-Sister Marriage in Roman Egypt Revisited," *JRS* 98 [2008]: 53–61; J. Pearce, "Review of E. J. Graham, *The Burial of the Urban Poor in Italy in the Late Roman Republic and Early Empire*," *JRS* 98 [2008]: 264), discerning the meaning of texts and inscriptions (e.g. Martin Beckman, "Trajan's Column and Mars Ultor," *JRS* 106 [2016]: 124–46), and understanding the significance of figures who shaped that understanding (e.g. J. A. North, "Caesar at the Lupercalia," *JRS* 98 [2008]: 144–60). The book is composed of six sections: (1) the Synoptic Gospels; (2) the Gospel of John; (3) Acts and Paul; (4) the rest of the NT; (5) canonicity and transmission; and (6) miracles.

In the first section, "The Formation of the Synoptic Gospels," Blomberg points out that the early attestation of Mark and Luke with their Gospels makes sense, as neither was a central character in first-century Christianity. Yet he does not believe that if Matthew did not write Matthew, the whole edifice comes crashing down. He wisely notes that the accounts of the lives of others from antiquity (such as Alexander the Great) date from periods far more removed from the central character than is the case with the Gospels. He writes that what matters is not what appears to be an error for us, but rather "what would have counted as an error in the context in which the statement first appeared" (p. 26) and that "concluding that the Gospels are biographical is not the same as deciding that everything in them actually happened" (p. 27). Thucydides can be glimpsed in the background. Yet Luke is explicit about his method: he interviewed witnesses and excluded material he regarded as less than "most trustworthy" (p. 27): "The Gospel writers behaved like normal historians and biographers. Belief in the inspiration of Scripture

does not require the conviction that God bypassed the standard processes of research, merely that he superintended those processes and guided the human writers so they wrote exactly what he wanted" (p. 29). Concerning the census under Quirinius, he demonstrates that the grammar can yield the census taking place before as opposed to being the first after Quirinius became governor. The problem of Abiathar he solves by noting that the grammar can yield, in effect, "about the time when Abiathar was priest" rather than the more specific "when Abiathar was priest" (pp. 65–67). He harmonizes the accounts of the last supper by noting that four cups of wine were consumed during a Passover meal.

In the second part on the Gospel of John, Blomberg follows the now-famous litany of proofs of Johannine authorship put forward with clarity in J. A. T. Robinson's *The Priority of John* (London: SCM, 1985). He then follows many of the now well-known arguments about harmonizing the Gospel of John with the Synoptics. Anti-Jewish language on Jesus's lips could well reflect intra-Jewish conflict.

In the third portion on Acts and Paul, the classic questions of harmonizing Galatians with the chronology of Acts are treated as are the events of his journeys treated *ad seriatim*. Blomberg points out, for example, that Luke's account is close to the ancient *periplous* tradition. He references the work of Reta Halteman Finger to argue that commensality in Acts is Levitical, not Greek, as is sometimes alleged. Blomberg finds it unlikely that Luke "invented" the travel narrative, as this would require incredible sophistication to craft a narrative that so nicely fits the undisputed Pauline epistles. He knows that Arabia in ancient times included lands much closer to Jerusalem than the modern region of Arabia. His handling of the four things from which to refrain is deft both historically and theologically. His analysis of the pseudonymity of 2 Thessalonians is a model of sober analysis and sapient observation. When demonstrating Paul's dependence upon Jesus, Blomberg notes that the idea of Christians judging "the world" (1 Cor 6:2) is not Jewish eschatology, but it does seem to parallel a saying of Jesus in Matt 19:28. Blomberg presents the material on women in such a way that both Jesus and Paul are affirming. He even notes that Junia (Rom 16:7) is one of the apostles.

In the fourth section, when he treats James and Paul on the matter of works, he recounts the standard argument for harmony. He is surely correct when he notes the close affinity of the teaching of James with the ethical injunctions of the Sermon on the Mount. When it comes to 1 Peter, he cites the work of Karen Jobes to demonstrate that the Greek of the letter reads like that of a Semitic writer for whom Greek is a second language. He answers many of the exegetical questions of Revelation (666 may be *gematria* for Nero Caesar, but it may also be a cipher for inferiority to 777), while reflecting on the matter of the historicity of Revelation.

The fifth section treats the Nag Hammadi documents as well as the NT apocrypha. He notes that the *Apocryphon of James* contains titles like "the Seed" and "the Virgins" that clearly mirror parables in the canonical Gospels, concluding that the *Apocryphon* must postdate the Gospels. Surely this is correct, but he does not demonstrate why this is so. He points out that in spite of *The Da Vinci Code*, there is no word in Aramaic that can mean both "companion" and "wife." In the section on transmission, he is masterful in telling the story of textual criticism and the for-

mation of the canon with sympathy and skill. In the closing section, he demonstrates familiarity with a wide range of material, from William Lane Craig and the *Kalam* argument to the eyewitness accounts of the miraculous by non-credulous medical experts around the globe.

We owe Craig Blomberg a debt of thanks. Wide ranging, lucidly written, graced by easy erudition, this is a first-rate reference work.

David P. Nystrom
Western Seminary, Rocklin, CA

Matthew's Presentation of the Son of David: Davidic Tradition and Typology in the Gospel of Matthew. By H. Daniel Zacharias. T&T Clark Biblical Studies. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017, xi + 224, \$114.00.

David is important to Matthew. This much is clear. How, though, does Jesus function in relationship to the Davidic tradition *throughout* the first Gospel? Davidic readings of many Matthean passages are easy to find in the literature. This dissertation seeks to bring together in one work a comprehensive analysis of Davidic themes in Matthew and what they tell us about the evangelist's understanding of Jesus as "the Son of David." Zacharias's contention is that Matthew has intentionally used various understandings of fulfillment and forms of typology to *pervasively* and *at key junctures* evoke Davidic themes that present Jesus as "the Son of David" in unexpected terms—not the militant royal messiah (as in *Psalms of Solomon* 17 and the DSS), but the humble (Zechariah 9) and healing (Ezekiel 34) shepherd. His method is largely narrative-critical with occasional compositional-critical considerations, seeking an "author-centric" interpretation.

Chapter 1 accomplishes two major objectives. First, Zacharias defines key intertextual terms. The most important for this study, it would seem, are "first-order typology" and "second-order typology." The former studies persons and events that *within the OT itself* envision the coming anti-type. The latter "looks to OT prophecies and finds something analogous in the literal meaning and fulfillment of that prophecy" (p. 13). That is, "second-order typology" is retrospective, observing recurring patterns that have now escalated into "the unfolding eschatological or messianic ... decisive action and fulfillment by God" (p. 15). Also significant are "echo" and "allusion," as well as the criterion of *recurrence* for discerning them. In my opinion, the real strength of Zacharias's approach, is his attention to *early* and *recurring* echoes, allusions, quotes, etc., that create a primacy effect for reading the entire narrative, and reading it as a whole. He writes, "The author may have already *intentionally oriented* his audience through explicit means to both seek and hear subtle and overt parallels to a particular tradition, present in the form of allusions and echoes in order to present a sustained or global typology" (p. 18, emphasis original). Second, chapter 1 also provides a sketch of late Second Temple Davidic messianism. *Psalms of Solomon* 17, 4Q161, and 4Q285 receive the most attention, together with a mirror reading of John 6, Acts 1, and Josephus. In short, hopes surrounding Davidic expectations were militaristic.

Chapters 2 and 3 explore how Matthew 1–2 “predispose[s] the reader to be on the alert for other elements of Davidic tradition in later portions of the Gospel” (p. 29). The incipit, Matt 1:1, bears on Matthew as a whole. It is like a rock dropped into a pond; only as the reader travels through the Gospel are all the ripples finally and fully felt. The first ripple is the genealogy (1:2–17), the next is Jesus’s birth story (1:18–2:23). Davidic themes are discovered throughout, collectively creating a primacy effect to pique readers’ attention to more Davidic themes to come.

Some standard Davidic interpretations of Matthew 1–2 do not need to be rehearsed here (the *gematria* in 1:17, Joseph in 1:18–25, Bethlehem in 2:1–12, the echo of Psalm 72 in 2:11, the use of Isa 11:1 in 2:23), but I will comment on two arguments Zacharias makes. (1) He proposes that Matthew’s strange counting of generations is resolved when readers count *David twice*. In this case, David is counted in the first table *and the second table*, and Jechoniah is counted in the third table (only). Thus, Matthew emphasizes David in this way. This *will* yield 14 in each table, apparently solving the problem. Yet this solution rings of question begging: readers are to count David twice because of Matthew’s special interest in David; because Matthew counts David twice readers see Matthew’s special interest in David. At the end of the day, however, it is unnecessary for the thesis. There is plenty of other Davidic language and imagery in Matthew 1–2 that this last round peg need not fit into the square hole. (2) Zacharias’s more fruitful insight comes in Matthew’s use of Isa 7:14, which he calls a “second-order typology.” The issue in Isaiah 7 is the status and future of David’s house, and the sign given to Ahaz confirms that *the Davidic line will continue*. Its historical fulfillment—the Davidic house continues in Ahaz’s son Hezekiah—becomes a pattern of God’s work that escalates in Jesus’s day. Perhaps Zacharias sweeps away a little too easily the significance of the child born in Isa 8:1–3 (see my own *Matthew’s New David at the End of Exile* [Leiden: Brill, 2016], 33–59), but the point remains strong: Matthew has invoked an OT narrative and divine promise swirling around the fate of David’s house. Additionally, Herod in Matthew 2 acts like the enemies of the House of David just like the aggressors in Isaiah 7 did.

Chapters 4–5 explore Matthew’s understanding of the *kind* of “Son of David” Jesus is. If Matthew 1–2 calls him “the Son of David,” Matthew 8–21 clarifies what that entails over against cultural expectations. In five healing episodes Jesus is hailed as “the Son of David” (9:27; 12:22–23; 15:22; 20:30–31; 21:14–15). Zacharias agrees with Young Chae (*Jesus as the Eschatological Davidic Shepherd* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006]) and a handful of others that the background here is Ezekiel 34 where the Lord himself will care for the weak, the sick, the injured, the strayed, and the lost (Ezek 34:2–4) *through David “their shepherd”* (Ezek 34:22–25). Jesus also exercises the authority of “the Son of David” in his lordship over the Sabbath (12:1–8), his building the temple (16:15–16), his “taking” of Jerusalem (20:29–21:11; cf. 2 Sam 5:6–8) on a donkey (21:2; cf. Zechariah 9–14 and a cluster of echoes across Matthew 21–27), and of course pointing in the same direction are the quotations of Psalm 118 in Matt 21:42 and Psalm 110 in Matt 22:41–46 (the latter of which is not a rejection of the title “Son of David” but a further clarification of the title as applied to Jesus): “Rather than a warrior, the Son of David is a healer; rather than a

conquering king, the Son of David is a humble king; and now, rather than being an inferior progeny, the Son of David is in fact superior to David himself" (p. 148).

Chapters 6 and 7 then take up Jesus's betrayal and crucifixion. While the name "David" nowhere appears in Matthew 26–27, Davidic typology is nonetheless prominent. Judas is portrayed as an anti-type of Ahithophel (cf. 2 Samuel 15–17 and esp. Psalms 41 and 55). In addition, the language and themes of Psalm 22—the "voice of David"—pervade Matthew 27. The "clear citation [of Ps 22:1 in Matt 27:46] gives way to recognition of numerous other allusions and cluster echoes" (p. 178). In these matters, Matthew goes beyond the other Gospel writers "to add numerous parallels in order to create a sustained typological connection to David" (p. 186). I wonder in addition, though, if the ideas of Pss 22:22, 27–28, 30–31 are also embedded in Matt 28:16–20.

Finally, a concluding chapter lays out how Zacharias understands his contribution and ideas for further study. In sum, Matthew 1–2 present Jesus consistently as "the Son of David," and the rest of the Gospel presents a sustained typology that then defines *what it means* to be "the Son of David": not a violent militaristically triumphant messiah, but the humble king and healing shepherd. Zacharias believes "this wider Davidic theme is core to a proper understanding of Matthew's Gospel" (p. 191). He goes on, "If I am correct that second-order typology is the best way to understand these texts, then it means that the evangelist did not misunderstand or misread the OT" (p. 192).

Despite the over-enthusiasm regarding David in the genealogy I mentioned above, the overall arch of this thesis is strong. The conclusions are hard to demur. Matthean specialists may not find too much new in this work, but the systematic examination of Davidic typology and Son of David themes brought together in one monograph will make this book a helpful and unavoidable reference for in-depth study of the first Gospel for the foreseeable future. I might suggest, all the same, that there is even more Davidic imagery in addition to the texts covered here. Isa 9:1–2 is quoted in Matt 4:13–16 (right before the significant seam in 4:17), invoking that Davidic context as well (cf. Isa 9:7). The Davidic tradition in connection to "rest" also likely lies behind the *logion* in 11:28–30 (see Jon C. Laansma's *I Will Give You Rest* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997]). The promises to Judah seem embedded in the triumphal entry (cf. Gen 49:11 and Matt 21:2). I have argued that Psalm 2 stands behind the Great Commission (*Matthew's New David at the End of Exile*, pp. 56–58). I would also point readers to Matthias Konradt's excellent *Israel, Church, and the Gentiles in the Gospel of Matthew* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014) for a consideration of "the Son of David" within the Gospel's missionary vision. These additional comments here are only further support for Zacharias's persuasive thesis.

Nicholas G. Piotrowski
Crossroads Bible College, Indianapolis, IN
Indianapolis Theological Seminary, Indianapolis, IN

The Sermon on the Mount and Human Flourishing: A Theological Commentary. By Jonathan T. Pennington. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017, xx + 326 pp., \$29.99 paper.

Jonathan T. Pennington's expertise in the Gospel of Matthew becomes clear as he provides a historical, literary, and theological exposition of the Sermon on the Mount. He situates the Sermon in the context of Jewish wisdom literature and the Greco-Roman virtue tradition, communicating with clarity how the story of Israel and Greco-Roman philosophy could and did intersect with the Sermon. Consequently, Pennington effectively answers how the Sermon promotes human flourishing in the midst of the theological and existential questions those contexts raise.

By initiating his commentary with his own translation of the Sermon on the Mount, Pennington is able to introduce certain emphases in his interpretation through non-traditional renderings, specifically with regard to the well-known Beatitudes. While the modification of the traditional "Blessed are" to "Flourishing are" seems most remarkable, this tactic engages the reader to reconsider the emphasis of the Sermon itself. Even though this raises the question of whether another reading of the Sermon is necessary, Pennington's argument deserves careful consideration in light of the social, political, economic, and ethical issues with which our world is immersed. This work is not only helpful for understanding human flourishing according to the Sermon but also useful for considering ways to engage those outside the Christian tradition in regard to the teaching of Jesus.

In the introduction to *The Sermon on the Mount and Human Flourishing*, Pennington provides an overall strategy for reading the Sermon before dividing the text into three parts. The first part orients the reader to the content of the Sermon defining key terms and concepts, specifically *makarios* and *teleios*, and then provides a structure of the Sermon in the context of Matthew. This effectively segues into the second part, a six-chapter commentary on Matthew 5–7 based on the structure previously outlined. The third part ends with a relatively brief theological reflection on human flourishing.

In order to offer a convincing reading strategy for the Sermon, Pennington orients the reader with a history of readings, albeit brief. His filter is through the theological, pastoral, and practical problems the Sermon raises due to what appears to be ethical and practical impossibilities. Drawing on prominent readings from patristic, medieval, Reformation, and modern periods, Pennington demonstrates that there is more than one way to read the Sermon. Thankfully, he also includes a section on non-Western and non-Caucasian readings before concluding with his own overall strategy for understanding the Sermon. He suggests that Matthew's Jesus provides a "*Christocentric, flourishing-oriented, kingdom-awaiting, eschatological wisdom exhortation*" (p. 15, emphasis original). With this approach, the hope is that in spite of the difficulties the Sermon has raised in the past, his work will skillfully suggest that the most beneficial reading of the Sermon on the Mount is one that encourages human flourishing.

Providing an encyclopedic context reinforces the opportunity to demonstrate that both Jewish wisdom literature and the Greco-Roman virtue tradition emphasize ways that humanity can flourish. The word *eudaimonia*, best translated "human

flourishing,” summarizes this idea, and yet I am unsure the modern reader understands the disconnect between how Pennington’s two contexts understand human flourishing and what a modern reader might perceive as human flourishing. As Pennington points out, “It was only through lifelong, intentional pursuit of virtue (practiced moral character) that one could find true flourishing” (p. 31). In spite of this definition, confusion may continue to arise as to what human flourishing meant then and what readers perceive it might mean now. While I agree the Sermon advocates *eudaimonia*, grasping that human flourishing involves morality, prudence, and intellect more than physical wealth or ease of existence may engender confusion. In other words, a section on what human flourishing was not and is not in the midst of these two contexts could have furthered the conversation.

Also in the initial part of the book, Pennington engages in an exceptional lexical analysis of key terms and concepts. He spends entire chapters on *makarios* (“happiness”) and *teleios* (“wholeness”) because they are the “key ideas for the best reading of the Sermon” (p. 85). In this way discussion and development of the difficulties associated with translating these two terms becomes clear. In spite of the difficulties, Pennington’s lexical work on these two key terms is grounded in sound canonical, historical, and literary analysis. In addition to those key terms, “righteousness,” “hypocrisy,” “heart,” “Gentiles/pagans,” “the Father in heaven,” “the kingdom of God,” and “reward” all receive sufficient attention. Arguably, “righteousness” could have warranted a chapter of its own due to Matthew’s Gospel as a whole, and, as Pennington later points out when analyzing the Sermon’s structure, “The clear theme of the Sermon is the idea of greater righteousness” (p. 134). In spite of this, Pennington’s selection of key concepts accurately reflects elements that remain central to the Sermon.

Continuing to orient his readers to his rationale for dividing the Sermon for the commentary section, Pennington wisely provides a brief overview of the structure of Matthew and rightly acknowledges that Matthew’s “literary skill is all about *structure*” (p. 106, emphasis original). While he recognizes the lack of consensus regarding Matthew’s structure, this chapter identifies and develops more than one structural approach to the Sermon on the Mount. This work I find particularly helpful whether one agrees that the emphasis of the Sermon is on human flourishing or not.

The second part of *The Sermon on the Mount and Human Flourishing* is devoted completely to a commentary on the Sermon. Each chapter provides an overview of a section of the Sermon, dividing each section into individual passages for analysis, and an explanation of how each section connects to human flourishing. I appreciate Pennington’s ability to evaluate consistently each section of the Sermon from this perspective. However, I left each chapter wanting more on the connection between the commentary and human flourishing, even though the final segment of each chapter connected the passage in some way to human flourishing. Perhaps I was looking for more explanation of how these concepts actually encourage wholeness and happiness or how the failure to follow Jesus’s teaching is a detriment to flourishing. I could not discern whether I was asking too much of the author or the lack of attention to this was beyond the scope of the work.

The third part of this text summarizes Pennington's six key arguments in order to engage in larger theological categories. I will briefly address two of the six arguments. Pennington suggests first that not only is the Bible about human flourishing but also, second, that human flourishing is God-centered and eschatological. I find these positions defensible from Scripture and necessary for human flourishing. I appreciate the author's ability to draw on these and other themes to demonstrate the potential value for utilizing the Sermon on the Mount in a way that encourages human flourishing.

In light of the topic, content, and emphases, I hope that those in and outside of academia will engage *The Sermon on the Mount and Human Flourishing* to expand further the conversation regarding human flourishing. Pennington tackles this topic with precision and care in light of both the Jewish and Greco-Roman contexts. While the text may be most appropriate in an academic setting on the Gospel of Matthew or the Sermon on the Mount itself, Pennington's work deserves attention and consideration amidst a plethora of works that challenge us to consider Jesus's Sermon on the Mount in Matthew.

Matt Jones

Colorado Christian University, Lakewood, CO

Suffering in Ancient Worldview: Luke, Seneca and 4 Maccabees in Dialogue. By Brian J. Tabb. Library of NT Studies 569. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017, xix + 274 pp., \$114.00.

Brian J. Tabb is Academic Dean and Assistant Professor of Biblical Studies at Bethlehem College and Seminary in Minneapolis and serves as managing editor of *Themelios*. In this revision of his London School of Theology Ph.D. thesis written under Steve Walton, Tabb studies three diverse first-century sources (the writings of Seneca, 4 Maccabees, and the book of Acts) in order to create an "ancient conversation" on suffering. Tabb has chosen these three ancient voices, because they are roughly contemporary with each other and wrote on the problem of suffering. However, he does not imply they were ever actually in dialogue, only that they represent three different worldviews as regards the problem of suffering. Seneca represents Stoicism, which does not promise to remove suffering as much as offer a way of bearing suffering by changing one's attitude towards it. The author of 4 Maccabees, called "Auctor" by Tabb, represents the view of Hellenistic Judaism that suffering is the result of divine chastisement. The pious will endure, because their eyes are fixed on God. In the book of Acts Luke represents the Christian view of suffering as suffering on behalf of the name of Jesus.

In the introduction to the book, Tabb defines suffering as an individual or group experience of bearing physical, psychological, economic, and/or social pain, distress, or loss. Persecution is suffering deliberately inflicted on a person or group because of their distinctive beliefs, ethnicity, or practice (p. 11). Because the reason each of Tabb's authors will give for the meaning of suffering is colored by their worldview, he adapts N. T. Wright's five worldview questions to the issue of suf-

fering. These questions are: (1) Who is God, and how is God involved in our suffering? (2) How does suffering relate to our nature, task, and purpose in the world? (3) How does suffering clarify the world's basic problem? (4) How does suffering relate to the solution for the world's problem? (5) How does suffering relate to our expectations for the future (p. 18)? There is agreement among the three authors on the problem of suffering. For all three authors, suffering is governed by divine providence and all three authors agree humans will endure suffering in this world. While all three would agree the real problem humans face is ignorance or sin, not suffering, they differ on how humans ought to respond to suffering. For Seneca, suffering is an opportunity to demonstrate virtue; for Auctor suffering cleanses the land of Israel's sin; for Luke suffering is a symptom of human brokenness and the only solution is Jesus. In fact, Luke's view is that "suffering is a normative facet of Christian discipleship before the consummation of God's kingdom" (p. 168). The response to suffering for each author could not be more different. For Seneca, the solution is to embrace philosophy. For Auctor the solution is obedience to God's Law. For Luke, however, the divine solution to the problem of suffering is the name of Jesus.

Tabb devotes two chapters to each of his dialogue partners. The first is subtitled "exegesis" and begins with a short overview of critical questions for each of his ancient authors. Tabb then selects several important texts on suffering for each author for more detailed study. The first chapter of the pair develops a database of texts for the second chapter, subtitled "synthesis." In this section, Tabb asks each of the three writers the five worldview questions in order to create a "theology of suffering" for Seneca, Auctor, and Luke. There is so much material on suffering in the case of Seneca and Acts that Tabb cannot possibly include every example, so he selects key passages that he will use to illustrate the overall worldview of the author. Since 4 Maccabees is a more limited selection, there is more exegetical detail.

For Seneca (chaps. 1–2), suffering in this life is inevitable but not completely random since God uses *fatum*, *fortuna*, and *providentia* to educate and discipline his children (p. 51). For Seneca, humans are "reasoning animals" who learn virtue "in the school of suffering" (p. 54). Hardships are not evil in themselves, but human response to suffering may be good or evil (p. 69). Although there is not much future hope in Seneca, death does bring an end to suffering. The wise person does not fear death and prepares to die appropriately (p. 67).

The author of 4 Maccabees (chaps. 3–4) understands suffering as a direct result of Israel's failure to recognize and honor God as their "supreme patron" (p. 107). Expanding on the story of Eleazar, the seven brothers, and their mother from 2 Macc 6:18–7:41, Auctor "proves devout reason's superiority," describing the painful torture of the brothers who resist the king (p. 77). The seven brothers are described as "noble athletes" who endure torture by mastering their passions. The reason for their suffering is Israel's leadership (specifically, Jason) who broke the covenant by welcoming foreign practices. The individuals who suffer torture and death in 4 Maccabees are faithful to the covenant and therefore "achieve salvation in Israel" (p. 114). In the deaths of the seven brothers divine mercy is satisfied, and both the people and the land are cleansed of their guilt. Tabb argues their "vicari-

ous deaths propitiated God's judgment" (p. 120), and this results in the restoration of peace to Israel. Unlike Seneca, Auctor has a clear eschatology. Those who are suffering in this life experience bodily resurrection and reward, which Tabb suggests is a "significant interpretive extension" of the Deuteronomic blessings (p. 115). In addition, 4 Macc 9:8–9 contrasts temporal suffering with the eternal suffering awaiting the persecutors (p. 118).

Tabb observes the book of Acts is remarkably restrained in its recounting of Christian suffering, especially when compared to 4 Maccabees and later Christian martyr stories. In chapters 5–6 he focuses his attention on two specific passages, Stephen's speech and death (Acts 6:8–8:4) and Saul's conversion (Acts 9:1–30). Both accounts highlight Jesus's identification with the one suffering. Both Stephen and Paul suffer "in Jesus's name." Suffering legitimizes them as witnesses and genuine leaders of God's people and ironically leads to further proclamation of the Gospel. Stephen and Paul also demonstrate the cost of discipleship anticipated in Luke 9:23 and 14:27. The true disciple should expect to suffer in the same way Jesus did. For Luke, the world's problem is sin and unbelief (p. 182), and the only solution is eschatological salvation in Jesus's name.

Tabb expands his synthesis in chapter 6 to include the Gospel of Luke. He uses the prophecy of Simeon (Luke 2:34–35) and Jesus's own passion predictions to demonstrate Luke's view that God's plan includes the suffering of Jesus as well as Paul (Acts 9:16) and all believers (Luke 11:11–12). Jesus's disciples are "cross-bearing people" who enter into the kingdom of God through many tribulations (Acts 14:22). What is perplexing is that Tabb does not compare this to 4 Maccabees, where the suffering of the brothers appeases God's wrath and returns the land to a state of peace. Is it possible Jesus's own vicarious death "propitiated God's judgment"? However, Tabb's focus is on the meaning of suffering in the life of the disciple, so this Christological diversion is outside the scope of his study.

In his concluding chapter, Tabb creates an "ancient conversation" about suffering following the model of Cicero's *De Natura Deorum*. In this imaginary conversation, the three writers meet on the Ides of June, 63 CE to discuss *de natura patientiae*, "the nature of suffering." In this thirteen-page dialogue, each author offers their view of suffering and answers questions from the others. Tabb provides references to primary sources in the notes. Although some may object to a fictional dialogue in a scholarly monograph, Tabb succeeds in capturing the voice of each author on the purpose of suffering. The dialogue is followed by a short postscript that reports the findings of Tabb's study in a more traditional, academic fashion.

Any study that sets three voices in conversation as Tabb has done must answer the question, "Why these three?" Perhaps the results would be dramatically different if 1 Peter, Hebrews, or Revelation were given a place at Tabb's imaginary table. Tabb could have included suffering in the hellish visions of the Enochic literature, the speech at Masada in Josephus, or even the suffering of Rhodanes, who twice suffers crucifixion in Iamblichus's *The Babylonian Tale*. However, Tabb's

choice of a Stoic, a Hellenistic Jew, and a Christian theologian draws attention to both similarities and differences on the topic of suffering.

Phillip J. Long

Grace Bible College, Grand Rapids, MI

An Anomalous Jew: Paul among Jews, Greeks, and Romans. By Michael F. Bird. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016, xii + 310 pp., \$28.00 paper.

This is an anomalous book about an anomalous Jew. I expected it to focus on the question of whether Paul was a Jew or a Christian and to interact mainly with what has been called the “radical new perspective on Paul,” the idea that Paul was an observant Jew with no critique of Judaism. It certainly does that, but it is also much broader, interacting extensively with other questions and schools of thought in Pauline theology. This anomaly is both its strength and its weakness—a strength because it brings separate conversations about Paul into dialogue, and a weakness because not everything seems to be related directly to the main topic of the book. One reason the book is so broad is that three of the five chapters are revised versions of stand-alone essays published in earlier volumes. Bird has brought them together here with an introduction and two new chapters, all loosely related to the topic of Paul’s anomalous relationship to Judaism.

The introduction offers a typology of positions on Paul’s relationship with Judaism. Was he a former Jew who had embraced a new identity (the apocalyptic Paul)? A Jewish figure for whom Judaism had been transformed by his encounter with Christ (the new perspective)? Or a faithful Jew who proclaimed Jesus as only the savior of the Gentiles? Bird finds good and ill in all of these approaches. He himself prefers John Barclay’s term “an anomalous Jew,” although he fills this term with his own content, locating the anomaly or peculiarity of Paul’s thinking in the revelation he received from God, “which discloses how faith in Christ without Torah was the instrument that brings Jews and Gentiles into reconciliation with God and into the renewal of all things” (p. 28).

Bird’s first chapter tackles the huge question in Pauline scholarship about the nature of the Jewish soteriology to which Paul responded and Paul’s own continuity or discontinuity with that soteriology. Did Paul respond to Jewish legalism, covenantal nomism, ethnocentricism, or what? Bird’s discussion is a little confusing but at the end of the day he seems to take a smorgasbord approach that sees Paul critiquing different kinds of Judaism (ethical monotheism, covenantal nomism, ethnocentric nomism) in different places of his letters, sometimes from a perspective within Judaism and sometimes from a perspective against Judaism. Did Paul view himself and his communities within Judaism or outside Judaism? Here again Bird takes a both/and approach seeing Paul and his communities as tied to Judaism in one sense but also transcending it in Christ.

In the second chapter, Bird argues that Paul preached to both Gentiles *and* Jews—specifically that “an earlier phase of his career included evangelistic work among Jewish communities; and even after his turn to the Gentiles, he never

stopped sharing the gospel with Jews when he had the chance” (pp. 70–71). Here I found myself agreeing with his conclusion but wondering about some of his arguments. Is there really evidence for a *turn* in Paul’s ministry from preaching to the Jews to preaching to the Gentiles? Bird argues this thesis from Gal 1:17–23 and Acts 9:19–30 (pp. 85–90). However, is the evidence of Paul preaching to Jews in Acts 9 really any different from his later preaching in the synagogues? More importantly, Paul says in Gal 1:15–16 that God revealed his Son to him in order that (ἵνα) he might preach Christ among the Gentiles and that he immediately obeyed this call by going to Arabia (Gal 1:17). Bird must argue that this ἵνα only refers to the ultimate goal of the revelation and not to what God had actually revealed to Paul at the time (pp. 85–86). However, it seems more likely that Paul was called to preach among the Gentiles from the beginning. Bird does make some interesting points in this chapter. For example, perhaps Paul’s description of his apostleship for the obedience of faith ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν refers to the geographical location of his preaching (“among all the nations”) rather than limiting his preaching only to Gentiles (“to all the nations”). Further, Bird quotes Richard Bell’s interesting observation about the jealousy motif Paul appeals to in Romans 10–11: “Paul’s theology demands a mission to the Jewish people” (p. 99, emphasis original).

In chapter 3, Bird argues against the absolute dichotomy between salvation history and apocalyptic in Galatians as heralded by Martyn and others. This is a helpful introduction to that debate. It relates to the main point of the book in that it shows that Paul’s “apocalyptic” gospel is rooted in *Israel’s* history.

Chapter 4 delves deep into a historical reconstruction of the incident at Antioch (Gal 2:11–14). Bird argues that Paul disagreed with Peter and Barnabas about whether Gentiles should be considered full covenant members and thus worthy of table fellowship with Jews. Paul adopted the “old Antioch” position and was forced to make a painful break with his brothers and pursue his mission elsewhere. Bird views the Antioch incident as the “first public expression of Paulinism, understood as the antithesis between Christ and Torah when the salvation and equal status of Gentiles is on the line” (p. 203). Yet I wonder how Bird would view Acts 13:38–39, which presents Paul as preaching the Christ/Torah antithesis *before* the Antioch incident, assuming Bird’s understanding of Pauline chronology.

The final chapter explores Paul’s supposed critique of the Roman empire in his letter to the Romans. Bird spends some time recounting the history of scholarship on Paul and empire and mentioning the various critiques, but it did not seem to me that he had really taken to heart the problem of insignificant parallels and the fact that this approach must always be read as an implicit and hidden transcript in Paul’s discourse. Paul never says “Christ is Lord” and then draws the conclusion that “Caesar is not.” This conclusion must always be read between the lines.

I mentioned in the beginning of this review that the broad nature of Bird’s book is both a weakness and strength. On the one hand, it is a weakness in that the book lacks coherence. Most of the essays loosely address Paul’s Jewishness, but they do not establish a coherent thesis about his Jewishness. I walked away with much food for thought but not with a convincing argument about how to think about Paul’s relationship with Judaism. There is no concluding chapter in the book,

which was particularly frustrating since the last chapter about Paul and empire did not really seem to touch on the main topic at all.

On the other hand, there is a strength in Bird's broad approach. I had never connected the apocalyptic Paul with the question of Paul's relationship with Judaism, but Bird's discussion helped me think more coherently about how these two academic conversations relate. Bird discusses many different issues in Pauline theology in this volume, and his extensive work in the primary sources and his clear summaries of the secondary literature will be helpful for understanding both Paul and his interpreters. Perhaps an anomalous book is not such a bad idea after all.

Kevin W. McFadden
Cairn University, Philadelphia, PA

Steward of God's Mysteries: Paul and Early Church Tradition. By Jerry L. Sumney. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017, xiv + 209 pp., \$28.00 paper.

In *Steward of God's Mysteries*, Jerry L. Sumney contends that we should not think of Paul as an inventor of Christianity but rather as someone who adopted and adapted the traditions he inherited. Sumney, Professor of Biblical Studies at Lexington Theological Seminary, organizes his argument by responding to some of the discrete challenges of those who claim that Paul is essentially the "founder" of Christianity (e.g. Hyam Maccoby, James Tabor, Barrie Wilson, etc.). In response to each allegation, Sumney points to evidence that Paul utilized and adopted preformed material related to the given topic under consideration. Therefore, we can conclude that he was influenced by, and relied upon, previously constructed material within the early church (making his critique distinct from others like David Wenham). In other words, Paul's use of tradition shows that he did not invent Christianity.

After situating his study on preformed material as a critique of those who claim Paul created Christianity, Sumney provides a set of criteria for detecting prior tradition in chapter 1. Discerning exactly where these traditions appear is quite controversial, and so methodology is crucial. The following is a brief summary of Sumney's extensive list of criteria (pp. 17–18): (1) introductory formulae; (2) unusual terminology; (3) shift to first-person plurals; (4) "confession" terminology; (5) relative pronoun/clause or participial phrase as introduction; (6) multiple attestation; (7) passage as self-contained; (8) inconsistent theology; (9) interruption in context; (10) lack of naming the honoree; (11) parallelism and rhythm; (12) resumption of an argument using a key word/phrase; (13) unique grammatical features; and (14) gospel summary (found elsewhere).

This set of criteria helpfully points to the need for methodological rigor on the topic, though, as Sumney contends, the criteria do not need to be fully met. Sumney suggests that "at least three or four" need to be met in order for us to have confidence (p. 18), which will appear to some readers as arbitrary and subjective. This is something that Sumney recognizes, and he is careful in how he weighs the evidence throughout the book. Ultimately, his aims are fairly modest, judicious, and

circumspect; by identifying preformed material, Sumney simply suggests that Paul was not the originator of the broader idea in question, and thus he cannot be said to have invented it. Such is surely welcome to many as a final statement about Paul and his identity within the early Christian movement, even as individual alleged examples of prior tradition may be rejected or regarded as inconclusive. At any rate, Sumney identifies five areas for further exploration that are addressed in the subsequent chapters.

Sumney contends in chapter 2 that the death of Jesus was interpreted as having saving significance prior to Paul, beginning with the most explicit, and least controversial, example: 1 Cor 15:3–5. In chapter 3, Sumney is interested in finding “exalted claims about Christ” (p. 41) in the preformed material. He looks at a number of texts and concludes by noting that several key Christological affirmations precede Paul: for example, that Jesus was called Messiah and Lord, that he was believed to be a descendent of David, and that he was raised from the dead by God (p. 66). The result further shows that Paul’s Christology was not in dispute with his opponents. The goal of chapter 4 is a little less specific. Sumney states that he is looking for preformed material that indicates “something of the understanding of salvation that was in the church before Paul” (p. 70). After discerning prior tradition in a number of texts, he concludes with some restraint, “Whatever [Paul’s] innovations, he was not the first to proclaim that Jesus was the means of receiving forgiveness of sins and redemption by God” (p. 95). Like chapter 4, chapter 5 is also a bit broader, as Sumney is merely looking for examples of preformed material that “involve eschatology or that have eschatological implications” (p. 97). Chapter 6 stands out for being the only chapter that addresses a single text, and the text that it focuses on—1 Cor 11:23–25—is regarded by most as a clear example of prior tradition. As Sumney contends here, Luke and Paul drew upon a similar eucharistic tradition (pp. 144–45), Mark’s tradition contains elements that are more primitive than Paul’s (pp. 142–44, 150, 156–57), and, since Luke and Paul used a similar tradition, both contain unique examples of secondary developments of tradition (pp. 145–46). The final chapter (chap. 7) is a summary and synthesis of the previous chapters. For Sumney, when “Paul does not argue for the belief that the tradition asserts” (p. 171), that is evidence that he is using a tradition as common ground from which to derive relevant principles to speak into certain situations and address new problems. As Sumney concludes, “Paul is his churches’ leading *interpreter* of the beliefs expressed in the church’s earlier traditions” (p. 174, emphasis original). In other words, as a missionary, Paul contextualized the tradition of the church to a Gentile audience.

Much of Sumney’s methodology is sound and helpful. The instances in the book where the weight of the thesis is most strongly felt is when the traditional material is explicitly stated to be such (e.g. 1 Cor 11:23–25; 15:3–5; 1 Thess 4:13–18) or when Aramaic is incorporated (esp. 1 Cor 16:22). Outside of these instances the reader may be less convinced. When there is no explicit indication, Sumney focuses mostly on the atypical. Yet it is a little difficult to talk about what is unusual for Paul in terms of grammatical features, terminology, or even theology as a means of discerning prior tradition given our dearth of evidence overall. For Sumney, the

Pauline evidence only amounts to the seven undisputed letters, which shrinks the available evidence even further. In saying this, I do not wish to deny that irregularities exist but only note that our evidence is too sparse, especially when it happens to span years of missionary activity.

Scholars will grant that preformed material appears in Paul, though there will remain disputes about the individual instances; the devil loves those details. Each of the non-explicit instances that Sumney contends are examples of preformed material are not without their detractors. Even though many readers of Sumney's book, myself included, will heartily affirm that Paul was not the inventor of Christianity on other grounds, there will remain some pushback as to how much of the alleged preformed material actually constitutes prior tradition.

It seems to me that a helpful starting point for discerning Pauline use of tradition is to take our cues from his use of Scripture. Of course, we can verify and assess this with more confidence—though surely with no less controversy—than his use of traditions to which we do not have independent access. If we take Paul's use of Scripture as instructive, this could open some fruitful doors for comparative purposes, though it would also further complicate our search for prior tradition (e.g. consider the phenomenon of composite citations).

Missing from the study is extended discussion on Paul's explicit *comments on tradition*, not merely his use of it (though see the brief comment on p. 133). In Galatians 1, Paul seems to want to distance himself from the Jerusalem "pillar" apostles to highlight that his gospel and apostleship were not derived from anyone other than Christ. Even though this book was not written as an exhaustive account of preformed material and prior tradition in Paul, it would still have been beneficial, in addition to providing evidence that shows that Paul did not invent Christianity, to address whether Paul thought he had done so.

Overall, Sumney provides a cogent rebuttal to those who claim that Paul was Christianity's originator. His study on preformed material comes with a great deal of methodological precision along with judicious assessment of the implications. Although primarily intended to critique the idea that Paul invented Christianity, Sumney's study also serves as a further critique of F. C. Baur's old hypothesis that Christianity developed in two antithetical streams, Petrine and Pauline, and were then later harmonized in early Catholicism. As an expert on the opponents of Paul, Sumney is also keen in this study to show commonalities between Pauline and non-Pauline theologies, stressing that the commotion that we see in Paul's polemical writings concern a much smaller segment of doctrinal disputes than we often realize. Whether one is finally persuaded by the discussion on each text in this study, the cumulative weight certainly provides much to think about.

John Anthony Dunne
Bethel Seminary, St. Paul, MN

Christ Is King: Paul's Royal Ideology. By Joshua W. Jipp. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015, viii + 380 pp., \$44.00 paper.

This is a monograph written by a rising American scholar. It is noteworthy that the second chapter received the Paul J. Achtemeier Award (2013) through the Society of Biblical Literature, a recognition that promises high-quality work in the rest of the book. Jipp's basic argument is that Paul reworked and applied Greco-Roman and Jewish conceptions of the good king to Christ. Chapter 1 ("Paul's Christ-Discourse as Ancient Kingship Discourse") starts by surveying recent works that seek to overturn the scholarly consensus since Wilhelm Bousset that Paul uses *Χριστός* only as a proper name. Following the footsteps of Matthew Novenson, Adela Yarbro Collins, Richard Hays, Douglas Campbell, and William Horbury, Jipp takes the titular connotations of *Χριστός* seriously and proposes that Paul's Christ-discourse is informed by ancient kingship discourses. He then demonstrates the prevalence of kingship discourse by giving a sketch of kingship discourses in both Hellenistic-Roman and Israelite-Jewish writings.

Chapter 2 ("King and Law: Christ the King as Living Law") discusses the concept of the ideal king as "living law." There are ample examples in Hellenistic kingship discourse. The good king is set to be the example whom his subjects should imitate and in this way achieve social harmony. Although the OT does not use the language of "living law" to describe Israel's ideal king, the *concept* is there. The requirement of kings to copy the law (Deut 17:18–20), the commendation of Josiah as an ideal king for his discovery and implementation of the law (2 Kgs 22:3–20), and the juxtaposition of kingship psalms and Torah psalms (Psalms 1–2; 18–21; 118–119) are cited as examples. In the final and climatic section, Jipp argues that the enigmatic expression "the law of Christ" (used by Paul only in Gal 6:2 and 1 Cor 9:22) should be understood against the background of the political discourse of king as living law. The expression is a shorthand for "the Torah as it has been embodied by Christ."

In chapter 3 ("King and Praise: Hymns as Royal Encomia to Christ the King") Jipp argues that Hellenistic kingship ideology as well as Jewish royal hymns provide the most plausible background for the early church's divine Christology. Both Hellenistic and Jewish customs of singing to the king, who was seen as a vicegerent of a god and also God's representative in ruling over the created universe and bestowing peace on his subjects, paved the way for the Christians' adoration of Christ as God's equal. Jipp examines Col 1:15–20 in great depth and takes it as a royal encomium written to praise the messianic king in broad accordance with ancient kingship theology.

Chapter 4 ("King and Kingdom: Sharing in the Rule of Christ the King") asserts that the primary root for understanding Paul's participatory theology is Christ's Davidic kingship. A brief rehearsal of the Hellenistic and Roman texts that present the king as the earthly representative of the gods is followed by a long discussion of the Jewish tradition in which the Davidic king is both the son of God who shares Yahweh's rule and the representative of the people. Paul sees Jesus as uniquely positioned to be the bridge between God and his people. Christ, through

his installation as the resurrected and powerful Son of God, enables his people to share God's *πνεῦμα* (also the *πνεῦμα* of Christ) and thus all the benefits of being the sons of God. Jipp makes a big claim that the paradigmatic presentation of Jesus Christ is characterized as God's singular anointed Davidic-like figure not only in Rom 1:3–4 but "throughout the epistle" (p. 166), with evidence mainly from Romans 5 to 8 and 15:9–12 in this chapter. He claims that in Romans 5 to 8 Christ's enthronement and bestowment of gifts are *cosmically* reworked by Paul. Paul sees Adam as both the prototypical *human* and a *royal figure*. Christ succeeded where Adam failed and defeated the evil overlords of sin and death. Those who belong to Christ are thus "God's sons" (8:4) by virtue of their participation in the messianic sonship of Jesus Christ.

Chapter 5 ("King and Justice: God's Righteousness and the Righteous King in Romans") continues the argument of chapter 4 closely. Jipp maintains that the justice and judgment discourse in Romans is best understood against the background of ancient discussions of the king and justice. He shows that there is a close relationship between the king and justice in both Greco-Roman texts and Hellenistic Jewish writings. The Hebrew Scriptures look forward to a coming king who fully embodies divine righteousness. God's righteousness is closely tied up with the king's righteousness. Within the Psalter, the king is often portrayed as the righteous one, whose righteousness is the basis on which he appeals for God's justification, judgment on the wicked, and the salvation of his people. Similarly, in Isaiah's Servant Songs, God's saving righteousness is revealed in his justification and rescue of his servant (whom Jipp sees as a royal Davidic figure) from shame, death, and the violence of the wicked. Such a background is critical for understanding the *δικα*-language in Romans. In 1:18–3:20, God's righteousness is revealed in his resurrecting his Son, who was the only righteous one and who was crucified by the injustice of humanity. The identity of the *ὁ δίκαιος* in 1:17b is, in the first instance, the Messiah. In 4:24–25, Paul draws upon Isaiah 53, viewing Christ as the "the Righteous One" who receives life as a result of his righteousness and can then impart life to his people, a theme that runs through Romans 5–8.

In chapter 6 ("Conclusions") Jipp summarizes his thesis that ancient kingship discourse provides a rich source for understanding Paul's Christological language. He points out that more work could be done to expand his thesis, like the notion of the king as a priestly figure, temple builder, and benefactor. He concludes by highlighting the significance of his book.

This monograph is a significant contribution to NT theology in several respects. To a certain extent and broadly speaking, Jipp has accomplished what he hopes to achieve. First, by producing voluminous examples of kingship discourse in both Greco-Roman and Jewish writings and studying Paul's Christology against this background, Jipp advances a plausible case that the good king is the religious-historical precedent of Paul's use of *Χριστός*. This argument not only adds force to the growing scholarly interests in the honorific use of *Χριστός*, but also provides an alternative explanation of early Christology to the high Christology model of Bauckham and Hurtado. Second, Jipp's fresh proposal helps to explain the source of Paul's participatory soteriology by demonstrating that Jesus Christ, by virtue of

being both the son of the divine king and the resurrected human king, can share the benefits of life with his people. Third, his proposal of Christ as “living law” is a possible solution in eradicating the apparent contradictions between Christ and the law. The puzzling expression “the law of Christ” in Gal 6:2 and 1 Cor 9:22 can now be understood in a new light.

Having said that, the importance of this work is undermined at times by the less than rigorous argumentation from Paul’s text, especially in the second half of the book where Jipp’s case is based mainly on Romans. While Jipp’s proposal is attractive in its broad outlook, his exegesis of Romans stands on shaky ground at places.

Jipp presses his case too far in claiming that royal imagery is behind the use of Christ “throughout the epistle” of Romans, a claim that he fails to substantiate. While he is helpful in emphasizing the *inclusio* effect of Rom 1:2–4 and 15:9–12 and rightly suggests that the *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ* that has been revealed “*has as its content God’s resurrection of his royal son from the dead and the enthronement of this son to a position of powerful lordship over the nations*” (p. 249, emphasis original), in his interpretation of Romans he places more weight on the paradigmatic nature of Rom 1:2–4 and the implicit support of Paul’s scriptural citations rather than on explicit contextual and exegetical evidence. To cite an example, his argument that Jesus Christ is presented as the only righteous one in Romans is not persuasive enough. The reference of “the righteous” to Christ in the Hab 2:4 citation is doubtful. There are places where his logic of argument is dubious: “We have seen that in Rom. 1:2 Paul establishes a christological hermeneutic for his reading of Israel’s Scriptures. . . . It would seem much more likely that he is drawing upon the prophet [Habakkuk] to say something about God’s Son, and particularly about his resurrection. . . . For him to draw upon Hab. 2:4 to attest to *humanity’s* justification by faith would fail to conform to the christological hermeneutical cues he has provided the reader in Rom. 1:2” (pp. 255–56, emphasis original). My question is: Why should only 1:2 provide the cue for understanding Paul’s use of Hab 2:4? Do not 1:5–6, the immediate subsequent verses after 1:2–4 and probably also of paradigmatic nature, better inform Paul’s use of Habakkuk? Does not Paul’s zeal to bring about the faith of obedience among the nations better explain his use of Hab 2:4, which sets up a model of obedient people responding to God and the gospel in faith? After all, to understand *ὁ δίκαιος* as referring to Christ flies in the face of the original meaning of Hab 2:4, which points to the righteous among the Israelites and does not carry any Christological connotation.

It is my hope that Jipp can strengthen his case with more direct contextual and exegetical evidence from Paul’s texts. For instance, rather than resorting to the echo of Isaiah 53 in Rom 4:24–25 (which requires proving that the Servant is a royal figure in the first instance) to demonstrate that Jesus is the righteous one as in the Psalter (a rather tortuous way of argument), Jipp could directly use Paul’s “Jesus as Lord”/“Christ as Lord” motif with allusion to the royal Psalms (2:7–8 and LXX 109:1), a bold declaration of Jesus’s divine and royal identity in his resurrection that stands out not only in 4:24, but also in 1:4 (which Jipp has already teased out) and

10:9. Jipp's theory has great potential and deserves more substantiation and further refinement.

Maureen Yeung Marshall
Evangel Seminary, Hong Kong

Paul and the Person: Reframing Paul's Anthropology. By Susan Grove Eastman. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017, xvi + 207 pp., \$30.00 paper.

Eastman's *Paul and the Person* is an unusual but important book. One might expect that a book on Paul's anthropology would have discussions of the major words that refer to humans and a treatment of most of the significant passages in which personhood is discussed. Eastman's work has a different focus. She engages Epictetus's views of the self and modern scientific discussions of personhood and discusses in detail only three Pauline texts: Romans 7, Philippians 2, and Galatians 2. Still, her work deserves careful attention, and it has the potential to change the way people think about human nature, the gospel, and the way the gospel challenges assumptions and offers insight into human nature. Her book contributes to the rediscovered emphasis on participation in Christ and seeks to clarify Paul's "in Christ" and related expressions. The book addresses the academic community, but it will be unfortunate if pastors and churches in general do not pay attention to the argument. Much of what drives Eastman has pastoral concerns.

Eastman's primary target is the false "Cartesian" assumption of the isolated individual, surely one of the sources of many of our problems. She focuses instead on a "second-person hermeneutics," one that views the self as always existing as the recipient of an address (p. 15), and offers what she calls a "participatory identity" (p. xii). Humans are relationally constituted agents who are both embodied and embedded in their world, and therefore individuality presupposes relationality, rather than the reverse (pp. 15–16).

After a foreword from John Barclay, who also rejects old models of individual autonomy, and a preface, the book is divided into an introduction, two major parts, and a conclusion. The first major part is a "three-way conversation," which treats Epictetus, modern perspectives on the person, and an analysis of "the corporeal reality of Pauline participation," which is largely a contrast between Rudolf Bultmann's and Ernst Käsemann's views of *sōma*. The second major part, "Participation and the Self," is a treatment of the three Pauline texts (Romans 7, Philippians 2, and Galatians 2). Eastman is especially concerned to deal with the similar constructions "I no longer live but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20) and "I no longer am doing it [what he hates], but sin dwelling in me [does it]" (Rom. 7:17 and 20). "In both cases the self is a self-in-relation-to-another, suggesting that it is not only 'in Christ,' but also in the realm of sin and death, that the person is shaped in relationship to a separate entity that is both external and indwelling" (p. 7). These two relational contexts, which for Paul are the only alternatives, do not leave room for an autonomous freestanding self. "Paul's anthropology is participatory all the way down," but this does not mean Paul has no sense of a "self" (p. 9). The stated goal

of the book is “to put forth concepts of the self, of being, of identity, and of meaning that we can understand ourselves, and can spell out, at least partly, in contemporary terms as a comprehensible conceptual frame for interpreting Paul’s participatory logic” (p. 10). The focus of the second part of her book explores three aspects of this participatory logic: human involvement in the realm of sin and death (Romans 7), Christ’s participation in the realm of human bondage (Philippians 2), and human involvement in a new interpersonal regime inaugurated and indwelt by Christ (Galatians 2). One overarching question dominates throughout the book: Does a person exist primarily in self-relation or in relational exchange (p. 23)? Clearly from the outset, for Eastman it can only be the latter.

The least relevant chapter is perhaps the one on Epictetus, but it is a good treatment and valuable, if for no other reason than for its marking how different Paul and Epictetus are, not least in language where both talk about being in the divine.

The second chapter on contemporary perspectives on personhood questions two dualistic and individualistic assumptions: that of a nonmaterial “soul” separate from the body and that of the self as a freestanding autonomous agent. Eastman summarizes the work of Shaun Gallagher and Vasudevi Reddy on neonate imitation and that of Vittorio Gallese on mirror neurons. These studies are evidence of “a broadly shared notion of the person as irreducibly embodied and socially and environmentally embedded. . . . It is intersubjective all the way down. The Cartesian idea of an individual, freestanding, independent self is long gone” (p. 79).

The third chapter dealing with *sōma* emphasizes again that humans are always embodied and embedded in relations. *Sōma* is viewed as a mode of participation, and Paul’s “body language” shows “a close interplay between corporeal human existence as physical and social ‘bodies’ and larger suprahuman realities that exercise pressure on embodied human interaction” (p. 91). She has in mind the contrast between the “body of sin” and the “body of Christ,” and the way sin or Christ becomes the environment in which one lives. No doubt she is right about this, but she, unnecessarily in my opinion, adapts Dale Martin’s assumption that for ancients the body is “porous” and “of a piece with the elements surrounding it and pervading it,” so that “the surface of the body is not a sealed boundary” (p. 93). In her treatment of Bultmann and Käsemann, she clearly sides with Käsemann and for good reason. For Bultmann, the body is inward-directed self-relation, whereas for Käsemann it is outward-directed other-relation and never a neutral entity. Rather, it is embedded in its environment and always constrained and shaped by the worlds to which it belongs.

Eastman sees Romans 7 as the third part of a spiral structure describing sin. In Romans 1:18–5:12, sin is what humans do, in 5:12–7:7 sin is an agent in human history to whom humans are captive and with whom they are complicit, and in 7:7–25 the issue is sin and the law and the way a person unwillingly participates in a larger cosmos with hostile powers. The logic of the self as independent, isolated, and autonomous makes no sense in Paul’s argument.

The treatment of Philippians 2 focuses on divine participation with humans. This text shows readers that they are being imitated by God in Christ in a divine-

human relationship that grounds and generates intimacy with God and each other. Participation is first of all God's participation in the human plight, and this makes possible human participation with God's Son. This participation *by* Christ creates a relational bond that restructures the self in relationship to others; in essence it is the basis for the reconstitution of humans. Eastman finds an Adam typology in Philipians 2, but that is not central to the argument and in my estimation questionable.

The treatment of Galatians 2 focuses on participation with Christ, Paul's use of "in," and the way existence is reconstituted by Christ. Placing the self in a new relational matrix, specifically union with Christ, causes the reconstitution. Eastman sees Christ's indwelling and recreating the self as the *source* of faith in Christ. Issues of divine and human agency are apparent, but Eastman urges us not to slide into a competitive account of divine and human agency. Humans still have agency and responsibility. Surely we want to say that human faith is a divinely assisted act, but Eastman does not adequately deal with divine and human agency. This is understandable given the complexity of the issue and the lack of clarity in Scripture. Still, if Christ is the one energizing faith, which surely he/the Spirit does, why does it not work in every person?

The conclusion treats the psalmist's question, "What is a human?" and the answer is given from a second-person perspective. Humans are those creatures whose bodily form Christ assumed and thereby dignified. Human identity cannot be explained from the standpoint of the individual or of merely human relations. The subheading of the conclusion shows what Eastman intends: "Pushing the Reset Button on Paul's Anthropology" (p. 176), and she has accomplished that well. Humans must be seen in relational and participatory terms and as embodied and embedded. Paul's anthropology is framed on the possible spheres in which one is embedded, either in sin and the flesh or in Christ. This relational focus and especially the emphasis on Christ's participation with us in the incarnation and our participation in and with Christ are at the center of Paul's thought and need to be recovered in the life of the church. Eastman is to be congratulated for a substantive and helpful work.

Klyne Snodgrass

North Park Theological Seminary, Chicago, IL

Reading Paul with the Reformers: Reconciling Old and New Perspectives. By Stephen J. Chester. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017, xxi + 478 pp., \$60.00.

The year 2017 marked two different anniversaries. It was the 500th anniversary of Luther's posting of the 95 Theses, regarded as the spark that lit the Protestant Reformation. It was also the 40th anniversary of the publication of E. P. Sanders's landmark volume *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), credited with initiating the ascendancy of what has come to be known as the New Perspective on Paul.

Conscious that many regard the Reformation tradition and the New Perspective to be fundamentally incompatible, Stephen J. Chester has authored a well-

researched attempt to place these two influential understandings of the theology of Paul in irenic dialogue. Once misunderstandings and false dichotomies are removed, Chester argues, the two traditions stand in a far more complementary relationship with one another than is often recognized. Only then, Chester insists, may a reliable path be charted into the post-New Perspective landscape in which the academic study of Paul finds itself.

After a brief prologue that charts the outline and previews the contents of the book, *Reading Paul* proceeds in four parts. Part 1 addresses the complexities posed and opportunities offered by bringing sixteenth and twenty-first century readings of Scripture into dialogue. Chester is not interested in presenting the Reformation “simply as a negative foil to the insights of the NPP” (p. 56). He believes that the Reformation has much to offer the contemporary study of Paul and can help modern readers to “evaluate” both the “readings” and “interpretative presuppositions” of the New Perspective on Paul (p. 57).

Yet for this dialogue to take place, one must first look both at “the interpretive paradigm that preceded [the Reformers] and the manner in which together they succeeded in establishing an alternative paradigm” (p. 55). This project constitutes the burden of part 2. The Reformers broke from medieval readings of Paul in establishing what Chester terms a “new Pauline exegetical grammar” (p. 61). The Reformers understood Paul to describe the human plight in such a way as to preclude any “meritorious human cooperation with divine grace” (p. 104). For this reason, “works” were entirely removed from “the causes of justification,” and justifying faith was understood in terms of “trusting reception of Christ and his benefits” (p. 170).

In part 3, Chester explores how three Reformers—Luther, Melancthon, and Calvin—placed their individual stamps upon this common exegetical grammar. According to Chester, Melancthon and Calvin “emphasi[ze] ... the forensic nature of justification” in a way that Luther does not (p. 315). Unlike Melancthon, however, Luther and Calvin set justification in the context of union with Christ. Even here, Chester argues, the two Reformers differ in an important respect. Calvin “makes a very sharp distinction” between justification and sanctification in which justification is “an exclusively forensic movement whereas renewal is allocated entirely to sanctification” (p. 316). Chester is unprepared to pronounce this distinction mistaken but he does not believe that it does justice to the way in which Paul uses the “vocabulary of righteousness” (p. 316). Chester is more sympathetic to what he understands Luther to say about justification, namely, that the believer is justified by an alien righteousness and that the believer’s “justification encompasses renewal” (p. 206).

In part 4, Chester brings his analysis of the Reformers’ readings of Paul to bear on the New Perspective on Paul, whose “shared ... commitments,” Chester emphasizes, “are neither as extensive nor as cohesive as those developed by the Reformers” (p. 321). He argues that, contrary to received opinion, the New Perspective on Paul is not diametrically opposed to the Reformation. Continuity is evident in the shared understanding of Paul’s pessimistic anthropology and in the “intensification” of the apocalyptic and covenantal strands of Paul’s thinking in the

New Perspective on Paul (pp. 332, 337). However, there are also misunderstandings. Stendahl positively erred in his claims that the Reformers understood Paul, prior to his conversion, to struggle with feelings of guilt relating to an inability to keep the demands of the law. Chester is also prepared to criticize both approaches to Paul. Neither the Reformers nor the New Perspective on Paul are said to understand Paul's phrase "the works of the law" entirely correctly. The Reformers were correct to understand the phrase to denote the deeds that the law requires but, in ways that Chester never adequately explains, mistaken to characterize Judaism as a legalistic religion (pp. 355, 359, 361, 373). The New Perspective on Paul has been correct to insist that the phrase has a "boundary-marking function" but mistaken to reject its primary signification as deeds done (p. 349).

What, then, of "righteousness" in Paul? For Chester, N. T. Wright is mistaken to claim that "righteousness" denotes covenantal membership, even as Wright has been correct to criticize "imputed righteousness" as unfaithful to Paul (p. 393). Chester prefers the category proposed by Michael Bird, "incorporated righteousness," which, Chester argues, couples union with Christ with the alien righteousness of Christ in such a way as to break down "the common scholarly bifurcation between forensic and participatory categories in Pauline soteriology" (p. 394).

What of the believer's good works? Appealing to Barclay's recent work on "gift" in Paul, Chester argues that the "Christ-gift" is given to the "unworthy," who remain "externally dependent on this gift" (pp. 375, 376). Believers, through the "supply" of the gift, are to "make their lives fit the gift" so that they may be "commend[ed]" when Christ returns (p. 376). This explanation, for Chester, creatively resolves a longstanding debate in the study of Paul about the role of works in one's salvation without either wholesale "reproduc[ing]" or "repudiat[ing] earlier figures" (p. 377).

Reading Paul with the Reformers is a rich work that repays careful reading. It is refreshing to see a NT scholar evidence such sympathy for the Reformers in the contemporary study of Paul. Chester's heuristic device of an "exegetical grammar" is an effective way to show how the Reformers parted ways with their interpretative predecessors and how contemporary readers may effectively engage the Reformers' exegesis of Paul. Chester himself correctly demonstrates that the proponents of the New Perspective on Paul are more indebted to the Reformation than they have frequently acknowledged. His comparison of the Reformers and the New Perspective on Paul along the lines of dependence, intensification, misunderstanding, and partial insight in part 4 is a constructive rubric to highlight areas of agreement and disagreement.

One area of formal agreement that Chester helpfully identifies between the New Perspective on Paul and the Reformation tradition is the importance of union with Christ to the study of Paul. Far from being an insight largely confined to the twentieth-century study of Paul, union with Christ was central to both Luther's and Calvin's interpretation of Paul. The Reformers therefore have much to offer contemporary interpretation when they point us to the way in which Paul understands union with Christ in light of the "reign of grace" (p. 368).

Chester also demonstrates that Stendahl's criticisms of the Reformation tradition for allegedly understanding the pre-conversion Paul to have been tormented by an introspective conscience are misplaced. In fact, the Reformers were largely disinterested "in the psychological dimensions of how the law reveals sin" (p. 343). Even if Stendahl were correct that Paul was possessed of a "robust conscience," Chester perceptively observes, Stendahl's understanding of justification as "focused solely on the inclusion of the Gentiles in God's people in a way that excludes any concern with works-righteousness" "simply fails to follow" (p. 346).

For all these virtues, *Reading Paul* fails to yield a fully satisfactory reading either of the Reformers or of Paul. In a number of ways, Chester evidences dissatisfaction with the view that justification, for Paul, was altogether forensic and exclusive of transformation, a view that he acknowledges that Calvin embraced. For Chester, Luther and Calvin differ at this point. Luther, he argues, understood justification to include renewal. However, the evidence that Chester supplies from Luther's writings does not bear out this conclusion (see pp. 191–96). Furthermore, as Chester acknowledges, it uncomfortably puts Luther at variance with the *Formula of Concord* (1577), and that at a point that defined the Lutheran Reformation (p. 214). Whatever verbal or rhetorical differences may obtain between the two Reformers, Chester offers no compelling reason to think that Luther would have dissented from Calvin's formulation that justification and sanctification, while inseparable, are necessarily distinguishable.

Chester's understanding of justification understandably surfaces in his treatment of Paul and engagement with the New Perspective on Paul. He concurs with N. T. Wright's rejection of imputed righteousness as a category untrue to Paul (p. 392) and understands Paul's use of the word "righteousness" in Romans 5–6 and Philippians 3 to be broader than forensic in denotation (pp. 367, 375, 395–96). In doing so, Chester effectively rejects the Reformational distinction between imputed righteousness and imparted righteousness. What Chester puts in place of that distinction, however, is unable to sustain the weight of the Reformational doctrine of an exclusively forensic justification. "Incorporated righteousness" is too imprecisely defined to vindicate Chester's claim that it effectively transcends and replaces imputed righteousness. In similar fashion, Chester's appropriation of Barclay's work on "gift" fails to preclude the presence of meritorious works in justification that the Reformers sought to rid from the medieval church's understanding of Paul. Chester's understanding of justification as inclusive of renewal is less an appropriation and extension of the Reformers' exegesis of Paul in conversation with modern scholarship than a considered dissent from a cardinal claim of the exegetical and doctrinal consensus of the Protestant Reformers.

These concerns notwithstanding, *Reading Paul* is a work that merits the careful attention of both biblical and Reformation scholarship. It models a constructive way of bringing into conversation two different disciplines that converge on a single figure, the apostle Paul. It demonstrates, sometimes unintentionally, that the questions, terms, and categories that informed the Reformers' readings of Paul abide with readers of Paul today. Modern readers of Paul, seeking to make their

way through the thicket of post-New Perspective interpretation, would do well to consult Chester as a guide.

Guy Prentiss Waters

Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson, MS

Paul as a Problem in History and Culture: The Apostle and His Critics through the Centuries. By Patrick Gray. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016, x + 262 pp., \$33.00.

Evangelicals have a special affinity for Paul, imagining him as the ideal follower of Jesus. Evangelical theology appeals to many passages in Paul's letters for support. We might imagine that if Paul showed up to one of our churches, he might be relieved to at last find people who practice the faith as he envisioned it. This relationship to the apostle sets up evangelicals for quite a surprise when they find out that many interpreters of the Christian faith—friend and foe alike—regard Paul as having departed from Jesus's teachings, corrupted them, subverted them, or rejected them wholesale. Might it be the case that Paul, rather than Jesus, is more properly regarded as the true founder of Christianity?

Patrick Gray provides a thorough survey beginning in the first century up through the modern era of those who "regard Paul as a problem, indeed, the most nettlesome problem of the last two thousand years. Everyone loves Jesus, it seems, but Paul is another matter" (p. 7). Gray has much material with which to work and no shortage of striking quotes from figures ranging from cultural critics to political leaders. Søren Kierkegaard "writes that the Protestantism of his day is 'completely untenable' because it is 'a revolution brought about by proclaiming the Apostle (Paul) at the expense of the Master (Christ)'" (p. 3). For George Bernard Shaw, Paul "does nothing that Jesus would have done, and says nothing that Jesus would have said" (p. 3). Robert Frost writes that Paul "is the fellow who theologizes Christ almost out of Christianity. Look out for him" (p. 4). Gray cites the biting words of social critic James Baldwin, noting the "personal animus that is difficult to ignore": "The real architect of the Christian church was not the disreputable, sun-baked Hebrew who gave it his name but the mercilessly fanatical and self-righteous St. Paul, who, 'with a most unusual and stunning exactness, described himself as a wretched man'" (p. 6). The collection of quotation-worthy comment throughout Gray's work is quite impressive, more than justifying his having produced this work.

The book is divided into two parts. The first surveys anti-Paulinism beginning in the first century through the start of the twenty-first. He surveys Jewish and Islamic writers, along with liberal Christian scholars, social critics, philosophers, novelists, and filmmakers. In the second part, Gray expands upon a number of themes that emerge throughout his historical survey, reflecting at length on topics such as Jewish and Islamic treatments of Paul and what a world without Paul might have been like.

In his first chapter, Gray treats the problem of Paul in the NT, noting that from the very beginning, "Paul evokes strong reactions from everyone he encounters" (p. 13). His letters indicate that he was frequently involved with contentious

people in his churches, and Luke's account in Acts demonstrates that Paul often faced opposition and generated a strong reaction. James appears to counter Paul's teaching of justification by faith when he argues that justification comes not by faith alone (Jas 2:24) and that faith without works is dead (v. 26). There are several ways to conceive of the relationship between James's letter and Paul's statements about justification by faith in Romans and Galatians. Perhaps James misunderstood Paul, or it may be that he "understood him all too well but rejects the revolutionary implications of his argument" (p. 21). It may also be that James and Paul are addressing different topics and issues, but Gray's discussion is useful in that he highlights how the NT itself provides data for later scholars to envision a situation in which Paul was already troublesome among other apostolic figures.

The second and third chapters treat anti-Pauline sentiment throughout the proceeding centuries up through the Enlightenment period and into the development of early critical biblical scholarship. Criticism of the apostle appears to grow increasingly caustic as it becomes a weapon in the arsenal with which some critique the Christian faith. This is evident also in the subsequent chapter, surveying the nineteenth century. Thomas Jefferson left Paul's letters out of his work, known popularly as "the Jefferson Bible," but officially titled *The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth* (p. 64). He believed that Jesus's teaching had been corrupted by later followers, seemingly singling out Paul when he wrote to a fellow signer of the Declaration of Independence that the doctrines of Jesus "have been still more disfigured by the corruptions of schismatizing followers, who have found an interest in sophisticating and perverting the simple doctrines he taught, by engrafting on them the mysticisms of a Grecian sophist, frittering them into subtleties, and obscuring them with jargon" (p. 65). The philosopher and political theorist, and occasional correspondent with Jefferson, Jeremy Bentham, went further, calling Paul a liar who fabricated the stories of the resurrected Jesus, formulated a religion opposite that of Jesus and was himself the anti-Christ (p. 66). The remainder of Gray's survey in the first part of his book makes it a one-stop shop for all things anti-Paul. He situates his treatments within wider cultural trends, which goes a long way toward giving readers some sympathy with critics of Paul, while also maintaining some distance in order to explain, to some extent, the animosity.

In the book's second half, Gray picks up and elaborates on some themes found throughout his historical survey. He treats Jewish criticisms of Paul that paint him as a self-hating Jew who rejected his people and misunderstood the central impulses running through Judaism (pp. 117–23): "Paul nonetheless remains an ambiguous figure for modern Jews. By no means is it impossible to find appreciative treatments of his accomplishments. But it is more common to hear him described as a renegade Jew—if he is even acknowledged as a Jew" (p. 123). Gray cites the trite phrase that summarizes the overall sentiment: "Jesus was a good guy, Paul was a bad *guy*" (p. 123).

Gray points out that a recent trend within NT studies has sought to read Paul against a Jewish backdrop. Indeed, NT scholarship for generations assumed that Paul had rejected Judaism for a variety of reasons, which fueled anti-Judaism throughout the history of the church, culminating in the Nazi horrors against Jews

in the middle of the twentieth century. A reflex in the opposite direction has given rise to what has been called the “New Perspective on Paul,” which Gray depicts as an attempt to rehabilitate the apostle and to reconcile him somehow with his Jewish heritage. If there is one quibble I had with Gray’s book, it is the collecting together of disparate interpreters with competing views of Paul under the umbrella term “New Perspective.” Gray lists as proponents a few harsh critics of the New Perspective, such as Mark Nanos and Pamela Eisenbaum (p. 125).

He helpfully traces the development of criticisms toward traditional depictions of Paul to the work of Krister Stendahl and E. P. Sanders, whose foundational work was developed by N. T. Wright and James D. G. Dunn. Yet Nanos and Eisenbaum stand over against the New Perspective, critiquing the work of Wright and Dunn for regarding Paul as seeing something wrong with Judaism and worthy of rejection. While Paul no longer rejects Judaism for its legalism, these scholars claim that Wright and Dunn cannot avoid envisioning Paul as having rejected Judaism for some other reason, perhaps for its ethno-centrism. The emerging development of a yet-newer school of thought on Paul (these are proliferating at such speed that professors must constantly revise their taxonomies) is the “Paul within Judaism” perspective. Gray’s discussion of attempts at rehabilitating Paul (pp. 124–29) is excellent in that both of these approaches can be understood as seeking to find more helpful ways of situating the apostle with regard to his Jewish heritage. It is worth noting, however, that not all of these interpreters sit comfortably alongside one another.

Gray’s work is a wonderful contribution to Pauline studies and a delight to read. He writes with a light touch as he treats a most serious topic. Evangelicals who regard Paul as a brother will do well to grapple with his mixed legacy among other interpreters throughout the ages.

Timothy G. Gombis
Grand Rapids Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, MI

Romans. By John D. Harvey. Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2017, xxxiii + 429 pp., \$29.99 paper.

The volumes in this series (eight have now appeared) occupy a niche between rather bare-bones and dated guides such as those by Zerwick and Grosvenor or Rogers and Rogers and full-fledged commentaries. They resemble more closely the Baylor Handbook on the Greek NT though entries in this EGGNT series encompass much more than the volumes in the Baylor series do. In addition, they include several features that most commentaries do not, and so they serve a very useful function, especially for pastors (though see below), but also for students and teachers of the NT.

John Harvey is Dean and Professor of NT of the Seminary at Columbia International University in Columbia, SC. His *Romans* volume begins with a chapter that introduces Paul’s epistle. That introduction encompasses only four pages, so that the readers see only the barest compilation of important data on the letter’s

authorship, place of origin and date, audience, occasion, and purpose, as well as an outline of the letter and recommended commentaries. From that point the book traces Romans section by section following Harvey's outline of Romans—one that falls into line with most. Each section then proceeds in a methodical manner covering the following elements. First, we see the structure of the passage—a short prose analysis followed by a layout of the Greek structure (of UBS⁵) using some basic and easily grasped conventions. Second, based on that grammatical layout, Harvey provides a verse-by-verse analysis, listing each relevant Greek clause or other structural unit. Here we find parsings of key terms (helping those whose Greek is rusty), word meanings from lexicons (BDAG is prominent), identification of grammatical uses or options, discussions of text-critical problems, various English version renderings of contested matters, pointers to important commentaries on key issues—often citing competing interpretations to alert the readers to ranges of options—and Harvey's own interpretations of the meaning of the features he highlights. When he believes that interpretive options are evenly balanced, he only lists competing options and leaves the reader to decide.

Third, Harvey includes a section “For Further Study” in which he provides a list of useful resources that address one or more key issues or topics that surfaced in the passage. He includes journal articles, monographs, essays, and lexicon entries, including a smattering of German sources—which will be beyond the reach of most pastors but will prove useful for scholars or advanced students. For example, for 1:8–12, Harvey includes “Pauline Thanksgivings (1:8)” and “Prayer in Paul (1:9)” as topics for further study. For the section on 8:18–30, he provides bibliography for the topics “Suffering (8:18),” “Deliverance of Creation (8:20),” and “Predestination and Election (8:29).” For the section on 12:9–21, the topics are “Paraenesis (12:9),” “Hospitality (12:13),” and “Coals of Fire (12:19).”

Fourth, each section concludes with “Homiletical Suggestions,” essentially outlines (typically more than one per section) that one might use for an exegetical sermon or sermon series. For 8:18–30, the suggestions are “The Hope of Glory” and “The Nature of Christian Hope.” For 12:9–21, Harvey provides a three-part sermon series with the title, “Total Transformation,” with individual outlines entitled “Evidence of a Transformed Mind (12:9–13),” “Evidence of a Transformed Heart (12:14–16),” and “Evidence of a Transformed Will (12:17–21).”

What are the book's strengths? Harvey has done meticulous work in his focus on the specific items in the text of Romans. He has picked out the relevant and significant features, and readers will find judicious decisions about most issues they might want to engage. He has commented on virtually every feature of every sentence in Romans that may have exegetical payoff. This is impressive. Laying out the Greek text is useful for seeing the structural elements of passages, particularly using indentation to show connections and subordination. The topics he has picked for further study are usually the key ones, and he includes important works in the bibliographies. If a preacher is prone to sermons that follow the structure of the text, Harvey's outlines will prove useful or at least suggestive.

Inevitably, as with any tool that involves the interpretation of texts, readers will disagree with some of Harvey's conclusions—uses of a genitive case, categori-

zation of adverbial participles, and things like that. He takes a traditional approach to grammatical analysis, so that those readers familiar with the older Dana and Mantey, *Manual Grammar*, or the more recent work by Daniel Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, will recognize such categories as customary imperfect, progressive or perfective present, intensive perfect, pure dative, etc. What seems to be missing are treatments of verbal aspect in his tense analyses. Though Stanley Porter's *Idioms of the Greek New Testament* is among the tools Harvey employs, works devoted to verbal aspect seem to be absent. The book's index has no entries for "aspect" or for "verbal aspect." This seems a serious lack in a book that devotes so much to grammatical analysis. His extensive analyses of grammatical features are impressive, and so it is lamentable that he does not also utilize what could be gained from a study of verbal aspect, an important feature in how verbs function. It is difficult to imagine a book written these days that does not show acquaintance with and use of this crucial dimension of verbal analysis—a widely discussed topic among NT scholars since the early 1990s with books on the topic by Buist Fanning and Stanley Porter, and recently augmented by Constantine Campbell and David Mathewson, among others. Most often Harvey is sensitive to using an inclusive rendering of *ἄνθρωπος* where warranted, but there are a few times when he translates it as "man" or "men" when clearly "human" or "people" is appropriate in the context (e.g. at 2:29 and 3:4).

An obvious strength is Harvey's use of the best sources in his goal of providing exegetical help for interpreters. As to commentaries, Cranfield, Dunn, Longenecker, Moo, and Schreiner get prominent billing, although he does cite Barrett and Käsemann, as well as the older works by H. A. W. Meyer, John Murray, and Sanday and Headlam upon occasion. He relies mostly on Porter and Wallace (both mentioned above) for grammatical issues, but Harvey also cites the older works by E. de W. Burton, A. T. Robertson, C. F. D. Moule, N. Turner, and Blass-Debrunner-Funk. Likewise, his bibliographic choices for more study on various topics are gold mines that will provide readers with a great head start, even if they wish to do more exhaustive searches themselves. One might always quibble about some of the entries, or why others were omitted. Or one might argue that some bibliographies favor one position over against another. However, these are difficult judgment calls, and I think on the whole Harvey has been eminently fair throughout.

A pastor or student who is comfortable in the Greek text will find this book a faithful guide in navigating the features of Romans. Students in Greek exegesis classes in Romans will love it! However, as with any tool that identifies features in the Greek text, its usefulness will depend on whether the reader knows what the categories mean and why they are significant for the interpretation of the text. Absent this knowledge, having labels, as accurate as Harvey's may be, will be pointless, as pointless as using a computer program to parse original language forms. For example, in 3:22 Paul speaks of the "faith of Jesus Christ." Harvey identifies scholars who support two options for understanding this, but does not take a side himself (p. 91). Unless a reader knows the difference between an objective and subjective genitive for the interpretation of a text, those categories will be meaningless, and the reader will not be able to follow the argument. That is where Harvey's

work falls short of a full-fledged commentary. It fills an important niche but will be of limited use to readers without Greek. For preachers who have facility in Greek, this will be a valuable work to place alongside their favorite commentaries. In addition, they may find the homiletical outlines useful, or they may not. Preachers have their own favorite approaches to texts.

William W. Klein
Denver Seminary, Littleton, CO

Spirit and Word: Dual Testimony in Paul, John and Luke. By Timothy Wiarda. Library of NT Studies 565. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017, ix + 269 pp., \$108.00.

Timothy Wiarda's *Spirit and Word* is an excellent example of how biblical exegesis can serve in theological discussions within the wider church. The Reformed and the Wesleyan/Holiness (and Pentecostal) traditions begin their understanding of pneumatology from very different places. The question is: *What is the correct locus for locating the work of the Spirit in the proclamation of the gospel?* Reformed theologians will concentrate either on the doctrine of Scripture or the preparation and achievements of the evangelist. Holiness traditions will additionally locate this work within the hearts of the recipients whose experience confirms or convicts regarding the truth of what has been said. Some would say the former is highly cognitive and the latter experiential, and likely there is some truth in this. Wiarda knows this theological tension well and wants to speak to it (p. 240).

Wiarda wants us to see that in proclamation there is what we might call "dual agency" in the work of the church: The word of God is proclaimed and the Spirit of God accompanies this proclamation, making it effective. Acts 5:32 illustrates this dual agency concisely. When Peter explains to the Sanhedrin what these Christians are up to, he simply says, "We are witnesses to these things *and so is the Holy Spirit* whom God has given to those who obey him." The apostolic mission thus included faithful proclamation and confidence that God's Spirit was empowering and completing what was being done. Yet what is the relation of Word to Spirit when the gospel is preached?

Wiarda provides a compelling and comprehensive survey of the key texts in the NT where Word and Spirit are juxtaposed (thus the book's title). His aim is to demonstrate that we have not only misread many of these key texts but that the NT (or at least, Paul, John, and Luke) have a uniform understanding of the work of the Spirit. Here he tries to define the locus of the Spirit's work: Is it in the activity of preaching or in the experience of receiving? He decidedly argues for the latter, which makes him a friend of so many in the Holiness movement and its allies in the Charismatic world where Spirit experience is commonplace.

After an introductory chapter surveying the issues, he finds his primary texts in 1 Cor 2:4–5 and 1 Thess 1:4–5 (with added notes on Rom 15:18–19 and 2 Cor 6:6–7) and explores them in chapter 2. In every case he sees the primary thrust of these texts as the same: the faith-producing influence of the Spirit on the audience. He then finds two metaphors (chap. 3) in Paul that affirm this as well: Christians as

written letters (2 Cor 3:3) and pastors in priestly service (Rom 15:6). The process of sanctification and transformation by the Spirit means that the believer can fully understand the Word and embrace it. In chapters 4 and 5 Wiarda continues in Paul to show the effectual works of the Spirit in the believer's heart to know the love of God and to know God's glory (Rom 5:5–8; 2 Cor 14:6; Eph 3:16–19)—and to see the transformative work of the Spirit to conform believers to the image of Christ (2 Cor 3:18), lead in worship (Eph 5:18–19), and engage Satan in battle (Eph 6:17). In each case, there is a delicate balance between the work of the Spirit and the proclaimed Word of God. Reformed theology, inclined as it is to being relatively cognitive, has also emphasized that, if the Spirit has an experiential dimension, it is helping us read and understand a text more clearly. In chapter 6 Wiarda studies 1 Cor 2:10–16 and 2 Cor 3:6, 12–17 to show that the Spirit actually helps us receive and believe what we hear. Its transformational work is not just in understanding but in accepting and embracing. The corrective here can be heard loud and clear: *Paul believes that when the Word is preached, something happens within us as we hear and obey it.*

In chapters 7–10, the book discusses the Johannine literature. John's Gospel no doubt has the most developed pneumatology of any of the four Gospels. Wiarda looks at 15:26–27 where we discover a genuine interior work of the Spirit, 14:25–26 where we discover how the Spirit-Paraclete will bring back to us the spoken Word of Jesus, and 16:12–13 where the Spirit is promised to provide what many have seen as new revelations. This is perhaps where Wiarda's own theological background may get in the way. For him, this promise found in 16:12–13 cannot refer to new (prophetic?) revelation but instead to "clarifying revelations" that interpret what Jesus had said ambiguously in his earthly career (Greek *paroiimia*; cf. John 16:25). Many Johannine interpreters might disagree with this view, since many of them think that the Johannine church likely invited new revelations that went beyond the historic revelation of Jesus. These new revelations (so the argument runs) likely fueled the secessionist split we read about in 1 John.

Spirit and Word are explicitly joined in John 6:63 (the Word gives life; the Spirit gives life) and this provides us with a hint at how to interpret 3:1–15 (the Nicodemus story) and 4:23–24 (the climax of the Samaritan woman narrative). Nicodemus's transformation in the Spirit is linked to his embrace of Jesus's revelation, just as the woman's newly directed worship must be linked to the truth—and Jesus is the Truth. The Spirit, in other words, cannot operate apart from the Word revealed in history. This is especially clear in 1 John where the role of the Holy Spirit is to recall and revive what had been taught previously in the historic witness of the church (2:18–27; 4:1–6).

A final section—covered all too briefly perhaps—concentrates on Luke (chap. 11). Wiarda examines Acts 5:32, 15:1–35, and the interesting (and blindingly obvious but often missed) structure of Acts 1–2. The Word is proclaimed by Peter, and it is accompanied by Pentecost. Together this preached Word and profound Spirit create the birth of the church.

When Wiarda synthesizes these findings in chapters 12–13, it almost comes as a relief. This book truly spends a great deal of time in the trees—but now at the end, he lets us see the forest and gain the larger picture. He shows us the symmetry

among Paul, John, and Luke and even suggests that there may well have been influence of thought here because the message is so similar. My own disappointment was with the brevity of his final chapter where in five brief pages he talks about what this might mean for the church. It is his contemporary application, of course, but as monographs go, few take the time to provide us practical guidance or answer the “So what?” question.

This is an excellent book that could be used as a guide for any graduate student to show how a thesis is presented and prosecuted. Above all, it shows that exegetical discoveries are valuable not only for understanding the NT but for how we think theologically about matters of such importance as this.

Gary M. Burge

Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, MI

New Testament Apocrypha: More Noncanonical Scriptures, Volume One. Edited by Tony Burke and Brent Landau. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016, xlix + 585 pp., \$75.00.

This important reference work contains thirty texts that may be described as in some sense apocryphal, containing material paralleling stories or genres within the NT (the editors agonize a little about the most appropriate terminology in their Introduction). Broadly, the collection is conceived as a supplement to J. K. Elliott’s collection in *The Apocryphal New Testament: A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation based on M. R. James* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993). Since Elliott selected “the oldest or most important and influential or merely the most popular” of the noncanonical texts (Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, p. xiii), this collection of *More Noncanonical Scriptures* contains predominantly texts from well after the fourth century (the editors claim an average date of “around the fifth century” [“Introduction,” p. xlv] although it is difficult to see how that has been determined), a few of which were extremely influential and all of which have points of interest for a variety of readers. Whether any of them ever functioned as “authoritative and inspired Scriptures” (as the editors claim [p. xx]) seems uncertain, but disputes about the title of the collection do not seem profitable. The editors acknowledge straightforwardly that “many of the texts included in this collection were composed long after those in the New Testament, and one of the reasons for the creation of the *MNTA* (*More New Testament Apocrypha*) series was to bring attention to texts that have been neglected by scholars because they have little bearing on the study of early Christianity” (p. xxxix). In fact, this judgment may be more negative than is warranted considering the presence of some significant second and third century texts in this collection (e.g. P. Oxy 210, P. Oxy 5072, “The Death of Judas according to Papias,” and “John and the Robber”).

The editors have done a great job in gathering a collection of twenty-six good scholars (around a dozen of whom have already published monographs or serious articles on the texts with which they are dealing) and in ensuring a good deal of consistency in presentation. For each of the thirty texts, the individual writers provide an introduction, which typically summarizes the contents of the text, lists and

discusses the extant manuscripts and previous editions, discusses the date and provenance of the original composition, comments—sometimes extensively—on its literary and theological significance, briefly introduces the English translation (for a good number of these it is claimed that this represents the first translation of the text into English; the editors claim that “the majority of texts within its covers have never been translated into any modern scholarly language” [p. xlv]), and offers a brief and helpful bibliography of editions, translations, and published studies of the text. The translations seem to me typically to be in a register somewhat like the RSV translation of the Bible—with capitalization of divine names, italicization of biblical citations, chapters and verses (often created for this edition), and helpful subheadings summarizing the contents of each section (I am assuming by their consistency that these subheadings are introduced into the translations and do not reflect any part of the originals, but I could not document this).

Alongside the translations there are cross-references in the outer margin (mostly biblical parallels/sources), and an apparatus of notes below the main text discussing both points of detail (names, dates, places, etc.) and differences among witnesses or linguistic traditions. Sometimes the differences are so significant that we are offered parallel synoptic translations or translations of different language texts in sequence. Sometimes the source is so fragmentary that two types of translation are offered. Once we are offered not a translation, but an English summary of the text (for “The Revelation of the Magi”; it is claimed that an English translation is “easily accessible” in a book by the author, but that is unconvincing to me and rather unfortunate).

The texts chosen fit, in one way or another, into the categories that correspond to the contents and genres of the NT: “Gospels and Related Traditions of New Testament Figures” (17 texts, none of which is self-described as a “Gospel”); “Apocryphal Acts and Related Tradition” (7 texts); “Epistles” (2 texts); and “Apocalypses” (4 texts). A list of the texts, with the name of the translator, the title as given (other titles that appear in manuscripts and editions are generally noted in the introductions), a brief introduction to the content or point of interest, a note of its proposed date, original language, earliest testimony or manuscript, and length of the English translation follows:

Katharina Heyden, “The Legend of Aphroditianus” (an expansion of the story of the magi; third century composition in Greek, referred to and quoted in a fifth or sixth-century Greek text by Aphroditianus, translation from Greek and Slavonic, eight-page English translation);

Brent Landau, “The Revelation of the Magi” (the magi tell their story; claimed as a late second or early third-century Syriac composition, but with a single eighth-century Syriac manuscript, nine-page English summary);

Mark Glen Bilby, “The Hospitality of Dysmas” (Dysmas is the “good thief” of Luke 23:40–43 who encountered Mary and Joseph during their sojourn in Egypt, twelfth- or thirteenth-century Greek composition, interpolation into Acts of Pilate, five-page English translation);

Tony Burke, “The Infancy Gospel of Thomas (Syriac)” (miraculous tales of the child Jesus; the Greek composition is from the second century, four main Syriac manuscripts from fifth/sixth century, eight-page English translation);

William Adler, “On the Priesthood of Jesus” (a secret account of Jesus’s admission into the Jerusalem priesthood, seventh or eighth-century Greek composition, abbreviated version in *Suda* lexicon of tenth century, twenty-page English translation [3 versions]);

Brent Landau and Stanley E. Porter, “Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 210” (single leaf of third-century papyrus codex, text in Greek but fragmentary, six-page English translation [but mostly notes]);

Ross P. Ponder, “Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 5072” (single leaf of second/third-century papyrus codex, text in Greek includes exorcism and discussion of discipleship, three-page English translation [mostly notes]);

Bradley N. Rice, “The Dialogue of the Paralytic with Christ” (dialogue of risen Christ with a paralytic in Jerusalem, possible tenth-century Arabic composition, Armenian and Georgian manuscripts from thirteenth century, nine-page English translation [separate Armenian and Georgian versions]);

F. Stanley Jones, “The Toledot Yesu (Aramaic Fragment)” (date quite uncertain, perhaps fourth century; Aramaic manuscripts from eleventh century, two-page English translation);

Alin Suci, “The Berlin-Strasbourg Apocryphon” (account of events preceding the arrest of Jesus with narrative and revelatory dialogue; Coptic composition from fifth century [previously called “Gospel of the Savior”]; two manuscripts, seven-page English translation);

Paul C. Dille, “The Discourse of the Savior and the Dance of the Savior” (two texts, post-resurrection dialogue between Jesus and disciples about the cross and hymn and dance to the cross; Coptic codex from c. 1000; unable to date composition [definitely post-Constantinian], four-page English translation);

Christine Luckritz Marquis, “An Encomium on Mary Magdalene” (three Coptic manuscripts from ninth century and later [fragmentary], thirteen-page English translation);

Philip L. Tite, “An Encomium on John the Baptist” (two tenth-century Coptic manuscripts, possible Greek original, fifth to tenth-century composition, fourteen-page English translation);

Andrew Bernhard, “The Life and Martyrdom of John the Baptist” (fifth-century Greek composition, Greek manuscripts from eighth century, eleven-page English translation);

Slavomír Čéplö, “The Life of John the Baptist by Serapion” (fourteenth-century Arabic composition [perhaps earlier sources], fifteen-page English translation);

Tony Burke and Slavomír Čéplö, “The Legend of the Thirty Pieces of Silver” (story of the coins; known in Syriac and Armenian from thirteenth century, and

Latin from twelfth century; unknown origin; six-page English translation [both versions]);

Geoffrey S. Smith, "The Death of Judas according to Papias" (excerpt attributed to Papias [first half of second century] by Apollinaris of Laodicea [fourth century], surviving in *Catena* to Matthew [eleventh-century manuscripts] and Acts [twelfth-century manuscript], one-page English translation);

Glenn E. Snyder, "The Acts of Barnabas" (collection of stories about John Mark and Barnabas; late fifth-century Greek composition [Cyprus], Greek manuscripts from ninth century, ten-page English translation);

Tony Burke and Witold Witakowski, "The Acts of Cornelius the Centurion" (date very uncertain with no evidence before tenth century; Greek manuscripts from eleventh century and Ethiopic manuscript from fifteenth century, seven-page English translation);

Rick Brannan, "John and the Robber" (the apostle John meets a robber who repents; cited by Clement of Alexandria so presumably late second century [also in Eusebius], three-page English translation);

F. Stanley Jones, "The History of Simon Cephas, the Chief of the Apostles" (Syriac composition from late fourth century; Syriac manuscript of uncertain date and location, twenty-page English translation);

Cavan W. Concannon, "The Acts of Timothy" (Greek composition of fifth century, Greek and Latin manuscripts, citation by Photius in ninth century, four-page English translation);

Richard I. Pervo, "The Acts of Titus" (seventh-century Greek composition [Crete], Greek manuscripts from tenth century, five-page English translation);

David L. Eastman, "The Life and Conduct of the Holy Women Xanthippe, Polyxena, and Rebecca" (fifth or sixth-century Greek composition, stories of women that presume Pauline missionary activity in Spain, novelistic hagiography, twenty-four-page English translation);

Calogero A. Miceli, "The Epistle of Christ from Heaven" (perhaps sixth-century composition, probably composed in Greek, many versions, Greek manuscripts from fifteenth century, condemned as heretical in 745 CE, four-page English translation);

David L. Eastman, "The Epistle of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite to Timothy concerning the Deaths of the Apostles Peter and Paul" (sixth or seventh-century Greek composition, Latin, Syriac, Armenian, Georgian, and Arabic manuscripts, six-page English translation from Latin);

Charles D. Wright, "The (Latin) Revelation of John about Antichrist" (tenth-century Latin composition [perhaps in England], fourteenth-century Latin manuscripts, three-page English translation);

Stephen J. Shoemaker, "The Apocalypse of the Virgin" (perhaps seventh-century composition, very influential, many manuscripts, Greek manuscripts from eleventh century, nine-page English translation);

Stephen J. Shoemaker, "The Tiburtine Sibyl" (perhaps sixth-century composition, Greek and Latin manuscripts, eight-page English translation); and

Alin Siciu and Ibrahim Saweros, "The Investiture of Abbaton, the Angel of Death" (single tenth-century Coptic manuscript, twenty-one-page English translation).

This book will be useful for historians and theologians interested in popular Christianity across the centuries and for scholars interested in the reception of NT characters in diverse types of Christianity. The texts themselves are often thought-provoking, occasionally edifying, and full of entertaining oddities. The indices include a helpful "Index of Scripture and Other Ancient Texts" (pp. 562–85), which will be useful for those tracing the influence of biblical material in these texts.

Peter M. Head
Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, UK

The Problem of God: Answering a Skeptic's Challenges to Christianity. By Mark Clark. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017, 267 pp., \$17.99 paper.

In *The Problem of God*, former atheist, now pastor, Mark Clark seeks to address ten significant challenges to the spiritual authority of Christianity. Primarily written for skeptics searching for truth, *The Problem of God* also serves as an educational tool for Christians on critical issues. Clark's goal is to provide a work that is accessible to the laity, both secular and Christian, while engaging with complex philosophical discussions.

Though not outlined in the book in this manner, the arguments Clark tackles can be categorized into three sections: issues with epistemology (chapters 1–4), emotion (chapters 5–6), and theology (chapters 7–10). Perhaps the most poignant responses given by Clark in the first section reside in chapter 2 where Clark utilizes a moral argument for the existence of God. An essential part of doing apologetics, but one that can be easily forgotten, includes analyzing what is required for a belief to be true. Clark effectively highlights the necessary existence of absolute morals by analyzing what is required for a belief to be true. For example, everyone has a sense of justice, but cries against injustice would be empty except for a meaningful yearning for resolution (p. 47). By emphasizing the implications of a sense of justice, Clark immediately connects with readers and invites them to seriously consider the implications of their beliefs. Throughout the chapter, Clark engages with scholarly critics and offers thoughtful responses accessible to those without a philosophy degree. Still, there are times where his conclusions are sound, but more elaboration is needed.

For example, in chapter 1, Clark argues for the superiority of Christianity in fostering scientific thought over and against all other philosophies. For Clark, only Christianity provides the necessary epistemic foundation for modern scientific inquiry. In his argument, he specifically mentions that modern science could not have happened under Greek philosophy. While this is a valid argument, Clark never

elaborates on this comparison to the Greeks (p. 29). All that would be needed is a sentence or two describing how Greek religious commitments caused them to view the world in a manner not conducive towards the scientific method. However, for people who know that much of Western thought is indebted to the Greeks but are not necessarily well versed in their metaphysics, this can become a point at which the author loses credibility with them. The point here is not to nitpick Clark, but in writing a book that is aimed at skeptics, gaps in explanation such as this can be a stumbling block.

In discussing problems related to emotion, Clark is in his element as a former skeptic who now works with hurting people. From the outset, he openly shares the pains he experienced in his life both prior to and after conversion. It is obvious that Clark is someone who has experienced personal loss and heartache, faced the problem of evil, and has walked away with confidence in the existence of God. While Clark conveys his unique ability to empathize with those questioning the existence of God, he understandably struggles to exhaustively address the vast topic that is the problem of evil. That said, Clark is to be commended for including not only Alvin Plantinga but also J. L. Mackie in his discussions. While theologians and philosophers who have studied the problem of evil on a scholarly level may recognize these names, the laity is not readily familiar with them. The fact that he also brings names such as Richard Dawkins into the discussion helps to bridge academics with popular culture. Scholars may wish for Clark to discuss arguments from Plantinga and Mackie such as *Transworld Depravity*, the *Free Will Defense*, and *Metaphysical Double Vision*, but the lack of discussions on these topics may be explained in terms of page limitations. Yet, at least one area for improvement should be addressed in the event a second edition is published.

In chapter 5, Clark discusses evolutionary claims of moral authority in the context of the problem of evil. He makes a moral argument that altruism can only be accounted for by theism. More specifically, he argues that naturalistic evolution does not have the tools to address altruism. Although Clark mentions J. L. Mackie and Richard Dawkins, he does not reference Mackie's "*The Law of the Jungle: Moral Alternatives and Principles of Evolution*," which utilizes Dawkins's scientific theories as a means of accounting for altruism via evolution. Addressing such claims would strengthen the overall argument that altruism works as proof against naturalistic evolution. Nevertheless, Clark seamlessly weaves anecdotal experiences with philosophical concepts and makes it clear to skeptical readers that emotional subjects, such as the problem of evil and the existence of hell, are not automatic defeaters for the Christian faith.

In concluding this book by dealing directly with theology, Clark demonstrates that Christian theology is capable of withstanding critical claims. These claims are not only aimed at central issues in Christian theology, such as soteriology and the resurrection, but they are also aimed at issues from which the church tends to shy away, such as sexual relationships. Some of the most compelling arguments Clark makes in this section have to do with sexuality. In fact, Clark's candid discussion of a theology of sex contributes to the effectiveness of his argument. Often, the church's dialogue on sex includes only sin and perhaps an allegory from the Song

of Solomon. However, Clark unabashedly discusses issues ranging from sexual sin to the frequency with which a couple should engage in intercourse. While this may appear lowbrow, especially in light of other weightier, or more scholarly, topics in this book, sex is on the forefront of Western culture, and Clark's willingness to discuss what the Bible teaches about sex, and not just sexual sins, is refreshing and well done. Although there are points in these theology chapters that would benefit from more detail (such as an inadequate discussion about the exclusivity of Buddhism; pp. 209–11), Clark presents an overall sound case for some popular problems skeptics have with Christian theology.

The Problem of God offers an excellent sampling of critical questions that are often used as reasons for rejecting Christianity; indeed, one would be hard pressed to find a skeptic for whom this work is not applicable. Furthermore, Clark's personal experience and perspective place him in a unique position to recognize what the critics are thinking and what they need to hear. In terms of its relationship to other similar books, Norman Geisler's *The Big Book of Christian Apologetics* is a fount of information easily accessible to anyone who can use an encyclopedia. However, while both are aimed at helping people to understand truth, Clark's work empathizes with readers, making it more personable and, potentially, more effective. In fact, *The Problem of God* feels very much like Gary Habermas and Michael Licona's *The Case for the Resurrection* in that scholarly research is presented not only in an accessible way, like Geisler's work, but also in an engaging manner. *The Problem of God* aspires to the level of research and communication of *The Case for the Resurrection*. Although at times it falls slightly short of its goal, it largely succeeds in connecting skeptics with truths about Christian philosophy and apologetics.

The Problem of God contains much research and makes compelling arguments for answering critical objections. What is more, it is personal, which is valuable in a world where skeptics can often feel excluded from the church. At times these arguments may not be as complete as the author might have intended, but even so the arguments represent a good introduction into a much larger world of scholarly discourse. Mark Clark's *The Problem of God* stands as a valuable resource to introduce skeptics, and people of the pew, to a world of philosophical thought that answers challenges to the Christian faith.

Peter J. Morgan

Southwestern Assemblies of God University, Waxahachie, TX

How I Changed My Mind about Evolution: Evangelicals Reflect on Faith and Science. Edited by Kathryn Applegate and J. B. Stump. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2016, 196 pp., \$16.00 paper.

As one might suspect from its title, this book collects the personal reflections of individuals who have struggled with the relationship of science and the Christian faith. While they come from a variety of backgrounds and are professionals in different fields, for the most part they share a similar story: at one point they struggled with "a kind of cognitive dissonance" between evolutionary science and their

Christian faith (p. 17). The common resolution was the discovery and acceptance of what several call “evolutionary creation.” The editors are clear in their introduction that the book has an agenda, specifically to show that “serious Christians, who love Jesus and are committed to the authority of the Bible, can also accept evolution” (p. 17). As such its primary audience consists of people who are struggling with the tension between the two beliefs. However, even those who have already made decisions regarding how evolutionary science and the Christian faith relate will find it worthwhile reading—even if they have concluded that evolutionary science is not the best paradigm to explain the physical world.

First, the book reminds readers that for many the struggle with cognitive dissonance between evolutionary science and the Christian faith is a real issue. As Deborah Haarsma points out in her foreword, while at one level the questions are intellectual, on another level, they “engage the heart and soul as well as the mind” (p. 11). In this regard, her desire is that readers “better understand their struggles, their motivations and their faith” (p. 12). Such understanding should enable those who hold different views to interact in a thoughtful, non-conflictive manner. At the same time, it reminds readers who hold different views that the issue is complex. As J. B. Stump puts it, “Belief structures are complicated, interrelated webs, and you can’t just replace one isolated section of the web without affecting other parts” (p. 123). This suggests that an individual’s world view (the overall belief structure) is complicated, incorporating a number of other aspects. I might add that because they are so complicated, these belief structures all too often contain inconsistencies—at times, radical ones. I would further suggest that often the one who holds the belief structure is not even aware of all the ramifications of the webs, which would suggest that simplistic answers that address even apparently isolated sections likely will not be adequate regardless of how logically sound they are. This, I would propose, applies equally to adherents of evolutionary creation and young earth creation, suggesting that as those who believe in creation, we have forbearance with one another.

Second, it is inspiring to read how some who have opted for evolutionary science have endeavored to maintain their faith and their love of God’s Word even as they have struggled in this area. One thing that is often forgotten by Christians is that we can have strong differences of opinion on fairly significant issues, but as long as we adhere to the basics of the gospel, we can be genuine brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ who are growing in our faith. Given the *JETS* audience, it is worth noting that one can hold to the inerrancy of Scripture while maintaining that the divine author used figurative language in Genesis 1 to describe the creation. As a number of the contributors note, Genesis 1 is not written as a scientific textbook. Consequently, regardless of one’s view of creation, one needs to avoid trying to read science into Genesis 1, especially given that scientific theory (which is a human explanation of physical data) constantly changes. There is a caveat, however, in that viewing Genesis 1 as figurative language does raise other theological issues (especially in the context of Genesis 2 and 3, as well as a number of NT passages), some of which are significant. Further, OT scholars such as Gerhard von Rad maintain

that Genesis 1 is clearly written as historical narrative; as such, it is neither a scientific description nor a poetic description (though it does contain figures of speech).

Third, it is informative to read of how various contributors respond to various arguments purported to counter evolution. For example, one author was told that “dinosaur bones were buried by Satan to fool the world into demonic ideas” (p. 30). It was explained to another contributor that the relationship between dinosaurs and the six-day creation story is that “with God, one day is like a thousand years” (p. 35). A third noted the common expression “the Bible obviously says,” which is presented as an argument against evolution (p. 117). In each of these cases, the contributor found another explanation to be more intellectually satisfying, that is, evolutionary creation.

This desire for explanations that are intellectually viable is commendable but can be troublesome. We live in a physical universe that begs for observation. Moreover, various contributors recount how their awareness of the physical world evoked wonder. Indeed, as John Ortberg puts it, such recognition “moves us dangerously close to worship” (p. 82). Science is premised on the fact that we live in a physical universe that functions through predictable cause-and-effect relationships. It would seem that God delights as we discover how those relationships work and then marvel at the complexity that seems to increase exponentially as we become more and more aware of intricacies of the cosmos God created. Here is where caution needs to be exercised because it becomes rather easy to assume that those physical cause-and-effect relationships are the total summation of existence. If that were the case, then there would be no need of God, as Richard Dawkins and the other new atheists claim. But that is not the position of the contributors to this book, who either began with or ultimately came to an acceptance of the implications of work of Jesus Christ.

Ours is not a simplistic faith. The doctrines of the Trinity, the incarnation, and salvation are intellectually difficult, even ultimately incomprehensible. As such, when it comes to understanding God, it seems that it is not a question of whether or not there is cognitive dissonance; rather, it is a question of where the dissonance lies. The same holds true with the doctrine of creation. For example, the basic postulate of the Big Bang hypothesis is that something came from nothing, a postulate that runs contrary to one of the basic premises of science.

There is no question but that the evolutionary model is the paradigm for biology and that there is much evidence that is interpreted as pointing toward evolution. Moreover, as we study living creatures, there is a degree of genetic plasticity that allows for variation through generations. Furthermore, the evolutionary model does seem to be consistent with the premise that our universe functions on predictable cause-and-effect relationships. But it is at this point that Christians who accept the evolutionary model must part with their secular theory. While the secular perspective is that evolution is a process that functions in and of itself, evolutionary creation maintains that it is God who controls the evolutionary process. This tension raises several questions about which believers disagree: Is evolution really a viable process in and of itself? If so, what is the role of God? Should the work of God be limited to being enmeshed within observable “natural” physical cause-and-

effect processes? What room is there then for what we call miracles? If God as Creator has set up natural law to direct many of the routine processes we observe daily, can he intervene? Is so, where and when?

Most of the contributors (whether scientists or not) state that what drew them to accept evolution was the evidence for it. However, very few addressed specific strands of evidence. This approach seems to be in accord with directions from the editors who noted in the introduction that the “technical evidence for the truth of evolution” can be found in many other places (p. 17). For the most part, however, there is the question (and much confusion) as to how much of the evidence for the overall model of evolutionary science is actual evidence and how much is interpretation of the evidence. For example, is the extrapolation of evidence for what is called micro-evolution (which is generally accepted even by the most ardent opponents of the evolutionary hypothesis) to support the theory of macro-evolution really evidence? Several contributors mention the Genome Project and the similarities between the genes of various living species. More recent research suggests that the genetic code is much more complex than previously believed, belying the notion that vast amounts of material are “junk DNA.” Apparently, the genetic structure is more like a language where a change in just one component can totally change the meaning (for example, add the word “not” to this sentence). While the book avoids technical discussions, more familiarity with information theory would have been helpful.

The book contains twenty-five essays that differ greatly. Its purpose is not to prove evolution but to relate the process by which the contributors came to accept evolutionary creation. The processes varied, and the material that affected each differed significantly. This brief review is not the place to address the various journeys. However, one should note that a number of the contributors record a background of young earth creation teaching. One of these, James K. A. Smith, reported that he had taken science at a Bible college and maintained that he had been give “a very selective sampling of data and evidences that exhibited a kind of confirmation bias,” that is, proved young earth creation (p. 23). This account raises several questions. Was this just Smith’s perception? Is it possible that, given the purpose of a Bible college, the course was intentionally apologetic in nature? Yet one must also wonder if a secular college science class, which dismisses God entirely, is any more balanced. Do science classes in secular schools also have “a kind of confirmation bias”?

In this light, a couple of specific statements took me aback. Scot McKnight states that science “has no agenda” (p. 33). While this may be the ideal of science in the abstract, because it involves fallen human beings, science as taught in an actual classroom has an agenda, however subtle it may be. Ken Fong noted that, as a science major, he had been taught that “any and every theory we devise should be falsifiable” (p. 37). That raises the question: How is the theory of evolution falsifiable? Further, given the climate of higher education today, if one came up with evidence that clearly falsified evolution, would one be able to teach it in a classroom or get an article proposing it published?

Several contributors suggested there should be more open discussion on this issue. Jeff Hardin states, “We need to provide a space where godly people can engage in edifying dialogue about difficult subjects” (p. 60). Richard Mouw expresses a similar sentiment when he offers, “We must create safe spaces under the cross for discussion of tremendously important issues” (p. 194). I heartily agree. It seems that a good place to start would be for InterVarsity Press to commission a companion book, *How I Changed My Mind About Creation* (something like the *Why I am Not an Arminian/Calvinist* pair), which would recount the reflections of scientists, theologians, pastors, and scholars who changed their minds about evolution in the opposite direction.

Michael A. Harbin
Taylor University, Upland, IN

Church Planting in Post-Christian Soil: Theology and Practice. By Christopher B. James. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018, 355 pp., \$35.00.

Christopher James presents a case study of the newest cohort of churches in Seattle, WA. The book is an exercise in practical theology. The author transforms four statistical paradigms into practical ecclesiological models by using a novel, “mixed methods,” approach to the study of churches. This methodology makes the book not only practical, but distinctive (Appendix A, pp. 243–48). As a practical theologian, James engages the data with theological reflection to offer practical wisdom to church planters. Anyone who is closely monitoring ecclesiological trends in the U.S. church will find ample points of interest in this work.

Church Planting in Post-Christian Soil puts the reader in mind of Patrick Johnstone’s *The Future of the Global Church* (IVP, 2013), Tim Keller’s *Center Church* (Zondervan, 2012), and Alan Hirsch’s *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church* (Brazos, 2009), as well as numerous volumes by Ed Stetzer and George Barna. Though James combines empirical analysis (Johnstone), theological reflection (Keller), and missional orientation (Hirsch), it is his narrow focus on the Seattle cohort of new churches that makes his findings transferrable to other urban centers in the trending U.S. post-Christian context. The stated desire of the author is that this project will help “Christian communities fulfill their vocations as witnesses to the good news of Jesus Christ in rapidly evolving Western contexts” (p. 13).

James identifies critical trends that portend the future for the U.S. church. Demographic labels such as “Nones” and “None Zone” statistically track the decline of Christianity in the U.S. One need only consult *The Pew Research Forum* (<http://www.pewforum.org>) to discover the reality of the exponential rise of the non-affiliated (Nones) in the U.S. In the wake of such pessimistic demography, *Church Planting in Post-Christian Soil* presents evidence of a resurgent evangelicalism in Seattle, the predominant “None Zone” in the U.S. James surveys the 105 Christian churches founded in Seattle during 2001–2014. He contends that the post-Christian “soil” (ecology) of Seattle is indicative of a growing national trend. Therefore, he submits, because new evangelical churches have been planted in the post-

Christian soil of Seattle, church planters laboring in urban centers elsewhere in the U.S. can apply the practical wisdom of this study with similar results (p. 4).

Chapter 1 details the unique characteristics that make Seattle a prime example of the future-trending context for the U.S. church. According to James, four demographic measures represent the specific Seattle ecology that is trending on a national scale. First, urbanization is responsible for Seattle having the highest annual population increase in the nation (2.8%). This functions as a two-edged sword for the city, what James terms “physical” and “psychological” mobility. On the one hand, many new residents are seeking to start afresh in a new place. On the other hand, the “Seattle Freeze” stigma is a reference to the difficulty of new residents to connect with other in meaningful relationships. Second, progressive values are evident from Seattle’s nation-leading density of same-sex households (2.6%). Minimum wage, legalized recreational marijuana, and environmental issues round out the city’s left-leaning trajectory. Third, the city of Seattle is a hub for the information technology industry (Microsoft, Google, Amazon). Wi-fi is so prolific in the city that it recently (2009) became home to America’s first internet addiction clinic. Fourth, Seattle is avowedly post-Christian. While the “no religious preference” demographic (Pew Research Center: Religiously Unaffiliated) is approaching 25% of the nation’s population, in Seattle the “Nones” comprise 40% of the metro population. Though alarming, this sharp increase demonstrates a diminishing interest in religious institutions and not necessarily the advancing of secularization. That said, Seattle has the highest per capita concentration of atheists in the nation (10%). Still, the post-Christian seedbed of Seattle is generating a burgeoning evangelical community. Therefore, Seattle’s new evangelical churches are noteworthy because they are shaped in and for the post-Christian context (a.k.a., Seattle’s religious ecology).

Chapter 2 unpacks Seattle unique religious ecology via “The New Seattle Churches Survey” (Appendix B, pp. 249–58). The 2013–2014 survey evaluates the cohort of the 105 new churches started, rebirthed, and/or relocated during the period of 2001–2014. The survey is designed to collect data from pioneer church planters and its results are intended for broader application to the national church context. Specifically, the survey delineates three dimensions of ecclesial life: spirituality, mission, and identity (p. 31). The dimensions answer the questions: “How do we relate to God?” “What are we supposed to do?” and “What are we corporately?” The questions are interpreted according to what James terms “currents” and “patterns,” the former being responses across the survey and the latter being responses within the same dimension (p. 39). When delimited to currents, the survey reveals a study in contrasts. For example, lines of demarcation indicate striking differences of worship styles. Yet, there is also consensus of priorities among the new Seattle churches, especially the desire to offer “a community in which to belong and be loved” (p. 61). Each of the four paradigmatic ecclesial combinations (models of practical ecclesiology) represent a cluster of patterns across the dimensions noted above: (1) the mission-centric Great Commission team; (2) the Spirit-filled Household of the Spirit; (3) the conglomeration of mainline, progressive, and sacramental-liturgical into the New Community; and (4) the extra-congregational

Neighborhood Incarnation (p. 63). The four designations promote the study's central task of developing an ecclesio-praxis from these prevalent forms.

Chapter 3 is an attempt to make sense of ecclesial diversity given the current scholarly attention on multiple models of church. To substantiate the four practical models of ecclesiology that emerged from the survey, the author considers the nature and limitations of models for understanding ecclesial life (e.g. Ammerman, et al., eds., *Studying Congregations*, 1998). James differentiates the present study from sociological and methodologically atheistic approaches. By contrasting theological models that are derived from biblical metaphors, James relies on Avery Dulles (*Models of the Church*, 1991), H. Richard Niebuhr (*Christ and Culture*, 1975), and the ecclesiological methodology of Nicholas Healy (*The Church, World, and the Christian Life*, 2000) to argue against the more mainstream practice of adopting a single dominant model (or "supermodel," p. 66) that results in what he terms "blueprint ecclesiologies" (p. 68). Instead, James advocates for a comparative approach that interprets models of the church, then synthesizes the dominant types of ecclesiology into more practical "footprint ecclesiologies" (p. 68). Though numerous typologies emerge from synthesizing theological and sociological models of church (e.g. Roozen, McKinney, and Carroll, *Varieties of Religious Presence*, 1984), none sufficiently represent the variegated ecclesial landscape of the new Seattle churches. Still, the major contours in spirituality, mission, and identity provide relevant linkage to the corpus of theological and sociological literature (p. 84).

Chapter 4 is devoted to fleshing out the previously identified ecclesial models: The Great Commission Team (GCT), the Household of the Spirit (HS), the New Community (NC), and the Neighborhood Incarnation (NI). Each of the ecclesial models is developed according to the ecclesial dimensions of spirituality, mission, and identity. The intention of offering a more robust description of the models is to arrive at practical proposals by subsequently subjecting each one to theological assessment. The GCT model is mission-driven and regards the church as a missionary team charged with the task of making disciples (p. 104). The HS model is experience-driven and regards the church, empowered by the Spirit, to offer "supernatural healing in a sin-sick world" (p. 112). The NC model exists in stark contrast to counter-cultural evangelicalism. NC churches exude a spirit of openness and inclusiveness in keeping with the prevailing social progressivism of their context (p. 125). The NI model regards church as being deeply rooted in the community. NI churches manifest as social entities to facilitate meaningful relationships among members of their local community (p. 136). A caveat concludes the chapter: Rather than being worthy of emulation, the identified models are only useful to the degree that they are submitted to theological and missiological scrutiny (p. 137).

Chapter 5 is a theological assessment of the four previously identified ecclesial models. Each model is scrutinized for its strengths and weaknesses. The desired result of this inquiry is to produce a faithful ecclesio-praxis, that is, a practical missional theology (p. 138). The GCT practical ecclesiology, though regarded as a mission-driven ecclesial model, lacks authentic missional character at key points (p. 159). The model's weakness is its duty-bound spirituality. Rather than fostering attentiveness to the Spirit, a subtly coercive and potentially dehumanizing form of

evangelism is fostered. The HS model evinces a strong missional perspective. This perspective is evident through the agency of the Holy Spirit at work. The contemporary work of God is experienced firsthand among HS members, among whom demonstrative works of the Spirit (e.g. healing) reveal the broader salvific inbreaking of the reign of God. Noted weaknesses of this model include a lack of regard for God's wider working in the world (e.g. an exaggerated role of the church) and pressure to maintain a multisensory worship experience (p. 163). The NC model is distinctly missional in relation to the GCT and HS churches. NC churches adhere to a theology of inclusion, endorsing progressive social movements and having disdain for proselytism and evangelistic appeals (p. 166). It is this pension for inclusion and disdain for proactive practices of evangelism that makes the NC not only unique, but also anti-evangelical. Among the four practical ecclesiological models, James considers the NI model to best exemplify the identity, mission, and spirituality of missional theology. As suggested in the name ("neighborhood"), this model reduces the scale of evangelization to the local parish (p. 172). The "us/them" social distinction dissolves into "neighbors" with whom NI members share fundamental solidarity. This lack of distinction risks alienating the wider church, perhaps to the point of harsh criticisms aimed at the more traditional models (p. 175). Nevertheless, though not to the exclusion of the other models, James endorses the NI model as being particularly appropriate for the urban environment.

Chapter 6 offers practical proposals to ministry practitioners for each of the four previously assessed ecclesiological models. James's desire to assist the U.S. church in its pursuit of vital ecclesial witness stems from his commitment to the necessity for change that he deems essential to the missionary task (p. 184). The Spirit of God is the agent of change who, by means of continuous conversion, forms the church into a more perfect embodiment of the reign of God (p. 185). The practical proposals build off perceived strengths while guarding against the most threatening liabilities. NI churches (members) are encouraged to focus on such things as conversation (Jesus as exemplar), meal sharing, prayer-walking, and the formation of small discernment groups. NI churches, as a guard against isolation and negativity, should be actively forging bonds with all the churches in their neighborhood (p. 190). GCT churches are encouraged to partner with secular service agencies, not only to establish meaningful relationships with those outside the church, but to tamp down disparaging attitudes toward non-Christians (p. 194). Also, incorporating "play" outside of member home gatherings in public locations such as parks, beaches, or a sporting event, will deepen the personal knowledge of the missionary context. James calls upon HS churches to modify corporate worship from a deeply individual and experience-driven practice toward an increased awareness of fellow worshippers (p. 199). HS churches are encouraged to incorporate worship songs that focus on God's presence in everyday real-life contexts. "Me-centered" tendencies, a corollary of individual experience, can be overcome through increased intercession, or what James terms "missionary prayer" (pp. 201–2). Finally, without the concrete practice of mission (i.e. contra-evangelical), NC churches require a greater clarity of mission (p. 203). Toward that end, James sug-

gests intentional, inclusive conversation with the community to discern corporate opportunities for members to participate in the *missio Dei*.

Chapter seven catalogues what James terms “five threads of practical wisdom” (p. 209). The threads represent points of convergence between currents in the field and missional theological reflection. The threads offer faithful missional practices to places like Seattle that need ecclesial viability and ecclesiological fidelity. The five threads of practical wisdom are: (1) embracing local identity and local mission; (2) cultivating embodied, experiential, everyday spiritualities; (3) recognizing community life as both witness and formation; (4) prioritizing hospitality as a cornerstone practice; and (5) discovering vitality in a diverse ecclesial ecology. James astutely notes that his study reveals a finding that is unexpected given the downward trending of U.S. Christianity, that is, if Seattle is arguable the least likely place for new churches to thrive, then how does one account for 105 new churches during the period of 2000–2014? The study has concretized a basic and counterintuitive insight: “the vibrancy of religious life in the Pacific Northwest comports with the openness of a religious environment that favors creative and nontraditional religious communities” (p. 230). In the end, Seattle offers the U.S. church grounds for enthusiastic hope as it faces certain and substantial contextual change (p. 240).

The task of reviewing this volume was not undertaken without a keen sense of personal interest. In addition to teaching at a Bible college in New York’s Southern Tier, our family is active in an outreach ministry located in the Foothills Region of the Adirondack Mountains. Next to Seattle, ours is a region of the U.S. where the major urban centers are less than 2% evangelical. Our county of Fulton is more than 50% unaffiliated. I can attest firsthand to the relevance the study contained in this volume. It is methodologically sound, and its findings are practically useful. Given the nature of a survey-based study, James’s presentation is accessible, and the reader is not buried in the minutiae of statistics.

The foreseeable challenge to such a project as this is the self-imposed limitation of its scope. The assumption from the outset is that Seattle is a proxy city, given the trajectory of the U.S. church. James admits that no proxy is perfect. For example, he observes that Seattle is overwhelmingly Euro-American. This is not a small admission, especially when considering other urban centers in the U.S. and a national population in which non-Hispanic whites will no longer be in the majority by 2043. According to James, the study is potentially diminished due to its underrepresentation of churches composed of non-majority ethnic, culture, and language groups. Nevertheless, given the limitations of the study, it offers an exemplary case study in the performance and application of practical ecclesiology.

D. Alan Blanc
Davis College, Johnson City, NY

Faith in Formulae: A Collection of Early Christian Creeds and Creed-related Texts. Edited, annotated, and translated by Wolfram Kinzig. Oxford Early Christian Texts series, 4 volumes. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017, pp. 1,856, \$675.

Conservative American evangelicals have always had a complicated relationship with ancient creeds. Slogans like “no creed but Christ” still emerge from pulpits or Bible studies from time to time, indicating how difficult it is for some Christians to accept the importance of millennia-old documents. Why have these ancient statements been preserved, memorized, studied, and handed down through the centuries by so many Christians? If it is not Scripture, why would it matter? Don’t real Christians just love and obey the Bible rather than the later inventions of post-biblical authors? Shouldn’t Scripture *alone* shape our beliefs and practices? Such questions and concerns are common in broad evangelical circles, especially among laity.

It is worth taking a moment to recognize that evangelicals (such as those in the ETS) ought to thank God for the ancient creeds. Rightly understood, these are gifts from God to the church through the ages. Perfect? No. Of tremendous abiding significance? Absolutely. Where there is unity among the creeds—one to another—and unity of the creeds with our current beliefs, then we can reasonably have greater confidence in our understanding. The Spirit of creation is the Spirit of Pentecost; the Spirit of the ancient church is the same as the Spirit of Wittenberg or Wheaton; the Spirit of Constantinople is the same Spirit active in Colorado Springs. When we find ourselves taking positions or making assumptions alien to these creedal statements, we should hesitate. It doesn’t necessarily mean we are wrong, but it does mean we should slow down, seeking to understand what we are claiming, as well as why the tradition(s) did not accept such a position. When in doubt, if one is going against most of tradition, doubt oneself. Even Luther would tell you that!

Thankfully, I don’t think recognizing the relevance for the Creeds is as difficult for younger evangelicals as it might have been to those in previous generations. They have a renewed awareness of the need to recognize the catholicity of our faith, which we did not invent but rather received as it was handed down through the ages.

Tradition, in this sense, is a gift to be cherished rather than an enemy to be avoided. Even independent congregational churches located on countless street corners across America draw on this creedal tradition, whether they realize it or not. One does not have to be familiar with Nicaea or Chalcedon in order to be in debt to these historic gatherings. Even the local Christian leader who never reads them is almost inevitably borrowing from these ancient creedal formulas, even without knowing it.

There remains great concern among believers that their faith is not merely a passing fad, but comes from the God of Abraham and Isaac, that the faith professed by Matthew and Mary has continuity with our faith. The dots between the biblical testimony in the ancient Near East and our day are connected through the church. Those dots are most clearly seen when they mark a significant creedal gath-

ering or statement: in these times and places, unity of faith and practice was worked at and recorded, rather than assumed or neglected. Even many centuries later, this vibrant creedal tradition of liturgical reflection, biblical meditation, and careful articulation offers the people of God a rich treasury from which to draw. And a new scholarly collection makes many of those treasures even more accessible to us.

Simply put, every theological library *must* own this four-volume set, *Faith in Formulae*. Without question it has become the new standard in its field and promises to remain that way for many years to come. Scholars who can afford it might do well to get their own copies; pastors and laity will find it less essential, but certainly this collection would still offer a great resource for any who can get access to it. This set provides access to rare primary source material in the original languages. This strength, however, is also its weakness: Because it focuses on the *Formulae*, much of what is included in this collection concentrates on small variations of a theme rather than expansive growth of categories. Specialists will love these volumes while non-specialists will find them interesting, but also painfully demanding. In some ways one reads the same material over and over again, often reaping fewer rewards than might have been imagined, depending on what one was hoping to discover. Better indices would help this problem, but I will return to that at the end. Now to explore some of the details.

First, this set is a stunning achievement in primary source material. The Creeds and creed-related documents are consistently presented in both the original language and in fine English translation. Those with knowledge of Greek and Latin will be especially pleased to have easy access to the original languages, while also having scholarly annotation right at hand. For example, for the Definition of Faith (see §215) of the Council of Chalcedon (AD 451), one can find not only a Greek edition with an English translation, but also various ancient Latin translations (e.g., from Rusticus and the *Collectio Hispana*).

Second, the set covers not simply the first four to six centuries of creedal development but continues through the early Middle Ages (roughly the ninth century). Too often this later material is neglected. Given this extended historical coverage, the reader can move beyond the earliest statements, allowing one to discover how early creedal declarations were maintained, modified, and even commented upon as the centuries rolled on. One of the main benefits of this material—not to be underestimated—is the discovery of how widespread these statements (e.g., Nicaea) were, showing up in many forms and in scattered locations. Scholars will delight to carefully examine the texts to discover not just the vast amount of overlap, but the occasional modifications and differences. Too often such comparisons were difficult to accomplish for all but the most serious historical specialists.

Third, this systematic and generous treatment of texts gives rare attention to geographical developments and differences. After the helpful introduction in Volume 1, the set moves to OT and NT “creedal” *Formulae*, then provides plenty of samples from the second and third century church. Finally, Volume 1 and the first 200 pages of Volume 2 devote hundreds of pages to Eastern creeds, creedal *Formulae*, and creed-related texts from the fourth through ninth centuries. Wonderful—and often not widely known—material is found there. I will provide an exam-

ple from Serverian of Gabala below. Beyond that, Volume 2 shows not simply ecclesial but also geographical variety. Turning westward, moving from Italy to the British Isles, from Spain to North Africa, Volume 2 covers creedal materials grouped according to location, rather than simply theme (given they all share, basically, the same theme[s]). Volume 3 picks up on this pattern, beginning with the *Symbolum Quicumque* (Athanasian Creed) and then spends 300 pages on Western material, again arranged around geographical location, then subdivided according to author, gathering, or declaration. The reader does not get full statements of every document or assembly but often just a relevant snippet that adds to the discussion or demonstrates unity and affirmation. There is always primary source documentation and indications where a scholar can go for the fuller treatments of whatever sources are drawn from. If everything were reprinted in full, this massive 4 volume set would be even more unwieldy. Volume 3 concludes by highlighting Laws and Synodal Canons relating to the Creed, ending right before the eighth century.

Fourth, this collection examines how the liturgy shaped daily life. This shows up throughout the set, but it is especially highlighted in Volume 4. Special attention is given to how baptismal interrogations took place, considering both indirect and direct evidence (cf. Vol. 1, pp. 145–64). Baptism carried great weight, and the preparation and liturgy surrounding this sacrament is highly informative. Similar treatment is also given to how the creeds show up in the liturgy of the mass. This collection concludes in Volume 4 with extensive documentation of the creeds in the Carolingian reform.

The four volumes contain many fascinating tidbits to examine, but this will have to suffice to whet one's appetite. In Volume 2, a creedal text that is ascribed to Serverian of Gabala comes from a homily "On Faith" (*De fide*, see § 194). Richly Trinitarian in orientation, it is deeply layered in meaning. First, this "faith" is necessarily positioned to the God of this faith; and because this God is "incomprehensible, intangible, unobservable, unassailable," he is to be "worshiped and venerated in silence." Yet, clearly, this is a silence that is broken by the Triune God's own self-disclosure as Father, Son, and Spirit. Thus, second, we follow the Trinitarian logic the text presents: "Faith indeed begins from the Father, proceeds to the Son, and is fulfilled in the Holy Spirit." In us, "Faith is the seat of the soul, the foundation of life, the immortal soul." The movement is from God to us, from us to God. Faith thus connects the worshipper with the Worshiped. Lest one becomes confused, however, and imagines that this "faith" is simply something conjured up by the human and thus unstable, this homily quickly takes us back into the embrace of the Triune God: "The living root of faith, however, is the Father; the never-fading branch is the Son; the immortal fruit is the Holy Spirit." Thus, the solidity of faith is not in the constantly changing creature, but in the enteral triune Lord. Rather than sticking to this emphasis on divine threeness, however, the homily quickly returns to the doctrine of divine simplicity: it is "a simple Trinity, uncompounded, ineffable, indescribably, indivisible." How? Because there are no distinctions between Father, Son, and Spirit? No. Instead, this simplicity is found "according to its harmony, power, operation, godhead, greatness." How is this maintained? Rather than pitting divine distinction against divine unity, Serverian of Gabala (or whoever

is the actual author) holds together what others try to separate: “distinguished in hypostases and names, but united in its deeds and powers.” One does not need Augustine to teach a divine simplicity that still affirms that only the Son becomes incarnate and the Spirit is poured out at Pentecost. Gregory of Nazianzus is not the only one to be captured by the vision of how encountering the One brings a worshiper into the embrace of the Three, and how seeing the Three brings that worshiper before the one true God. God is Triune, and there is no God other than the Trinity: “The Trinity existed before the ages; it did not come to exist from a beginning, but is unbegun, timeless, ageless, immortal, never-ending, neither increasing nor diminishing, not growing old, but being indissoluble.” Thus, this God is not newly worshiped because humans came to finally recognize that he is worthy, but rather for ages, “since the beginning of time,” God has been worshiped by the angels, and now from the fathers to the prophets, from the apostles to the contemporary church, this triune God is to be exalted. One could spend a great deal of time meditating on insights like this from Serverian of Gabala and, thanks to this collection, that is now possible.

I should confess that because these thousands of pages are focused on the creeds, there is a sense that often one is reviewing the same material repeatedly. What is new, however, is the historical situatedness of this presentation that allows us to better appreciate how creeds are functioning through the ages and around the world. What is also new are some of the voices or communities that are found here echoing those creedal instincts, voices too often neglected or unknown.

There is so much to love about this new definitive collection; still, there are some real frustrations. The concerns are not with the translations nor with what is chosen but mostly related to the organization and lack of usability for many readers. A brief comparison of these four volumes (Oxford) with the four-volume Yale University Press collection, entitled *Creeds and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition* (edited by Jaroslav Pelikan and Valerie Hotchkiss; 2003), will illustrate my point.

First, the Yale volumes are mostly arranged chronologically, covering a much longer time frame by moving from the most ancient documents to twentieth-century statements, rather than ending in the ninth century like the Oxford set. Second, the Oxford volumes have much greater depth and breadth in terms of sources from the patristic material, but the Yale volumes obviously cover much more. For example, the massive Volume 2 of the Yale set contains a vast collection of creeds and confessions of the Reformation era, material that is especially relevant to Protestant scholars. Third, because the Oxford volumes maintain a first millennium focus, they do not address any of the more recent developments and concerns reflected in the global creedal statements that have arisen in the past century or so. From the “Social Creed of Methodism,” published in 1908, to the 1951 “Confession of Faith” of the Protestant Christian Batak Church, the Yale edition contains so many gems rarely appreciated by those outside the tradition that birthed the relevant *Formulae*. In this way, I find the Yale volumes far superior, but that is not fair to the Oxford set given that including global creedal statements

from the twentieth century was not part of its intended purpose. Ideally, one will have access to both collections.

Fourth and finally, my greatest frustration with the Oxford volumes—and my greatest appreciation for the Yale set—is based on the often-underappreciated value of a well-constructed index. There are outstanding bibliographies in both sets and each also includes indices. Their usefulness and quality, however, differs greatly. The Oxford set includes a very helpful index to key biblical passages. Similarly, the Yale edition has an extensive index to relevant Scripture citations. Both sets include pertinent indices keyed to significant historical figures and documents: The Oxford edition focuses on ancient and medieval authors, while the Yale volumes have both an Ecclesiastical Index (allowing one to look up relevant creed-related material according to tradition/approach) as well as a more standard Index of Persons. The Oxford set also has a helpful index of inscriptions and manuscripts.

What really separates the sets, however, is the need for an index of topics and themes rather than simply names and Scriptures. The Oxford set doesn't even attempt such a massive feat. But the Yale volume, led by Pelikan, provides a magisterial index called Comparative Creedal Syndogmaticon. Organized around twelve creedal statements from the Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan Creed, this creative index points to relevant statements across the history of the creeds and confessions, showing how various traditions unpacked the point under consideration. Pelikan quotes Robert L. Collinson, who once reflected that “few indexes make a conscientious attempt to index ideas” (Pelikan, Vol. 3, 955), but this is exactly what the Yale volumes aim to achieve. Their efforts are very beneficial. The Oxford set decided against making that attempt. The lack of such an exhaustive subject-oriented index is possibly the greatest weakness of the Oxford volumes and one of the greatest strengths of the Yale collection. The result is that the four volumes of *Faith in Formulae* can be hard to navigate. That difficulty is less acute if one is primarily interested in questions related to a small historical period within a geographical region, whereas tracing the development of an idea across the centuries and throughout the world is much more difficult in the Oxford set. My hope is that one day such an extensive subject/theme-based index to the Oxford collection will be made available, even if only in an online version.

Inevitably, what is a strength of one is a weakness of the other, and vice versa. Pelikan's volumes are stunning in the breadth, covering not just a vast amount of history but also wide creedal variety. From Gregory Thaumaturgus's *Declaration of Faith* to the Hussite Confessions, from North African creeds written in the early fifth century to the twentieth century creeds coming out of Cuba, Togo, and Brazil, the Yale volumes remain unsurpassed. Despite the lack of historical length in the Oxford volumes, ending in the early Middle Ages, they offer a great breadth of primary sources from that period, more than in the Pelikan set. Ideally, one has access to both collections, for they do not simply overlap, but instead complement one another. In the end, Wolfram Kinzig has offered a masterful new collection,

and scholars eagerly wait for his promised commentary on the material. Hopefully, when that is published, it will include a new full index for the entire collection.

Kelly M. Kopic
Covenant College, Lookout Mountain, GA