

# Book Reviews

**Bruce W. LONGENECKER.** *The Crosses of Pompeii: Jesus Devotion in a Vesuvian Town.* Minneapolis: Fortress, 2016. 366 pp. \$39.00.

Discussion of evidence for first century “Jesus followers” will appeal to *SCJ* readers who traditionally hold a keen interest in the Apostolic Church. Cross inscriptions and artwork are widely accepted by scholars as typical markers of the presence of Christians in post-Constantinian contexts. In contrast, some scholars, such as Graydon F. Snyder in his *Ante-Pacem: Archaeological Evidence of Church Life before Constantine* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1985, p. 28), dispute all kerygmatic cross motifs from earlier contexts. Scholarly resistance to the identification of early crosses as being uniquely “Christian” has arisen first, as a means of delaying the presumed evolution of orthodox Christian soteriology and second, in reaction to the unbridled enthusiasm of some persons in making uncritical claims of finding early Christians. Bruce Longenecker presents a reasoned case that cross-shaped marks found at Pompeii and Herculaneum in the sealed locus formed by the pyroclastic material deposited by Mount Vesuvius’ eruption in AD 79, could be evidence of the presence of persons who venerated Jesus. His thesis challenges categorical dismissal of the use of the cross as a Christian symbol prior to the fourth century.

Longenecker is not a froth-mouthed victim of “cross mania.” He establishes that some cross-shaped items found in the Vesuvian communities served functional and ornamental purposes in mosaic floors, pools, and inscriptions made by non-Christians (80-83). Considerable space is also given to explaining how “T,” “X,” and “+” shaped marks that appear on first-century Jerusalem ossuaries may reflect a “mark” of Jewish eschatological expectation derived from Ezek 9:4 and 6 that survivors might have believed turned away divine judgment (86-96). This discussion of evidence outside Pompeii is foundational to his later interpretation of most of the cross evidence found in the city.

Longenecker’s case depends upon twenty-two cross-shaped artifacts that require interpretation. He does not include the often-discussed cross-shaped impression found in the plasterwork on the wall in a house in Herculaneum, which has been widely dismissed as a shelf bracket. His two strongest pieces of evidence include the largely unmentioned “Viv+graffito” found scratched on a wall (145), and the “Christianos Inscription” found written in charcoal on the wall of an inn (153, 185). The content of the context of these artifacts suggest a theological significance to the cross. The stucco raised-relief artifact found on the wall of the Pompeian bakery and the Meges Ring require a great deal of explanation and as a result do not carry as much weight in his argument. Longenecker’s greatest contribution to the discussion is found in his identification of eighteen small equilateral crosses found carved into paving stones of the streets of Pompeii in close proximity to structures like the bakery in which other alleged cross artifacts have been found (191). He argues that these crosses served an apotropaic function perhaps inspired from Judaism.

Persons philosophically opposed to the spread of Apostolic Christianity to Italy in the first century will still likely remain unconvinced of the early use of the kerygmatic cross, but

they will likely embrace early apotropaic crosses of an unorthodox Christianity. As the Stone-Campbell Movement has historically sought to focus on apostolic doctrine and precedent as a basis for uniting the Church today, there is a tendency to idealize the first-century church. The book of Acts and the canonical epistles, however, reveal familiar modern challenges of worldliness, and religious syncretism. Bible-believing readers considering Longenecker's reconstruction should not be put off by the possible existence of divergence from NT theology in the worldly context of Pompeii.

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**Greg PETERS.** *The Story of Monasticism: Retrieving an Ancient Tradition for Contemporary Spirituality.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2015. 278 pp. \$23.00.

In the current volume, the author Greg Peters gives a historical outlook of monastic spirituality, from the beginning of the church to the near present time. His goal is to show that monastic spirituality has a lot to offer modern Christians, and seeks to educate those who may have grown up in a tradition where monasticism is seen as strange or foreign. Peters himself states that in order to progress in the faith, one must look to the past for guidance, for “the future lies in the past” (2). Here, the study of history is used to illuminate the past so that it can in turn influence the future. From this belief, Peters argues monastic spirituality has much to teach present-day Christians about drawing closer to God.

The strength of this book lies in Peters's ability to give a phenomenal historical synopsis of monasticism while also making the book about Christian spirituality. Each chapter begins as a historical look on a topic, but concludes with thoughts on how Christians in the twenty-first century can learn and grow in their faith by what they have just read. In this sense, the book is also pastoral in nature, seeking to give a practical application to what one has just learned. The book blurs the lines and avoids being a strict history or ministerial book; rather, it is a hybrid of history and spirituality.

While this book's strength lies in this ability to blend history and practical spirituality, it is not always executed smoothly. For the most part, Peters gives a rigid historical analysis in each chapter with a concluding section devoted to practical application. Upon reading each chapter, the reader can easily feel they are immersed in an academic historical book, only to be reminded abruptly on the last page that they need to contemplate things of a spiritual nature. One can be left feeling as if there are two separate goals in mind, which does obstruct the flow of the writing.

Overall, this book would be of great value in the classroom for any undergraduate or seminary student. For students of religious history, a lot can be learned from this book due to the extensive details given of monastic development and reform. However, history students will have to keep in mind the author does at times deviate from the historical method to insert his own opinions regarding spiritual disciplines. These dialogues on spiritual disciplines, though, could be beneficial to students in spiritual formation courses, and should especially help those going into ministry.

In addition to this being a great book for the classroom, it would also assist those in ministry and in the Stone Campbell Movement. Ministers and members of the movement would

benefit from the monastic ideal of retreating from the busy world with the intent of focusing on God. The author stresses that one does not need to fully renounce the world and live in a cave to do this. Instead, one could practice this ideal by going on a spiritual retreat, or setting aside more time for God (51-52). In today's fast-paced culture of social media, it seems as though it is getting harder for people of faith, including ministers, to disconnect from all the white noise to focus on what really matters. In this book, Greg Peters gives us a glimpse of a more disciplined life that is not devoted to the things that are passing away, but instead thirsts for God.

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**Mark A. NOLL.** *In the Beginning Was the Word: The Bible in American Public Life, 1492-1783.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. 448 pp. \$29.95.

In the first of a multivolume set that will trace the history of the Bible in America, Noll constructs a fascinating story about the relationship between the Bible and public life from the earliest Catholic colonizers to the Revolutionaries. Despite the fact that the Bible is by far the “single most widely read text, distributed object, and referenced book in all of American history,” (1) historians have treated the Bible “as wallpaper, simply a backdrop for more important objects of attention” (19). Noll’s book and his inclusion of “overexuberant quotation to the point of tedium” deliberately portray the Bible as a “sturdy piece of furniture smack in the middle of the room” (19). Indeed, this well-documented, persuasively argued study demonstrates the centrality of the Bible in America’s history.

This volume denotes Noll’s concentration on the “history of Scripture for political, imperial, or national purposes” (5). Central to Noll’s “public” inquiry and investigation is the interaction between “biblicism” and “Christendom.” Biblicism refers to an effort to follow “the Bible alone” (with other authorities absent or subordinated) as the guide for all of life. Noll emphasizes the variations of biblicism (and non-biblicism) that the Protestant principle of *sola scriptura* produced. “Christendom,” founded on the ideal that societies existed as organic unities, refers to a society in which leaders of church and state were closely tied, Christian principles shaped the laws and culture, and everyone except defined outsiders were Christian (5-6). Noll demonstrates that biblicism sometimes supported Christendom (Puritan New England) and at other times went against it (Anabaptists, Revolutionaries).

After a brief chapter on Catholic Bibles in the New World, Noll explains Luther’s principle of “the Bible alone” and the diverse applications; although Luther utilized *sola scriptura* to support Christendom, Anabaptists immediately used the principle to challenge Christendom (chapter 1). That is, diverse meanings of “the Bible alone” straightaway divided Protestants. Noll then (chapter 2) unpacks the English history of the Bible’s influence in public life by focusing on Tyndale and the KJV, noting the intricate interplay between political institutions and translations.

Noll devotes chapter three to explaining how English and Scottish historical developments bequeathed the American colonists their attachment to Scripture but also set them on a different historical trajectory than the colonies: conflicting views on the Bible in society and consequent social chaos (especially 1640-1660) as well as new appeals to “nature” (over Scripture) as

an authority for political theories (e.g., Hobbes, Filmer, Locke) “jolted many influential leaders away from the ideal of Christendom governed directly by application of Scripture” (96). These developments worked against the flourishing of biblicism in England and Scotland after 1660, whereas biblicists in the colonies enjoyed much greater possibilities for shaping public life (New England Puritans in chapter 4; Hutchinson, Williams, Penn, and Baptists in chapter 5).

Chapters 6–11 explain the evolution of the Bible in American public life from the 1680s through the American Revolution. Colonists used the Bible to reinforce Britain’s chosenness until the Revolution. The Great Awakening revivals influenced a shift in which “the communal Bible of Protestant Christendom became the personal Bible of spiritually empowered individuals” (178), which drove the message of the Bible “deeper” (African American readings) even as most revivalists used the Bible to support the British empire. Use of the Bible for empire only increased at the perceived threat of “French papal tyranny and Indian papal barbarism” (206), leading to a “thinner” Bible that functioned “more as priest to sanction other authorities than as prophet to guide them” (236); many conflated Scripture with British values about race, politics, economics, and philosophy. In the Revolutionary era, both sides appealed to scriptural authority to support their cause, but these appeals were more often rhetorical than didactic in nature. In the end, Revolutionaries used the Bible to disestablish religion (and reject “formal” Christendom).

The chapters in this book serve as the foundation to Noll’s future book which will explore how Protestants in the new (non-Christendom) nation immediately used the Bible to establish an “informal Christendom” in the nineteenth century. I highly recommend this landmark work of history; although in accessible prose, college-level historical knowledge is assumed throughout.

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**Carl J. RICHARD.** *The Founders and the Bible.* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016. 385 pp. \$41.98.

The debate over what if any influence the Bible had in the life of early America has long raged. Given the sectarian nature of aspects of early America, such influences led to a caste of scholars that has given the Bible very little influence over America’s founding. Richard wanted to show the founders’ relationship to the Bible and the influence it had in their intellectual lives and how they understood humanity and politics as a result.

Richard’s initial chapter focuses more on those in the life of the founders and the overall influence of the Bible on the social background to the intellectual history of the time. Richard also points out other influences (the classics) that were common of a classical education during the period, at the core of which was often in school and home, the Bible. The esteem held of the Bible by those closely associated to the founders, such as family and teachers, demonstrated that religion was highly important given the views held of the Scriptures even in a time when branches of Enlightenment thinking challenged such sources of authority. The first chapter set the base that led further into their lives, and Richard followed it with a second chapter dedicated to the lasting influence of the Bible that did not end in an academy when the founders were young but went on into their retirement and final years.

One particular strength of Richard's tome is that he readily uses primary sources while supplementing them with relevant secondary sources. His grasp of primary literature is such that it can be overwhelming at times and almost seem as if he were trying to include all that he had at his disposal. The opening chapter demonstrates this, and at times his work seems to lack focus and prefers to include all sources that he had available. Any reader can confidently say that he did not undersource his work, but was rather deliberate in giving certainty to the reader that he knows his subject very well. However, the rapid, sometimes disconnected, references may not be appealing to all readers.

Another strength of this work is that Richard includes the unorthodox views of the Bible held by some of the founding fathers. For example, he devotes adequate space to the views later held by Thomas Paine as articulated in *Age of Reason*. Richard states what Paine believed as disclosed in the treatise, but he also engaged Paine's thoughts from his point of view. Another prominent unorthodox view known of by many is that of the Jefferson Bible wherein Thomas Jefferson removed portions of the Scriptures that did not suit his Enlightenment thinking. By including such unorthodox views, Richard demonstrates an intellectual honesty toward all points of view that were held by the founders, for better or worse. While he also engages many of the views and displays his interpretation, he does so after having first shown that the Bible was ever so vital in the founders' lives.

Much more material is present to praise the balanced approach Richard used in disseminating the available data, but it will suffice to say that he adequately covers aspects of the Bible in early America, particularly the lives and thinking of the founders. No one can dispute that the Bible held sway in their mind, but for some, the response to its message was reverent while to others it was another masterpiece of literature in Western Civilization. Even some sought to deconstruct it, and Richard does not avoid any viewpoint but readily engages many points of view. This work would be beneficial to students of early America and particularly those giving study to the establishment of the United States pre- and post-revolutionary.

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**Gordon L. HEATH, ed. *American Churches and the First World War*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2016. 224 pp. \$27.00.**

With historians commemorating the centennial of American entry into Europe's Great War in 1917, Canadian Gordon Heath of McMaster Divinity College brings us an edited volume of essays focused upon the role of America's churches in the conflict. The book is a welcome addition because of the paucity of scholarship on the topic. This volume is a sequel to another edited volume that Heath produced on Canadian Churches and the First World War. While that first volume filled a large hole in the historiography of the role of religion in Canada during the war, this second volume only partially lives up to the expectations created by the original.

The volume is organized into eleven chapters, with eight focused on different American churches, an introduction, and two chapters on religious issues during the war: chaplaincy and American Christianity's response to the Armenian genocide. Four of the chapters on denominations are quite helpful and explore new ground, including chapters on "evangelicals" generally, a chapter on Lutherans, another on the Mormons, and finally, a chapter on

the International Bible Student Association, which would eventually become known as the Jehovah's Witnesses. Other chapters focused on Catholics, Pentecostals, Mennonites, and Quakers, more or less rehash prior work and generally add little to scholarly discussion. What is in some ways even more disappointing, however, especially to members of the Stone-Campbell Movement, is that Heath included no chapter on the Churches of Christ, which, according to both the U.S. Army and Jeanette Keith in *Rich Man's War, Poor Man's Fight*, was the largest peace church in the United States at the beginning of the conflict.

The most interesting piece in the volume is Richard Gamble's essay, "Together for the Gospel of Americanism: Evangelicals and the First World War." This chapter is a revision of Gamble's thesis in his monograph *The War for Righteousness: Progressive Christianity, the Great War, and the Rise of the Messianic Nation*, by far the most important book on American churches and World War I that has yet to appear in the historiography. In this chapter, Gamble argues that he was wrong in his 2004 book to see fundamentalists such as Billy Sunday and modernists such as Lyman Abbott and Harry Emerson Fosdick as "strange bed-fellows," divided by their liberalism and fundamentalism, but united in the moment by their jingoism for the war. He instead argues that these three—and many others—ought to be seen as united in their adherence to an American Civil Religion that embraced the idea of a "Christian America" and an American nation that had a divine mission to the world. Once these groups are united, Gamble contrasts them with "confessionalists" who had less of an interest in America's identity as a Christian nation. While this does solve the thorny problem of Gamble's decidedly partisan attempts (he is a contributing editor for the *American Conservative* and he published his monograph with ISI Press, which is a politically partisan publisher) to paint Christian "liberals" as the driving force sending America to war, it fails to note the divide between evangelical churches of all stripes that supported the war effort, and sectarian groups such as the Churches of Christ and most Pentecostal Churches which opposed the conflagration. Nonetheless, Gamble's new thesis provides much new fodder that may help to energize the conversation.

Chapters on Lutherans and Mormons and the war both argue that the war served to integrate these religious groups into the larger American society, and—while this language is not used by either author—to push these churches from a more sociologically sectarian orientation towards American culture towards a more denominational model where both groups became cultural insiders. These conclusions importantly add more steam to the idea that the war accelerated transitions from sect to denomination in a wide variety of religious groups in America. The chapter on Jehovah's Witnesses, however, argues that federal prosecution of Joseph F. Rutherford and other "bible student" leaders occurred, not because of the reasons that the Witnesses have claimed, persecution of the movement by the established clergy, but simply because the United States Government was so offended by bible student anti-Americanism. However, considering how many federal prosecutions of religious groups during the war were initiated by citizen complaints, and with no mention of research in the files of the Bureau of Investigation mentioned in footnotes, I find such an argument interesting, but inconclusive without hard evidence. Regardless, M. James Penton provides a valuable starting point for additional study of the Witnesses and the war.

As mentioned above, while the chapters on Catholics, Mennonites, and Quakers largely synthesize old ground, the chapter on Pentecostals by Zachary Michael Tackett requires additional comment because it largely relies upon the work of sociologist Murray Dempster.

Dempster's arguments that Pentecostals were not largely pacifistic during the war have recently and largely been discredited by Jay Beaman, whose detailed research in the primary sources, including in Bureau of Investigation records, draft cards, and the statements of faith of every known Pentecostal group in 1917, shows that Pentecostals were overwhelmingly pacifists and against American participation in the Great War. Tackett's main argument is that Pentecostals can be divided into three camps: a small group of prophetic voices against the war, Pentecostals who wished to imbibe in nationalism while still rejecting the war, and those who either supported the war effort or did not oppose it. While Tackett is able to show that Pentecostal pacifism was not unanimous, specialists in the field know that even Quakers and Mennonite responses to the war were nowhere near unanimous, but this does not seem to call into question these group's reputations as Peace Churches.

Outside of the chapters on churches, the chapter on American chaplaincy during World War I fills a large hole in the historiography. Monographs of Great War chaplaincy focused on England, Germany, and Canada exist, but little to no scholarly work that is focused upon American chaplains in World War I is extant. However, while Timothy Demy's chapter on the topic does provide a start on this topic, and excitingly provides a narrative of both American Army *and* Navy chaplaincy, the chapter was written almost exclusively from secondary sources, showing little in original research.

In addition to these shortcomings, the volume as a whole could have benefited from a stronger peer review and editorial review process. Several factual errors occur in the book, including a statement by Mark Granquist that Councils of Defense were "mainly in the Midwest," when they were actually part of a nationwide system of Councils of Defense with national, state, and county organizations throughout the United States (61). Perry Bush claimed that the Attorney General was responsible for declaring things nonmailable by the Post Office Department, when this responsibility was clearly given in the law to the Postmaster General (91-92). Gordon Heath also describes the Armenian Genocide as the "first modern genocide" (169). Heath does mention in a footnote that Ben Kiernan has documented that the Herero and Nama Genocide (committed by Imperial Germany between 1904 and 1907) was the first of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but provides no rationale for then claiming in his narrative that the Armenian Genocide was, in fact, the first (181, n. 525). Finally, in my reading of the PDF eBook edition of the volume, I found that the publisher failed to include page numbers, even though an index with page numbers is included at the back of the book. The eBook edition also suffered from a lack of optical character recognition or an electronic table of contents, features that are quick and easy to add and which are now the norm in scholarly eBook publishing.

However, even with these shortcomings, the volume does provide a compact group of narratives on a wide variety of American religious groups, the effect of the war on those groups, and how those churches responded to the war. As such, professors may find it useful in assigning as a reader for students on the topic of Religion and War, or Religion and World War I. Specialists will also find some of the chapters, as noted above useful in advancing scholarly dialogue on this important but neglected topic.

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John D. WILSEY. *American Exceptionalism and Civil Religion*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2015. 262 pp. \$25.00.

No one could accuse this volume of lacking timeliness. It takes as its focal point the notion of American exceptionalism, a notion that figured prominently in the most recent presidential campaign in this country. Though Donald Trump contended that America had in some ways forfeited its unique greatness, he maintained that American supremacy was not only a reality in the past, but could be recovered in the future. Hillary Clinton took issue with this diagnosis, but not with the assumption of American exceptionalism: “America has never stopped being great,” “America is great because America is good,” and most tellingly, “The United States is an exceptional nation.” Clearly, then, American exceptionalism is still an article of faith in political discourse in the USA today. Wilsey’s fundamental question is whether this is an article to which Christians in the USA can subscribe in good conscience.

The answer is yes and no, because according to Wilsey, there is American exceptionalism, and then there is American exceptionalism. Wilsey’s main contention in the book is that one form of American exceptionalism, which he dubs “closed exceptionalism,” is incompatible with the gospel, whereas another form, styled “open exceptionalism,” is not. The former type of exceptionalism is idolatrous, in that it “makes America an object of worship” (19), while the latter, though an aspect of civil religion, is not only acceptable, but is positively laudable, insofar as it “serves as a benefit to the nation, to religion and to the world by fostering a civic engagement informed by freedom, equality and justice” (20). Wilsey fleshes out the differences between the two forms of exceptionalism by examining five themes that have characterized closed exceptionalism, themes that ought to remain in the domain of theology but that have been misapplied to the USA: divine chosenness, divine commission, innocence, sacred land, and glory. After an introductory chapter and two chapters tracing the emergence of the two forms of American exceptionalism, Wilsey devotes a chapter apiece to each of these five themes. In each of these chapters Wilsey lifts up a few case studies, from various eras of American history, of the particular pathology in question, and then suggests how an open form of exceptionalism could avoid it. The book concludes with a chapter that examines the unlikely duo of Justin Martyr and W.E.B. Du Bois in order to imagine what open exceptionalism might look like in action for American Christians today.

It is hard to fault the intentions of the book, which is clearly animated by a deep unease about the ways in which fundamentalist and evangelical American Protestants tend to conflate God and *patria*. Wilsey’s survey of fundamentalist homeschooling curricula in the penultimate chapter makes only too clear that Wilsey is not shadowboxing with a bogeyman, but locking horns with a real and pervasive tendency to sacralize the USA in some influential sectors of American Christianity. But one can certainly raise critical questions about Wilsey’s constructive proposal, on both historical and theological grounds. Certain historical questions are not satisfactorily addressed. In the first two chapters of the book, Wilsey provides an account of the emergence of both forms of exceptionalism. But what he appears to demonstrate undercuts his optimism about open exceptionalism. For Wilsey, Abraham Lincoln is the great paragon of open exceptionalism, who decisively refutes the idea that exceptionalism is inexorably racist and idolatrous. But Wilsey’s survey of American history prior to Lincoln suggests that in colonial and antebellum America exceptionalism strongly tended to the closed variety; to cite examples that Wilsey himself provides, witness the Puritans’ self-identification with Israel, Abraham Ketteltas’ pro-Patriot preaching in



Massachusetts in the early years of the Revolutionary War, John L. O'Sullivan's advocacy for the notion of manifest destiny, and William Walker's "filibustering" in Latin America. Indeed, one is left wondering how Lincoln had the resources to develop an open exceptionalism when it would appear that only closed forms of exceptionalism were on the menu in mid-nineteenth-century America. Wilsey's argument for the viability of open exceptionalism would be stronger if he had been able to demonstrate that there was a prehistory of Lincoln's open exceptionalism.

But even apart from these historical questions, doubts remain about Wilsey's primary thesis, which is not so much argued for as simply asserted. To begin, it is baffling that Wilsey opts to retain the category of exceptionalism. Why not simply drop the term altogether, given its acute vulnerability to idolatrous interpretations? Indeed, it is not even clear in Wilsey's account what precisely makes the USA exceptional. Whenever Wilsey expatiates on what makes the USA "a special and unique place," he resorts to bromides: the USA has been "divinely blessed as a haven of freedom, opportunity and material bounty," and it has "played a major role in helping the cause of justice where injustice has made human life wretched in the world" (213). Elsewhere Wilsey adds that "America is different because it is a nation in which dissent is not only allowed; it is a virtue" (218). This latter claim, though not supported, has at least the virtue of concreteness, in contrast to the jejuneness of his other avowals of American exceptionalism. To be fair, Wilsey seems to assume that the reader is already fully convinced of American exceptionalism, in which case the onus is not on him to make a compelling case for it. But this makes the book rather frustrating going for the more skeptical reader. What is more, his rather bland assertions of American exceptionalism suggest that Wilsey is not terribly invested in the concept of exceptionalism on a substantive level. Indeed, when Wilsey describes the contours of open exceptionalism, which he does in appealing terms, one cannot help but ask why he would not simply term it "patriotism" instead (though of course this term is not totally theologically innocent either). After all, Wilsey is wisely wary of claims that America is somehow exempt from this or that law of history or theological truth. So if Wilsey does not actually mount an evidentiary case for American exceptionalism, and is keenly attuned to its possibly idolatrous implications, why does he not jettison the term once and for all?

Wilsey's case for the Christian promotion of civil religion, of which, he stresses, exceptionalism is an important aspect, is unconvincing on the same grounds. One need not assume that civil religion is per se idolatrous in order to fail to be persuaded by Wilsey's rather facile argument for it. He avers that "revealed religion" has an innate tendency to "factionalize and curtail religious freedom" (34), and that civil religion chastens "the sectarian tendencies of the Christian tradition (or any religion, for that matter)" (35). No supporting evidence is adduced. Nor does Wilsey even entertain the possibility that a "revealed religion" might possess within itself the resources for a robust defense of religious freedom. This is especially curious given his claim that the values of Enlightenment liberalism, including tolerance, the notion of natural rights, and equality, are "largely consistent with Christian teaching in the Bible on the dignity and value of the individual person before God and within community" (34). This sweeping claim is put forward without evidence even though it is a (if not *the*) fundamental presupposition of the whole book (and interestingly, the word "largely" is never glossed). Wilsey evinces no anxiety whatsoever that there might be the slightest tension between Christian doctrine and the tenets of modern liberalism that are enshrined in

the founding documents of the USA and that guide American political discourse. It is particularly conspicuous, and disappointing, that Wilsey does not engage with Christian theologians who have written extensively, both pro and contra, about precisely this supposition about the compatibility of Christianity and liberalism over the past few decades. Stunningly, Stanley Hauerwas, the *bête noire* of liberalism and civil religion, is never even mentioned, and Reinhold Niebuhr merits only a paragraph and a half (needless to say, Catholic theologians, such as John Courtney Murray and William Cavanaugh, who have written at length and seminally on these matters, are absent from the index). Accordingly, the book lacks the theological sophistication without which those not already inclined to Wilsey's sanguine outlook on civil religion and American exceptionalism are not likely to be swayed.

The book's flaws do not detract entirely from its virtues. It is engagingly and clearly written, and Wilsey's decision to begin each of the five thematic chapters with a concrete case study was a canny one. The book raises questions that no Christian in the USA can afford to deflect, and its discussions of the idolatrous proclivities of American exceptionalism could certainly be read by profit by those Christians in the USA who incline toward "closed" exceptionalism. But this book will likely not convince American Christians with an ambivalent view of their country that they should promote American exceptionalism, however "open" it may be, in the service of shoring up civil religion.

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**Martin E. MARTY.** *October 31, 1517: Martin Luther and the Day That Changed the World.* Brewster, MA: Paraclete, 2016. 128 pp. \$19.99.

Some years ago, author and syndicated columnist Jim Bishop wrote a series of books exploring the events surrounding some of the most famous days in history. His books included *The Day Christ was Born*, *The Day Christ Died*, *The Day Lincoln was Shot*, and *The Day Kennedy was Shot*. And now, as several fresh studies of Martin Luther are emerging on the threshold of the five-hundredth anniversary of Luther's posting of his Ninety-Five Theses, it would seem an appropriate occasion for exploring the cultural nuances and activities that both contributed to and resulted from Luther's undertaking on October 31, 1517. Just such a book, one would assume from its title, is exactly what historian Martin E. Marty has published. Unfortunately, such an assumption would be mistaken.

Marty's misleadingly titled publication spends precious little time examining the events of October 31, 1517, which his subtitle describes as "the day that changed the world." Instead, Marty relies on the first of Luther's Ninety-Five Theses, "When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said 'Repent,' he intended the entire life of believers to be repentance," as the impulse for this book. Moreover, he contends that this publication is "about 'repentance' as a worthy theme for believers to keep in mind if and as they commemorate events of five hundred years ago, events that still shape many features of their lives" (5). The "key" to understanding Luther's "wide effect and appeal," according to Marty, is a proper understanding of his "attitudes to repentance and the practice of repenting" which is "well summarized in the first of the Ninety-Five Theses" (86-87). So, "This little book," he explains, focuses "on the theme of repentance and the 'change of heart' toward other Christians" (37).

While Marty's writing does indeed repeat the theme of repentance and frequently hearkens back to Luther's initial thesis, he may have been more accurate to have described this book as a call for reconciliation between Lutherans and Roman Catholics. Throughout the text, Marty references the ecumenical dialogue between Roman Catholics and Lutherans "in the decades leading up to the celebration of the five-hundredth anniversary of Lutheran communal life, and after" (41). These dialogues, which produced *The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (1999) and *From Conflict to Communion* (2013), Marty argues, were signs of repentance showing that both Lutherans and Catholics "were confessing that their old ways impeded the efforts of Christians to realize the 'one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church'" (54).

Marty's final chapter, "Can One Day Change the World?" finally initiates an all-too-brief discussion of what he describes as "the bold claim in the subtitle of this book" (81). In this chapter, Marty notes that the events of a particularly significant day often have a "double consequence." In addition to the immediate influence, there is often "a ripple effect that sustains or magnifies the decisive change" (82). And, while "the main impact" of Luther's posting of the Ninety-Five Theses was "in the spiritual realm" (86), Luther also contributed "to the spread of human liberty beyond the world of the church and spirituality" (85). Moreover, Marty contends, "the cultural contributions after October 31, 1517, are . . . vast" (85). Although Marty touches upon some significant topics and ideas in this final chapter, one would wish the totality of this book would be focused primarily upon the events that ignited Luther's posting of the Ninety-Five Theses and the aftermath of "the day that changed the world."

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**Scott W. SUNQUIST and Amos YONG, eds. *The Gospel and Pluralism Today: Reassessing Lesslie Newbigin in the 21st Century*. Missiological Engagements. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2015. 240 pp. \$30.00.**

Sunquist and Yong, the editors of this volume, are both professors at Fuller Theological Seminary (Pasadena, CA). This edited volume emerged out of the annual Missiology Lectures at Fuller Theological Seminary's School of Intercultural Studies in 2014. The 2014 Lectures focused on Lesslie Newbigin's *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*. Sunquist explains, "This volume is a collection of papers that reflect on the ongoing meaning and value of the *Gospel in a Pluralist Society* for the twenty-first century" (15). It includes material presented during the Lectures in addition to work from authors who were not in attendance. In total, there are contributions from eleven scholars, including the editors. Each chapter provides unique insight into Newbigin's legacy. Rather than briefly describing the contents of each of the ten chapters, I will focus on two chapters that I think are the most intriguing and relevant contributions for current conversations regarding Christianity and developments in technology, and the growth of Charismatic and/or Pentecostal forms of Christianity.

Amos Yong aims to extend Newbigin's legacy of Christian missiological engagement with Western culture by providing a constructive proposal for a more developed pneumatological missiology that he believes is latent in Newbigin's writings. Using a Pentecostal perspective, Yong identifies the undeveloped pneumatology in Newbigin's writings. Yong describes that much of Newbigin's writing is Christocentric. However, Newbigin was attentive to the early

Pentecostal movement. In regard to engaging with science in technology, Yong writes, “Such a pentecostal and pneumatological missiology understands many forms of technology as divine gifts that can be deployed for good or ill, and thereby recognizes the need to nurture proper habits of living technologically *and* faithfully so as to facilitate more accurate discernment about the promise and challenges of technological advance” (169). In lieu of avoiding modern advances in technology Yong believes the teleological considerations of his development of Newbigin’s pneumatology empower Christians to engage with the diversity of human technologies in the ways Christians have approached the plurality of cultures.

Allen Yeh, professor of intercultural studies and missiology at Biola University (La Mirada, CA), discusses the future of Asian theology, which is grounded in a pluralism of religious expressions. Areas of East Asia, like sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America, are becoming representative of contemporary world Christianity. Yeh believes that religious pluralism in Asia can challenge Christianity to regain some of its radical authenticity. Yeh writes, “If Christianity can use these three raw materials [i.e., Islam, Buddhism, and Confucianism] to construct its own indigenous theology, like . . . employing Confucian or Buddhist philosophy the same way Western theology builds on the pagan Greek philosopher Plato, then there will be the beginnings of a self-theologizing that is authentically true to the Asian context and that is built on the very pluralism of the continent” (231). Yeh believes that we may see a revolution in theology once Asia’s voice is on par with the West, and that this is the kind of pluralism that Newbigin would approve.

This work will be especially appealing to those interested in epistemology, and those engaged in interreligious contexts. The important themes of Newbigin’s missiology described in the volume will help church leaders navigate further cultural changes (*pre*-Enlightenment questions, advances in technology). Yong and Yeh provide two examples of what we can learn from Newbigin’s thought, and how we might be able to further develop his thought and methods in our contemporary context. This volume should encourage further examination of the past missiological beliefs (Newbigin and others) in light of the changing context(s) of global Christianity, and should invite voices and perspective from the new centers of global Christianity to join the theological conversation.

BRADY KAL COX  
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**Katherine SONDEREGGER.** *Systematic Theology Volume 1, The Doctrine of God.* Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015. 539 pp. \$49.00.

Sonderegger is William Meade Chair in Systematic Theology at Virginia Theological Seminary, and a priest in the Episcopal Church. Her previous work has primarily focused on twentieth-century systematic theology, particularly as it relates to Karl Barth and his dogmatic interpretation of Israel. Her latest volume is the first of a planned three-volume systematic theology that attempts to look at the Divine through the attributes of omnipresence, omnipotence, and omniscience, all while emphasizing the radical unicity of God. What follows is a biblical and prayerful theological work that attempts to overcome the dominating strands of Trinitarian systematic theology by portraying God as all-living Oneness.

Sonderegger’s project is divided into five parts. Part I is framed by Israel’s *Shema*, which asserts that the God of Israel is One God. For Sonderegger, “The Christian doctrine of God

begins, is governed by, and finds its rest in the call to the One God, the One Lord of Israel” (3). This sentiment sets up the overarching theological claim of the project. Unicity acts as the foundation of the human attempt to understand God, and all other Divine attributes are determined by God’s Oneness. The choice to begin a systematic through Oneness, as opposed to beginning with the doctrine of the Trinity, places Sonderegger in the same methodological camp as Thomas Aquinas, who the author includes in her discussion of the metaphysics of Oneness. Yet, ultimately the most impactful of the section’s argument is that Divine Oneness is recommended by Holy Scripture itself (9).

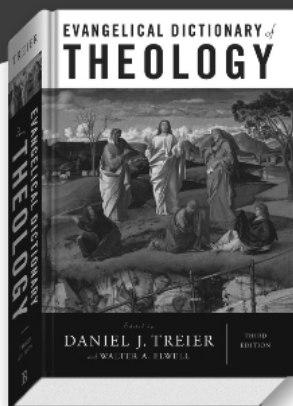
Part II turns its attention to the Divine attribute of omnipresence, particularly as it relates to God’s ability to not be seen. For Sonderegger, God is able to be omnipresent because of an intrinsic hiddenness. She writes, “The presence of the One God takes place in the Mode and form of invisibility: when He is disclosed, He is not seen” [*sic*] (74). This sentiment is rooted in scriptural accounts such as the burning bush, or the first creation account in Genesis, where God reveals Godself as present to humanity, while remaining unseen. After establishing the parameters of God’s hiddenness, Part III explores Divine omnipotence which Sonderegger depicts as reliant on God’s humility. Power is an intrinsic aspect of God’s essence, in a way that is neither exercised nor acted out. Simply put, God *is* power (188). While accounting for God’s power, Sonderegger rejects an understanding of God that can be reduced to a sort of Divine will or intellect. Ultimately Sonderegger’s conclusion is that it is possible for God to exist as an Absolute Power that is purely good and incorruptible. This is expressed in God’s humble omnipotence, seen explicitly in biblical accounts of God interacting with creation.

Part IV attempts to account for God’s ability to be omniscient. God has perfect knowledge, including a Divine knowledge of evil, however this form of knowledge is not to be considered as a faculty. God’s omniscience is reliant on God’s eternal existence outside of the limitations of linear time. God’s eternal knowledge is separate from any aspect of creation. It is not gathered by observation, rather Divine knowledge (or wisdom) is how God engages with human beings. God’s propensity for humility again comes into play with this view of omniscience. This wisdom is not overbearing, and maintains space for human beings to exist with their own free will. Sonderegger concludes the manuscript in Part V by exploring the perfection of Divine love.

Sonderegger’s project is an important work that exists as a unique conversation partner to other recent systematics such as Sarah Coakley’s 2013 *God, Sexuality, and the Self*. Where Coakley deploys a detailed methodology applying *théologie totale* to her explanation of the Trinity, Sonderegger is seemingly attempting to do something much simpler. Her methodological choice to focus on God’s Oneness is set up as being straightforward, and finding its main support in scripture, yet it is sometimes difficult to deduce what is meant by Oneness in a specific moment in the text. This leads to uncertainty from the reader about the specific roles of the members of the Trinity, as well as an absence of explanation about what is truly meant by God’s existence as Father, Son, and Spirit. Despite this confusion, Sonderegger’s work exists as an important example of a systematic theology that prides itself on using scripture as its primary source. The use of scripture reminds the reader that systematic theology is a prayerful endeavor that should not be limited to the academy, and should take place in everyone’s personal engagement with scripture.

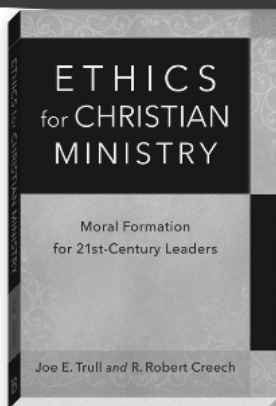
J. TYLER CAMPBELL  
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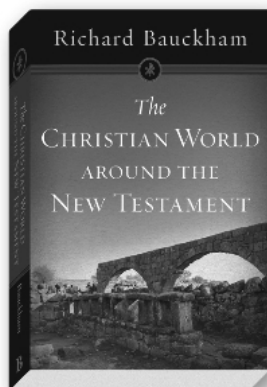
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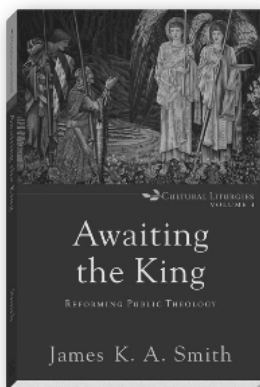
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**Alister E. McGRATH, editor.** *The Christian Theology Reader*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell, 2017. 632 pp. \$49.95.

This anthology, first published in 1996, is now in its fifth edition. It is, I judge, the best resource available for the student who wishes to gain an understanding of what Christian theology has been about from the Patristic period to the twenty-first century. A plus is the offering of video resources available at no cost. The preface offers valuable instructions to both student and teacher on how to use this reader.

The book is organized by theological topics beginning with the “Preliminaries” and ending naturally enough with “The Last Things.” All the usual topics are covered including the Sources of Theology, Doctrine of God, The Person of Christ, Salvation in Christ, Human Nature, Sin and Grace, The Church, The Sacraments, and a section on Christianity and Other Religions.

Each subject is presented using the following outline:

- an introduction to the subject,
- a brief summary of the issues at stake,
- several excerpts from the original sources with an introduction by the editor regarding the historical context of each reading and a comment restating the substance of the reading, and
- questions for study related to the reading.

If a student wishes to explore the thought of a particular theologian, say Augustine, Luther, or Barth, she can go to the index and find several readings on a number of subjects by that theologian.

An attempt to give even a small hearing to the most influential theologians for the past two thousand years is bound to neglect someone that the reader considers important. One will look in vain for a reading from any theologian from the Stone-Campbell Movement. I fear that this says less about the competency of the editor than about the paucity and/or the relevancy of the Movement’s contribution to the Christian theological corpus.

The theologians who are included will not receive the space some critics believe they deserve, or certain subjects will receive more attention than they deserve. However, in the end I cannot think of a better resource to introduce the beginning student to Christianity’s vast library of theological reflection. At the same time, these readings also provide a resource to help the more advanced students and teachers explore certain areas of thought regarding which they feel some deficit.

McGrath has here set a theological table with more than enough food with a variety of dishes to provide a feast that should satisfy the most critical gourmet. I only wish that the meal had been available when I was teaching the Introduction to Theology to college students many years ago.

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**Darrell BOCK with Benjamin SIMPSON.** *Jesus the God-Man: The Unity and Diversity of the Gospel Portrayals*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016. 194 pp. \$19.99.

Bock usually has a unique way to approach a topic. He has a way to craft words and turn phrases. In this volume, he repeatedly uses the phrase that we must approach Jesus ‘from the

earth up'. His bias is that the Synoptics take that approach to teach about Jesus. In contrast, John approaches Jesus 'from heaven down'. Of course, he is making the distinction of the High Christology of John. So, what do these phrases mean? The Synoptics see Jesus' teaching from the human perspective, while John sees him from the divine perspective. Jesus' human actions and words lift him up from earth. He is more than human!

Bock bucks some prevalent scholarly opinions. For instance, he states, "Jesus refused to predict the time of the end, nor did he preach imminence in such a way as to declare that it would come within the generation of the disciples" (28, 29). He has a different understanding of imminent eschatology than many. Another expression of difference is: there is "... an ultimate unity between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith" (171). Bock does not seem to differentiate the two. Personally, I find these views refreshing.

The book is organized around Jesus' Central Message, Kingdom, Titles, Teaching, Community and Return. Bock unpackages each of these areas showing how, as a rule, they demonstrated Jesus "from the earth up." Again, interesting phrases are used by Bock. In discussing the miracles of Jesus he states, "They painted in audiovisual terms the presence of Jesus's authority and victory over Satan" (35). He makes an important and somewhat controversial point about the Kingdom by writing, "But the kingdom is bigger than the church" (45). Each title discussed is given clear expression and definitive biblical references. He does well in explaining these titles, but notes, "He preferred to display his role through his actions versus proclaiming who he is" (73). Regarding miracles Bock observes that in John only two miracles occur in Jerusalem and both are on the Sabbath: the man with paralysis (John 5) and the man born blind (John 9). Regardless the title, "the resurrection is the ultimate vindication of these claims" (120). Titles can be claimed or given. The death, burial and resurrection of Jesus shows that he has absolute authority and is completely divine. "In the ultimate way, the resurrection takes Jesus from the earth up" (120)!!

Bock demonstrates that Jesus' mission was to call the sick. Jesus alone is eternal life. As I tell my students, "Eternal life is not a place or a period of time. Eternal life is a person" (John 17:3)!! Bock seems to agree. On the last page of the book's text he states, "Jesus is the revelator of God but also the revelator of our hearts before God" (172). Darrell Bock does an excellent job of making this point.

JOE GRANA II

Dean

Hope International University

**Andrew PURVES.** *Exploring Christology and Atonement: Conversations with John McLeod Campbell, H. R. Mackintosh and T. F. Torrance.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2015. 260 pp. \$34.00.

Andrew Purves is the Jean and Nancy Davis Professor Emeritus of Historical Theology at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. Before beginning his 32-year teaching career at PTS, he served as a minister at a Presbyterian congregation for several years. Both his theological acumen and pastoral concern are on display in this book.

For many, the breadth of the Reformed theology that has existed historically and that is present in Europe today may come as a surprise. Although all Reformed traditions look to John Calvin, the Reformed stream flows wide enough to include Jonathan Edwards, Friedrich Schleiermacher, and Karl Barth. Purves studied with T. F. Torrance in his native



Scotland before coming to the United States, and this volume explains the central concerns of a Reformed tradition underrepresented on these shores.

Strictly speaking, this is a work in systematic theology, not Church history. That is, it is Purves's own theological reflection given to the Church today with the aim of guiding both its current thought and its ongoing ministry. Being a good systematician, however, Purves wishes to accomplish this task in conversation with the most salient voices of the past. His choices for these (in addition to the ever-present voice of John Calvin) are three Reformed Scottish theologians from successive generations of the Kirk: John McLeod Campbell (1800–1872), Hugh Ross Mackintosh (1870–1936), and Thomas Forsyth Torrance (1913–2007).

This volume begins with a chapter on theological method. It then continues—despite Purves's insistence that Christology and Atonement cannot be separated—with three chapters on Christology and three chapters on the Atonement. Finally, it concludes with a chapter reflecting on the way that these doctrines affect faith and ministry. McLeod Campbell, Mackintosh, and Torrance are present throughout, and Purves's book can serve as something of an introduction to their thought (although nothing, of course, substitutes for reading such original theologians in their own words).

As Purves states in the book's introduction and reinforces at its conclusion, "This book offers an account of the relationship between Jesus Christ, who is the incarnate Son, and the Father, the result of which is the atonement, for in the incarnate Son the relation between God and humankind is savingly established" (253-254). For those unfamiliar with the thought of McLeod Campbell, Mackintosh, and Torrance, these theologians contrast starkly with the penal and heavily forensic understanding of the Atonement usual in Federal Calvinism (such as one finds in the Westminster Confession). They were all also strongly Christocentric in focus; they by no means denied the Trinity, but they found that the proper way to affirm it—and everything else in Christian doctrine—was by first and forever knowing Christ. Purves carries this tradition forward, mining their work and producing a salutary Reformed theology for today.

If one would find grounds to criticize the work, it would be that Purves is so concerned to develop and correct Reformed theology that he makes little mention of other contemporary streams of thought. While that might not be a deficiency in a purely historical work, this is a work in systematics. One can also question the understanding of Critical Realism and of Anselm that Purves presents. On the other hand, Purves does look to a number of theologians from the Early Church and Reformation (such as Athanasius and Philipp Melancthon) to enrich and ground his thought.

This book is most suitable for seminary students and other readers with some prior theological training. It would make an excellent course book for a class on Reformed Christology. And it is a good read. Recommended.

STEVEN D. CONE

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**Matthew BARRETT.** *God's Word Alone: The Authority of Scripture.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016. 416 pp. \$24.99.

Barrett is also editor of the book's series, "The Five Solas," prepared in celebration of the five-hundredth anniversary of the Protestant Reformation and its continuing relevance.

He defines *sola Scriptura* as the doctrine that “*only Scripture, because it is God’s inspired Word, is our inerrant, sufficient, and final authority for the church*” (23, italics original).

The book opens with a lengthy historical summary titled, “God’s Word under Fire.” Barrett begins with the Reformation, moves through the Enlightenment, German and American theological liberalism, Karl Barth, and watershed moments at Princeton in the late 1800s and at Fuller in the mid-1900s, eventually arriving at the 1978 Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy.

You will love this book if you are American, Protestant, Calvinist, and a strong inerrantist. It may also help to be male (the author, the twelve recommendations in the front matter, the author of the foreword, all the names in the index [except the Queen of Sheba], and 246 of the 251 authors in the bibliography are men, and masculine pronouns are used throughout). Whether or not you fit these categories, you may not be entirely comfortable with tracing the Reformation’s doctrine of *sola Scriptura* in the way this book does—with inerrancy as the main theme, with the 1978 Chicago Statement as the culmination, and with no reference to persons or trends outside the West.

Concerning inerrancy as the main theme, Barrett declares that “The Bible is all about authority” (23), and argues at length that the God-authored Bible must therefore be verbally and plenary inspired and thus inerrant. He does affirm divine accommodation, the doctrine that God’s choice to work through human authors includes the fact that God did “not wipe out the uniqueness of the human authors, but accommodated himself, using different literary styles and grammatical constructions to communicate to different types of people” (237). Examples given of such accommodation include poor grammar (237) and Jesus’ use of hyperbole regarding the size of a mustard seed (269). Though the book briefly notes these matters, it does not sufficiently counter two ever-present dangers inherent in the doctrine of inerrancy: First, that most presentations of inerrancy in the church insist on a one-sentence definition rather than a nuanced definition such as the several-page Chicago Statement. Second, that many presentations of inerrancy reject or ignore the Chicago Statement’s final article, which includes the following denial: “We deny that such confession [of inerrancy] is necessary for salvation” (Chicago Statement, Articles of Affirmation and Denial, Article 19). Happily, Barrett stops short of rejecting the salvation of those who do not affirm inerrancy, but he does characterize such Christians as assaulting God’s Word.

An example of the Calvinist tone of the book is Barrett’s belief that the Enlightenment damaged *sola Scriptura* largely because it rejected “Augustinian anthropology and its doctrine of original sin. Man was now seen as inherently good” (79).

I take issue with Barrett’s occasional comments on manuscripts and textual criticism. At one point, he notes that 2 Tim 3:16 establishes inerrancy’s relevancy to the autographs rather than to copies: “When Paul says all *Scripture* is breathed out by God, he has the actual *documents* in mind (2 Tim 3:16), not merely the biblical authors. This means that it is not the copies that are inerrant, but the original manuscripts of the biblical authors” (266, italics original). Even inerrantists who accept the first sentence’s distinction between the inspiration of biblical authors and the inspiration of biblical texts should here recognize that Barrett is using a poor proof-text for the second sentence’s appeal to original manuscripts. A second problem is Barrett’s claim that textual criticism would be impossible apart from inerrancy, “for there would be no objective textual basis on which to distinguish fact from fancy” (267). Barrett seems to believe that the aim of textual criticism is to uncover the

inerrant text (as opposed to uncovering the original text), thus making it a different discipline from the textual criticism of all other ancient texts.

Readers of *SCJ* may be interested that Barrett quotes Alexander Campbell on the topic of his reading the Bible without being “influenced by any foreign name, authority, or system” (345, quoting *The Christian Baptist*, April 3, 1826). He disregards the context of the quotation and attributes to Campbell and certain of his followers the excess of wholly abandoning tradition and thereby elevating one’s own interpretation to the level of scripture—“anti-traditional traditionalism of the worst kind” (346). Elsewhere, in an explanation of the excesses of *nuda Scriptura* (“bare scripture,” hence total rejection of tradition), Barrett takes another jab (intentionally or unintentionally) at the Stone-Campbell Movement: “*sola Scriptura* is too easily confused today with *nuda Scriptura*, the view that we should have ‘no creed but the Bible!’” (23, cf. 54-58).

Barrett’s book contains much truth, but is neither inerrant nor infallible. Readers of *SCJ* who lack wholesale commitments to Calvinism, verbal plenary inspiration, and inerrancy will not value it highly.

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**John C. PECKHAM.** *Canonical Theology: The Biblical Canon, Sola Scriptura and Theological Method.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016. 305 pp. \$35.00.

Peckham’s book proposes a way forward in the perennial canon debate. But the largest portion of the book focuses on laying out the popular options. He delineates two large scale options:

1. Tradition 0: No role to tradition
2. Tradition I: Scripture has final authority, while tradition can supplement interpretive moves (what is called “intrinsic” canon)
3. Tradition II: Scripture is authored and identified in community and thus must be partnered with tradition (what is called “communitarian” canon)

While these are obviously broad brush strokes, he successfully engages Traditions I and II. This is one of the strengths of this book; it’s the thorough, critical, but succinct exploration of the canon debate in these two streams. He even gives a full chapter to “the rule of faith,” which is sometimes left out of this important conversation. Combined with hearty footnotes, *Canonical Theology* could easily be used as an introductory resource for the canon debate.

A weakness does exist, from a Stone-Campbell perspective, namely the lack of treatment of Tradition 0 as its own trajectory. Peckham does this purposely, arguing that there is significant blurring between 0 and I in modern evangelicalism, and thus practically they can both fit into Tradition I. While that is a fair observation, for those in a “Restoration Movement,” which (in verbiage anyway) argue for Tradition 0, this might be seen as a weakness, or at least a focused place to question what we mean by “*sola scriptura*.”

In the second half of the book Peckham makes his case for what he calls “canonical *sola scriptura*.” Canonical *sola scriptura* sees the Bible as uniquely authoritative and sees the whole of the canon as the rule of faith, without accepting outside authority. In this he agrees

with Kevin Vanhoozer who posits a similar direction in his book *The Drama of Doctrine*. While Vanhoozer focuses on theology, Peckham is defending the central thesis of this approach to the canon debate.

He engages this problem, by arguing essentially that adding canonical to “sola scriptura” means to address various extreme errors, e.g. that scripture is not the *only* source of knowledge, that it excludes reason and interpretation. To argue this point Peckham briefly engages a series of Tradition II interlocutors, Christian Smith, Robert Sungenis, Stanley Hauerwas. This is another strength of the book, his willingness to engage a wide set of questions/problems that sola scriptura has, and how adding “canonical” to it can avoid some traditional Tradition I errors.

Finally, Peckham devotes significant space to using this approach to “do” theology. He engages the Trinity as a classic test. This is an interesting exercise and eminently applicable. Then he turns to how this approach can be used in systematic theology and hermeneutics. Obviously with such large topics there is much more to be said, but he deftly engages some surface work.

Ultimately, he is arguing that our theological abstractions are subservient to canonical data and should be “tested against those particulars via the hermeneutical spiral” (219). In this way, however, it does not seem to me that adding “canonical” to sola scriptura does much work. It seems that this is fairly common in terms of what most Tradition I (and probably many) would agree with. In this way what is offered here is a careful refutation of the caricature that is often presented of sola scriptura, and a solid refutation of straw-man arguments. In this way the book is very helpful, and would be a helpful addition to anyone looking to see an intelligent argument for something like Tradition I.

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**J. Gary MILLAR.** *Calling on the Name of the Lord: A Biblical Theology of Prayer.* New Studies in Biblical Theology, ed. D. A. Carson. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2016. 264 pp. \$24.00.

Millar presents something of a biblical theology of prayer, albeit with a single focus: true, biblical prayer is that which calls upon God to fulfill his covenant promises to his people. “What follows in these pages is an exposition of the fact that prayer in the Bible is intimately linked with the gospel—God’s promised and provided solution to the problem of human rebellion against him and its consequences” (17). Millar traces the makeup and trajectory of prayer beginning with the Pentateuch (Ch. 1), through the historical books (Ch. 2), the prophets (Chs. 3-4), and the Psalms (Ch. 5) noting how the overwhelming majority of prayers recorded in the OT invoke Yahweh to deliver upon his previously promised blessings toward redemption of humanity and establishment of the Kingdom. Chapter six begins his examination of prayer in the life of Jesus, in which Jesus’ prayers followed the OT tradition of petitioning Yahweh to finally work his major redemptive act. Millar then examines prayer in the book of Acts (Ch. 7), the life of Paul (Ch. 8), and the general epistles (Ch. 9). His thesis about prayer in the OT, that “‘calling on the name of Yahweh,’ or *prayer that asks God to deliver on his covenantal promises*, is the foundation for all that the Old Testament says

about prayer” (18), extends to his discussion of prayer in the NT, where praying in the name of Jesus is the equivalent of “calling upon the name of the LORD.”

Millar’s work is a breath of fresh air in prayer studies. The literature on prayer is skewed toward two extreme ends of a very large spectrum. Academic and theological works are mostly focused on the development, structure, and patterns of prayer revealed in the ANE context, the intertestamental period, or the early church. These works seek to understand the character and nuances of biblical prayer by examining its place in and connection to the religion of the surrounding culture(s). On the other end, devotional works on prayer seem largely concerned with technique and with the alleviation of modern inconveniences. What this volume brings to the table is a plea to examine and return to the *focus* of the prayers recorded in Scripture: the nature, will, and redemptive scheme of God. Toward this end, Millar offers a concluding chapter suggesting how modern believers might begin to incorporate this focus into their own practice. What we find in this latest installment of the New Studies in Biblical Theology series is a call to modern believers to abandon personal, selfish interests in prayer in favor of God’s interests in the world—interests deeply rooted in covenant and Kingdom.

What will mildly chafe the reader, however, is a confusion about what actually constitutes prayer in the biblical record. In the initial chapter Millar asserts that prayer isn’t simply “speaking to God,” but rather calling on God when he is not immediately present (19, n. 1). But later Joshua “simply speaks to Yahweh” (47) and it is given consideration as prayer, as is the dream of Solomon (59). Theophanic appearances are initially excluded as prayer (45, n. 2), but later the theophany of Isaiah 6 is given consideration (68). Millar claims early that there is little difference between song and prayer (69), then excludes the “songs” of Zechariah and Mary (168), and later includes the songs of Revelation (226, 228). After initially defining prayer in a rather narrow way (i.e. more than “speaking” to God, but rather crying out to him only when he is absent), he later concludes that we should not be too restrictive in our definition of prayer (160-161). The inability to concisely define prayer is a bit of an albatross in this book, a constantly moving target. On the other hand, perhaps we should not be too hard on Millar. Prayer is hard to define, and if we broaden its definition to “interaction with God,” nearly every word of Scripture would have to be considered in a biblical theology of prayer. Of the writing of such theology, the world could not contain the books.

This volume is a welcome addition to the New Studies in Biblical Theology series and a significant contribution to the growing study of prayer in the biblical record. Millar’s call for the Church to engage with God in his redemptive plan, in Kingdom, in the gospel, and to center all of our prayers *in that direction* makes this a work that will share its place alongside the great theological works on prayer.

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**Norman WIRZBA.** *From Nature to Creation: A Christian Vision for Understanding and Loving Our World.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2015. 162 pp. \$20.00.

In the opening pages of this volume Wirzba articulates the need for Christians to cultivate a theologically robust imagination and, more specifically, an imagination that cares for

the whole of creation (3). For Wirzba, this is no small feat in a society that has overindulged in philosophical ideologies and daily practices that feed cycles of exploitation, idolatry, and isolationism. What is held out in this approachable book is not just another call to discipleship but a plea to take account of how a deep and participatory knowledge of one's place within creation compels a certain way of life—in a word, creatureliness. This word is a placeholder for a lived logic that affirms, “*Where* we are matters for *who* we think we are, and thus also for *how* we think it appropriate to act” (24). This rationale is unpacked throughout a book that skillfully integrates reflections on theology, ethics, philosophy, economics, and ecology.

One of the many strengths of this book comes in Wirzba's thorough analysis of the systemic idolatry that plagues the imaginations of many contemporary Christians. The exegetical and theological fountainhead of this idolatry is located in a perspective that views “nature” as a “stockpile of ‘natural resources’” that can be used without giving care to the complex repercussions that accompany the degradation or exhaustion of these same “resources” (31). Wirzba masterfully traces how this way of thinking and acting is directly commensurate with the sway of modernism and the consequential norms of industrial society. For example, Wirzba details John Locke's stance that value is placed on private property through human action rather than value being inherent within the land (37). Similarly, Wirzba surveys the Cartesian compulsion to accept “that the world's intelligibility and value are seen to depend on a meaning-*bestowing* rather than meaning-*discovering* self” (43). This bestowing of value, in a way that is entirely dependent on human designation, elevates the human voice as the ultimate “architect” and “engineer” of creation (45, 68). Such a problematic view has been compounded through philosophical conclusions and economic decisions that not only separate people from creation but that have also led to the self-designation of “nature” into realms to be conquered or cleared for human purposes, be it through the partitioning of “nature” into wasteland or inhabitable land or through the colonialist impulse to commoditize land, stripping resources and “potentialities” for those inhabiting another place altogether (26). According to Wirzba, “The effect of so much of our culture's training is to convince us that we really are the center around which the world moves” (68). Inheriting these guiding frameworks, whether consciously or unconsciously, has not only resulted in disastrous acts in modern history, but it has also been the height of idolatry through the displacement of God and the subsequent enthronement and worship of human ingenuity, decision, and advancement apart from the rest of creation (113).

For as much as Wirzba's critiques surface as a firm indictment, the final chapters persuasively underscore the absolute need for a different course of action. Wirzba's framing of creatureliness is not only theologically robust, but it also surfaces with ways of acting, as a part of creation, that are in reach—as close as plate, knife, and fork. Consistent with his writing elsewhere (*Food and Faith: A Theology of Eating*), Wirzba calls for Christians to be fully invested in creation. When this is the case, Christian communities can come to acknowledge rhythms of faithfulness and unfaithfulness in everyday locales—for example, the garden and the table. When the act of eating is a theologically meaningful act, the ethical sourcing of food, attention to labor practices, and care for land become practical moments of Christian formation and discipleship within creation. In ways, and on plates, large and small, one of the ultimate aims of creaturely life is habitual thanksgiving, gratitude, and hospitality. Christian love, experienced and enacted through acts of hospitality, effectively force us to

remember that “Just as God the gardener withdraws to make room for the world, all the while nurturing it, so too, hospitable creatures withdraw to make room for the other as welcome guest, all the while offering nurture and help” (152).

If there is a weakness regarding this book, I think primarily of those who will reject Wirzba’s conclusions before giving them a fair hearing because they’ve grown too comfortable with theological, philosophical, and political presuppositions that confirm and perpetuate an understanding of creation as something that can be freely mined for one’s pleasures, needs, and whims regardless of circumstance and consequence. At times, I wished this book could have repeated more of the detailed conclusions in Wirzba’s *The Paradise of God: Renewing Religion in an Ecological Age*. I also questioned while reading what a more politically focused approach to reform and policymaking might look like in the immediate future. These obstacles are addressed, but this is where I found myself wishing for even greater development (125-127). However, Wirzba still provokes these questions and emphasizes the ongoing role of the Christian imagination to make a difference for all creation.

In the end, Wirzba’s writing is not only compelling and lucid, it’s also immensely practical. For the church that eats together and desires to feed the hungry in their community, this book poses real questions about what it means to be embedded within creation. For ministers and students of theology, philosophy, or ecology, this book will challenge one to wrestle with preconceived systems of thinking and acting—whether as a part of creation or, tragically, apart from creation. This book is a gift to be read with care, awareness of place, and, most of all, hospitality.

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**Walter BRUEGGEMANN. *Money and Possessions. Interpretation: Resources for the Use of Scripture in the Church.* Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2016. 344 pp. \$40.00.**

“We live in a society that would like to bracket out money and possessions (politics and economy) from ultimate questions. The Bible insists otherwise. It insists that the issues of ultimacy are questions about money and possessions. Biblical testimony invites a serious reconsideration of the ways in which our society engages or does not engage questions of money and possessions as carriers of social possibility [for] all neighbors, human and non-human. . . . [This inclusivity] requires a recharacterization of the body politic as an arena for the performance and embodiment of the will of the creator God, a will that contradicts much of our preferred, uncriticized practice” (12-13).

This final paragraph of Brueggemann’s introductory chapter in many ways summarizes the intent, importance, and serious urgency of his review of a central biblical theme that most of us and our churches would rather not reengage at a deep level. Brueggemann very clearly states up front that his task is to gather central texts as an exhibit for interpretive consideration, reserving most of his judgments about them; and requiring readers to somehow divest themselves of initial resistance and prior comfortable conclusions and pay closer atten-

tion. In other words, as readers we must be willing to allow this collection of texts to challenge and change us. Repentance is explicit in Brueggemann’s approach.

Good introductions serve multiple functions. Brueggemann’s introduction is outstanding in this sense. It is nearly a stand-alone piece and is a homiletical masterpiece theologically. It calls the listener to complete its action. In thirteen pages, it intensely focuses the reader and maps out the scope of the immense theme. It also serves as the concluding chapter that seems to be missing from the end of the book. I suggest readers come back to the Introduction and ponder its theses in light of the tour-de-force discussion of biblical texts that follows. It supplies the critical motive for *why* we must pay better attention. It also exposes our weak excuses for having not had ears to hear. Brueggemann even admits that in light of the enormous amount of material, and its richness and familiarity, that he “found the writing of this book to be a difficult challenge” (xix). Attentive readers will be challenged all the more.

Brueggemann’s six theses (/antitheses) are: 1. Money and possessions (M&P) are gifts from God/contradicting market ideology. 2. M&P are received as reward for obedience/not readily transposed into the reward system of the market. 3. M&P belong to God and are held in trust by human persons in community/contradicting the pretension of greedy market ideology. 4. M&P are sources of social injustice/contradicting the easy assumption of the market that autonomous wealth is disconnected from the community and separate from social justice. 5. M&P are to be shared in a neighborly way/over against a predatory market of rivals, competitors, and threats. 6. M&P are seductions that lead to idolatry/contradicting the market view that M&P are inert and innocent neutral objects.

Essentially the rest of the book is a canonical movement through the Bible that brings fullness to these statements. Although Brueggemann certainly brings a thorough and readable analysis for us to carefully consider, there are a few items he overlooked: 1. Relative to the OT prophets and disobedience, the economic nature of the futility curses within the prophetic covenant lawsuits, particularly tied to Deut 28:20,47. 2. The foundational Pauline ideal of *koinonia* for the church (as a corollary to OT *hesed*) relative to material communal sharing rooted in the *kenosis* of Christ and not simply a shallow sense of fellowship as “a network of friendship (neighborliness)” (mentioned only once by Brueggemann regarding Acts 2:42; 208). This volume is essential, urgent reading for our time if the church is to become the countercultural alternative economy God calls it to be during our politically *pleonexia*-filled age of Putin and Trump (192, n.16).

CRAIG D. BOWMAN  
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Rochester College

**Scot MCKNIGHT.** *The Real Mary: Why Protestant Christians Can Embrace the Mother of Jesus.* Brewster, MA: Paraclete, 2016. 176 pp. \$17.99.

The present volume appeared in 2016 as a print-on-demand paperback version of the original 2007 hardback. In it, McKnight encourages Protestants to reevaluate their reflexive hesitation to make much of Mary the mother of Jesus.

Nearly two-thirds of the book contains the author’s reconstruction of Mary’s life and significance from the Gospels and Acts. For McKnight the “real Mary” went beyond the sweet,



passive figure of Christian imagination; she was “not a ‘nice’ girl” (26). Instead, she appears in the narrative books of the NT as a “woman of justice,” a “woman of danger,” a “woman of ambivalence,” and so on. McKnight sets Mary’s life within the culture and history of the time, encouraging modern readers to notice aspects of the story easily glossed over. For example, he explains that Mary’s faithful acceptance of her mission as the mother of the Messiah involved marking herself for life as an adulteress by becoming pregnant while betrothed. “Mary, in faith, consented to God’s plan. Mary, in faith, began to carry a cross before Jesus was born. Mary began to suffer for the Messiah before the Messiah suffered” (13).

Then in two pivotal chapters, McKnight faces the postbiblical developments of Mariology: first, the “early developments”: her identification with the “woman clothed with the sun” of Revelation 12, her sinlessness, and her perpetual virginity. In the next chapter, he deals with the “later developments,” including two issues that draw a bright line between Protestant and Catholic understandings of Mary: her immaculate conception, dogmatized in 1854, and her assumption into heaven, dogmatized in 1950.

The final chapter encourages Protestant churches to “render Mary her due” (143), in part by celebrating an annual “Honor Mary Day” comparable to the Roman Catholic feast days that honor her (144). One of the book’s two appendices contains “suggestions for reflecting on Mary,” including Scripture passages, selections from the *Book of Common Prayer*, and the lyrics of two “traditional Christmas hymns” (157-170).

Throughout the book, McKnight treats both Catholic and Protestant concerns with sensitivity and respect. He faces clearly the issues that separate the two traditions, and at the same time, he writes as an Evangelical to Evangelicals. He makes plain “The Big Difference” (116) between the Protestant *sola Scriptura* hermeneutic and the Catholic hermeneutic of Scripture plus tradition—or better, Scripture as the earliest stratum of the ongoing tradition.

NT scholars who read this work should not expect a “real Mary” analogous to the “historian’s Jesus” of the Jesus Quest. The “real Mary” does not appear as a minimal historically verifiable character, for McKnight takes all the Mary passages as historical and even moves beyond their data at some points. For example, since only the Magnificat contains any biblical hint of Mary’s own understanding of God, McKnight finds himself forced to assume that the song’s themes made up the bulk of Mary’s theology throughout her life. Again, he relies on the how-can-we-deny type of argumentation when he describes what Mary “must” have done, or when he says that some claim “simply makes logical sense” (54, 84-85). And sometimes he relies on simple assertion (26, 31, 32, 54).

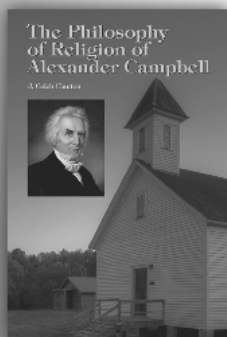
Quibbles aside, McKnight has done a good work in encouraging the Evangelical general reader to rethink Mary and her role in salvation history. Even if the “Honor Mary Day” does not catch on, readers will find themselves encouraged to give the mother of Jesus her due.

CARL BRIDGES  
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Johnson University

**Jonathan Klawans.** *Josephus and the Theologies of Ancient Judaism.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. 400 pp. \$29.95.

Josephus’ importance for understanding the Jewish world of the NT is evident, and yet the amount of scholarship devoted to his writings has somehow been less than one might

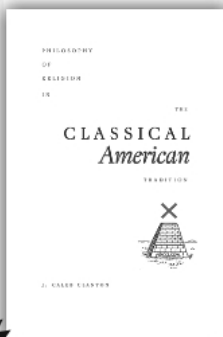
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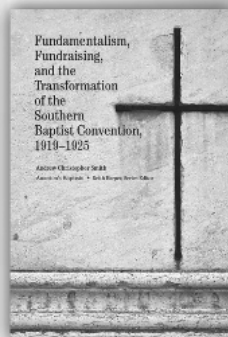
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have expected. He tends to be treated tangentially—as a go-to source for locating this or that idea in the context of the first century—and hardly ever, it seems, at the level of his own “system” of ideas. Klawans’s book helps fill the void. And yet Klawans has presented us with more than a book about Josephus. While always keeping the task of understanding Josephus in focus, the book ranges broadly throughout the Jewish expressions of his day on several large matters, such as questions of fate and free will (ch. 2), concepts of the afterlife (ch. 3), and the relation of Torah to tradition (ch. 4).

One of the real treats of this book comes in the form of the fifth chapter, “Josephus and Judaism after 70 CE,” in which Klawans dismantles the notion, widespread in treatments of Jewish history (and of rabbinic theological development), that the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE marked a world-effacing rupture within Judaism. Taking aim especially at the way that view is formulated by Jacob Neusner (in literally hundreds of writings) and by Seth Schwartz, Klawans argues that the events of 70 CE would have been considerably less world-shattering for Jews than the events of the 1940s. Klawans shows, rather handily, that the tendency to treat the events of 70 CE as a first-century equivalent of the same sort of rupture as the Holocaust is not based on a reading of the sources, but rather on a misreading of the sources’ relative silence.

Klawans is a good writer, and his book is organized thoughtfully. The book is easily accessible to nonexperts on Josephus, while, at the same time, making serious contributions to the field. It is accessible, even, to those who have never read Josephus.

Given especially the way in which Klawans ranges widely throughout Jewish expressions in covering the topics outlined above, and given the importance of the areas themselves, this is a book that any devoted student of the NT will want to read. It would make a good required text for more advanced courses on the background to the NT.

On the down side: it is wholly unfortunate that Oxford published this book with endnotes instead of footnotes. It’s difficult to understand why readers should be made (needlessly) to turn pages to learn the deeper story about certain details.

JOHN C. POIRIER  
Germantown, OH

**Christopher A. STEPHENSON.** *Types of Pentecostal Theology: Method, System, Spirit.* AAR Academy Series. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. 234 pp. \$24.95.

“Crip” Stephenson’s dissertation is about the variety of approaches in modern Pentecostal scholarship. For non-Pentecostals, the book’s main benefit, perhaps, will be to show that such a variety exists, and to show something of the more academic side of Pentecostal theology. The book also seems to function as a defense of Pentecostal theology (especially as an academic discipline), although it does not advertise itself as that. (Disclosure: this reviewer is a Pentecostal.)

Stephenson discusses the work of several representative figures, showing a development in Pentecostal theology from the more traditional (and Evangelical) approaches of Myer Pearlman, E. S. Williams, and French Arrington (ch. 1), to the approaches of several figures pursuing a more postmodernizing line of thought: Steven Land and Simon Chan (ch. 2), Frank Macchia (ch. 3), and Amos Yong (ch. 4). The roadmap of this book never gets more complicated than that: Pentecostal theology is portrayed as a way of thinking that has caught

up with the times in every way, and which deserves to be taken seriously as a discipline in its own right. A fifth chapter lays out a “rule of spirituality” and a “rule of doctrine,” and shows (for an example) how these might be applied in the case of the Lord’s Supper. The book ends with a brief concluding note.

The layout of chapters 1–4 is equally simple: Stephenson introduces each thinker, gives an outline of his approach, and lists the advantages and disadvantages of the approach. (Stephenson apologizes for being unable to find a female representative of Pentecostal theology who can be treated in the depth of the others he reviews.) One of the giveaways of this book’s apologetic bent lies in the discussions of the so-called disadvantages of the approaches reviewed: the critiques of the individual approaches seem to become less trenchant as the book progresses, and the reader is left with the impression that Pentecostal theology is moving toward some golden age. There is a reason for this, as Stephenson sometimes treats his subjects with kid gloves. For example, in discussing Yong’s book *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh* (2005), Stephenson completely passes over the uproar that this book caused with its suggestion that the Holy Spirit is manifest in various non-Christian religious expressions throughout the world. And after praising Yong for his exegetical abilities (!), Stephenson fails to note the exegetical howler on which Yong attempts to base his panreligious pneumatology. (Yong reads the “all” in Joel’s/Luke’s notion of the Spirit being poured out “on all flesh” as referring to “all” *without exception*, whereas Scripture *clearly* intends it to be taken as “all” *without distinction*—without the distinctions, that is, that Paul deflates in Galatians.)

Stephenson’s book will work well as an introduction to Pentecostal theology. Of course, whether it is the right book for that task will depend on whether one wishes to learn about *popular-level* Pentecostal theology, or *academic* Pentecostal theology. (This book introduces the latter, but some of what is found in the former can be gleaned from the chapter on Pearlman, Williams, and Arrington.) Unfortunately, this book is also a sign of how little this branch of theology has been willing to conduct any serious self-criticism.

JOHN C. POIRIER  
Germantown, OH

**John Shelby SPONG.** *Biblical Literalism: A Gentile Heresy.* New York: HarperOne, 2016. 394 pp. \$26.99.

John Shelby Spong is the retired Episcopal Bishop of Newark, and is currently a visiting lecturer at Harvard and at more than 500 other universities around the world. He has written a number of books, including *Why Christianity Must Change or Die*, and his autobiography, *Here I Stand*. His books have sold over a million copies worldwide. *Biblical Literalism: A Gentile Heresy* endeavors to “reclaim the Jewish past that can illuminate our gospel narratives in a way that is almost unimaginable” (3). It seeks “to demonstrate that the presence of an anti-Jewish bias over the centuries has kept the Christian church locked inside an anti-Semitic, Gentile exile” (3). Claiming that a “long-standing Gentile ignorance of all things Jewish . . . has marked our understanding of the New Testament,” the book sets forth to “reveal that biblical fundamentalism is, in fact, a product of that ignorance” (3).

The book contains a Preface, and is divided into ten parts—with 33 chapters total. A Bibliography, Scripture Index, and Subject Index are included at the back of the book. One

major drawback in the organization of the work is that no footnotes were included. Neither were there any endnotes. Given the gravity of the claims made by the author, and his status worldwide, one is puzzled as to this apparent oversight. There are no illustrations or pictures, and only one chart—on page 363, illustrating (as per the claim) the “liturgical drama” of Matthew’s account. The Preface is spent reciting the author’s personal experience meeting scholars worldwide who pointed him in the direction he has taken, and much of the first chapter is a tirade against what he perceives to be the intellectual wasteland of “fundamentalism.”

And, that is precisely the fundamental flaw (no pun intended) of the work. The reader is exposed to assertion after assertion after assertion concerning the Scriptures, with little or no evidence given as to the veracity of the claims made. It is as if the author is asking his audience to trust him; because, after all, he is a famous person. This is disappointing, because he does pose an interesting supposition: “Mark is the gospel writer who first used the liturgical year of the Jews as his organizing guide when relating the story of Jesus” (57-58). The proposition is made that “Jesus was ‘preached’ in the synagogues long before people thought about organizing the details of his life in some biographical pattern” (58). If one were to excise all of the superheated rhetoric of the book, he would have an interesting research paper topic. As it is, though, he is left with a screed.

“Was Jesus actually born in Bethlehem? Of course not!” (97). “No less a person than Sigmund Freud proposed, in one of his books, that Moses may have been the illegitimate child of the pharaoh’s daughter by a Hebrew slave” (103). “(T)he Jesus of history never preached the Sermon on the Mount” (131). “So it becomes obvious that the Lord’s Prayer is the creation of the church and never was taught by Jesus” (137). “The second strand of the New Testament to be written is what we call the ‘pseudo-Pauline epistles’—that is, those epistles that claim to be written by Paul, but clearly are not” (155-156). And on and on and on. In his zeal to condemn biblical literalism, the author presents almost a caricature of the liberal position concerning Scripture. And that is the truly sad part in all of this. In the present climate—both politically and religiously—there needs to be less heat and more light. Calm, reasoned discussion must be the order of the day. This work has jettisoned both.

DAVID W. HESTER  
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**David E. ALEXANDER and Daniel M. JOHNSON.** *Calvinism and the Problem of Evil*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2016. 308 pp. \$37.00.

Despite “a popular evangelical resurgence of Calvinism” generally, in academic circles of Christian philosophers the trend is toward open theism. So report Alexander and Johnson in their introduction to this volume of collected essays on Calvinism and the Problem of Evil. The twelve contributors offer a variety of rational justifications for Calvinism as a philosophical theology capable of handling the thorniest objection to religious belief in the modern world.

The variety of perspectives may surprise some readers, and the result may be positive or negative depending upon how one takes the differences. For example, whether or not God is made the author of sin within Calvinism is a recurring topic among several contributors, but their responses to the issue are not uniform. If read in succession one may get the

impression of inconsistency among the authors. However, the editors seek to prevent this occasion by thoroughly summarizing the philosophical topics taken up in the essays. Indeed, this volume provides one of the most robust summaries this reviewer has encountered, and in this case it was a welcome aid and should not be skipped by the reader.

Variety also appears in the way the contributors respond to the problem of evil. Some of the essays in the volume provide narrow claims that are comprehensively handled, such as Paul Helm's essay on the discriminatory aspect of God's activity and James N. Anderson's essay on the First Sin. These essays begin with a narrow focus, but are able to draw the implications to the larger problem of evil. The results are tightly argued, compelling presentations of Calvinist positions that clarify a number of misconceptions. For example, Anderson distinguishes between physical determinism, causal determinism, and divine determinism, showing that while the third view represents Calvinism, the literature often represents Calvinistic determinism in terms of the first or second version of determinism. Many of the essays provide helpful distinctions that alleviate such confusion.

A few essays leave arguments truncated, whether because the contributor aims only to indicate a possible line of argument that could be taken (Pruss), or because the contributor appears not to have considered an implication. However, these omissions provide occasion for the reader to contemplate for himself, which is a good thing. An instance of the latter occurs with Green's claim in chapter ten that the size of demonstrable goods resulting from God's allowance of evil includes human observers both present and future. However, he does not consider heavenly beings as witnesses of God's demonstrative goods, nor does he consider departed saints whose souls are with Christ and who are, presumably, conscious observers of contemporary events. These observations would have strengthened Green's claim about supposedly unobserved evils (the death of a fawn in a remote forest), which seem to escape observation.

Most of the essays handle not only the commonplace arguments the problem of evil presents to Christianity, but also the Calvinist doctrines that cause Christians to fault Calvinism with regard to the problem of evil. Besides the "author of sin" and divine determinism topics mentioned already, the contributors also respond to particular election, original sin, and reprobation.

Christian philosophers and other academics who may not have considered, or may have rejected upon too hasty consideration, the Calvinist responses to the problem of evil constitute the main audience for this volume. Additionally, pastors, elders, and laypersons with an interest in the problem of evil from a philosophical standpoint will also benefit from this volume, as it mostly avoids technical terminology and the methods of analytic philosophy employed in addressing the problem of evil. Finally, opponents of Calvinism may find an interesting variety of claims heretofore unconsidered with which to interact.

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**Peter J. LEITHART.** *The End of Protestantism: Pursuing Unity in a Fragmented Church.* Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2016. 240 pp. \$21.99.

Jesus prayed that the unity among his disciples would mirror his union with the Father (John 17:21), and taught that it is by such unity in love the world will recognize Christ in

the Church (John 13:35). The trouble that Peter Leithart attempts to highlight and address in this book is not only that Christians are *not* unified, but that unity is not presently a desired goal for much of the Church. One of his central arguments is that denominational Christianity is hardwired to resist unity—and that in the twenty-first century all Christianity is denominational. The Church as it now exists, then, is not the Church as Christ desires it to be, and bridging that divide “will require nothing less than death” to old forms and old names, followed by a reunifying resurrection as something more like the body Christ declares us to be (5). What that future Church will look like, no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor heart imagined, and Leithart is certain it can come about as nothing less than the unlooked-for gift of the Spirit and that it is unlikely to come about instantaneously, but till then he believes that wanting it, working toward it, and watching expectantly for it can only hasten its coming. To that end, he offers this volume as a kind of “interim ecclesiology and interim agenda” which he hopes will provide his nearest brothers—other “theologically conservative evangelical Protestant churches—with a practical way of striving toward unity in the Spirit.

The book proceeds in four parts, which Leithart playfully connects to the four movements of a typical symphony to reinforce the idea that the envisioned end of the symphony that is Church history will end in a reprise of the original theme: one body unified in creed and sacrament. The first ‘movement’ reflects briefly on the unity of the early Church prior to the Great Schism and, later, the Reformation. It then offers a brief imagining of what a reunified Christian church could look like. Leithart shows a humble restraint here, not venturing to speculate too minutely, but he is certain that “it will not be a mere continuation of any of today’s churches”—for the envisioned unity to occur, Catholics, Orthodox, and Protestants alike will have to become in some sense less like themselves (26). Leithart is also confident that unity *will* come, as God’s promise of redemption includes the promise of a unified humanity.

In the second movement Leithart turns specifically to address the most fragmented arm of Christianity—Protestantism. Denominations, he argues, have done much good since the Reformation but are in the business (sometimes literally) of institutionalizing divisions among the body by defining themselves over and against other Christian groups and hindering the maintenance of sound doctrine or dogma by making doctrinal distinctions essential to denominational identities. So, while the end of *Protestantism* may be in view, and certainly makes for a catchier title, it is the end of *denominationalism* that is of greatest concern to Leithart.

Between the third and fourth sections, Leithart inserts an exegetical interlude emphasizing God’s habit throughout Scripture of creation by dividing and reuniting. The days of creation in Genesis are full of the trope, a divided Israel is reunited only through Babylonian exile, and so on and so on. Perhaps the Church, too, he suggests, has suffered centuries of division only as preparation for a new and greater unity (110). In the third and fourth movements, Leithart looks ahead. First, by suggesting that the expansion of Christianity in the global South is already offering glimpses of dissolving denominational divides and a new way of being the Church. Finally, he offers practical advice for pursuing unity while waiting for the unpredictable movement of the Spirit to complete the work of bringing about what he calls a “Reformed Catholicity” (170).

The strength of Leithart’s book lies in its diverse appeal; it is at once heavily researched while remaining pastoral and approachable in its style, tone, and length. This broad appeal is likely by

design, as Leithart insists pastors and average parishioners, laboring at the local and metropolitan levels, will prove most important to ecumenical movements of the future. Protestants could gripe that he has too little to say to Roman Catholics and the Orthodox, though Leithart himself explains that, while he has desires regarding the ‘end’ of Catholicism and Orthodoxy as well, he is best situated to speak to his own “tribe” about their tribalism. What appears as a possible weakness, then, may indeed prove an irenic exercise of restraint—a dying to self which the Church may have to emulate before her “good” becomes *very* good indeed.

SEAN JOHNSON

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**Michelle LEE-BARNEWALL.** *Neither Complementarian nor Egalitarian: A Kingdom Corrective to the Evangelical Gender Debate.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016. 215 pp. \$22.99.

Lee-Barnewall states her purpose in writing in the introduction to *Neither Complementarian nor Egalitarian*: “to demonstrate how the debate as it is presently structured, as a choice between the two current sides, can benefit from a different framework and additional questions” (7). She begins with an overview of the historical approach to gaining freedoms and rights for women in America, discussing feminism beginning with the post-Civil War era and moving to World War II, the ’60s, and today’s understanding of women’s rights.

Lee-Barnewall then exerts that today’s debate surrounding the distribution of authority in both the Church and marriage stems from a misunderstanding of the themes of Scripture and that the Church today focuses on individual rights and fulfillment of the individual’s potential instead of emphasizing unity among believers. As she states on page 11, “Approaching the issues . . . with the primary goal of determining what is allowable can cause us to miss another explanation of gender that could reframe the way we understand the issue, in particular as it relates to God’s greater purposes for his people.” His greater purpose is the unity of believers, achieved by the reversal of roles and the giving up of rights by both genders.

The author approaches Scripture by highlighting the importance of community to the Kingdom of God throughout the Bible and the idea of “reversals” in understanding the power of God in the Christian community. Reversals occur when “God works in unexpected ways that upend the traditional expectations” (76). Without a firm understanding of these two ideas, the Church has focused more on individual rights and the distribution of power in the body than on the unity of believers and our witness to the rest of the world.

Lee-Barnewall attempts not to take a side in the debate. She encourages the reader to examine Scripture from a different point of view and not from either egalitarian or complementarian points of view. This strengthens her writing, since it demonstrates that she is not pushing an agenda but instead hopes that the reader will rethink the Church’s traditional approach to defining the Kingdom of God and authority in the Church and in marriage.

Her inclusion of historical context helps the reader understand the current debate and puts it in the framework of social movements of the past. More than that, her explanation of the history of women’s rights and the approach of the Church to the topic clarifies that the American church has syncretized the gospel with our ideas of personal fulfillment, rights, and freedoms.



Despite her effort to remain neutral and avoid taking a side in the debate, however, Lee-Barnewall appears to lean very slightly toward complementarianism. This may color some readers' opinion of her ideas, but it is not so extreme that it discredits the book.

This book belongs in an undergraduate college classroom. It examines the issues thoroughly, using an academic tone and style to set forth biblical principles one at a time. Students wanting a balanced and thoughtful approach to gender questions need to examine this text. Pastors would also benefit from reading this book since they often find themselves on the front lines in church skirmishes surrounding gender roles. The book is not written on a popular level, so, while it would be useful for lay people, it does require more effort and closer examination than just a casual reading might provide. Its level is not too difficult for an educated and ambitious layperson, however.

LAURA MCKILLIP WOOD  
Registrar  
Nebraska Christian College

**Andreas J. KÖSTENBERGER and Richard D. PATTERSON.** *For the Love of God's Word: An Introduction to Biblical Interpretation.* Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2015. 444 pp. \$34.99.

In this abridged version of Köstenberger and Patterson's *Invitation to Biblical Interpretation*, our authors aim to offer an "essential digest of the larger book for high school, home school, and college students, and anyone who is interested in a solid course of instruction on studying and applying God's Word" (9). The authors emphasize the maturation of the believer that occurs in proper interpretation, and thus the necessity for a textbook on biblical interpretation aimed not at the scholar, but the beginner. They state that "those who want to succeed in the task of biblical interpretation need to proceed within a proper interpretive framework, that is, the hermeneutical triad, which consists of three elements interpreters must address in studying any given biblical passage: a book's *historical setting*, its *literary dimension*, and its *theological message*" (23). This will provide a proverbial road map up the mountain of interpretation often referred to by the authors at each unit change.

The first unit addresses the historical and cultural context readers encounter during study of the Bible. The authors suggest, "Biblical authors recorded the most significant historical events for understanding who God is, what he is doing in the world and what he calls humanity to do in response" (35). This is Salvation History and forms the path readers must first follow.

The second unit, which contains 292 pages (over half of the total work), focuses sharply on the Bible as a literary work. This is broken into three subunits discussing the canon (chapters 3–4), genres in the OT and the NT (chapters 5–11), and biblical languages and discourse structures (chapters 12–13).

The final unit, Theology, brings the reader to the "mountain top" (359) of interpretation. Having quickly covered the practice of biblical theology in chapter 14, the authors offer helpful tools for the application of scripture, which they argue as equally if not more important than the interpretation itself in chapter 15 (380). This, they argue, is the working out of theology.

The authors conclude with a restatement of purpose and prayer for the reader to grow in “(1) historical-cultural awareness; (2) canonical consciousness; (3) sensitivity to genre; (4) literary and linguistic competence; (5) a firm and growing grasp of biblical theology; and (6) an ability to apply and proclaim passages from every biblical genre to your own life and to the life of your congregation” (388).

This volume introduces biblical hermeneutics in a helpful and articulate manner. Readers, however, should keep two things in mind. First, this work contains very few references to secondary sources. It includes a few “Key Resources” at the end of each chapter, but does not include footnotes nor endnotes. Second, the authors clearly demonstrate (and at times explicitly say) that they operate under very orthodox, conservative views concerning the inspiration of Scripture.

Amongst the very easy to follow progression from topic to topic, the reader will encounter every-day language, helpful definitions of technical terms, supportive graphics including timelines with corresponding key figures and texts, flow charts, explicit chapter objectives and outlines, key words and assignments, and a list of extrabiblical tools for interpretation. In the back of the book, one will find a reference list, glossary, a subject index, and a most impressive 30-page Scripture index.

The authors coherently explain within each chapter what necessitates the need not only for isolated topic conversation, but also how each individual subject influences interpretation as a whole. They bring relevance to interpretation for every believer, bring light to both historical and present approaches to hermeneutics, and offer an interpretative challenge to every reader to find application of the biblical text.

JACKSON T. MOSER  
Johnson University

**Paul COPAN and Kenneth D. LITWAK.** *The Gospel in the Marketplace of Ideas: Paul’s Mars Hill Experience for Our Pluralistic World.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2014. 197 pp. \$18.00.

Copan and Litwak address a growing problem in the world which is destroying the Christian worldview and abandoning basic tenets of logic and reason. They not only challenge the pluralistic nature of the world throughout this volume but also seek to teach the reader how to combat such fallacious reasoning. The book considers the text of Paul’s Mars Hill speech in Acts 17 to show how Christians in present time can meet the unbelievers where they are to show the absolute truth of the gospel message.

The first chapter, “Welcome to Athens,” plainly describes the issue facing today’s proclaimer of the good news. The methods previously used with some success are shown to be incompatible today. The authors point to Paul’s speech as a vehicle by which one can discover how to become relevant to the “philosophers” of today. Copan and Litwak state that “we need to go to them, learn what they think and find ways to present them with the truths of the gospel in ways that will be meaningful to them.” This aptly describes their method throughout the volume.

The second chapter, “Was Paul’s Speech at Athens a Mistake?” addresses the belief of apparently some of the Christian faith that Paul was wrong or unwise to make his speech to the philosophers. The authors show that Paul’s speech was quite similar to his short speech

in Acts 14 and that he effectively used logic and reasoning as a means to present the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The third chapter, “Paul’s Athens,” describes the first-century city where Paul delivered his speech. The city’s past glory seems to be the driving force for the fame which Athens enjoyed in Paul’s day. In this chapter the two camps of philosophers (Epicureans and Stoics) are examined to show their similarities along with their points of departure. These two philosophies will be used in later chapters to display Paul’s wisdom in his speech.

Chapter four, the longest chapter, focuses upon “Our Athens,” our philosophical city, by first considering the ancient philosophies which have contributed to today’s thinking. Teachings of great thinkers and scientists are examined in turn, moving ever closer to the twenty-first century with Plato, Nietzsche, Hoyle, and others showing their relation to this current pluralistic mess.

Chapter five, “Paul’s Speeches in Acts,” shows how Paul’s Mars Hill speech follows a basic pattern of all the sermons preached in the book of Acts from Paul and others. This chapter highlights Luke’s work as the historiographer of all these important speeches. Paul’s other speeches are also examined to further show that they resemble the Acts 17 discourse quite closely.

Chapter six further considers “Paul’s Audience” with their specific philosophies. The belief in the afterlife for Stoics and Epicureans along with their polytheistic tendencies is the major focus of this chapter. Ways by which these aspects relate to Paul and his speech tie the chapter together.

“Paul’s Gospel for the Educated” is the seventh chapter of this volume. Copan and Litwak grieve the reality that the educated are often neglected in the proclamation of the good news. Reasons for this group’s importance to the topic of evangelism are introduced before providing some basic instructions and help for speaking with the educated. This chapter covers the beginnings of Paul’s speech on Mars Hill.

The eighth chapter, “The Art of Persuasion,” continues to examine the speech by looking at Paul’s ability to relate to his audience. Each of Paul’s arguments is examined to show how the “unknown god” of the inscription is better understood in the personality of YHWH and his son Jesus. Paul’s use of rhetoric is also considered in this chapter.

“Acting on the Truth” shows how Paul brought the speech to an important conclusion which offended and challenged the understanding of his listeners. The mention of Jesus and his resurrection was the most important—the necessary—part of the speech but was also the point which divided the group. The fact that some began to follow Jesus after this shows just how important it is to engage the philosophers of today.

The final chapter, “Going to Our Own Mars Hill,” provides encouragement and useful tools for the believer to approach the unbelieving of current times. Copan and Litwak focus upon looking at individuals as those created in God’s image despite their atheistic belief system. The authors demonstrate specific examples of ways to talk to others as a guide for the evangelist.

Copan and Litwak did a tremendous job of giving practical application of Paul’s speech on Mars Hill. Each chapter continually brings the reader to street level with ways to proclaim the gospel message. Table 10.1 maps out the steps that one takes from being completely secular to coming to faith in Christ and living an actively faithful life. One negative aspect is the heavy focus on proving that Paul’s speech was not a mistake. While this is a minor critique,

it did detract from the flow and force of the book. The arguments and reasoning throughout the book were enough to show amply that Paul's speech was guided by the Holy Spirit and was profitable for his listeners and for us today.

This book is an excellent tool for believers desiring to reach the lost. The thought flow, philosophical view, and heavy dependence upon Scripture make it both usable and enjoyable to read. Copan and Litwak have helped to kindle the evangelistic fire which smolders easily in this pluralistic world. I recommend the book and will continue to look at certain chapters and sections as I seek to approach my local Mars Hill.

BRANDON HAMILTON  
Faulkner University

**Charles E. FARHADIAN.** *Introducing World Religions: A Christian Engagement.*  
Grand Rapids: Baker, 2015. 600 pp. \$49.99.

Farhadian chairs the department of Religious Studies at Westmont College in Santa Barbara, California, and he has produced a textbook that is well worth considering for introductory undergraduate classes on world religions. Farhadian is Professor of World Religions and Christian Mission, and his work reflects both parts of his title: it provides a significant examination of the great range of religions in the world, and it does so from a Christian perspective.

The book is attractively produced in full color, with numerous illustrations and sidebars. The work's first chapter, "The Persistence of Religion," is an investigation of the study of religion; it summarizes Farhadian's methodological reflection and sets the tone for the rest of the work. Subsequent chapters examine Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Taoism and Confucianism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and "New Religious Movements" (such as Christian Science and the Moonies, plus a concluding comment on religious pluralism). Each chapter concludes with a timeline of significant events for the religion(s) that chapter considers, a list of key terms, and suggestions for further reading. The end matter includes the endnotes, a glossary, a bibliography, and a subject index.

Anyone looking for a textbook on world religions will likely consider Huston Smith's classic, *The World's Religions*, now in a 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary edition from HarperOne. It is worth, therefore, noting the similarities and differences of Smith's and Farhadian's works. The similarities are clear: 1) both works survey wide ranges of the religious reality of the human species across the world; 2) both are engagingly written and tend to start their chapters with a "real-life" current example that draws the reader into consideration of each religion; 3) both present the various religions sympathetically (but according to substantially different worldviews—see below).

The differences, though, are even more pronounced, and they bring out several of the strengths of Farhadian's work: 1) Huston attempts to take a neutral stance on the validity of the various world religions, but this effectively means that his standpoint is agnostic or pluralist; Farhadian is clearly Christian—in a way that leads him to examine the religions with charity and not to discount them—and this stance is more intellectually transparent than Smith's. 2) Huston discounts the institutional forms of religion to get at their "inner core"; this makes his work part of the history of ideas and disconnects it both from the history of each religion and from many of the things that each religion's practitioners consider impor-

tant. Farhadian is a social scientist for whom history and institutions are just as valid as the psychological and intellectual aspects of religion. 3) Aside from these issues of perspective and methodology, Farhadian's work is much more current; Smith's work contains little new content beyond the 1980s.

That Farhadian writes as a social scientist and from a Christian perspective deserves further explanation. The history of the social sciences with respect to religion is not kind. The reductionisms of Freud, Marx, and Durkheim spring easily to mind, and Farhadian acknowledges this legacy. However, the groundbreaking work of Mircea Eliade provides an understanding of religion within the social sciences that strives to take religion on its own terms and not as a function of something else; Farhadian's work draws especially on this tradition. Farhadian's Christian perspective comes through most clearly in the numerous sidebars labeled "Christian Reflection." In these one finds both clarification of the differences of the various world religions with the core teachings of Christianity and challenges to a Christian audience to consider the non-Christian religions as serious attempts to make sense of life. There is no attempt to syncretize Christianity with any of the considered religions or to deny the often-great differences in worldview. But, there is also a call to understand the practitioners of the world religions as fellow travelers on a search for the truth. Farhadian's perspective on Christianity is also refreshingly global, with full credit given to the move of Christianity's demographic center toward the global south.

One can wish that the textbook had provided a few more pedagogical features. Especially lacking are chapter summaries and discussion questions that would help order the study of each section. However, these deficiencies do not critically detract from the high quality of this work.

STEVEN D. CONE

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**Jeffrey W. BARBEAU and Beth Felker JONES.** *Spirit of God: Christian Renewal in the Community of Faith.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2015. 266 pp. \$25.20.

In the last century, there has been an increased interest in, as well as awareness of, the role of the Holy Spirit in the Christian life. From the growth of charismatic movements to the influx of recent academic books and articles treating the topic, there appears to be renewal in the Spirit across denominational lines and cultures. In fact, Barbeau and Jones argue that "Christianity around the world continues to experience a renewal of life unlike any age since the founding era of apostolic witness" (11). In order to provide further reflection amidst this pneumatological renewal, the twenty-third annual meeting of the Wheaton College Theology Conference devoted its attention to this very theme, taking seriously its biblical, historical, doctrinal, and practical dimensions. The collection of essays arising from the conference, entitled *Spirit of God: Christian Renewal in the Community of Faith*, seeks to be ecumenical in scope, and it includes scholars from a number of disciplines, including biblical studies, history, and systematic theology in order to see the fullness and diversity in Christian testimony about the Spirit throughout the centuries.

The essays are divided into two sections. The first section includes snapshots of various perspectives and issues pertaining to the Holy Spirit throughout the history of Christianity.

Regarding the longstanding disagreements between East and West, both Gregory Lee and Matthew Levering argue that both sides share more commonality than is sometimes recognized when classical writers are not closely studied. Lee focuses his attention on Basil the Great and Augustine, while Levering provides a close reading of Aquinas's arguments for the *filioque* against common objections. From mainline Protestant perspectives, Jeffrey Barbeau explores the role of pneumatological questions in eighteenth-century Methodism, and Oliver Crisp offers preliminary insights into the person and work of the Holy Spirit from Reformed thinkers. The book would not be complete without engaging Pentecostalism, so Allen Anderson and Estrela Alexander provide different accounts of the growth of Pentecostalism and the place of the Holy Spirit within it.

The second section seeks to build on the first in ways that are at once constructive and practical. For example, engaging reformed and Pentecostal scholars, Kevin Vanhoozer considers the role of the Holy Spirit in biblical interpretation, emphasizing the role of the community and the illumination of the Spirit that conforms believers into the divine image. Amos Yong, a Pentecostal theologian, offers methodological insights into the theology of creation from a pneumatological-eschatological perspective in which the Spirit redeems the various tongues (academic disciplines) of creation, resulting in a methodological pluralism that is both integrative and performative. Additionally, Douglas Peterson argues for the inseparability of Pentecostal pneumatology and social justice practices as demonstrated by various stories of this connection at work. Treating the issue of ecumenism explicitly, Geoffrey Wainwright presents the liturgical grammar of the Spirit across traditions, while Timothy George reflects on recent ecumenical endeavors as reflections of the Spirit of unity.

This collection of essays is ideally suited to ministers who seek a deeper understanding of the person and work of the Holy Spirit. Its greatest strength is that it provides a diverse set of perspectives that acquaint those new to the field with some of the important issues in contemporary pneumatology. It would also be ideal for undergraduate courses that seek to introduce students to some of the perspectives and figures important for the area. However, its greatest strength inevitably brings with it a weakness as well, namely an inability to fully engage recent scholarship on the issues addressed. Scholars will reject overly simplistic assessments of certain trends in the history and development of pneumatology such as the exaggerated problem of the difference between eastern and western approaches to the Holy Spirit, a problem already addressed by many contemporary theologians. Additionally, many of the ideas proposed in the essays can be found in a more academically rigorous form in other essays and monographs written by the very contributors themselves. However, such weaknesses do not take away from the volume's invaluable contribution to students and ministers, for whom the book provides a refreshing way to speak, think, and live pneumatologically.

JOHN R. KERN  
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Boston College

**Doug KOSKELA.** *Calling and Clarity: Discovering What God Wants for Your Life.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015. 120 pp. \$15.00.

In this volume, Koskela describes different types of callings from God and gives readers concrete ways to understand and discern each of those calls in their lives. He breaks the idea

of calling into three main types: missional calling, direct calling, and general calling and describes the differences between each one. He also provides clear ways that a person can examine himself in order to understand each type of call. His description of missional calling as “an ongoing pattern of using your gifts toward a particular purpose of significance in God’s kingdom” (4) and assertion that missional calling involves something a person feels passionate about and joyful doing frees the reader to enjoy the exploration of his talents for use in the Body of Christ.

Koskela also writes about vocational discernment and the theology behind God’s call. He stresses repeatedly the need for community involvement and self-examination in the discernment of God’s call and the necessity of staying in communion with God through spiritual disciplines. He describes ways that people can serve God and follow his lead in any type of profession, not just full-time vocational ministry, but includes instruction for those who think they may be called to full-time ministry as well.

Koskela has obviously spent quite a bit of time working with young people who struggle to know how to follow God in their futures. The strengths of the book lie in the way the author offers practical, easy-to-understand advice on understanding how God works in people and gives real-life examples of the principles he teaches. His inclusion of the need for self-examination and community involvement in discerning God’s will is important and somewhat unique since many things written about this topic focus more on hearing God and less on listening to the ways that God uses people and events around us to lead us. Koskela’s urging that the reader develop a close relationship with God for reasons other than just hearing his call shows his concern for the whole person over a lifetime.

Koskela writes in a style that makes the information accessible to the target demographic and addresses many of the objections and common questions that arise when discussing God’s calling. Not only does he provide information about the subject, but he includes helpful discussion questions at the end of each chapter.

Although the book is interesting and easy to understand, it becomes somewhat repetitive at times. It also assumes some theological beliefs that are not central to the idea of the calling of God and can take the book slightly off topic in a few places.

This volume would be useful for a person working with young people, either teenagers or young adults, since these age groups often search for God’s will for their lives, long to discover a calling from God, or just want to know their place in the world and how they can contribute. However, it could be helpful to anyone experiencing a transition or questioning a career move later in life as well. The discussion questions found at the end of each chapter make it useful for a small group Bible study, Sunday school class, one-on-one mentoring relationship, or just a single reader. The questions provide a way to review the material from the chapter, summarize it, and rethink it. Koskela’s book succinctly and plainly sets forth guidelines for those searching to know God’s will and follow his lead.

LAURA MCKILLIP WOOD  
Registrar  
Nebraska Christian College

**E. Ray CLENDENEN and Jeremy Royal HOWARD, eds.** *Holman Illustrated Bible Commentary*. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2015. 1410 pp. \$44.99.

This commentary contains a wealth of informed evangelical biblical scholarship within one volume. Besides the editors, 45 contributors comment on the whole text of the Protestant canon. Readers of *SCJ* will recognize several: Murray Harris, Walter Kaiser, Andreas Köstenberger, Tremper Longman, Stanley Porter, and others. The work uses the Holman Christian Standard Bible as its text, and the commentary represents an expansion of the *HCSB Study Bible* (Preface, ix).

The work operates within the boundaries of present-day conservative Protestant theology. At one end of the canon, it takes no position on the days of creation (literal or figurative), and at the other end it describes different millennial views without taking sides. The work mentions some critical debates but always comes down to a traditional or conservative conclusion: Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch (with later edits), a 15<sup>th</sup>-century BC Exodus, unitary authorship of Isaiah, traditional authorship of all four Gospels, Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles, and so on. The writers speak as evangelicals to evangelicals, making every effort to avoid intramural debates while making no apology for their conservative conclusions to those outside the movement.

Various features make the commentary readily usable. Unlike some similar works, this volume puts all its maps, charts, and photos on the pages to which they apply, instead of grouping general articles at the beginning and maps at the end, requiring the reader to flip pages. Each biblical book has its own introduction, usually a page or two, and a bibliography with anywhere between three and 30 entries. The bibliographies contain mostly evangelical works, but not exclusively. The physical book lends itself to easy use, with its hard covers, sewn binding, and color maps and photos.

Professional scholars and seminary students will need something more technical, but for lay Bible students, this volume represents its genre well.

CARL B. BRIDGES  
Professor of New Testament  
Johnson University

**John GOLDINGAY.** *Do We Need the New Testament? Letting the Old Testament Speak for Itself*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2015. 178 pp. \$22.00.

In this volume, Goldingay examines the need for the NT and defends the value of the OT (which he prefers to call the “First Testament”). By flipping on its head the oft-held assumption by Christians that the OT is dispensable because the gospel of the NT now exists, Goldingay underscores the many ways in which the OT is essential to understanding the questions that arise when we read the NT.

This is not a new question. Scholars of the Hebrew Scriptures have long opined the relegation of these texts to a second-tier status, read and interpreted only through a ‘Jesus’ lens and not as texts that have a value and a voice in their own right. The question (and the title of this volume), then, is provocative in that it holds within it the critique of Christians who would do this very thing.



This volume examines such issues as the need for the NT, the importance of Jesus, the function of narratives in the “Grand Narrative,” the role of the Holy Spirit, the “mis-reading” of the book of Hebrews, spirituality, the relationship of memory and faith, and ethics—all through the primary lens of the OT. In the closing chapter, he urges readers to adopt a theological reading of scripture wide enough to include the diversity and mutually interpretive elements of both testaments.

This volume limits the use of other scholarly sources (there are few footnotes), and Goldingay’s writing is often conversational, rather than strictly academic. His tone is frank and his insights are presented with little elaboration. Biblical scholars will likely find his claims too simplistic and his discussions of complicated issues too concise, but this is best explained by his aim to (a) invite readers who are not professionals in the field to the table, (b) reframe the problem in a way that provides an invitation to dialogue, and (c) introduce issues that he plans to address more thoroughly in a later book on biblical theology. This book, then, provides an entrée into an important topic for all Christians to consider. It would be useful as a small-group study or even in a first-year undergraduate course on the scriptures and hermeneutics.

HOLLY J. CAREY  
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Point University

**John H. WALTON.** *The Lost World of Adam and Eve: Genesis 2–3 and the Human Origins Debate.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2015. 250 pp. \$18.00.

The question of where humans came from has perplexed us for centuries. The Bible indicates that humanity began through the creation of a man and a woman and that this couple was placed in a garden, only to be dismissed by their divine landlord due to a contract violation. The couple then wandered out into the wilderness to start their lives, where they would spawn children and cause the advent of the human race. However, as anyone who has read the opening story of the Bible knows, there is so much more going on than a simple contract dispute. Thankfully John Walton brings his critical eye and articulate voice to the ever-tense conversation of where humans came from.

Walton is one of the more respected OT scholars, writing it from a Christian perspective. This is the second volume in that trilogy, with *The Lost World of Genesis One: Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate* being the first volume. In that volume, Walton presented twenty apologetic propositions that bring the differing views on cosmology and human origin into conversation with one another. In a way, much more respectful and articulate than any “Ham on Nye” debate, Walton solidly develops arguments for a biblical view of creation that moves well beyond a literal six-day theory.

Walton expands on his previous volume by focusing specifically on human origins. He builds from what was presented in the previous volume, yet he also brings Genesis 1 into the conversation because understanding what the author of Genesis 1 is doing with his poetic narration is critical to understanding why we have a “second creation story” in Genesis 2 and the implications that brings for understanding Genesis 3. Arranged in a series of twenty-one apologetic propositions, Walton seeks to set forth an argument that God did absolutely create the man and woman we are introduced to in Genesis 2, that the story presented is more

than a simple retelling, and that the man and woman willingly chose to disobey God. I use the word “apologetic” more in the sense that Walton is seeking to build a holistic view of what is happening in the text, a view that falls gently in the moderate theological view. Walton is not attempting to dismantle the more traditional/conservative view of a literal chronicle that is meant to steer us from sin, or the more liberal view that this is simply a fable meant to give credibility to an illegitimate social system.

If Walton does any dismantling, it is in regard to the doctrine of original sin, which Walton does not support. His understanding of chaos and how chaos interacts with order to facilitate a tenuous but operational biological system for human development (and his integration of his “cosmos as sacred space” argument from his previous volume) is certainly a strength of this volume. Walton clearly argues that sin occurred because the man and woman chose to sin, thus inflicting death (i.e., “chaos”) on a perfect system. A major weakness of the volume is when Walton dabbles his academic foot in the NT side of this argument. Fortunately, he relies on a reworked but articulate exposition from N. T. Wright to provide the grounding that the volume needs to bring in this element of the conversation about human origins and our shared spiritual condition. In doing so, this becomes a powerful voice against the unfortunate doctrine of original sin that is based more in philosophy than in exposition or theology.

ROB O’LYNN

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**Peter H. W. LAU and Gregory GOSWELL.** *Unceasing Kindness: A Biblical Theology of Ruth.* *New Studies in Biblical Theology: 41.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2016. 212 pp. \$9.99.

This volume is a high-quality addition to *New Studies in Biblical Theology*, an evangelical series edited by D. A. Carson. The book proceeds as thematic biblical theology rather than verse-by-verse exegetical commentary. Some themes, such as *hesed* and redemption, are to be expected. Others, such as famine and hunger, are a welcome surprise. The most distinctive feature of the book is the extent to which the authors deliberate connections between *Ruth* and other OT documents.

After a brief introductory chapter, the authors expound *Ruth*’s relationship with *Ezra-Nehemiah*, a starting point not surprising to scholars of either of these books. Though Lau and Goswell conclude *Ruth* was composed prior to the early restoration period of *Ezra-Nehemiah*, they also believe it was available and influential during this period. Points of contact between the two books go beyond the overt tension reflected in views of marriage to non-Israelites to other themes, such as God’s sovereign providence and the role of Torah in community life. Even when expounding points of tension, such as the centrality of the temple and of the Davidic monarchy, Lau and Goswell work to emphasize the compatibility of these two books.

Chapter 3 assesses *Ruth*’s connection to the Davidic monarchy, taking as its starting point that two of the book’s three canon positions (before 1 Samuel and before Psalms) imply a strong link to David. Recognizing that canonical position is secondary to content, the authors nevertheless argue convincingly that connections to the coming narratives of



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David are found throughout the book, and the closing genealogy is therefore a suitable dénouement rather than an interpolated postscript. The authors have “provided a theological reading of the book that interprets it within the wider story of God’s purposes for Israel, with divine providence and kindness upholding the dynasty of David for the benefit of Israel as a whole” (34).

Chapter 4, “Ruth as a Wise Woman,” considers Ruth’s other canon position after Proverbs. The clearest connection this position makes is between the closing ode of Proverbs 31 and Ruth herself. Equally as important is the designation *eschet hayil*, assigned both to the woman of Proverbs 31 (v. 10) and to Ruth (3:11). Positioning Ruth after Proverbs also opens the interpretive mind to other connections with themes found in Proverbs (such as finding a wife and caring for the poor).

Chapter 5 returns to possible ramifications of positioning Ruth before Psalms. The authors hint that this is their preferred place for Ruth, in large part because of the emphasis on *hesed* in Psalms (127 occurrences)—an emphatic connection which provides the book’s title, *Unceasing Kindness*. Other themes highlighted by the juxtaposition of these books include God as refuge and protector, and movement from lament to praise.

Chapter 6 argues that, regardless of canon position, Ruth’s opening mention of famine occurs after a number of famines in the biblical narrative, many of which have theological import. Famines may, for example, bring God’s judgment, demonstrate God’s superiority over the gods, or prompt people to return to trusting in God. Furthermore, famine is mentioned as one Deuteronomic punishment for sin (Deut 28:48). Thus, “Elimelech and his family should have remained in the Promised Land and repented or called for their fellow Israelites to repent. Continued trust in God to provide, coupled with supplication to God to end the famine, would have been another appropriate response” (79).

Chapter 7 discusses God’s behind-the-scenes work. The authors compare God’s “hiddenness” in Ruth with similar theological experiences throughout both testaments, especially in Judges and Esther. The concealment of God or God’s activity can serve to highlight human agency. Whether such agency is largely positive (Ruth, Esther) or negative (Judges), God’s purposes eventually prevail. The one NT example of God’s hiddenness given is Jesus’ cry from the cross, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” The authors reject the view (which I and various readers of *SCJ* hold) that, by calling out Ps 22:1, Jesus refers to the full message of Psalm 22, including its victorious and forward-looking ending.

Chapter 8 surveys Ruth for insight into redemption and its various components and ramifications. It concludes by affirming Boaz as a type of Christ. Accompanying this affirmation are the recognition that no NT text applies typology to Boaz and the caveat that understanding Boaz as a type refers specifically to his act of redemption, not to all his actions in the story.

This claim that Boaz is a type of Christ prompts the question of the authors’ view of the OT as a source of Christian theology. Thus, we return briefly to chapter 3, which begins with an explanation of the authors’ views of the OT as a source of Christian theology—an explanation which would have been welcome in the introduction or opening chapter. The authors’ view is summed up as follows, and is one with which *SCJ* readers may or may not agree: “Biblical theology cannot be limited to just one theme, even one as important as messianic expectation, though, of course, this theme will take pride of place in any Christian evaluation and use of the Old Testament” (19-20).

Chapter 9 describes Ruth as a witness to and instrument of God's mission in the world. Ruth promotes missional *hesed* over strict obedience to Torah as the "unceasing kindness" of God which God's people must emulate.

This book would be an excellent seminary text, perhaps alongside an exegetical commentary. It would also serve as an especially helpful sermon resource. It should be noted that the book never summarizes the content of Ruth; the authors assume that their readers already know Ruth quite well.

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**Alan ROSS. *A Commentary on the Psalms: Volume 3 (90–150)*. Kregel Exegetical Library. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2016. 1018 pp. \$49.99.**

This volume brings to completion Alan Ross's magnum opus on the Psalter, a treasure of nearly 3000 pages of exposition. As with the first two volumes of this set, Ross has written with "pastors, teachers and serious students of the Bible in mind" (11). Because of this limited audience, he rarely dives into scholarly debates regarding composition, form, or redaction criticism. Most noticeably lacking in the current climate of Psalms study is the slight attention he gives to canonical criticism.

This volume does not have an introduction, but is comprised of generous attention to each psalm utilizing a consistent expositional approach. He provides a translation of each psalm with numerous footnotes dealing with textual criticism. He wrestles with these complex issues in a way comprehensible to a nonspecialist. In the "Composition and Context" section, Ross wrestles with a wide variety of proposals for setting and authorship. Regarding setting, he posits plausible settings based on the language of the psalm itself avoiding undue speculation. To give a couple of examples, he describes the setting of Psalm 103 in this way, "it was an individual hymn sung for the community" (228-229). In Psalm 115, after outlining several proposals, he concludes, "all we can say for certain is that it is a liturgical prayer sung antiphonally with an emphasis on assurance" (412). In this section, he also provides a robust argument for traditional authorship while acknowledging the strength of other views. In the "Exegetical Analysis" section of each psalm, Ross provides a short summary of the psalm in one or two sentences followed by a detailed outline. This helpfully focuses the exposition on the main thrust of the psalm as a whole. The commentary proper is given in expository form with the titles written in a way that make it easy for pastors or teachers to translate directly to a ministry context. The final section, "Message and Application" includes a one sentence big idea for each psalm. He also reflects on how the psalm connects theologically with the NT and on ways in which Christians could appropriate the message of the psalm today.

Probably the most significant contribution of this commentary is its clear expositional summary and outline of each psalm. Ross also includes a remarkable 136-page commentary on Psalm 119 patiently unpacking and commenting on each line. He pauses after each letter of the acrostic to reflect on its message and application. This is all the more remarkable since most modern commentaries treat this Psalm rather briefly (cf. the recent NICOT volume). He laments that this psalm "has not received the kind of attention that it deserves"

and goes some way toward remedying that neglect (459). The volume itself is a sturdy hard-cover with a readable font and thick pages which will stand up to years of use.

While the commentary serves its purpose well, it would have been interesting to see how Ross would interact with recent approaches to the Psalter that have opened up new insights into the book (e.g., canonical criticism, iconography, intertextuality, rhetorical criticism).

When viewed as a whole set, this three volume Psalms commentary is a remarkable achievement that will serve pastors, teachers, and scholars for years to come. The clarity of exposition and the patient attentiveness to the language of the text itself are virtues that are all too rare. Ross has managed to sustain this attention across 3000 pages of commentary, and coming to the end of it he acknowledges “no work on the Psalter can be said to be complete” (11). I am sure that Ross’s commentary itself will serve as the impetus for many to take up their own study of this inexhaustible book.

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**Katy E. VALENTINE.** *“For You Were Bought with a Price”: Sex, Slavery, and Self-Control in a Pauline Community.* GHDS: 4. Wilmore, KY: GlossaHouse, 2017. 451 pp. \$17.99.

In this revision of her 2014 dissertation at the Graduate Theological Union, the author tackles 1 Cor 7:21-24, where the Apostle Paul encourages slaves to “make use of it rather” (μᾶλλον χρῆσαι, *mallon chrēsai*). Some interpreters have taken the passage to mean that slaves should make use of their slavery, while others believe Paul wants slaves to make use of any opportunity to gain freedom. Building on recent advances in social-rhetorical criticism, Valentine argues that Paul urged slaves to “live into their Christian calling” (xv) as slaves if necessary and freed people if possible. She advances the discussion by arguing that Paul had a specific reason in mind: because slaves lived subject to the sexual whims of their masters, only as freed people would they have any chance to practice ἐγκράτεια (*enkrateia*, “self-control”) through either celibacy or marriage, and thus live out the full Christian ethic: The thesis of this work is that Paul encouraged freedom for slaves in 1 Cor 7:21-24 so that they could use it to exercise self-control and avoid πορνεία [*porneia*, ‘sexual sin’]” (1).

Following a chapter on methodology and a literature review, Valentine uses the “Romanization model of Bilingualism” (87) to describe Corinth as a city of freedmen who learned to negotiate two separate identities: the Greek identity of many of them and the free Roman identity to which they aspired. A free Roman man displayed ἐγκράτεια (*enkrateia*, “self-control”) as a major part of his identity, a virtue the culture did not expect of women or slaves.

Following the work of Orlando Patterson, Moses Finley, and others, Valentine debunks earlier portrayals of Roman slavery as a relatively benign institution. A slave *could not* exercise self-control as could a freeborn or freed person, since the slave’s body belonged to the master, to be punished as needed and used sexually as desired. In this context, she explores the question raised by Jennifer Glancy in 1998, whether slaves could fully participate in Pauline churches while forced by their masters to commit πορνεία (*porneia*, “sexual sin”) on a regular basis. Valentine argues that the Apostle “gives a pass” (my expression, not

Valentine's) to Christian slaves victimized in this way. However, because of the slaves' ambiguous moral position, Paul encourages slaves who have a chance for manumission to live out their Christian calling as freed people, exercising the self-control denied them as slaves.

Valentine dialogues with most of the major interpreters of the passage, ancient and modern, and she builds her case with sensitivity to the ancient world and its mores. She concludes that although Paul did not "[treat] men and women equally in all matters," he "shows his willingness to resist some common cultural norms" (286). Although "Paul did not censure the institution of slavery, my interpretation shows how Paul did in fact navigate the ancient world within his own context" (362).

Perhaps the weakest point in an otherwise solid book lies in Valentine's effort to connect the material culture of Corinth to her topic; in my opinion, the inscriptional evidence adds little to the discussion. However, by citing the inscriptional evidence such as it is, she has made sure to leave no stone unturned.

Valentine writes clear, readable prose. She builds in enough redundancy (in the good sense) that the reader always knows where she is going. This book should stand as a major contribution to the exegesis of a famously difficult passage.

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**Verlyn D. VERBRUGGE and Keith R. KRELL.** *Paul and Money: A Biblical and Theological Analysis of the Apostle's Teachings and Practices.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015. 312 pp. \$27.99.

Seeking to "probe everything that he [Paul] says and does in the NT concerning the issue of money" (23), Verbrugge and Krell offer in this volume an exposition of all Pauline texts which relate, in one way or another, to economic matters. This goal takes the authors beyond simply examining what Paul has to say about monetary exchange to a host of related topics including: patronage, hospitality, manual labor, taxation, theft, and debt. The result is a useful volume which provides not only insightful exegetical analysis of the pertinent NT texts but also critical engagement with significant recent scholarship. Verbrugge and Krell have provided an excellent starting point for anyone interested in Paul's economic thought and practice.

The authors divide the book into three parts. Part one deals with Paul's own financial situation. In three chapters, Verbrugge and Krell examine the question of why Paul, even though he defends the right of traveling evangelists to accept financial support, generally refused such support for himself, while also departing from this principled stance in certain noteworthy situations. The authors conclude that Paul refused financial support in the early days of his evangelistic mission in a city but accepted the churches' participation and support for his ongoing mission once these churches were well established. Part Two includes five chapters which deal with Paul's collection for the poor in Jerusalem. In the first chapter of this section, the authors examine Paul's general concern for the poor and focus specifically on Gal 2:10, concluding that this key verse represents not a mandate which marked the beginning of the collection project for Jerusalem but rather Paul's ongoing commitment to

carrying for the poor which had previously marked his life as a faithful Pharisee and continued to do so after his affiliation with the Jesus movement. The authors then deal with the genesis of the collection and consider various theories regarding Paul's purpose in organizing the project. While admitting that Paul was probably motivated by several factors, Verbrugge and Krell conclude that chief among these was Paul's desire to heal the growing rift between Gentile and Jewish Christians. Chapter six, which relies heavily upon Verbrugge's earlier work on the collection, examines Paul's strategies in promoting the project and the particular challenges he faced in Corinth. The next chapter provides a close reading of 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, focusing on Paul's rhetorical strategies for motivating the Corinthians to follow through on their earlier commitment to the project. Chapter eight concludes this section and deals with the aftermath of the collection and its delivery in Jerusalem, relying on hints and allusions in Acts for reconstructing this part of the collection's history. Part Three addresses the remaining Pauline texts pertaining to economic topics and devotes chapters to the "freeloaders" in Thessalonica, the division between rich and poor in Corinth, Paul's instructions to the affluent about the proper use of wealth in the Pastoral Epistles, and a chapter on paying taxes, debt, and Paul's silence on tithing. A concluding chapter sums up the authors' findings and offers some principles for modern application.

Readers may find some of the authors' conclusions and methods problematic. For example, Verbrugge and Krell propose a psychological explanation for Paul's theology of suffering, suggesting that guilt for his past persecution of Christians caused him to embrace the practice of self-support through manual labor as a means of increasing his own suffering. Psychological explanations for the behaviors of ancient figures are notoriously difficult, however, for a variety of reasons, not least of which are the insufficiency of the available evidence and the anachronistically modernizing tendencies of psychological interpretations. Methodologically, the authors also run into problems by relying on the Book of Acts in their attempt to piece together Paul's delivery of the collection to Jerusalem. It is one thing to accept the essential historicity of Acts and acknowledge possible allusions to the collection that can be detected there, but since the collection plays no role in Luke's narrative design, it seems illegitimate, as the authors have done, to read the collection into various episodes in the story of Paul's final journey to Jerusalem as narrated in Acts. For example, the authors argue that Paul likely used part of the collection to pay for the purification ritual of those under the Nazirite vow in Acts 21 and that his resolute determination to reach Jerusalem in this section of Acts can be explained by his eagerness to deliver the collection. Finally, while persuasive arguments can be made for the authenticity of the Pastoral Epistles, more explanation is necessary in chapter eleven to show how these letters fit into the chronology of Paul's ministry in view of the very different picture of church life that is reflected in these documents.

Overall, the authors have provided a useful resource for anyone interested in Paul's economic thought and practice. While the authors offer no unifying thesis, the strength of the book is its comprehensive treatment of economic matters in the Pauline letters. The book is accessible to a wide audience and could benefit college and seminary students, pastors, teachers, as well as the interested general reader.

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Elmer L. TOWNS and Ben GUTIERREZ, eds. *The Essence of the New Testament: A Survey*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2016. 382 pp. \$39.99.

Elmer Towns, co-founder of Liberty University and dean of Liberty's School of Religion, and Ben Gutierrez, vice provost and professor of divinity at the same institution, revised their 2012 *The Essence of the New Testament: A Survey* into a second edition in 2016. Beyond Towns and Gutierrez, contributors to the volume include James Borland, Wayne Brindle, Edward Hindson, Gaylen Leverett, Donald Love III, R. N. Small, and Michael Smith, all professors in some capacity at Liberty.

The bulk of book is a chapter-by-chapter treatment of each NT book in canonical order; these chapters are nearly identical to those in the first edition. Changes in the new edition include the addition of two pages on early canon formation in chapter 1 ("How We Got the New Testament"). The previous edition described three criteria for canonicity (apostolicity, rule of faith, and consensus), while the revised edition describes six (apostolicity, antiquity, orthodoxy, catholicity, traditional use, and inspiration). The revised chapter three ("The History between the Testaments") has an additional two pages on the religious components of the Temple Second Period that impact NT interpretation and a slim (1 page) overview of the three quests for the Historical Jesus. The most significant revision is the addition of an epilogue entitled "The Promise Fulfilled." Overall, the revision only added about eleven pages.

The chapters on each NT book are organized well. They begin with a colored textbox that gives a synopsis of key facts (author, recipient, provenance, date, key word, and key verse). These key facts would be helpful for students both when reading the chapter for the first time and in later review. They then proceed with more detail on those facts, as well as information on genre and structure. The heart of each of these chapters is the "Message" section, which provides high-flying commentary on the book (e.g., the "Message" section in the chapter on Acts is about 16 pages). This section provides information that some New Testament introductions lack because of their focus on historical background. The chapters conclude with study questions (drawn from the "Message" section, not the background issues), suggestions for further reading, and end-of-chapter notes.

In form, this survey has much potential for the undergraduate classroom—full-color maps and pictures, an easy-to-follow structure of each chapter, organized charts, and over 25 pages of indices. Most of these are carried over from the first edition. At about 350 pages, undergraduates could easily manage this book over the course of a semester.

In historical and theological content, this survey is extremely conservative. For example, it posits that Matthew and Luke were both written between 60 and 65, prior to Mark. Additionally, while acknowledging arguments for pseudepigraphy where relevant, the authors conclude that all NT documents were written by the author whose name is on the work. Their rhetoric often jabs at scholarly consensus and standard paradigms (e.g., the subtitle, "Is There a Problem with the Synoptic Gospels?"). In the section on interpretation, they advocate for the grammatical-historical approach and never mention other types of interpretation. Many will find some of the authors' stated theological presuppositions problematic, such as "every text has only one correct interpretation" (17), "Scripture will never contradict Scripture" (17), and their acceptance of the "*a priori* argument" which "states that God would guard the gathering of the books into the canon because he had originally written each book" (6). There is also a propensity for qualifying the NT authors or documents as "inspired" and a lack of gender-inclusive language.

Ultimately, while elements of this survey are commendable, the authors' ways of talking about majority views in biblical studies prove unhelpful at best and problematic at worst (e.g., categorizing the two types of scholars as either "conservative" or "critical," the latter of whom are referred to as "the critics" throughout the work). Certainly no consensus in biblical scholarship should be accepted uncritically; however, this textbook models not critical engagement with opposing views but rather overly simplistic dismissal of views lying outside of ultraconservative evangelical orthodoxy.

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**David J. DOWNS.** *The Offering of the Gentiles: Paul's Collection for Jerusalem in Its Chronological, Cultural, and Cultic Contexts.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016. 204 pp. \$35.00.

The aim of Downs's book is to investigate Paul's collection for the Jerusalem church in its chronological, cultural, and cultic contexts in order to understand its significance for Paul's mission and theology (161). For, as Downs claims from the outset, Paul's theology "cannot be dissociated from the seemingly mundane world of coins and credit" (1).

In the first, and introductory chapter, Downs lays out four common interpretations of Paul's collection for Jerusalem: 1) an eschatological pilgrimage of Gentiles to Zion, 2) a recurrent obligation placed on Paul's Gentile mission, equivalent to Jewish temple tax 3) a project in building ecumenical unity, 4) alleviation of material needs. After a careful analysis of the relevant texts, Downs finds no evidence for the first two interpretations, while affirming the fusion of the latter two as aspects of Paul's collection.

Two features, laid out at length in ch. 2, set Downs's project apart from the majority of comparable studies undertaken in previous years. First, Downs maintains a methodological consistency by treating the authentic Paulines and the book of Acts each in its own right, as primary and secondary sources respectively. Adopting the rule of John Knox, Downs allows the book of Acts to corroborate the autobiographical data from Paul's letters, but never to correct them (28). Second, and ensuing from the first, Downs holds that Paul's collection for Jerusalem is *not* an outcome of the earlier commission from Jerusalem authorities to "remember the poor" (Gal 2:10) but stems from Paul's own initiative, which is why Paul remains in doubt whether his contribution will be accepted by its intended recipients (Rom 15:31). Paul's collection of funds for Jerusalem (1 Cor 16:1-4; 2 Cor 8:1-9:15; Rom 15:14-32) may find a precedent in Paul's earlier delivery of assistance to Jerusalem from Antioch (Acts 11:27-30), but chronologically these are two separate projects (39, 72).

Paul's collection, however, cannot be understood solely in terms of its Antiochene precedent. As Downs argues in ch. 3, Paul's collection for Jerusalem has a number of features analogous to the hallmarks of the Greco-Roman voluntary associations: sharing of financial resources to fund collective activities; care for the poor within local communities; established financial links with other groups having a similar affiliation in foreign regions (119). It is precisely against this wider socio-cultural background that one is able to see how the rhetoric of Paul's collection transforms the dominant ideology of benefaction and patronage into an

endeavor that brings glory and thanksgiving not to the contributors themselves, but to God (143, 163).

This latter observation is substantiated by Downs's exegetical argument in ch. 4 that Paul's collection for Jerusalem is, at its core, a religious offering. Informed by recent developments in metaphor theory, Downs argues that two conceptual metaphors govern Paul's rhetoric of the collection: "collection is worship" and "collection is harvest" (126). Taking up 1 Cor 16:1-4, 2 Cor 8:1-9:15, and Rom 15:14-32 in turn, Downs explores the cultic vocabulary clustered therein, such as *λογεία*, *ἐπιτελέω* and *leitourgia*, among others (129-131, 135-137, 144, 152-155). In the case of the third text—Rom 15:14-32, Downs advances a persuasive argument that the "offering of the Gentiles" in 15:16 must be taken as subjective, rather than objective or attributive, Genitive (147-155).

Downs's reconstruction of Paul's collection for Jerusalem is both thought provoking and persuasive. Among its many strengths, Downs's proposal sheds light on several peripheral issues, like the dating of 1 Thessalonians and Philippians (53-55) or the ethnic make-up of the Ephesian church (55-58). The book's highest virtue is the breadth of its exploration, namely the chronological, cultural, and cultic contexts. Yet, it is not self-evident how these three realms overlap or inform one another. Downs believes that "careful attention to the chronological and socio-cultural contexts of the Pauline collection for Jerusalem offers the promise of a much richer understanding of the place of the relief fund in Paul's theology" (2). However, after turning the last page, the reader remains wondering about the specific *theological* implications of Downs's conclusions in chs. 2 and 3 concerning the dating of Paul's collection or its analogies to Greco-Roman voluntary associations. Why, for example, was the collection initiated at this particular chronological point in Paul's mission? Or, if Paul's collection for Jerusalem is indeed patterned on common practices of Greco-Roman voluntary associations, why does Paul entertain the possibility of rejection?

Readers looking to learn about the theological significance of Paul's collection will find a number of invaluable observations but not a continuous theological exposition. Readers who value careful exegetical work within Scriptural texts, and readers who are interested in the socio-cultural and historical location of these texts will both find Downs's book a helpful resource.

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**G. Scott GLEAVES.** *Did Jesus Speak Greek? The Emerging Evidence of Greek Dominance in First-Century Palestine.* Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2015. 310 pp. \$29.00.

In this book, Gleaves sets out the evidence (literary and inscriptional) for widespread use of Greek in Jewish Palestine in Jesus' day. The question as to whether there was a noticeable use of Greek has long been conceded in the affirmative—the remaining question is whether one can speak of Greek's "dominance," as Gleaves does in the subtitle of this book.

As a review of the evidence for the use of Greek in Jesus' day, Gleaves's book is something of a handy introduction. In the ways it goes beyond that, however, there are a few concerns. For starters, it is undeniable that Gleaves is motivated by a desire to make the Gospels

as accurate as possible in their portrayal of what Jesus said—he appears to be motivated by the fear that a Greek translation of words originally spoken in Aramaic might not capture original meanings with the degree of accuracy that some Evangelicals might demand. Some of Gleaves’s other reasons for rejecting the “Aramaic hypothesis” (see below) are equally weak. He wonders, for example, how all the books of the NT could have been written in Greek if Aramaic was the dominant language in Jewish Palestine, but he does not tell us which books he thinks might have been written for an audience in Jewish Palestine. (And even if *all* the books were written for those living in the holy land, we would still have to do with the very real disconnect between writers and consumers of religion: if illiteracy was as high as recent estimates claim, why should we *not* make a division between the language of the masses and that of a literate elite?)

A few of Gleaves’s arguments are really strange. At one point, he appeals to the fact that “Jesus appears to be quoting the LXX on three different occasions in Matthew’s temptation narrative” (18, cf. 144 [and on Luke, cf. 141-142]). I have never before encountered a scholar who considers the Evangelists’ placement of Septuagintal wording in Jesus’ mouth as an indication that Jesus really quoted the LXX. The arguments from Paul’s abilities to write in Greek also strike me as pointless. (These are to be classed, I think, with Gleaves’s repeated references to the need for *Alexandrian* Jews to have a Greek-language Bible. What does *that* prove?)

At the beginning of the book, Gleaves uses the term “Aramaic hypothesis” to refer to the notion that Aramaic was the dominant language in Jewish Palestine. In other parts of the book, however, he uses it to refer to the thesis that the Gospels were originally written in Aramaic. While the former is a consensus view, the latter is held only by a tiny minority.

I would have liked to have seen some interaction with the story of Paul’s arrest by the Roman tribune in Acts 22, as I think this shows the linguistic situation of the time rather clearly. That Paul was preaching to the crowd in Aramaic before his arrest is clearly shown, I think, by the fact that the tribune is surprised to hear Paul address him in Greek. (And the fact that the tribune should take Paul’s Greek-speaking abilities as a warrant to infer that he might be “the Egyptian” who had been stirring up trouble also speaks to the relative scarcity of Greek in similar situations.)

While there were few typos in the book, the several references (9) to “Justice of Tiberias” (rather than “*Justus* of Tiberias”) are rather irksome. (I should also point out that Gleaves’s bibliography is not as full as one might have hoped.)

I do not intend my disparaging remarks to detract from the importance of investigating Jesus’ possible use of Greek. It is, indeed, a worthwhile question, and the reader might find in Gleaves’s book a handy introduction to some of the reasons that question has had such staying power.

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**Charles Lee IRONS.** *A Syntax Guide for Readers of the Greek New Testament.* Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2016. 629 pp. \$39.99.

Charles Lee Irons (BA in Classical Greek, UCLA; MDiv, Westminster Seminary; PhD in NT, Fuller Theological Seminary) works as Senior Research Administrator at Charles R.

Drew University of Medicine and Science and serves as ruling elder at New Life Burbank Presbyterian Church. With these academic and pastoral qualifications and experience, Irons produced a scholarly syntactical guide to the GNT that has pastors and students in mind.

In his introduction, Irons distinguishes his syntax guide from a reader's guide because his book "picks up where these other tools leave off, presupposes their use, and moves on to more complex issues of syntax, translation, some textual criticism, and limited exegesis" (7). Irons intends to "provide concise notes enabling the reader to make sense of the Greek text at a level of linguistic communication one step higher than the word to the syntactical level of the phrase, clause, or sentence" (7). One of his goals is to encourage "students, pastors, and others" to read large portions of the GNT by "eliminating the need to stop and look up intermediate, advanced, or unusual grammatical features of the Greek text" (8).

The book is structured as a verse-by-verse syntactical guide for the GNT that closely follows the text of the GNT presented in the 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> editions of the Nestle-Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece*. Irons comments on unusual vocabulary, provides occasional help for identifying forms, and comments on textual critical issues, although he does not intend to go into too much detail. He frequently consults BDAG, BDF, Wallace, Zerwick, Metzger, and numerous commentaries. He occasionally suggests translations to help readers with difficult or unusual phrases. Most commonly, these translations come from the NIV, ESV, or NASB.

Irons uses traditional language to identify categories of syntax, relying on BDF and Wallace's *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*. He does not take sides in many of the current linguistic debates. He recognizes that many of the traditional categories in aforementioned works have been challenged by more recent works that have provided valuable insights, but he recognizes that "inventing new terminology would be inappropriate in a work of this nature" (10). For example, he uses the term "deponent" while admitting he is "agnostic about whether it is a genuine syntactical category" (10). He believes the Greek indicative verb "generally communicates temporal distinctions in addition to aspectual ones" and that the aorist "is generally used to indicate that the action is being viewed as a simple event in the past" although occasionally it "does not denote a past event but an action viewed as fact without regard to time" (10).

This book is published to resemble the UBS Greek NT by having the same size and color. Although the paper is brighter and it is hardback, this book is intended to function as a companion to the UBS GNT. The book concludes with a 22-page index of subjects identified in his guide, including intermediate syntactical features, Septuagintisms and loan words, discourse structure, figures of speech, atypical constructions, and text critical issues.

This syntax guide reads like the notebook of an advanced reader who has Wallace's *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* and BDAG by his side. For busy pastors and busy Greek readers, this book will be a helpful quick reference guide to hone their skills and keep them in the text without becoming a crutch. Scholars and advanced students, however, will prefer Wallace and BDAG by their sides instead.

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Steven E. RUNGE and Chris J. FRESCH, eds. *The Greek Verb Revisited: A Fresh Approach for Biblical Exegesis*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2016. 685 pp. \$49.99.

Runge is a Scholar-in-Residence at Logos Bible Software and is a research associate affiliated with the Department of Ancient Studies at the University of Stellenbosch in South Africa. One of his more famous works is his *Discourse Grammar of the Greek New Testament: A Practical Introduction for Teaching and Exegesis*, Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2010. He has written a number of high-definition commentaries, several volumes on Discourse Analysis, and several works applying this field for the student. He has also edited a festschrift in honor of Steven H. Levinsohn. In addition to books, he has written numerous peer-reviewed articles on discourse, verbal aspect, and pedagogy of the Greek language. He is a frequent presenter at ETS, SBL, and other NT conferences. Fresch recently completed his PhD at the University of Cambridge, and is a Lecturer in Biblical Languages and Old Testament at Bible College of South Australia. Both scholars have taught Greek in a variety of institutions.

This volume is a compilation of the papers presented at a special Linguistics and the Greek Verb Conference, which was scheduled for 10-11 July in Cambridge, as a nonreoccurring addition to the 2015 Tyndale Fellowship Conference. This conference added seven sessions of multiple papers or about 1½ days to the Tyndale Fellowship Conference. As the chapters in this volume illustrate, scholars presented from several disciplines. Classicists, Linguists, and NT scholars brought a variety of perspectives on the Greek Verb. While this conference addressed the verbal system in general, many of the papers presented focused on the Perfect tense-form, and on temporal reference. This might be due to the work that has been going on since the “Perfect Storm” papers that were presented at the annual SBL meeting in 2013 at Baltimore. As far as how this volume represents the conference itself, a couple of the chapters did not appear to be included on the conference schedule, and two of the papers on the conference schedule are not in the volume. The editor’s introduction does not state a reason for this change. While it is possible that some last-minute changes could have occurred at the conference, it is more likely that the included chapters were added to round out certain sections of the volume during the editing phase.

This volume is laid out in nineteen chapters, each corresponding to a particular paper. These chapters are grouped into three sections: Overview, Application, and Linguistic Investigations. A foreword is provided by Andreas Köstenberger. The first and last chapters serve as introduction and conclusion to the volume as a whole. Several indices organize the contributors, subjects and authors cited, and ancient sources cited.

In the overview section, Buist Fanning opened the conference with his paper, chapter one in this volume, which highlighted the similarities and differences between his view and that of Stanley E. Porter. He also pointed out some areas for future research and invited the attendees to advance the study of the Greek verb. Next Christopher J. Thomson presents the conflict extent in the literature regarding a definition of verbal aspect, along with some critiques. He prefers the understanding that verbal aspect is a temporal phenomenon related to the internal make-up of the situation as opposed to verbal aspect being a subjective portrayal of that situation. Rutger J. Allen focuses on the diachronic development of both the augment and the Perfect tense-form. He critiques several approaches that seek to identify the nature of the augment and suggests that there is no unified semantic for the Greek Perfect tense-form, at least not one that has yet been explained. Nicholas J. Ellis closes this section

in a paper applying a Cognitive Linguistics approach to questions of aspect. He also predicts the semantic meaning that various morphemes within the Greek verb have been based on typological studies. He appears to understand verbal aspect as being concerned with the temporal structure of the event. Both Thomson and Ellis do not maintain the same level of strict separation between categories such as aspect and temporal matters or aspect and *Aktionsart*, as Stanley Porter, Buist Fanning, and Constantine Campbell attempt to maintain. This is because of the more objective understanding of verbal aspect inherent in these papers.

Stephen Levinsohn introduced the Application section with his paper connecting verbal aspect to grounding in narrative. His view on the use of Perfect tense-forms as marking backgrounded material contrasts with Stanley Porter's "frontgrounded" category for the Perfect. Levinsohn also suggests how tense-forms might work in recorded speech imbedded in narrative. Patrick James connects several tense-form functions in narrative, while pointing out that aspect does not work alone to accomplish foregrounding and backgrounding. Aspect works in tandem with particles to mark discourse. Runge's paper points out that the Perfect tense-form either supports the mainline or corrects an implied or explicit counterpoint from the mainline. He also cautions that determining the grounding status of any clause is much more complex than the use of a particular aspect. Randall Buth's paper focuses on the pragmatic use of a participle as marking a clause as less prominent than a clause with a finite verb. He connects the participle's function relative to the Historical Present for many of his examples. Levinsohn closes this section with another paper, discussing the function of copula-participle periphrastic constructions. He points out that when both simple verb and periphrastic options are available, the periphrastic will be more stative than the simple tense. He also discusses syntactical differences between copula-participle, and participle-copula, where the latter is more prominent. Although this section raised issues in areas outside of pragmatics, the main thrust of the section was regarding discourse function.

Elizabeth Robar starts off the Linguistic Analysis section with a paper that analyzes the function of the Historic Present as drawing the reader's attention to what is most important. Peter Gentry analyzes the function of the augment using a diachronic approach. He understands the augment to mark past time, having developed from an adverb. Fresch tackles non-past Aorists next, and explains that although marked for + PAST, this can be negated, when used in a non-past setting, since aspect is primary over temporal marking. Buth's next paper treats the morphology of the Perfect. He points out that "kappatic" Perfects and Aorists are always transitive, and this feature occurs only on active stems. Next, he outlines the twofold aspectual morphology of the Perfect tense-form, where its perfective connects to the actions, and its imperfective connects to the state. He appears to counter Campbell's approach to the Perfect tense-form by showing how the Perfect opposes the Present due to its perfectivity on events, contra Campbell's idea that the Perfect is imperfective due to its collocation with the Present. Robert Crellin's paper analyzes the semantics for the Perfect tense-form in NT Greek. His carefully nuanced definition combines elements of event and state, with the idea that the Topic Time is included within the Situation Time. His model is able to predict several types of states from various lexemes. Runge's next paper analyzes the function of Perfect tense-forms that precede relevant material, or follow relevant material, to be supplemental, while those that occur on the theme line are often more prominent. He critiques Porter's and Campbell's approach to the Perfect, but allows for Perfects with heightened emphasis only on those found on the theme line. Next, Michael Aubrey presents more intricacies relat-

ed to the division between types of prohibitions. The choice of tense-form is not enough to decide whether someone is to “not start doing X,” or “to stop doing X.” Often the lexeme, mood, and clause function needs to be considered before deciding the matter. Amalia Moser discusses the issue of tense and aspect in Greek between the NT era and present day. A diachronic awareness is presented as a necessity for understanding synchronic periods of a language, and as an aid for determining if any NT usage is a deviation from the typical use within the language or normal. Rachel Aubrey discusses the middle and passive system. The unique passive markers for the Aorist and Perfect are analyzed as non-transitive middles, rather than parallel to the English passive. Geoffrey Horrocks concludes this section and the volume as a whole, with several exhortations to those who study Greek. One must not separate discussions of aspect from those of pragmatics, lexeme differences, and diachronic change of the language. Next, he cautions to maintain a distinction between lexical aspect and grammatical aspect. He closes with praise for the authors and editors for inclusion of a greater complexity in their handling of the issues of tense and aspect.

This volume is a great resource for anyone studying the Greek language. It brings together scholars within various disciplines, and pulls together a variety of fresh perspectives regarding the semantics and pragmatics of the Greek verb. The editors and authors are to be commended for their research as well as the interdisciplinary and diachronic concerns that they bring to the readers’ attention. This volume is useful to supplement a course in advanced exegesis, and is a wonderful reference for any scholar of the Greek language. biblical scholars and linguists alike will be referring to the material in this volume for years to come.

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**Laurențiu Florentin MOT.** *Morphological and Syntactical Irregularities in the Book of Revelation: A Greek Hypothesis.* Linguistic Biblical Studies: 11. Leiden: Brill, 2015. 289 pp. \$166.00.

It has been widely recognized that the Greek syntax and grammar of the Apocalypse contains numerous irregularities. The current volume is Moț’s revised dissertation attempting to comprehensively address the so-called solecisms of Revelation. To date, the most prominent theory explaining this phenomenon is what Moț calls Semitic transfer. Moț provides a fresh analysis of the proposed solecisms and barbarisms in the book of Revelation and seeks to explain these irregularities by Greek language conventions rather than relying on Hebrew/Aramaic transfer theories.

In chapter one, Moț provides an extensive history of research on the solecisms of Revelation. He provides five research questions this study addresses: (1) How many grammatical anomalies does the Apocalypse of John contain? (2) How could these peculiar structures be classified in such a way so as to enhance their evaluation? (3) Are they intentional or not intentional? (4) What is their explanation? (5) Do they hamper the message of the text or how do they affect that message? (30).

In chapter two, Moț makes one of his most significant contributions. He analyzes the distinction ancient Greek and Latin authors such as Quintilian, Herodianus, Lucian, et al.



made between solecisms and barbarisms. Using their distinctions, he defines a barbarism as the deviation of a single word component from the lexical form and a solecism as an irregularity in morpho-semantic features such as case, gender, or number (46-47). These authors developed taxonomies for identifying barbarisms and solecisms (48-51, 56-64). Moṭ demonstrates that lexical and morpho-syntactical irregularities could be tolerated as metaplasm or figure if they were due to the intentional poetic or stylistic license of the author (67-73). For Moṭ, if the proposed solecism could be shown to have some reasonable explanation (*constructio ad sensum*, *anacoluthon*, or ellipsis), then the occurrence should not be considered solecism. He then turns to discuss the idea of correctness in grammar. Traditional grammars, Moṭ states, used a prescriptive approach to grammar; yet, with the onset of descriptive-functional approaches to grammar, the focus has shifted from viewing language as a set of grammatical rules to viewing language as communicative convention (74-80). Moṭ favors the descriptive-functional approach.

In chapter three, Moṭ analyzes and categorizes the 232 solecisms in Revelation that have been proposed by scholars. He concludes that there are no barbarisms in the Apocalypse (107). He divides the remaining irregularities into five groups: (1) disagreements in case, gender, and number; (2) verbal incongruences; (3) prepositional irregularities; (4) omissions; and (5) additions or redundancies. Throughout his analysis of each proposed solecism, Moṭ uses text critical, diachronic, and synchronic insights to support his exegetical analysis of the text. In each section, he categorizes all proposed solecisms into three groups: alleged, explicable, and actual (132, 145-146, 158, 181). After analyzing all 232 proposed solecisms, he concludes many are alleged solecisms, the majority are explicable by a Greek language convention (*anacoluthon* or *constructio ad sensum*), and concludes that there are only 45 actual solecisms in Revelation (217-218).

In chapter four, Moṭ offers his assessment and draws implications from his findings. He concludes further that the 45 actual solecisms represent 9 types of solecisms, with 5 of them recurring more than once (218). Of the 9 types of solecisms, only 2 are attributed to Semitic transfer (Semitic resumptive pronouns and the idiom “to fight against” using μετά) (222). According to Moṭ, this means the Greek of Revelation is not inferior to that of other NT books, and that the Greek of Revelation is quite at home within registers of Koine Greek (234-236). He also provides implications for grammars, exegesis, and theology (236-243). Moṭ closes the book with a brief chapter containing summaries and conclusions.

Despite the many strengths of this book, there are several weaknesses. First, ironically, the monograph contains numerous barbarisms (e.g. “lenght” [50]; “embroided” [127]; “available” [155]; “contractio” [166]; “seting” [198]; “disagreements” [205]). Throughout the book, Moṭ incorrectly refers to T. Cowden Laughlin as “T. Laughlin Cowden.” Second, Moṭ often fails to treat other arguments which might explain particular solecisms. For example, in his discussion of the famous irregularity of a nominative for genitive in Rev 1:5, Moṭ makes no mention of G.K. Beale’s contention that these nominatives are due to an allusion to Psalm 88(89):27,37. Moṭ generally fails to deal with Beale’s provocative arguments (although he does in reference to the proposed solecism in 1:15 [137]). Third, Moṭ’s discussion of divine inspiration seems out of place. Moṭ concludes, “the Apocalypse is divinely inspired” however this inspiration “did not prevent irregularities from appearing in his linguistic behavior” (241). Moṭ’s conclusions about the implications of this study for the divine inspiration of Revelation appear awkward in a work focused on meticulous grammatical

analysis. Finally, the lack of a citation index makes it difficult and frustrating to relocate his discussions of certain verses.

In this work, Moř has advanced the discussion of solecisms in Revelation in a significant way by introducing the categories of the rhetorical handbooks and by doing detailed analysis of each proposed solecism. His work provides many provocative suggestions and ultimately succeeds in many of its aims. He has challenged the assumption that Revelation's Greek is inferior and that Semitic transfer is the best way to explain the irregularities. This book is worthy of consideration by those interested in the Greek of Revelation.

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**Richard B. HAYS.** *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels.* Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016. 524 pp. \$49.95.

Finally, it is here: Hays's follow-up to his much-lauded *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (1989). In 2014 we received a little taste of what Hays was planning on offering in a book titled *Reading Backwards*, based on his Hulsean Lectures; this earlier and much briefer book, it should be noted, was a condensation of the larger text now before us (rather than being a preparatory or prefatory volume). Instead of developing *Reading Backwards*, this volume polishes and completes the larger work from which the smaller book was excerpted.

The full orchestration of Hays's work on the Gospels now available is remarkable both in its production and its accomplishment. Part of the reason for this is personal: Hays received a serious cancer diagnosis in July of 2015 (xiv). If the text were going to be completed, then, it would need to happen in abbreviated fashion. Carey Newman and the staff of Baylor Press devised a solution: while Hays filled in the remaining gaps in the manuscript, four scholars would be recruited, one for each Gospel, who would help in providing the appropriate footnotes for the body of the text. This display of collegiality enabled the work to be readied for the press in less than two months. It is heartening to see a collaborative project be pulled off so well (and so efficiently).

Even if a team of scholars has assisted the effort, the result is vintage Hays. The combination of literary sensitivity and theological insight is deft throughout; this volume patiently shows his readers that a greater appreciation of the Evangelists' literary artistry leads to a richer understanding of their theology. The bedrock of this demonstration is the drawing together of individual scriptural intertexts, showing when the Gospel writers are drawing on the OT (usually the LXX) and suggesting what that appropriation might mean. For example, when Jesus quotes Psalm 118 in Mark 12, he is using the biblical text to suggest multiple things: (a) his forthcoming passion (the rejection of the stone) (b) his resurrection (Ps 118 is a Hillel song, a psalm of victory to be sung on the way to Jerusalem for Passover), while at the same time (c) evoking his Davidic role as ruler of the people of Israel, and (d) transforming that Davidic role such that it now includes suffering and pain, while also (e) gesturing toward the fact that suffering on behalf of Israel has always been a part of the Davidic/messianic role, considering the pattern of suffering and redemption that is evident in so many of David's psalms (53-54, 80). All these layers of meaning are available to those

with ears to hear, and this volume is a more than able guide through this strange new world of intertextual Scripture.

The burden of this book, however, is not just to exegete individual passages. This volume has an argument to make—or, rather, several arguments. What follows is only a selection: (1) that when it comes to the identity of Jesus Christ, the more one pays attention to the OT intertexts the Gospel writers use, the more clearly one will see that each holds to a divine identity Christology; (2) that the story told in the Gospels is an extension, rather than a break, from the OT narrative of Israel; (3) that the continuity between the two testaments should be established through the use of figural exegesis, which entails a retrospective discovery of the ways in which various figures in the OT foreshadow the Messiah of the New, rather than seeing OT authors as intentionally predicting Jesus Christ.

It must be admitted that there are some problems with the third argument in the list. Hays claims to be recovering figural exegesis in a manner akin to the way it was practiced in the early church fathers (9). This claim is challenged in a profound book by John David Dawson, *Christian Figural Reading* (which, to his credit, Hays does in fact cite).

In this book, Dawson lays out a crucial difference between ancient and modern interpreters of Scripture: ancient exegetes thought of Scripture as a record of divine performance, whereas modern exegetes think of Scripture as a text that constructs identities and forms meanings. Hays firmly falls in the latter camp, even if he occasionally tries to escape it (7-8, 359, 364-366), and it makes little sense to withhold an intentional predicting of Jesus Christ in the OT if the author of the OT is God. If that is the case, then the meaning of these texts was always Jesus Christ; and even if some readers might need to retrospectively discover this, such a program of reading backwards would not be absolutely necessary. The church fathers would be puzzled, I think, by what this volume is doing (which is not to say that one or the other is right, only that they are different). It would be better to frame what is going on in the book not as a quasi-patristic figural exegesis, but simply as intertextual reading (in addition to Dawson, one can now see Ephraim Radner's recent book, *Time and the Word: Figural Reading of the Christian Scriptures*, for further consideration of these issues).

Despite this problem of framing, this volume argues the other points with convincing insight and erudition. Particularly well accomplished is the argument for a divine identity Christology across the Gospels. This volume shows, for instance, several Gospel texts where the evangelist references an OT scripture and, while doing so, puts Jesus into the same role which in the OT is played by God, the LORD (74-75, commenting on Mark 7:37/Isa 35). One can see here, *in nuce*, the legitimacy of Hays's argument that the more one pays attention to the Hebraic OT intertexts, the more evident a divine identity Christology will be.

Beyond argument, what lingers with the reader of this volume is an appreciation for the distinctive style of each Evangelist, and especially for the way in which each Evangelist's use of Scripture contributes to that style. Mark's use of Scripture is dense, allusive, and mysterious; Matthew's use is clear, even didactic; Luke's use is based on the continuation of large narrative arcs; and John's use is more visual (vine, temple, water) than verbal. Each of these descriptors could just as easily be applied to the style of their respective Gospels as a whole. That the Evangelists' use of Scripture is inseparable from their overall style shows just how thoroughly embedded these texts are in the Scriptures that preceded them.

The implied audience for this volume is those with an advanced theological degree. Knowledge of Greek, Hebrew, and German is not necessary for comprehension, but it does

help. Still, this volume aims to be useful for pastors (361-362), and he succeeds in that aim: the writing is, for the most part, nontechnical, and everywhere it is lucid. Furthermore, the added context the book will yield for a sermon expositing any of the Gospel texts that are treated is so manifest that it need hardly be mentioned. And for any Gospel text not treated, this volume ably equips the reader to do her own searching of the Scriptures; he has gone some way to giving the receptive reader ears to hear.

We owe Hays an enormous debt for leading us into the world of Scripture in which the Gospel writers lived. For many of us—even those of us who are biblical scholars—that world will indeed be strange and new; or, at least the depth and breadth of it will be. The debt that is owed, then, originates from a sense that one may not have discovered this world apart from Hays’s assistance. Hays remains, therefore, a preeminent guide to the abundant presence of the OT in the NT.

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**Leland RYKEN.** *Jesus the Hero: A Guided Literary Study of the Gospels.* Wooster, OH: Weaver Book Company, 2016. 136 pp. \$9.99.

This volume is part of a series by the Weaver Book Company that seeks to “equip Christians to understand and teach the Bible effectively” (7). It is a specific mission in the sense that the series aims primarily at bridging the gap between standard Bible teaching practices and the literary genres that are often overlooked in this process. Leland Ryken, the author and general editor of the entire *Reading the Bible as Literature* series, has written extensively on the topic of how to read the Bible. Ryken seeks to find a middle ground between the skepticism that surrounds academic study of the Bible, and the idea that Scripture can *only* be understood by a highly educated group (8-9).

This volume sets out to work through the multiple literary genres found in the Gospels. These ideas find expression in each of the Gospels, though the different Gospel writers handle these genres in varied ways.

Ryken deftly handles this narrow study of the Gospels with precision and grace, as might be expected given his lifelong study of the topic. Ryken’s depth is what makes his work so engaging. He has a way of taking something complex, like the multitude of genres found in the Gospels, and giving his audience the gift of simplicity in his prose. He is the English teacher most students wish they had in college, and this is evidenced in his presentation of the material. Ryken lays the groundwork for studying the Gospels by pointing out the unique nature of these writings, while also demonstrating that they can be studied like most other works of literature (12-13).

To be sure, Ryken makes the most of this distinction between genres. Narrative is the primary genre of the Gospels, but Ryken counts at least eleven other genres, with the Passion genre having sixteen more genres that comprise it (70-71). In this way, Ryken’s attention to detail somewhat compounds his otherwise helpful thoughts. There are times when reading his explanations of how the genres work, and their exceptions or alterations, give the impression that more is being squeezed out of the discussion than naturally belongs there. The very

thing that makes the Gospels unique is simultaneously the thing that makes a straightforward literary analysis difficult: there is nothing else truly comparable to the Gospels.

To make this complexity tangible to his reader, Ryken provides helpful exercises at the end of each chapter. Thus, for a reader to really engage the idea that Jesus is part of a “hero story,” they must work through Mark 2:1-14 and apply Ryken’s principles as they do (39-40). This is the great strength of Ryken’s work: passively taking in Ryken’s literary theory will not suffice to see the relevance of all that he is claiming. This kind of active reading does help to mitigate Ryken’s insistence that a literary reading will yield great fruit. If by thinking about the Gospels in the terms and categories that Ryken proposes, then there is indeed much to be gained from every reading that might have otherwise been left undiscovered just below the surface.

Ryken’s work finds itself in a strange place. It is written to help individuals read and understand their Bible better, and is aimed at a lay audience. But the nature of the book seems attractive primarily to those who are already familiar with these discussions. Still, the ideas proposed by Ryken are helpful ones. If Christians want to read the Gospels better and, with Gerard Manly Hopkins, conceive of Jesus as “all the world’s hero [and] the hero of single souls,” then Ryken’s book is the place to begin (136).

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**Brian Neil PETERSON.** *John’s Use of Ezekiel: Understanding the Unique Perspective of the Fourth Gospel.* Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2015. 250 pp. \$39.00.

In his volume, OT and Ezekiel scholar Brian Neil Peterson undertakes a foray into the NT and engages in a critical examination of John’s potential use of Ezekiel beyond simple citation of key passages. Though, by his own admission, he is not a Johannine scholar, Peterson believes his position as an “outside observer” provides him with a vantage point from which he is able to observe things that other scholars fail to notice.

His first chapter on the uniqueness of John’s Gospel reviews the distinguishing characteristics that differentiate this work from the Synoptic Gospels. He provides a brief list of features peculiar to the fourth Gospel to support this assertion. The list is illustrative rather than exhaustive and is foundational to Peterson’s thesis. He then briefly surveys theories that attempt to address these peculiarities, theories that suggest dependence upon a variety of sources and sects from the second temple period up to and including the first century CE. In this list, Peterson observes a lacuna in the shape of Ezekiel, a lacuna he wishes to fill. Methodologically, his plan is to examine the unique features of John’s Gospel in light of Ezekiel. As one will infer from the title of the book, Peterson has concluded that these unique features can be explained as a consequence of the author’s deliberate influence by and use of Ezekiel. This use may have been influenced by possible parallels between the OT prophet and the author.

The remaining chapters address each of the unique features of John that Peterson identified. As noted, each feature is analyzed in conversation with the book of Ezekiel. First, Peterson examines John 1 in juxtaposition with Ezekiel 1–3. He observes a parallel between the Gospel’s assertion of Jesus’ divinity with the assertion of Yahweh’s divinity, which dom-

inates the corresponding chapters of Ezekiel. The chapter examines key motifs in both works that Peterson concludes are deliberate parallels.

The next chapter examines the role of signs in John and sign acts in Ezekiel. Peterson contends that John records specific events in Jesus' life and designates them signs because they parallel the sign acts of Ezekiel, both of which were intended to address and remedy unbelief. While not denying a connection between John's presentation of Jesus and the signs performed by Moses, Peterson believes that parallels between John and Ezekiel provide a better explanation for the signs recorded in John when discrepancies between Jesus and Moses arise. The chapter examines the signs Jesus performs and analyzes them in light of what Peterson believes are parallel sign acts in Ezekiel.

This is followed by a chapter in which Peterson addresses the placement of the account of Jesus cleansing the temple in light of Ezekiel 8–11. He first reviews scholarly theories that address the placement of the pericope, noting a lack of consensus on the question, then offers his alternative. Once again, he argues that there are structural parallels and shared motifs that indicate dependency.

The "I am" sayings of John are taken up in the next chapter. Peterson notes that Ezekiel employs this term in reference to Yahweh more than any other OT book, which he concludes is weighty evidence in favor of dependence. Once again, he observes what he believes are structural parallels between the two books. In addition, shared motifs such as the good shepherd, the resurrection, and the vine found in both works reinforce this conclusion.

Peterson follows this with a chapter that looks at macro-structural level parallels that he sees between John 17, 20 and Ezekiel 37. He argues that Jesus' resurrection parallels the reanimation of the dry bones in Ezekiel 37. Also, the insufflation, the inbreathing of Jesus in John 17 finds its influence in God's promise to put his spirit into his people in Ezekiel 37:11-14. He finally notes that the absence of the pre-cross, Eucharistic meal in John may be explained by the author's focus on the post-cross covenant of peace, also emphasized in Ezekiel 37 with parallel in Ezekiel 34.

The final parallel Peterson examines is Ezekiel 40–43, the vision of the rebuilt temple, which he argues John takes up in both the passion and resurrection narratives. He believes that both Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem and his return to Jerusalem after his resurrection parallel Ezekiel's vision of the rebuilt temple. The later event initiates the time of abundant blessing, anticipated in the later chapters of Ezekiel.

This volume is a welcome contribution to Johannine studies. As Peterson rightly notes, sometimes outside observers are better positioned to notice things that those too close to or deeply enmeshed in the debate may overlook. On the one hand, I agree that the author of John's Gospel appears to be particularly influenced by Ezekiel, among other sources. On the other hand, some of the connections Peterson draws seem like a bit of a stretch to me, at least on the first pass. Nevertheless, I like the outside-the-box thinking he brings to the conversation. It is for this reason I recommend his book. I will continue to reflect on his proposals. Perhaps, with time, I will come around.

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Cynthia Long WESTFALL. *Paul and Gender: Reclaiming the Apostle's Vision for Men and Women in Christ*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016. 315 pp. \$19.33.

In 2007, my long-held views about 1 Timothy 2 were challenged by a then-unpublished SBL paper by Cynthia Westfall. Her exegesis focused on the priority of Spirit-gifting in Romans 12, and the article was later expanded and published in *Priscilla Papers*.<sup>1</sup> Her analysis was foundational to my own study, and I was thrilled to see the work developed further in her new book *Paul and Gender*. Far more than just a commentary on specific “women in ministry” passages, this volume connects Paul’s various themes into a coherent mosaic through which the reader can approach the 1 Timothy 2 passage with fresh eyes. In fact, her goal for the book is stated succinctly on the dedication page, that readers will “accept a paradigm shift from God” and “find a reason to believe.”

Westfall structured her book according to themes in Paul’s writings, each of which builds toward her final chapter of exegesis on the hotly contested and often cited 1 Timothy 2 passage. This approach varies from other well-known books on the topic<sup>2</sup> and in so doing, lends an important voice to the conversation. Themes addressed include first-century cultural backgrounds, stereotypes and metaphors used by Paul, creation and the fall, Paul’s eschatology, the body and sexuality, calling and spiritual gifts, and Paul’s understanding of authority. Within each chapter, Westfall examines Paul’s writings *as a whole* in order to understand specific texts about women, noting “Pauline passages on women cannot be adequately understood or applied apart from a corresponding understanding of the Pauline passages on men” (x). This desire to understand Pauline theology as a whole rather than cherry-picking verses which limit women is to be commended.

This thematic structure is one of the book’s strengths and allows her to build a coherent, cohesive assessment of Paul’s theology. Throughout the book, Westfall reminds her readers that Paul’s theology is always based on his mission (3), his goal “for all people to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth” (304). Her “Creation” chapter is excellent, emphasizing that Paul’s appeals to creation only make sense in light of a human’s *new* creation in Christ and his or her “eschatological destiny” (62). Westfall emphasizes that “Paul wanted his churches to walk in the light of the future” and not according to the results of the fall (144).

Westfall exegetes individual texts within each section with a clear understanding of both culture and linguistics. Her analysis of *kephalē* in both Ephesians 5 and 1 Corinthians 11 is particularly astute (note especially 55, 71, 80-81, 84-86); further study comparing her work to Sarah Sumner’s would be valuable.<sup>3</sup> Westfall’s chapter on “Authority” shows how Paul

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<sup>1</sup> Cynthia Long Westfall, “On Developing a Consistent Hermeneutical Approach to the Application of General Scriptures,” *Priscilla Papers* 24.3 (Summer 2010), 9-13.

<sup>2</sup> For example, Philip Payne, *Man and Woman, One in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009) provides a verse-by-verse exegetical study on significant “women passages.” Additionally, Ronald W Pierce and Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, eds., *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity without Hierarchy* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005) offers a collection of essays by various authors each addressing a particular passage or topic.

<sup>3</sup> Sarah Sumner, *Men and Women in the Church: Building Consensus on Christian Leadership* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003). Sumner suggests *kephalē* means simply a physical head, which Paul uses as a metaphor in both texts to show the importance of unity (153). Westfall presumes *kephalē* means “source,” but comes to similar conclusions about unity.

critiqued the Greco-Roman culture, and that both Jesus and Paul viewed authority as servanthood, not power and control (259). Her section on the word *authentēin* (290-294) shows she has done her homework on the Greek text as well.

Of particular note is the paradigm shift with which she approaches 1 Timothy 2. Westfall's argument that these verses do not speak to women [plural] in worship but rather to a wife [singular] with her husband (288-289, 305) is most convincing. For centuries, English translations have clouded this text with a subheading "Instructions for Worship." Instead, Westfall contends the passage has more in common with the household codes and should be read "on its own terms," and she encourages readers to "set aside the common assumption that [it] signals a church service" (297-298).

Restoration movement churches vary widely in their approach to the "gender issue" and Stone-Campbell leaders will appreciate her commitment to the biblical text. Ministers may find her approach a helpful "way forward" as they navigate the faithful application of 1 Timothy 2 in their contexts. While the book is decidedly academic, those who are willing to set aside presumptions about the topic and study these texts deeply will find her book an important resource. Additionally, scholars will appreciate her interaction with many previous, well-known works on the topic and find her book to be a helpful addition to the ongoing dialogue about *Paul and Gender*.

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**Duane LITFIN.** *Paul's Theology of Preaching: The Apostle's Challenge to the Art of Persuasion in Ancient Corinth.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2015. 392 pp. \$42.00.

This work is a thorough revision of Litfin's original book on this subject: *St. Paul's Theology of Proclamation* (1994). In part I, "Greco-Roman Rhetoric," Litfin spends nine chapters thoroughly detailing the "rhetorical tradition" which was a "prime ingredient in the cultural heritage that defined the Greco-Roman world and gave the ancient mind its shape" (57). Through close attention to, and copious quotation from, the primary sources Litfin succeeds in explaining the contours of the rhetorical tradition and also demonstrating the privileged place which "eloquence" held in the Greco-Roman culture of Paul's day. As Litfin explains it, rhetoric had its birthplace in fifth-century BC Athens and from there the classical tradition developed through Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian and "countless lesser figures" until the range of rhetoric extended "to the entire Western world" (66-67). The goal of rhetoric was persuasion (it was "the art of moving your listeners where you want them to go" 70). The power to persuade—in the public realm (*deliberative* rhetoric), in the courts (*forensic* rhetoric), or on occasions of ceremony (*epideictic* rhetoric)—which the orators wielded was a great power indeed (ch. 3). Litfin quotes Cicero: "I mean the kind of eloquence which rushes along with the roar of a mighty stream, which all look up to and admire. . . . This eloquence has the power to sway men's minds and move them in every possible way. Now it storms the feelings, now it creeps in; it implants new ideas and uproots the old" (77). The appeal of rhetoric reached far: "It permeated the entire Greco-Roman world, from the emperors to the man in the street" (83). The genius of rhetoric lay in the orator's



ability to adapt both his style and his message to the audience so as to achieve his desired result. It was this skill above all else that rhetorical educators sought to instill in their students (ch. 5). Orators were subject to the appraisal of their audiences (ch. 6) and thus were exposed to potentially withering criticism and rejection (“the hazards of rhetoric,” ch. 7). But for those speakers who could master their audiences and win their approval a world of rewards—“fame, admiration, honor, glory, wealth, privilege, power, advancement” (109)—lay at their feet (ch. 8). The tradition of classical rhetoric then had a “grand equation” which Litfin adduces in chapter 9: the audience was a *Given*, the results were the *Independent Variable* (“the results are independent in the sense that, once set, they determine the remainder of the question,” 113), and the speaker’s efforts were the *Dependent Variable* (thus the overriding emphasis in classical rhetoric on the ability of the speaker to adapt to his audience so as to achieve his desired results, 113-114).

The purpose of Litfin’s extended treatment of Greco-Roman rhetoric is first of all to establish the background against which 1 Corinthians 1-4 (the central passage on which Litfin focuses his exegetical efforts) and Paul’s theology of preaching must be understood. In part II, “1 Cor 1-4,” Litfin masterfully exegetes this central passage through painstaking attention to grammatical and lexical detail, and broad engagement with Paul’s interpreters both ancient and modern. In chapter 10, “Paul and Rhetoric in Corinth,” Litfin demonstrates that first-century Corinth was a city which “luxuriated” in eloquence just as the rest of the Greco-Roman world did. Then, in chapters 11-16, Litfin sets forth his central argument through his exegesis of 1 Corinthians 1-4. The overall argument of the current volume can be summarized in three statements. First, Litfin argues that Paul rejected—for the purposes of preaching the gospel—not just degraded or immoral rhetoric (“bad rhetoric”) *but rhetoric per se; that is, he disavowed the very substance of the classical rhetorical tradition itself* (176-181, 26-261). Second, Litfin argues that Paul rejected rhetoric *per se* because his theological commitments required him to do so: Paul believed that his method of preaching the gospel needed to be consistent with the content of that gospel. In the gospel Paul proclaimed “Christ crucified,” a message which was a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Greeks (1 Cor 1:22-25). The gospel had thus demonstrated that God had chosen to bring about the salvation of the world through low and humble means which confounded human pride (1 Cor 1:26-29; 207-212). So then, Litfin argues, Paul was bound by the gospel itself to reject classical rhetoric (noble though it was in many respects) because it exalted the power and glory of the human speaker above all else. Further, says Litfin, Paul was determined not to intrude upon the work of the Holy Spirit: his job was to announce the gospel to all who would hear, but it was the Spirit’s job to persuade, convict, and convert those who heard (263-265; 1 Cor 2:4-5: “my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, *so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God*”). Third, Litfin argues that in contrast to adopting the stance of the orator or persuader, Paul intentionally adopted the stance of the herald (Litfin carefully and illuminatingly considers the language which Paul uses to describe his preaching, which is decidedly nonrhetorical, and thus corrects a significant blind spot in scholarly treatments of 1 Cor 1-4). The role of the herald, in contrast to that of the orator, was not to achieve a specific predetermined result by adapting his message to his audience, *but rather to faithfully proclaim the message entrusted to him by his master, and leave the matter of results between the hearers and the originator of the message* (182-235).

In Part III, “Summary and Analysis,” as well as in five appendices, Litfin presents a synthesis of his argument in order to demonstrate that Paul’s ministry model was *obedience* driven rather than *results* driven. Further, in these chapters and appendices Litfin explores other pertinent questions and also the important implications of Paul’s theology of preaching for contemporary Christian evangelism, preaching, and ministry.

It is the conviction of this reviewer that this volume is a model of theological scholarship in service to the church. Due to his painstaking attention to detail and his thorough knowledge of the rhetorical and exegetical literature Litfin succeeds in demonstrating his central arguments, as outlined above, from 1 Corinthians 1–4. Further, Litfin’s conclusions are not only historical in nature. Rather, they are decidedly theological and they have tremendous importance for all who undertake the work of Christian ministry. This book is an invitation to consider and understand, at the Apostle Paul’s feet, why it is so crucially important for the method of preaching the gospel to be consistent with the message of the gospel. Therefore, I gladly recommend that every minister, missionary, and professor read this volume.

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**Stanley E. PORTER.** *The Apostle Paul: His Life, Thought, and Letters.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016. 487 pp. \$40.00.

In this volume, Stanley Porter, one of the most prolific contemporary scholars in NT studies, offers arguably his finest synthesis yet of his extensive research into the history and interpretation of Paul and his letters. He expertly navigates through a wide array of debates on Paul and his letters and presents an in-depth introduction filled with fair and carefully measured judgments. Whereas there are many fine works that represent well one of the three areas of Paul’s life, his thought, or his letters, Porter’s outstanding tome excels at all three areas.

The volume begins by introducing Paul the person, drawing on not only the limited information in Paul’s own letters, but also the book of Acts (regarded as a reliable guide). The remainder of the first part of this book examines selected topics deemed essential: the chronology of Paul’s ministry and imprisonments, the background to Paul’s thought, major themes in Paul’s writings, the Pauline letter form, as well as the issues of pseudonymity and the formation of the Pauline canon.

In the second part of the volume, Porter discusses Paul’s letters in roughly the order he believes they were originally written, while keeping certain natural groupings. He surveys major critical issues such as authorship, date, occasion and purpose, followed by outlines and summaries of the content of Paul’s letters in the following order: Galatians, 1-2 Thessalonians, 1-2 Corinthians, Romans, the Prison Epistles, and the Pastoral Epistles.

Most of Porter’s conclusions are traditional. However, he fairly and penetratingly evaluates various positions, and brilliantly presents good arguments for his own preferences. The reconstructed chronology situates each of Paul’s thirteen letters in their most plausible settings and bolsters the traditional view of a full thirteen-letter authentic Pauline canon. Notably, the Prison epistles are shown to be most likely written during a single imprisonment, namely Paul’s long imprisonment in Rome. Furthermore, the tenuousness of the

arguments supporting pseudonymity are ably exposed. The possibility that Paul himself played a major role in gathering his own letter collection is also plausibly proposed.

Besides the contributions mentioned above, the survey of major themes in Paul's letters helpfully reminds readers about the distinction between Paul's fundamental beliefs (which he often simply invokes without justifying them) and Paul's developed beliefs (which he argued for in his letters). In addition, Porter contends for a five-part division to Paul's self-adapted standard letter form (opening, thanksgiving, body, paraenesis, and closing) and demonstrates the insights that can be derived from this approach in his outline and analysis of the content of the letters. Last, but not least, the treatment of the Pauline letters in the second part strikes a judicious balance between helping readers make sense of major critical issues for each letter and illuminating each letter's content in concise summaries (most of the content is understandably merely paraphrased or described, with little to no commentary).

The size of the volume is admittedly daunting and the prose can occasionally get a little dense, but there is perhaps no better and more accessible comprehensive introduction to Paul's life, his thought, and his letters, from which anyone ranging from beginning students to advanced scholars may profitably glean bountiful insights. It is highly recommended as a resource for scholars, pastors, and students alike.

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**Richard N. LONGENECKER.** *The Epistle to the Romans: A Commentary on the Greek Text.* The International Greek Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016. 1,140 pp. \$80.00.

Veteran scholar Richard Norman Longenecker (1930– ) has provided the latest installment in the esteemed series The International Greek Testament Commentary. And perhaps no one is better qualified to tackle this epistle—the pinnacle of Paul's theology, or as Luther put it, “the chief part of the New Testament, and . . . truly the purest gospel.” For well over a decade, Longenecker has devoted his time to the study of this epistle. In 2011, he published *Introducing Romans: Critical Issues in Paul's Most Famous Letter*, which serves as a prolegomenon and thus as a companion volume to his commentary (4, 5, 8).

The layout of this large commentary is rather simple. After a brief introduction (1-39), the “Commentary Proper” follows (41-1086) in units according to Longenecker's outline. Each unit is further broken down into six sections: (1) Longenecker's own “Translation” of Paul's text, followed by (2) his “Textual Notes” on variations within the manuscript tradition, (3) a section entitled “Form/Structure/Setting,” followed by (4) his “Exegetical Comments,” and then (5) a section called “Biblical Theology,” followed by (6) a final section entitled “Contextualization for Today.” Interspersed throughout his exposition are excursuses on important topics like “The Law,’ ‘Works of the Law,’ and ‘The New Perspective’” (362-372) and “On the Terms for ‘Remnant’ in the OT Scriptures . . .” (803-813). Full indexes are supplied for all modern scholars and ancient sources cited within the commentary.

Central to Longenecker's exposition is his belief that Paul's Epistle to the Romans constitutes “an ancient ‘letter essay’—that is, as instructional material set out within an episto-

lary frame” (14), in which Rom 5:1–8:29 stands as “the focus or central thrust” of the epistle (18) expressed in ancient rhetorical argumentation (15–16). Besides his lexical and grammatical analysis of Paul’s text, Longenecker supplies the background necessary to understand ancient rhetoric and early Jewish exegetical practice. In effect, he takes his readers behind Paul’s words to the world of Jewish thought that Paul addresses, often tracing its roots from the earliest Hebrew Scriptures up through the Septuagint, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Pseudepigrapha (e.g., his discussion of the key Hebrew terms for “remnant” and their development in the Septuagint, 803–804).

Paul’s Epistle to the Romans confronts the exegete with the principal and most profound questions that one can ask in theology. In spite of his own conservative Baptist background, Longenecker remains surprisingly neutral in his exposition. One finds no mention, for example, of “immersion” at Rom 6:4. And in his exegesis of 9:6–29, he refuses to take sides in the classic debate between Calvin and Arminius over God’s predestination and man’s free will. Instead, he diverts our attention with an extended discussion of the “remnant” (803–810). But this move merely postpones for one step our asking the question, upon what basis does God elect this faithful “remnant,” by His foreknowledge of their own free-will decisions or, as Calvin put it, by His own “good pleasure”? Perhaps Longenecker’s fence-straddling here explains his failure to notice the obvious anacoluthon in Rom 9:22–24, where Paul omits the apodosis (the “then” part of his hypothetical sentence). Few passages in Paul are more difficult than this one, and I expected a commentary on the Greek text to tackle such grammatical problems. Yet for what it lacks, this commentary amply makes up in what it so richly provides. It would make a suitable textbook for advanced students in a seminary setting.

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**Anthony C. THISELTON.** *Discovering Romans: Content, Interpretation, Reception.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016. 311 pp. \$22.00.

This volume by Thiselton is strikingly different from most introductory guides or commentaries one would normally encounter in biblical studies. The volume is compact and yet strives admirably to cover wide-ranging issues from strategies of interpretation to reception history to key interpretive debates, while engaging in judicious commentary on the text.

At the outset, Thiselton presents eight brief reasons (tied to the sequence of argument in Romans) why it is important to read and reread Romans in the present day. He then offers two chapters that introduce various strategies for interpretation. The chapter on three essential strategies is the more developed and useful of these two. The strategies elucidated are historical-critical methods, rhetorical criticism, and socio-scientific criticism. In addition to this introductory chapter, readers can gain further insight into these methods from the commentary part of the volume, where their imprint is consistently evident. This is because, besides shedding light on the text, the use of these methods in the commentary often illustrates both how to implement them and their potential fruits. However, the chapter on nine further strategies (which Thiselton considers useful for certain limited purposes) seems too brief to do much more than raise awareness. The use of the methods, with one exception,

also seem few and far between within the commentary and apparently do not make a consistent and substantial impact on Thiselton's interpretation of Romans overall. The exception is pre-critical exegesis. The commentary contains fairly-frequent citation of patristic writers and classical commentaries from the Reformation era alongside more modern commentators.

The next chapter lives up to the "Reception" part of the book's subtitle. It supplies a helpful and fascinating discussion of the reception history of Romans. The discussion covers the patristic, medieval, Reformation, and modern eras. This is followed by brief chapters on textual issues and a reconstruction of Paul and his travels, which serve to set the context for just under two hundred pages of concise, yet insightful commentary on the text of the entire epistle. The commentary is divided into nineteen chapters, in accordance with Thiselton's outline of Romans into nineteen major sections: 1:1-17; 1:18-32; 2:1-3:8; 3:9-31; 4:1-25; 5:1-11; 5:12-21; 6:1-23; 7:1-25; 8:1-17; 8:18-39; 9:1-29; 9:30-10:21; 11:1-36; 12:1-21; 13:1-14; 14:1-15:13; 15:14-16:2; and 16:3-27.

Besides the specific strengths and weaknesses pointed out in the comments above, two distinctive features of the volume merit mention as potential drawbacks for some readers. First, Thiselton quotes other authors, both ancient and modern, quite liberally, at times to an extent that his own voice cannot be readily discerned. Second, Thiselton is sometimes content to introduce key interpretive issues and cite major options others have provided, without indicating a clear preference.

The minor criticisms above notwithstanding, overall this volume is a highly accessible guide to the message of Romans as well as to the wealth of scholarly discussion on the letter. It would serve well as an introductory textbook on the content, interpretation, and reception history of the letter of Romans in a seminary or college classroom. It could also function as an initial guide for a more general audience, either to prepare them for or to refer them to more detailed and technical works on specific interpretive issues within the letter. Furthermore, despite its brevity, Thiselton's commentary consistently provides rich exegetical and theological insights and engages fruitfully with interpreters of Romans through the history of the church. It deserves a place on the shelf alongside other fine commentaries on Romans.

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**Beverly Roberts GAVENTA.** *When in Romans: An Invitation to Linger with the Gospel according to Paul.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016. 140 pp. \$22.99.

As the catchy title might indicate, what one encounters here is a cleverly written and crafted set of lectures by a respected and seasoned interpreter of Paul. Originally delivered as the Earle Lectures on Biblical Literature at Nazarene Theological Seminary in the fall of 2013, this book presents an apocalyptic/liberationist reading of Paul that shows Gaventa's indebtedness at times to her teacher and mentor, J. Louis Martyn, whose passion for the text is certainly replicated in his student. If Gaventa invites the reader to linger over the gospel according to Paul, it is because *she* has lingered—long and hard—over Paul and over the

letter that birthed her own vocation as a biblical scholar. It is hard to read anything by Gaventa and not come away with a renewed passion for the text and a close reading of it.

This little book packs a big punch. I hesitate to use a boxing metaphor because the book is anything but pugilistic. Rather, the metaphor is useful because Gaventa swings at a number of targets, however deftly and methodically, to land points for her own reading of Paul. The first, which comes after an introduction that sensitizes the reader to the often-neglected epistolary features of Romans, is readings of Romans that are too small or domesticated. “We miss the sheer size of the letter,” Gaventa writes, “because we have learned to notice only certain moments in the letter” (25). In fact, one of the reasons why Paul writes to the Romans in the first place is to enlarge their understanding of the gospel, which he fears is too restricted.

One restriction Gaventa sees affecting a modern audience is its preoccupation with individual salvation. In her reading, Paul beckons us to a much wider horizon—the salvation of the entire created order. But here Gaventa is swinging at a straw man. Even so-called traditional interpreters have always seen a vital connection between the two. Listen, for example, to one time-honored proponent of “individual” salvation: “A chief cause of trouble is to think of salvation too much and too exclusively in individual terms. The whole emphasis today is upon the individual aspect. That is right up to a point; we should all enjoy assurance of personal salvation; but to regard the whole of salvation in exclusively personal terms . . . is not Scriptural” (D. M. Lloyd-Jones). Gaventa notes an emerging scholarly critique of an overemphasis on corporate salvation, but she relegates this enticing observation to a footnote and does not allow it to inform her reading of Paul in any significant way. While Gaventa would not dismiss individual salvation out-of-hand, the question is where to put the emphasis. Clearly, she wants to subordinate the individual to the cosmic. I would argue that it is the other way around. Rather than humans eagerly awaiting the renewal of the cosmos, the cosmos is eagerly awaiting the renewal of the sons of God (Rom 8:19), including the redemption of their bodies (Rom 8:23).

Gaventa criticizes those approaches, both individualist and corporate, that operate too much on the linear plane (here she invokes Terrence Malick’s *The Tree of Life* as a contemporary example of nonlinear thinking). She rather anemically simplifies these views as God’s offering of a “solution” to a “problem” that human beings are free either to accept or reject. But does this punch hit its target? While Gaventa later recognizes the gift-character of faith (124), it plays no role in her description of traditional interpretations, many of which would want to affirm calling in Paul as an effectual call. No, the “problem” in Romans is that human beings are captive to both the guilt and power of sin, and only a “solution” coming from the outside is able to justify and liberate.

Speaking of justification, Gaventa, like Martyn, insists on translating δικαίω/δικαιοσύνη as “rectify”/“rectification.” This rendering, however, is hard to justify. The verb in particular is decidedly forensic in nature, meaning to declare someone not guilty in a court of law. Like Douglas Campbell and others, Gaventa is prone at times to quick-step Romans 1–4 to get to Romans 5–8, with its emphasis on liberation from the powers of Sin and Death. Yet even in this section the forensic remains a constant feature of the argument (notably 5:1,9,16,18; 6:7; 8:1,29-30,31-34). Paul does not simply “move on” from the forensic to what is truly important—the redemptive. The two are inextricably related in Paul’s understanding of the cross (Rom 3:24). Jews and Gentiles together break the law because together they are captive to Sin (Rom 3:9). Sin in fact has been “condemned”

(κατακρίνω) in God's court in the crucifixion of his Son (Rom 8:3)! The term "rectification" may be helpful as a way to describe the final state of salvation, but it hardly satisfies as a semantic equivalent to justification.

A second target of Gaventa is Paul and Israel. Here unfortunately Gaventa does not land her punches effectively. While she correctly sensitizes the reader to the developmental nature of Rom 9–11, Gaventa's conclusion that the climactic "all Israel" is the whole of ethnic Israel is not convincing (Rom 11:32). One senses the needs of Gaventa's liberationist reading getting in the way. Because Israel is part of God's redemptive plan for all creation, Israel, too, must be saved in the end ("all" means "all," she says). But this argument rests upon an inadequate exegesis of the first half of Romans 9 where Gaventa incorrectly emphasizes God's *creation* of Israel rather than God's *election* of Israel (see especially Rom 9:11). I would argue that the logic and flow of the discourse suggest that "all Israel" consists of the "full number" (πλήρωμα) of elect Jews (Rom 11:12) combined with the "full number" (πλήρωμα) of elect Gentiles (Rom 11:25) to form the eschatological people of God. Representative universalism, not universalism per se, better represents Paul's view, and, ironically, more closely coheres to Gaventa's own emphasis on corporate salvation.

With her third target Gaventa finally establishes a solid footing. Her move to tie ethics in Romans to worship involves some masterful connections. Particularly perceptive is her observation that the reading of the letter itself will generate worship, noting the liturgical "amens" scattered throughout the letter (1:25; 9:5; 11:36; 15:33; 16:27). These seemingly innocuous occurrences reveal how "Paul anticipates that, as the Roman Christians hear Phoebe's reading of the letter, they will join their own 'Amen' to hers" (90). (Here is a good example of Gaventa's lingering long over the text.) This integral connection between ethics and worship points Gaventa to her fourth target: the church, particularly the relationship of the "weak" and the "strong." The exercise of power by the strong in imitation of Christ is "not mere tolerance or human community as a good in and of itself. The result is nothing less than the *unified praise of God's saving glory* (15:6)" (italics mine). In other words, making my own connection to something Gaventa says earlier, "the worship of God, which had been withheld by humans and corrupted by Sin, is enabled as a result of the arrival of the gospel in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ" (88-89). In the end, it's all about worship.

Gaventa's invitation to linger over the text of Romans is one I heartily accept and others should as well. The book is accessible enough to make it useful for a lay audience, led by an informed pastor or teacher. My major criticism is that, just as the so-called new perspective in the form of N.T. Wright collapses justification into ecclesiology, Gaventa and her apocalyptic school collapse justification into redemption. Justification is neither. It is a fight worth having.

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**Andy JOHNSON.** *1 & 2 Thessalonians. The Two Horizons New Testament Commentary.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016. 367 pp. \$26.00.

Andy Johnson, professor of NT at Nazarene Theological Seminary, has written this thought-provoking *theological* commentary on the Thessalonian letters, the seventh NT com-

mentary to publish in Eerdmans' Two Horizons series. In keeping with the series' objective of "bridging the gap between biblical studies and systematic theology," Johnson skillfully mines both the theological substance and the missional teaching of these letters through discerning exegesis. A brief introduction is followed by commentaries on each letter and a generous "Theological Horizons" section which further explores the letters' theological themes.

The two-part introduction is atypical of commentaries but well worth reading, especially for those unfamiliar with theological and missional hermeneutics. Johnson first describes the nature and function of the theological interpretation of Scripture and outlines his interpretive framework, which focuses on those "elements of the text most useful for the continuing formation of the church into its proper identity as a missional community" (2). Second, he discusses only those background matters which "facilitate a fruitful theological engagement" (14), specifically the beginnings of the Thessalonian church and its sociopolitical context, which is appropriately considered throughout.

The commentary sections are well written and highly readable, following the thought flow of each letter. Johnson's interaction with the text is careful and informed, sufficiently thorough but not painfully exhaustive. He provides his own translation with marks of originality and footnotes on Greek grammar, syntax, and vocabulary which Greek students will appreciate. Still, non-Greek readers will find the commentary readily accessible.

The commentary emphasizes the public character of the Thessalonians' faith, demonstrating that "faith" (*pistis*) in these letters refers to "faithfulness and loyalty" (39) and is "an observable, ongoing, and costly turning away from society's idols to the living and true God, a public action that gets people talking" (230). The Thessalonians have been elected to participate in the *missio Dei* and to embody a Spirit-enabled pattern of life that is "cruciform in nature" and "expressed in loyalty to God and self-giving actions toward others" (47). Johnson unpacks this as the thrust of Paul's message, making the commentary a useful resource not only for scholars and serious students, but also for teachers and preachers focused on a textually based exposition of this message for the church today.

Johnson analyzes and clearly explains his interpretation of several of the more debated passages in the Thessalonian letters. For instance, he argues convincingly that Paul's supposed "anti-Semitic" invective in 1 Thess 2:14-16 is authentic, restrictive, and contextually reasonable. Moreover, he allows its tension with the broader Pauline corpus (especially Rom 9-11) to suggest a more nuanced view of God's wrath. Similarly, his discussion of 2 Thess 2:3-12 concerning "the man of lawlessness" is exegetically sharp, intellectually sane, and appropriately humble, especially with the further discussion in a later chapter titled "Paul's 'Anti-Christology.'"

The Theological Horizons section is a distinctive feature of this book, with additional chapters focusing on the letters' themes of holiness, election, mission, and eschatology. Certainly none of this is light reading, but it addresses a void apparent in many commentaries: the need to discuss important, and often complex, aspects of the letters' content within the broader canonical context and consider how that content instructs both biblical theology and the church.

Importantly, in this Theological Horizons section, Johnson does not allow eschatology to eclipse the other themes, including nearly thirty pages on "Holiness in 1 and 2 Thessalonians" and a significant (and erudite) chapter titled "Election, Mission and the Triune God." Here, one might suppose Johnson's Wesleyan tradition is coloring his inter-



pretation—perhaps only because of the emphasis on Spirit-enabled holiness—but a fairer assessment is that his theological views emerge from the text, not vice versa.

In addition to the excellent chapter, “Paul’s ‘Anti-Christology’” (mentioned above), one must not overlook the other chapters on eschatology, including: “Eschatology in 1 and 2 Thessalonians,” “On the (Secret) Rapture” (a critical evaluation of the dispensational interpretive framework relative to 1 Thess 4:13-18), and “You Wonder Where the Spirit Went: The Parousia as a Pneumatological Event in the Thessalonian Correspondence.”

Any weaknesses of Johnson’s volume are far overshadowed by its strengths as a scholarly, but immensely relevant, interaction with the Thessalonian letters. The theme of Spirit-enabled sanctification into a cruciform pattern of life, which is ably expounded throughout, challenges the church today, including those of us in the Stone-Campbell heritage. As such, teachers and preachers should follow Johnson’s lead and avoid making the Thessalonian letters primarily (or *only*) about eschatology, but more deliberately about the church’s participation in the ongoing *missio Dei*.

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