

Book Reviews

J. Caleb CLANTON. *The Philosophy of Religion of Alexander Campbell*. Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 2013. 207 pp. \$37.80.

A renowned Christian apologist and religious leader of early nineteenth-century America, Alexander Campbell forged an identity as a theologian and perceptive debater. Clanton asserts that Campbell also saw himself as a philosopher (12). Clanton argues that Campbell's role in religion overshadowed his philosophic contribution for both those who study philosophy and equally for those who focus upon his theological ideas. Clanton's carefully researched volume sets out to "reconstruct, explain, and evaluate the main contours of Campbell's philosophy of religion" (1).

Clanton divides his book into five chapters, following his valuable chapter introducing Campbell, the remaining four thematically organized chapters critically examine four foundational elements of Campbell's philosophy of religion. Clanton decisively notes that "Restoration traditions have tended to neglect the discipline of philosophy in general" (9). Conversely, philosophers generally overlook Campbell as a fellow philosopher.

In the second chapter Clanton dissects Campbell's "revealed-idea" argument premise by premise. He demonstrates a comprehensive awareness of modern philosophic ideas and deftly integrates Campbell's conceptual philosophy on the existence of God, his sense of natural theology, and a Christian theism informed by biblical revelation with the modern. Clanton lauds the creativity of Campbell, but appropriately raises major objection to his unique construct.

Clanton devotes the third chapter to Campbell's view of miracles as evidentiary for the truth of Christianity and for Jesus' resurrection. Campbell's exigency for the role of miracles derived in part from his rejection of what he understood as the extremes of a religion of enthusiasm or a deism that rejected the supernatural. Campbell's view hinged upon the "historicity of divine miracles" to the point that he defined them as "supernatural facts" (61). He concluded that the reality of the supernatural attested the divine nature of the messenger and the message. Clanton carefully lays out Hume's argument against miracles juxtaposed with Campbell's philosophic response. Clanton judiciously parses Campbell's logic. His critique recognizes the weaknesses in both Hume's arguments and in Campbell's.

Chapter four picks up Campbell's answers to the perennial questions of the presence of evil in the world and the related problem of "Divine Hiddenness." Clanton's work on this second problem fills a particular gap in studies on Campbell. Unlike some of his contemporaries, Campbell attempted to formulate a reasoned response to legitimate questions about evil and God's omnipotence. Clanton deduces a second evidential argument (99) from the presence of evil in Campbell's writings, known as "gratuitous evils." The presence of certain types of evil does not appear to serve any greater purpose of good.

Clanton's final chapter shifts from apologetics to Campbell's understanding of the connections between morality and religion. For Campbell "Divine Revelation" was essential to knowing God. He perceived five basics for moral philosophy: origin, nature, relations, obligations, and destiny of mankind (119). Clanton extends earlier works on Campbell's applied

ethics to include his moral epistemology, which for Campbell requires knowledge from the divine source. Clanton applies this conceptual framework to the problem known to many in the Stone-Campbell Movement as the “Silence of Scripture.” If biblical revelation is essential to moral behavior, how do Christians deal with the absence of revelation?

Clanton’s important work fills a gap in the historiography of Campbell as philosopher. This timely production updates older works with an informed view on Campbell’s philosophy, which Clanton rightly argues undergirds Campbell’s theology. Clanton’s difficulty lies in producing a text for professional philosophers and for the Church layman. A glossary of terms and philosophic givens would enhance the book for the latter. The section on Campbell’s philosophic influences begs for a section tracing those he influenced in their philosophy. This is an excellent volume for the serious scholar, the well-rounded philosophers, and those indebted to the movement founded by Alexander Campbell.

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D.G. HART. *From Billy Graham to Sarah Palin: Evangelicals and the Betrayal of American Conservatism.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011. 237 pp. \$25.00.

Are American Evangelicals politically conservative? Hart wishes it were so; however, he fears that the glory days in which evangelicals and political conservatives seemed to be singing from the same hymnal may have come to an end. Near the close of the book, he expresses his frustration clearly: “During the last twenty-five years evangelical writers have either overtly criticized or shown complete indifference to political conservatism” (177). He laments the fact that such is true.

Throughout the book’s seven chapters, Hart develops arguments that question the true conservatism of Evangelicals, but he does this in the context of taking the reader through an interesting historical survey of primarily twentieth-century Evangelicalism with an emphasis on the years between the Scopes Trial and the early twenty-first century. Chapter one provides an excellent and succinct historical review of twentieth-century conservative Protestantism. Hart has tremendous familiarity with Evangelicalism and its major and minor players, as well as the ideas that dominate the minds of Evangelicals through each decade of the twentieth century.

In chapters two through seven Hart lays out how Evangelicalism moves from progressives like Mark Hatfield and Richard Mouw to historians such as Donald Dayton, Mark Noll, and George Marsden before the “party crashers” like Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson enter the scene. Then he turns to such writers as Charles Colson and Ralph Reed as they add their mark to the Evangelicalism of the 1980s and early 1990s. In chapters six and seven he focuses his attention on the “left turn” changes within Evangelicalism and gives attention to Evangelicals like Jim Wallis and Tony Campolo, before finally addressing the contributions of such spokespersons as Bill Hybels and Rick Warren.

As much as Hart is an advocate for a merger between Evangelical faith and political conservative ideology, he recognizes that the two ways of thinking were never completely in step: “Evangelicals may have sung ‘The Star-Spangled Banner’ with relish, but their interest in political formalities, the sorts of questions that yielded the constitutionalism, federalism,

and republicanism of the framers, was of secondary importance. Before polity came morality and righteousness.” (89-90).

The last chapter is his advocacy chapter—Hart wants to tell his reader why it is important to be politically conservative. He goes through various interesting arguments, including the notion that conservatism is a way forward. He concludes that “Evangelicals should kick the tires of conservatism and give it a test drive” (226). However, by the end of the book he is not optimistic that Evangelicalism can become politically conservative.

For anyone interested in understanding the scope of Evangelicalism and the history of the relationship between Evangelicalism and conservatism, this is an excellent resource. The book may serve graduate students best. Hart’s text is tedious at times. Given the large number of surveys available today, it was surprising that Hart does not take advantage of much of that material. Finally, the title of the book is misleading, as this is not a book about either Graham or Palin. In fact, in the index Palin’s name is referenced only twice, and both of those references are in the introduction to the book. Though catchy, the title is not descriptive of the contents. Despite these minor concerns, Hart is an insider to Evangelicalism’s intellectual history—both in its social and political expressions; thus, this book is an excellent resource for grasping the tension between the faith and the politics of twentieth- and early twenty-first-century Evangelicalism in the United States.

KATHY J. PULLEY

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Martin M. MARTY. *Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s Letters and Papers from Prison*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011. 296 pp. \$24.95.

The countless readers of Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s *Letters and Papers from Prison*, so profoundly affected by that poignant, sublime work, would leap at the chance to sit across the table from Marty to discuss the life of this book. Such a person would relish the chance to hear Marty tell stories of this volume, muse about its varied interpreters, and reflect on his own view of its central themes and the reasons for its lasting significance. Anyone who holds this volume in the *Lives of Great Books* series has just such a precious opportunity.

This biography of a book is a great exposition of the various social and literary contexts in which it has been interpreted and read. As Marty says, “A biography of a book will specially focus on its soul, the content and message it emits, and then the human responses to it” (20). Thus, Marty encourages the reader to engage the *Letters* in conversation as a way to read what he aptly calls a classic.

The biography follows a semi-chronological order in its narrative. Rather than a systematically structured lecture on the history of interpretation of the *Letters*, Marty has written a book that captures what it might be like to listen to Marty over a long dinner as he reflects on the book and its interpreters across time and space.

Chapter 1 gives a general introduction to the historical context and circumstances of the writing of the *Letters* and something of its character, including a discussion of the publication history of the book. Chapter 2 reveals how the collection of letters from Bonhoeffer were collected and published, a process conducted by Eberhard Bethge, Bonhoeffer’s longtime friend and close confidant. Chapter 3 takes up the controversial contents of *Letters* found in the later

letters, as well as the relatively late interpretation of Ralf K. Wüstenberg. The chapter ends, however, with the tantalizing statement that what made the *Letters* famous was the many radical interpretations of the *Letters* based on its often contradictory themes (72).

The bulk of the book focuses on these interpretations and their bearing on the development of the life of the *Letters*. The next two chapters make three stops: East Germany (chapter 4), the US and the UK (chapter 5). Chapter 4 focuses on the book’s “travels east” and addresses the appropriation of *Letters* by theologians working in a post-WWII Communist context. Chapter 5 turns to the book’s travels West in what Marty playfully dubs the book’s adolescent period. Here he addresses the association of the *Letters* (and Bonhoeffer) with existentialism and the Death of God movement.

Chapter 6 reviews the Catholic and Evangelical responses to Bonhoeffer and the *Letters*. In chapter 7, the narrative then turns to the international reception of the *Letters*, including a new variety of German receptions. Marty discusses the *Letters* as appropriated by liberation movements and theologies in South Africa and the work of John de Gruchy, South America, East Asian contexts, and finally back to the US for African American engagement.

The final chapter of the book narrows in on the central questions evoked by the *Letters* and its interpreters, and illustrates how the *Letters* might continue to be interpreted in the current context, especially on the meaning of religion in the multifaceted contemporary global scene. Here also, Marty gives us a glimpse of his vision of the continuity in *Letters*.

The book covers a vast range of time, places, figures, and schools of thought in its biography. Yet throughout, Marty’s prose is accessible and engaging. This is no dry academic treatise. However, the exposition of the life of the book is primarily in its academic reception. Thus, the book gives a great entrée into the literary context of the book and would serve as a great research tool in that way. However, no close analysis is given to its lay reception or import, though it is mentioned briefly throughout. Despite his fair and important attention to the academic reception of the book, I would have also been interested in the popular-level and otherwise nonacademic reception of this book, especially given Marty’s position that the book is a classic, and ought to be engaged as such by the ordinary reader.

Given the academic focus of the subject-matter, the style, which I cast as a dinner conversation with Marty, is at times a liability. The narrative flow of the book is somewhat scattered, especially towards the end. Yet this is a “weakness” that flows from the strength of the book. Like most stories by seasoned individuals, the narrative proceeds with its own logic that others may not be able to pick up on while still enjoying the narrative. A story is often worth hearing even if it does not follow logically from what came before!

Overall, the book would be great for a nonacademic audience, readers who have been shaped by *Letters*, and those looking for an introduction to the major interpretations of Bonhoeffer and *Letters*. Its writing style, while difficult to follow at times, is written in an accessible and unassuming way, making it ideal for undergraduates as well.

JOSEPH M. KAUSLICK
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Robert F. REA. *Why Church History Matters: An Invitation to Love and Learn from Our Past.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2014. 231 pp. \$20.00.

Among the legions of people today for whom church history is a matter of exquisite indifference, perhaps no group is more skeptical of its value than a rather large subset of

Christians. Not only do these Christians partake of the prevalent cultural devaluation of history, but in many cases, as Rea notes in this volume, they also have specifically theological reasons for their dismissal of the study of the history of Christianity. For such Christians, post-apostolic church history is a dreary concatenation of events and trends whose deviation from authentic Christianity is manifest. Insofar as it has any value at all, church history can serve as a warning against granting “human traditions” any degree of authority. For such Christians, then, loving the Christian past, as commended by Rea’s subtitle, is oxymoronic. Rea knows well what he is up against, and it is to his great credit that he is not only willing to make a strong case for church history nonetheless, but that he does so in a way that is maximally generous to those Christians most inclined to be dubious.

Indeed, the tone of the book is not defensive, but rather celebratory. For Rea, many Christians have been depriving themselves of incalculable theological, exegetical, spiritual, and pastoral riches by not giving a hearing to the voices of the Christian past. But Rea is less interested in lamenting such a self-incurred impoverishment than in seizing what he believes to be an auspicious moment for the rediscovery of the Christian tradition in its spatial breadth and chronological depth. Auspicious, because despite the fact that many Christians continue to be doubtful about the value of church history, in the past few decades there has been a strong crosscurrent coursing through some of those very Protestant traditions most prone to belittle church tradition. Indeed, one of the most useful features of the book is Rea’s documenting of the trend among “Bible-focused Christians” (not the happiest locution; were not medieval monks, on Rea’s own admission, eminently Bible-focused?) to reacquaint themselves with the treasures of the Christian past. For Rea, this trend warrants his book, which seeks to capitalize upon this nascent movement to revitalize the church of today through a deeper knowledge of the church of yesterday. What Rea’s book offers to its readers is a thoughtful and cogent justification for restoring church history to its rightful place at the very center of theological education.

The first part of the book surveys the various views of church tradition that can be found among Christian communities today, from the Eastern Orthodox Church to Protestant free churches. I think that many of Rea’s “Bible-focused” readers will find his discussion of Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox views on tradition to be especially helpful. The second part, in many ways the centerpiece of the book, articulates the value of church history. According to Rea, the study of the Christian past is valuable because it enlarges our Christian community, which thereby calls us to a greater accountability, widens our horizons, and exposes limitations in our own understandings of what it means to be Christian. For Rea, studying church history should not be an exercise in nostalgic self-flagellation in which we bewail the present and poeticize the past. But it should serve as antidote to the sort of progressive triumphalism that so pervades modernity. The third and final part of the book is an attempt to show how the study of the history of the church can bear fruit for those toiling in the vineyards of Christian ministry. For Rea, the study of the church’s past will pay dividends in the areas of preaching, exegesis, ethics, spirituality, *inter alia*. Rea offers a number of concrete examples of such dividends, indeed perhaps too many; I wonder if this section of the book would have been even more effective if Rea had used fewer examples but developed them in greater depth.

Rea’s proposal is, to this reviewer at least, timely, sensible, and sagacious. His book deserves a wide readership among “Bible-focused Christians,” including those belonging to

the Stone-Campbell tradition. In many ways it is more geared toward pastors and teachers than students, at least undergraduates; many of Rea's reflections seem to be offered for the benefit of those who teach church history to Christians from traditions that purport (ironically enough, as Rea points out) to be averse to tradition. However, the book could be profitably read by seminarians who, as ministers, may wish to broaden the theological and historical horizons of those they serve. Indeed, the supreme value of the book is the reservoir of rhetorical strategies it offers to those who wish to commend study of the Christian past to those, both in the desk and in the pew, inclined to skepticism about its value.

Rea's volume is not without limitations. Rea is so eager to accentuate the positive aspects of the Christian tradition that he perhaps underplays how utterly bizarre and even repugnant much of the Christian past will appear to Christians today. To be fair, Rea repeatedly acknowledges that when we study the Christian tradition, we will discover ideas and practices that we will choose to reject. He also wisely cautions contemporary Christians to try to understand the most offensive beliefs and acts of their forebears in their historical context rather than simply recoil before them in horror. But despite his warning against seeing the whole sweep of church history "as a veritable smorgasbord of options from which we may choose whatever we like" (117), Rea's overall approach runs the risk of historical cherry-picking. At times he seems to suggest that Christians today should appropriate the best insights and imitate the noblest behavior of their antecedents, while placing a merciful curtain over what we find disagreeable. All of this is understandable given Rea's stated purpose to celebrate the riches of the Christian tradition. But Rea could perhaps have done more to prepare his readers to negotiate the sheer otherness of past forms of Christianity. For example, for roughly an entire millennium virtually every Christian in the world accepted the notion that the celibate life was spiritually superior to the married. This is likely a view that the contemporary Christian will choose to reject. Is it nonetheless possible for Christians today to learn something valuable from articulations of this view, and from those countless Christian lives that were animated by it? In other words, what might "learning from" look like in cases where there is no "agreeing with"? The book would have benefitted from the inclusion of a couple of such case studies.

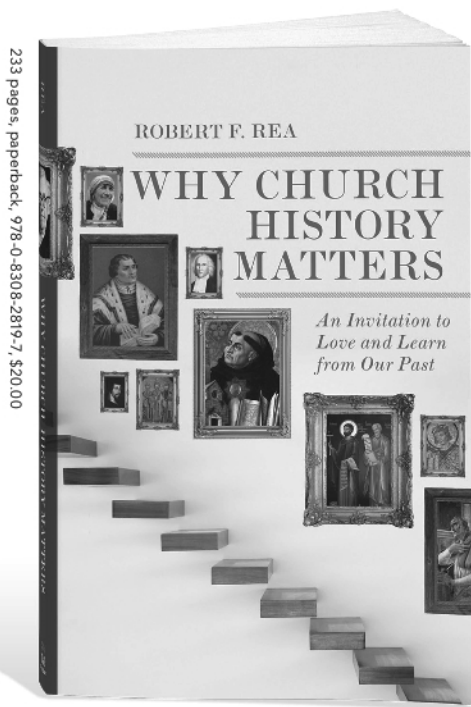
A related and more basic question is perhaps even more critical, namely, how does the Christian go about deciding what to reject and what to assimilate from the Christian past? One of the leitmotifs of the book is the importance of the *consensus fidelium* (the consensus of the faithful), which encompasses the core convictions shared by Christian believers across temporal, cultural, and ecclesiastical lines. For Rea, Christians today should look for such core convictions among their forebears, and when they find them, confidently assent to them. Unsurprisingly, then, Rea casts his lot with the classical Christian tradition, whose development and destiny were decisively shaped by the ecumenical councils. The question that Rea never satisfactorily addresses is that of ecclesiastical authority. Rea himself admits that consensus among Christians is never entirely complete, and indeed, the ecumenical councils themselves are proof, products as they are of acute theological contention. Of course, one might commend the Nicene Creed and the Chalcedonian definition for their inherent theological cogency, but they must also be reckoned with as exercises of episcopal (and indeed imperial!) authority. Church doctrine is certainly more than a mere function of ecclesiastical authority, but in order to understand how, say, the Nicene understanding of God became virtually universal, indeed, the *consensus fidelium*, one must look to extrinsic

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"Robert Rea has done something unique in this volume. He has dispelled the false notion that knowing the Bible makes understanding church history irrelevant. He has made church history a vital cornerstone for those who desire to serve the church well today and into the future. He has done this by taking the time to tie it deliberately and directly to the local church and practical ministry. Written by a veteran of the classroom and the church, this volume serves both venues well."

Mark Noll, University of Notre Dame

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factors as well as intrinsic ones. The issue of authority is a particularly thorny one for Christians from free church traditions, but such Christians would do well to grasp the nettle, and I wish that Rea had pushed them to do so.

All books have limitations, and the fact that Rea's book is no exception should not obscure its many virtues. Although Rea does not explicitly or exclusively write for Stone-Campbell readers, they certainly belong to his intended audience, and he deftly obviates some of the stock objections that they might have to embracing the study of church history. That a Stone-Campbell scholar has written a book that so passionately but prudently celebrates the heritage of the universal church is itself cause for celebration.

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Paul F. BRADSHAW and Maxwell E. JOHNSON. *The Eucharistic Liturgies: Their Evolution and Interpretation.* Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2012. 368 pp. \$39.95.

Contemporary Christian forms buckle now as ever under the mounting weight of harsh secular rebuke and internal discontent. Detractors demand the church's audience, issuing their vociferous protests with the biting passion of a thousand lovers scorned. And the faithful wonder: Can peace ever be achieved?

In his seminal *Three Rival Versions of Moral Inquiry* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1990) Alasdair MacIntyre famously insisted that peace between contending worldviews (philosophies, "crafts") can be achieved only when mutual consideration is given to the distinct historical traditions which undergird and validate each of them. He further alleged that Christian communities (*qua* Christian communities) deal themselves a deathblow to ignore or otherwise to disavow the traditions to which they owe their ritual and philosophical identities, urging instead that critical diligence be given to the traditional (historical) context of all Christian manifestations.

Writing as they do a *descriptive* and not a *prescriptive* (xiv) book, authors Bradshaw and Johnson show little awareness in this volume of either of these tensions or of MacIntyre's proposals. Nevertheless, theirs is the sort of robust traditio-historical survey that many readers of a Christian bent (particularly those sensitive to MacIntyre's cause) will construe as reaffirming the integrity of their cherished conventions—despite their seeming ambiguity and contradiction.

The diverse modes in which the ancient ritual of the Christian Eucharist has come to be observed, contend Bradshaw and Johnson, all derive from a single Jewish (also, Greco-Roman) tradition that would likely have been the mealtime custom of Jesus as reported in the NT (ch. 1). Early Christian commemoration of the Lord's Supper took its cues from the contextual (i.e., regional) distinctions of first-century worshipers (ch. 2): "[T]here is probably no such thing as a pure *ordo* existing anywhere in some idealized form apart from its very concrete, cultural, ecclesial, and linguistic ritual expressions" (29). It was not until the fourth and fifth centuries when Christianity was bestowed with imperial honors that the eucharistic liturgies were standardized in any measure, and that generally for didactic and catechetical interests (ch. 3). Language pertaining to the real presence, that is, "consecratory" language,

was used increasingly during these early periods, though only to signify that the *likeness* of Christ's body and blood had somehow been imparted to the emblems (ch. 4).

As Christendom came to be distinguished between East and West, the authors note, so too did the theological underpinnings of the Eucharist. In the East, greater emphasis than in the West was placed on the liturgical *ceremony*, seeing the Eucharist not as an isolated feature of the service, but as drawing upon the entire liturgy for its consecration (ch. 5). Eucharistic theology was equally robust in the Medieval West, however, as the consecrated emblems *themselves* were considered to have been imbued with salvific import, and the laity increasingly excused from direct participation in—and unmediated access to—the ritual (ch. 6). These developments continued into the sixteenth century as Protestants broke from Roman supervision to deny a strict transubstantial construal of the Eucharist—a doctrine condemned by Catholics at the Council of Trent (ch. 7). Bradshaw and Johnson round out their survey with a broad assessment of contemporary eucharistic customs, most of which have aimed to reorient the ritual to the heart of the church's liturgy, as well as to expand its lay accessibility (ch. 8).

This book has many features worth commending. It is thoroughly researched, coherent, and well-footnoted, though contented nontraditionalists (perhaps of a Stone-Campbell or other Free Church persuasion) may find it dull and impractical for just these reasons. The authors do not skimp on primary sources, drawing heavily upon a rich trove of ancient liturgical texts; indeed, the book owes much of its girth to lengthy quotations of traditional prayers and anaphoras. Particularly useful are the chapter summaries and illustrative tables, which help to sift through and condense the book's most relevant material.

Notwithstanding these structured features, however, the book is laden with dense, technical terminology that may leave casual readers fatigued or frustrated. On the other hand, readers already familiar with the standard jargon of liturgical contexts will appreciate the authors' depth of historical insight. This volume would thus serve as a fine supplement to college or seminary curricula, the lay scholar's bookshelf, or even the scholastic arsenal of the MacIntyrean apologist: "The desire to overcome the barriers that had for centuries divided one denomination from another inevitably led [in the modern period] to an examination of the differences in liturgical customs that existed between the churches and to the wish not to do separately what we could do together in the area of liturgical revision" (299).

WAYNE G. MASTIN

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Elesha J. COFFMAN. *The Christian Century and the Rise of the Protestant Mainline.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2013. 288 pp. \$22.40.

Coffman, Assistant Professor of Church History at the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, traces the history of *The Christian Century* (*ChrCent*) magazine from 1900 to 1960 as a way to explore the history and identity of the mainline tradition.

Like the categories "Fundamentalist" and "evangelical," defining "mainline" is a notoriously difficult task. Should we define it, as various scholars have done, as a set of denominations (the "Seven Sisters"), a mode of religiosity (identified by characteristic beliefs and practices), a social network, or an attempted religious establishment? Coffman argues that the mainline is all of these things, though not reducible to any one of them, which makes it

challenging to study the mainline as a whole. In order to get a sense of the whole, Coffman suggests we consider the mainline as a tradition in the sense articulated by Alisdair MacIntyre: “an historically extended, socially embodied argument” (6). According to Coffman, *ChrCent* has been the premier forum for this argument for more than 100 years, making it an excellent lens through which to understand the rise of the mainline tradition.

In chapter one, Coffman outlines the early history of the magazine with particular attention to the people who played key roles in its formation. She argues for the centrality of cultural capital, especially in the form of higher education, to a *ChrCent* and the mainline’s ascent to prominence.

Chapter two gives a short sketch of the history of Disciples of Christ in order to understand the peculiar traits that shaped *ChrCent* as well as Charles Morrison, the editor of *ChrCent* from 1908 to 1947. In this chapter, Coffman demonstrates how denominational sparring fostered a tendency for editors to speak for a broad constituency without reflecting popular opinion. Chapter three goes on to show how, amid a crisis in elite Protestant journalism in the 1920s, strategic decisions by Morrison enabled *ChrCent* to take a more prominent role in national conversations going forward.

In her fourth chapter, Coffman draws from congratulatory letters mailed to *ChrCent* on Morrison’s 20th anniversary with the magazine to paint a portrait of the magazine’s audience. Her analysis shows how *ChrCent* did not exercise its most powerful influence in converting American Protestants to its views. Rather, in the process of identifying and defining which writers, institutions, and ideas belong to the emerging mainline tradition it offered readers an opportunity to identify with that tradition.

In chapter five, Coffman focuses on the inner conflict in the nascent mainline tradition in the 1930s, especially that between Morrison and Reinhold Niebuhr, which Coffman views as a microcosm of larger conflicts in the tradition.

Chapter six is an analysis of the postwar phase of the developing mainline tradition in the 1940s and ’50s, specifically focusing on three major article series in *ChrCent* in 1946, 1947, and 1950. Coffman sees a strong tension during this period in which the *idea* of the mainline achieved unprecedented success, whereas mainline *ideas* about specific social issues and about the mechanics of Protestant cooperation often failed to gain traction.

In her final chapter, Coffman discusses *ChrCent*’s battle against *Christianity Today* and Billy Graham for influence in Protestant America, and shows how the mainline responded to the rise of neo-evangelicals by expanding its cultural capital from an ecumenical to an inter-faith endeavor and ceding its quest to win America to the neo-evangelicals. Coffman shows how at this point, around 1960, the mainline finally got its name and outlines what that name communicated.

Coffman argues her thesis persuasively, backing it up with extensive and meticulous research. This volume is the most illuminating book I have read in some time. It sheds a unique light on mainline Protestantism, *ChrCent* (Coffman’s book is the first and only critical study of the magazine), the United States, Disciples of Christ, religious journalism, and Charles Clayton Morrison. It is indispensable reading for anyone wishing to understand any of these topics.

GARRETT MATTHEW EAST
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John FEA. *Why Study History? Reflecting on the Importance of the Past.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013. 192 pp. \$19.99.

This helpful volume is targeted to undergraduates to answer the question, “What is history?” In an engaging style, Fea leads readers to consider what is meant by “history,” its relationship to truth, and its usability. The book engages Christian concerns with history with an excellent chapter on the difficulties of writing a “providential history” that claims to see clearly what God has done in the past. Instead the book recommends a more humble “perhaps” when discussing God’s hand in history, a “perhaps” that recognizes the mystery of God.

More positively, Fea discusses Christian resources for the study of the past, including the *imago Dei* as an incentive to study all of human history, not just that of elites. The doctrine of original sin helps historians explain the depth of evil often encountered in history. These and other Christian doctrines guide historians as they write from a moral perspective without moralizing, that is, without making simplistic moral judgments of good guys and bad guys in the past.

As a Christian historian, Fea believes that “The very practice of entering the past—no matter what the character of the people we encounter—teaches us the social virtues that are essential to making the world a better place.” Thus history has the power to transform society.

In a time when education has become job training, this book’s last chapter asks, “So What Can You Do with a History Major?” Answers include, work for social justice, become a writer, work in marketing and communication, pursue a business career, go into sales, work in television sports, become a filmmaker, and go into ministry, become a doctor, or pursue a career in criminal justice. The chapter gives specific examples of history majors in each vocation.

The book’s epilogue, “History and the Church,” reminds me of another recent book, *Why Church History Matters* by Robert F. Rea (InterVarsity, 2014) that is more focused on Christian history. I recommend both books highly.

GARY HOLLOWAY
Executive Director
World Convention

Dean FLEMMING. *Recovering the Full Mission of God: A Biblical Perspective on Being, Doing and Telling.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2013. 288 pp. \$24.00.

This work explores two questions: “What then, does Scripture have to tell us about the relationship of being, doing and telling in Christian mission? And how should that form and inform our participation today?” (14, emphasis removed from the original). As soon as he asks the questions, Flemming answers them: “The New Testament reveals a seamless integration of speaking, practicing, and embodying the good news” (15). The rest of the book supports that claim, with words like “seamless” recurring often (96).

Flemming argues on two fronts: against any who consider mission mainly a verbal activity—telling people about Jesus—with works of mercy only in support, versus others who consider mission a lifestyle of service and compassion that renders words unnecessary. True biblical mission includes both. He finds support for his thesis throughout Scripture: in the OT (two chapters), the Gospels (three chapters), the Acts (one chapter), the Pauline corpus

(two chapters), and one chapter each on 1 Peter and the Revelation. Each chapter ends with a helpful summary and application, and the whole book ends with “concluding reflections” that extend the application still further.

As a NT scholar (PhD, Aberdeen), Flemming focuses mainly on that part of Scripture. He argues briefly but not in detail against scholars who take opposing views, instead relying on clear, detailed analysis of the biblical texts to prove his point. He arrives at balanced, supportable conclusions: the mission of the church succeeds and extends the mission of Jesus (82-85). Another example: Although the whole church preaches, teaches, confronts, and heals, not each individual Christian bears the same responsibility for each role (257).

And so on. Flemming argues his case so cogently, and comes to such balanced conclusions, that the reader finds it hard to disagree with him. Only in the chapter on the Revelation does he seem to stretch the text, where he finds “the book of Revelation, quite unexpectedly . . . one of the New Testament’s deepest reservoirs for understanding how the church participates in the mission of God” (249). He cites much data from the text of Revelation, but the connection of some of it with mission in any but the broadest sense remains unclear.

This book does what it sets out to do, and does it well. It will work for undergraduate students in missions courses, especially theology of mission.

CARL B. BRIDGES

Professor, New Testament

Johnson University, Tennessee

Ron HIGHFIELD. *God, Freedom and Human Dignity: Embracing a God-Centered Identity in a Me-Centered Culture.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2013. 229 pp. \$22.00.

Highfield, professor of religion at Pepperdine University, has written an interesting new book in theological anthropology that spans aspects of philosophy, theology, history, and a kind of apologetics. It is in two parts, the first critical and the second constructive. He first uses Charles Taylor and Alasdair MacIntyre to set out a genealogy of the (mis)development of modern understandings of human selfhood. In the second part, he draws much on Augustine, Kierkegaard, and Barth (with healthy doses of John and Paul) to argue for a more adequate understanding.

Highfield’s main point in the first part of the work is that the modern misunderstanding of the self, especially with respect to freedom and dignity, leads intrinsically to a competitive and alienating mis-relation with God, other humans, and our own selves. By accepting a will-driven and radically self-sufficient understanding of ourselves, Highfield argues that we cut ourselves off from the very dignity and freedom we are seeking.

Refreshingly, Highfield deals directly with the importance of metaphysics in anthropology. An adequate understanding of human knowing, willing, and destiny requires a basis in who and what human beings are. His major point, brought out in the second part of the work, is that human beings are called to be—and fundamentally are when they are being true to themselves—children of God, created and liberated by grace. The perfect example of this is Jesus, the Son of God, but human beings find their true selves as they accept his offer to

be adopted by God and become (as far as is possible for a merely created being) like him. Freedom and dignity are offered to us and gained by us relationally, as the beloved of God.

Theologically educated readers will want to give Highfield time to develop his points. The work is written for communication with undergraduates and in some cases uses language that he would probably not use in a higher-level treatise. It also has something of a moving viewpoint. For example, in the first (critical) part of the work, Highfield speaks of relationship with God as external to the human self. As he brings out in the second, (constructive) part, following Kierkegaard's lead, he considers relationship to God as constitutive of human personhood. Relationship to God is external to the human person *according to the truncated viewpoint of the modern self*. In the first part of the work he often speaks somewhat from this viewpoint, whereas in the second part he corrects it and offers a wider view.

This is in many ways a work of out-narration (*a lá* Milbank). In a central section of his constructive argument, for instance, Highfield uses Adler's three-part definition of human freedom, showing how the modern perspective that spawned it cannot measure up to its own standards and requirements, and how the genuine intention of the definition is better and more powerfully met by life in Christ.

As with any Arminian work of theology, one must ask the question of exactly how close to the wind it sails with respect to Pelagianism. Highfield has a robust understanding of original sin (although not necessarily an Augustinian one, in that he does not deal with inherited guilt), and he is also clear that God's grace is necessary for human happiness and salvation. In working out exactly how this grace moves the human heart, though, it is a good question as to whether the persuasive work of God he highlights and depends on lives up to the requirements set by that fallenness and need for grace.

In the concluding chapters of the work, Highfield identifies as his most radical claim that God loves us with the same love that God loves himself. If the divine missions of Son and Spirit truly are the Trinitarian relations within time, it is difficult to see how one can contest this striking point. For it was not an angel that God sent to save us, but he came himself, in his fullness, drawing us into relationship with him. And, the love God loves us by is himself, for his attributes are not different from his person. It is by this gift of love that we have being and salvation, and thereby freedom and dignity in all their forms.

This is an excellent work for its intended audience: primarily undergraduates at Christian colleges and universities. It is well written, theologically astute, and communicates foundational concepts in a way that is approachable for those who have a basic grasp of Christian doctrine. It would be useful in an undergraduate course dealing with any major aspect of theological anthropology.

STEVEN D. CONE
Associate Professor of Theology
Lincoln Christian University

Matthew LEVERING. *The Theology of Augustine: An Introductory Guide to His Most Important Works.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013. 224 pp. \$24.99.

In this significant new offering, Levering, professor of theology at Mundelein Seminary, presents an overview of the theology of Augustine by crafting interpretive summaries of seven of Augustine's works. While Levering admits at the start that introducing Augustine is

a near-impossible task, the works selected deal with the most central topics of Augustine's authorship as well as the three major controversies he engaged in. The works treated are: *On Christian Doctrine* (Scripture), *Answer to Faustus, A Manichean* (Manichean controversy, also dealing with Scripture), *Homilies on the First Epistle of John* (Donatist controversy), *On the Predestination of the Saints* (Pelagian controversy), *The Confessions* (spiritual autobiography, memory, Scripture, and time), *The City of God* (participatory ontology, history, and apologetics), and *The Trinity*.

Levering's work is helpful in mediating several difficult points, such as the important distinction of use and enjoy, the main point of Augustine's teaching on predestination, the examination of time at the end of the *Confessions*, Augustine's use of allegory, *City of God's* expansive explanation of the participatory character of history, and the shades of meaning in the psychological analogy. No mere summaries, each chapter includes substantial analysis and explanation; still, Levering sticks quite close to Augustine's text. The emphasis is on Augustine's mature work, not on early efforts such as *On Free Will*.

Again and again, Levering returns to the major themes of charity as the heart of life with God, the Church as the teacher and domain of charity, and Scripture, which is given within the Church and whose interpretation is subject to charity. He does not gloss over Augustine's difficulties, nor does he dwell on them. Neither Augustine's deficiencies nor his glories can be elaborated in a work that draws so much together in a reasonable length.

Levering's viewpoint is that of a mature modern Augustinian and benefits from the work done in his other examinations of Augustine. This is reflected in the extensive and excellent notes that take up a substantial portion of the volume. They contain a treasure-trove of references, pointing the interested student to works that can deepen his or her knowledge on almost any subject treated in the book.

Augustine is one of the greatest figures in Christian theology, but also a complex one. A work (such as Levering's) that genuinely brings one into contact with Augustine's thought is liable to raise the emotions that certain aspects of his authorship can occasion. Anyone from the free-church tradition, for example, may have difficulty overcoming the problematic nature of Augustine's condemnatory rhetoric and justification of religious violence against the Donatists. It is worth the effort, for the *Homilies on First John* contain important reflection on the interpretation of Scripture. Likewise, those from an Arminian background may struggle with the way Augustine handles critical questions on grace. Levering candidly admits that some of Augustine's viewpoints on grace do not make complete sense, but he also does an excellent job of bringing out the core of why Augustine affirmed what he did.

This work will be most useful to those who have already wrestled with Augustine or who are starting on that journey in a serious way. In approaching it, it is important to recognize the kind of work it is *not*. It is not a historical or biographical study intended to bring out the man Augustine, although it has a brief biography and historical and biographical comments throughout. Neither is it a topical study of Augustine's thought. The works studied do center on topics, but Levering's text is an interpretation of each work, not a systematic treatment of the topics.

The level of the text is for graduate students or, perhaps, advanced undergraduates. It would be a shame—and probably counterproductive—to try to read this book without also reading the works it comments on; Levering's text will be most helpful for understanding those texts in that encounter. The book would be useful, preferably with a reader, in any class-length study of Augustine. However, as Levering points out, the best use of the book,

as with Augustine's own works, is to grow closer to God in the life of charity, in submission to Scripture, joined together in his Church.

STEVEN D. CONE

Associate Professor of Theology
Lincoln Christian University

Jane Barter MOULAISSON. *Thinking Christ: Christology and Contemporary Ethics.* Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2012. 167 pp. \$25.00.

Do ancient attempts to explain the person and work of Jesus Christ have something to say to those who also attempt to do so in our contemporary context? According to Moulaison, this is indeed the case. In her thoughtful book, Moulaison selects some representative early Christian theologians, some contemporary theologians, and moderates a dialogue between the two concerning the major tenets of Christology and certain particular concerns of our culture. These include such issues as the relationship between church and empire, creation and incarnation, pluralism, and violence. The result is a creative, complex, and reflective work on the truths of the faith that have been professed through the centuries and key issues that consume contemporary Christianity.

Moulaison has some helpful insights. She weaves together complicated conversations that have surprising relevance to each other. One gets the sense that nothing she does here is done lightly. Her particular contribution is found in the way that she allows ancient voices to provide a path toward solution or healing in the various topics she discusses. For example, St. Augustine's thoughts on the gift of memory as (1) a means of reminding us of what God has done in the past when functioning properly, and (2) a means of reminding us that we are faulty and imperfect, especially when we forget, is brought into dialogue with Miroslav Volf's argument that not all memory is efficacious, but that "forgetting" violence and suffering can bring healing and forgiveness of one's enemies, rather than retribution or a tendency to be on guard against potential attack. Moulaison not only makes this interesting connection, but urges the reader to see the benefit of these insights when reflecting on the person of Jesus as a model for both remembrance and forgiveness.

Moulaison's strength is in the way she brings together dialogue partners whose thoughts were voiced centuries apart. This enterprise might be further strengthened by expanding the representation of contemporary theologians in her discussion. For each issue being addressed, it is often the case that Moulaison interacts with only one representative voice of contemporary thought—one that may or may not reflect a general contemporary perspective at all.

Those pursuing a theology, philosophy, patristics, or ethics graduate degree, as well as established scholars in those fields, would find this book helpful and engaging. Although she deals with complex issues, Moulaison does so with sincere regard and respect for all of her dialogue partners—both ancient and contemporary. Her work is certain to inspire new and refreshing thoughts on what it means to call Jesus "the Christ" in a world that increasingly rejects this appellation.

HOLLY J. CAREY

Professor of Biblical Studies
Point University

Miroslav VOLF. *A Public Faith: How Followers of Christ Should Serve the Common Good.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013. 192 pp. \$17.99.

In today's political climate, religious overtones, debates, and conflict abound in the US and abroad. Many fear outbreaks of violence in religious conflict; or worse yet oppressive and violent forms of religious totalitarianism. To alleviate these fears and mitigate the possibility of religious violence, many advocate for the exclusion of religion from public and political life, and to simply let politics be governed by secular reason alone. Into this climate, Volf offers an insightful and accessible heuristic for Christians to live out their commitments in service to the common good in a politically and religiously plural society. He aims to offer an alternative to religious totalitarianism on the one hand and the complete exclusion of religion on the other (xiv).

Volf argues that there is no one right way for Christians to engage the wider public. Instead, the nature of Christian engagement will depend on the dynamic interplay between 1) the center/identity of the Christian faith, and 2) the particular social and cultural situation of a Christian person or group (xv). The rest of the book seeks to clarify and specify this contention, summarized in the following: The Christian faith seeks to “mend the world” (xv) and thus ought to permeate all aspects of life. Yet this should occur not through coercion, but by bringing grace; that is, seeking the flourishing of all by bearing witness to Christ. And this concept of flourishing is itself a unique contribution of Christianity to the public sphere. Christians thereby can and ought to bear witness to Christ in a variety of political arrangements and cultures, though they should always seek to establish religious pluralism in the political sphere.

Volf's slim volume definitely deserves the awards it received. The argument combines depth of insight with comprehensive treatment. Further, the connections between public engagement and interreligious dialog do an excellent job of broadening the topic's relevance to contemporary issues. The book creates an excellent rationale for Christian public engagement for a general audience.

Yet the book is not without its shortcomings and rough spots. Volf tends to make overgeneralized claims without much explanation. The main thrust of his argument hinges on a particularly Christian concept of human flourishing that never gets developed in a very clear way, and even his clarifications are at times unclear. For example, his frequent use of the phrase “bear witness” could mean something very different to an Anabaptist than an Episcopalian. Yet this language is not unpacked beyond specifying that the Christian faith should not be coercive.

Additionally, while Volf's analysis of varying responses can be insightful, it often suffers from overclassification and overgeneralization. Take for example the strong distinction he makes early in the book between prophetic and mystical religion. “The first advocates active transformation of the world, and the second encourages flights of the soul to God” (6). Beyond the fact that he admits that he does not see the “mystical” malfunctioning in Christianity, this distinction is artificial at best, and misleading at worst. What of figures like Thomas Merton, monastics and contemplatives whose encounters with God led them to engage the world for its transformation?

Overall, though, Volf's book is an excellent entree into the topics of political theology and the interplay between religion and politics. The book's general audience makes it ideal

for undergraduate courses and small group discussion in churches. The book could go a long way toward deepening Christian self-awareness of and motivation for its ongoing public engagement. Those more familiar with the topic and wanting to delve deeper into it, or those with specifically academic interests, however, are better off reading something else.

JOSEPH M. KAUSLICK
Abilene Christian University

Veli-Matti KÄRKKÄINEN. *Christ and Reconciliation: A Constructive Christian Theology for the Pluralistic World.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013. 407 pp. \$28.00.

In this monograph (the first in a series of five anticipated volumes on various loci of Christian theology), Fuller Theological Seminary professor Kärkkäinen reflects on Christology—the person and work of Christ—in a “new key.” As such, his discussion of Christology reflects Christianity’s rapidly increasing encounter with other faiths and interaction with emerging perspectives. This book is both enlightening in view of current themes and at times provocative.

Kärkkäinen begins by explaining the “new key” of his theological method and then spends the vast balance of the book in two large sections entitled simply “Christ” (referencing his person) and “Reconciliation” (his work). The “new key” which informs Kärkkäinen’s analysis endeavors to account for the “post-world” in which the West practices theology (including postmodern, postfoundationalist, postcolonial, and postmetaphysical, but acknowledging a lack of consensus as to our precise location in such a world) and values a theology that is coherent, inclusive, dialogical, and hospitable. In the large section on “Christ,” pursuing a “dynamic Christology” Kärkkäinen covers narrative aspects to Christ’s identity, reaffirms Chalcedonian Christology as a minimum (including preexistence and incarnation), affirms traditional titles for Christ as well as titles from, for example, Africa (i.e., Chief, Ancestor), discusses the relationship of Christ and the Holy Spirit, and considers, in turn, the relationship of Christ and Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism. The large section on “Reconciliation” covers atonement theories, violence and a theology of the cross, Trinitarian aspects of reconciliation including the “suffering God,” the church’s role in reconciliation, and the relationship of Christian soteriology with Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism.

Two strengths of the book are noted: (1) its focus on a *contemporary* Christology; and (2) its interaction with the aforementioned other world religions. As a contemporary Christology (1), the book includes issues that are currently stirring the academic community, some of which are noted above. One example is the book’s discussion of “postcolonial Christology,” Kärkkäinen advocating sensitivity toward the misuse of Christ in power relationships. Additionally, in discussing pluralism, Kärkkäinen assesses John Cobb’s “process Christology,” John Hick’s metaphorical notions of Christ, and the pluralistic views of Roman Catholics Paul Knitter and Raimundo Panikkar. Regarding world religions (2), Kärkkäinen, as to Judaism, notes a “resurgence of interest in Jesus among Jewish scholars” and further considers whether Christology is “inherently anti-Semitic” and the nature of the messiah. Regarding Hinduism, Kärkkäinen explores Hinduism’s view of Christ, concepts that may provide avenues for Christian-Hindu communication (such as avatars), and, more specifically, how to communicate the “‘uniqueness’ of Jesus” from within the Hindu context.

Two weaknesses are noted. First, readers preferring a chronologically arranged book tracking the development of christological thought will have to look elsewhere. The arrangement here is on select issues, which often does include historical discussion. Second, classically minded readers may occasionally find the book provocative. For instance, in discussing God's involvement in salvation, Kärkkäinen, citing Moltmann, states that “[a]ll suffering becomes God's so that God may overcome it,” and, quoting Moltmann approvingly, states that at the cross “God abandoned God and contradicted himself.” These statements raise issues as to divine transcendence and, as Kärkkäinen notes, aseity.

Finally, this intermediate level book seems geared toward academics or seminary students. The book remains at the theoretical level, and the interaction with contemporary christological debates will benefit the academic, as will the well-considered discussions of the world religions. However, ministers seeking to broaden horizons or facing such current issues, as well as ministers or missionaries encountering any of the aforementioned religions, will find at least portions of this book essential.

KELLY R. BAILEY

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary

L. Scott KELLUM. *Preaching the Farewell Discourse.* Nashville: B&H, 2014. 350 pp. \$29.95.

The Farewell Discourse of Jesus in John 13:31–17:26 is a thought-provoking, theologically packed passage. The movement and flow of Jesus' words are open to varied interpretations and applications. The challenge is to understand the text and then to teach and preach it. Kellum attempts to do both.

This book is a combination of hermeneutics, exegesis, and homiletics. Kellum's approach is extremely scholarly when it comes to the use of Greek and a detailed approach to John's literary style. He explains well what the text says. He is extremely explicit (probably too much for most pastors and even some professors) about the structure and movement of the text. Kellum declares his hermeneutical approach at the beginning of the book (sixty-six pages) and expands upon it in the appendix. Throughout each section he gives a detailed outline that can be used for a sermon. At the end of the book, fourteen sermon outlines are delineated to cover the Farewell Discourse. He attempts, very well, to balance exegesis of the text, and then to apply the main concepts for today.

The format is easy to follow: analyzing the text, interpreting the text, and preaching the text. He repeats that sequence throughout the book. It is steady and consistent. The only problem with the format is the 'relational structure' charts. They are much too small in print. His point would be better made if the charts were more readable. This adjustment would allow more effort to think through their implications than trying to discern their content. As for the exegesis: his approach and conclusions are excellent. They are appropriately conservative in nature. As with all authors, theological perspective comes through. Kellum clearly wants to protect “Once in grace, always in grace” (138). He is not an Open Theist (167, not that I am). He is not necessarily a literalist (177, to ask in Jesus' name is to ask on the basis of Jesus' character and authority).

Kellum makes pointed, and in my opinion, appropriate comments about preaching. He states that cute without content is meaningless. As a preacher he does not want people so

much to laugh as to tremble; to stave off boredom as to hunger for God's word; to transform lives, not just have the congregation enjoy the sermon. These are great points for homiletics as Kellum approaches his exegesis. The literary style of John is discussed throughout the book. This is true not only for the Farewell Discourse, but the Gospel as a whole. Kellum makes an insightful comment when he points out John's use of misunderstanding. The disciples think they understand, but they are mistaken. The lesson of their experience is well worth contemplating for our contemporary situation!

This volume attempts to balance scholarship and service. He wants to marry solid hermeneutics with practical homiletics. Overall, he does a fine job with these important approaches.

JOSEPH C. GRANA, II
Dean, Pacific Christian College of Bible and Ministry
Hope International University

Gregory S. SMITH. *The Testing of God's Sons*. Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2014. 207 pp. \$24.99.

This work attempts to address a very significant and prevalent issue within the biblical landscape—how Scripture reveals God's role and purpose in the idea of testing. The scope of Smith's analysis leaves no major narrative untouched. From Adam to Christ, and even the Church, Smith analyzes the literary context of "testing episodes" against a backdrop of exegetical research. After establishing a basic etymological understanding of the three "testing" words found in the Hebrew Bible (נִסָּוָה, נִסָּא, and נִסָּח), Smith then builds his argument against the literary backdrop of selected "testing" narratives. There is a brief overview of historical scholarship in relation to these terms revealing Smith has done his homework. After wading through some historical investigations on this theme, he moves into a specific analysis with regard to the implications of testing whether for the individual in focus or members of the covenant community as a whole. As Smith tries to flush out a "theology of testing" within the breadth of Scripture, he is careful in his approach. The approach of his analysis seems contingent on deductions he gathers from the Joseph narrative to which he gives much attention. From there he moves on to the testing motif working through selected Pentateuch-covenant narratives (Adam, Abraham, The Midwives, and Moses). He weaves the theme of God's testing through each narrative analysis by giving particular attention to the use and concept of what נִסָּא as a "touchstone" conveys. This is foundational to his approach. He reaches some helpful conclusions that show how God frequently seems to use suffering to bring good to his people and refine them for his purposes. Smith shows how this "testing/refining" idea should not be studied as isolated only to individuals and covenant communities, but understood as a larger theological framework.

This work is quite refreshing in the level of attention given to his historical analysis of the original Hebrew text. Many works of this size (fewer than 200 pages), do not usually display exegetical research for fear of losing the common reader by using technical language. Smith's tone is conversational in nature which helps ease navigation through these wide sweeping theological concepts. His attempt to cover exegetical depth, literarily and linguistically, historically, and theologically, proves this work can be used as a study resource. This work could be especially helpful for professors, OT seminarians, and for pastors and teach-

ers who have a strong affinity for the Hebrew text. One of the major drawbacks of this work is that it fails to qualify the nature of the NT's idea of testing versus tempting (Jas 1:12-15). Another drawback is the silence of how the LXX writers thought about and used Greek equivalent testing terms from the BHS, which influenced the NT writers.

While Smith is quick to point out that suffering is often the arbiter of how God refines his people, the wide scope of biblical ground covered does not allow him to develop this theme more specifically as it relates to persecution of the Church because of the Gospel. While general suffering is common to all people, it would have been helpful for Smith to develop the refining theme more as it relates to the persecution of Christians. I recommend this work for both its depth and its attempt to highlight a much needed theology of "testing" evident in Scripture. The pastoral implications that can be applied from Smith's presentation of this material are many making this work a highly desirable resource.

BRYAN BLAKEMORE
Family Life Minister
Taylorville Christian Church

Bruce Ellis BENSON. *Liturgy as a Way of Life: Embodying the Arts in Christian Worship.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013. 160 pp. \$17.99.

The use of "liturgy" as the first word of the title will create a strong first impression, which will either draw or repel most readers. But make no mistake about it; this book is not primarily focused on high church worship. Benson's book is about life, both congregational and individual. In fact, ironically, it is more about jazz improvisation than it is about a particular worship tradition.

This volume is part of a series by Baker Academic, called The Church and Postmodern Culture. "The Church and Postmodern Culture series features high-profile theorists in continental philosophy and contemporary theology writing for a broad, nonspecialist audience interested in the impact of postmodern theory on the faith and practice of the church" (7). As such, it is a fascinating read. Rather brief, with only five chapters and about 160 pages, it sails through its premises with impressive fluidity and pacing. The Introduction provides a summary of each chapter, and each chapter builds on the previous one to craft what might be called a philosophy of the arts.

Any reader might wonder how this book could add to the plethora of contributions proclaiming worship as a lifestyle. Dating back to Robert E. Webber's *Worship Is a Verb* (1992) and on through the years since, it is not unique to describe worship as "a way of life." Yet, this book is about a view of living in postmodern culture. It is about the arts. The Introduction is titled "The Art of Living." The final chapter, "Becoming Living Works of Art." Clearly, the center of the book is at the intersection of art and life.

The editor of the series, James K. A. Smith, explains his motivation in including such a book as this in The Church and Postmodern Culture series. He describes the modernistic church as "the dissemination of information to brains-on-a-stick, sitting on their hands" (9). Smith even claims "a renewal of the arts can be read as a 'practical postmodernism.'" (11) Benson later confirms the priority of the arts in worship, placing the arts in the very center of what it means to be human. He writes, "I do not believe that art is some kind of 'add-on'

that we ‘indulge’ when we happen to have the time and money. Instead, I think art is central to who we are as human beings” (69).

The book is at least partially borrowed from materials used over several years in Benson’s Philosophy of the Arts course at Wheaton College. Several of the chapters borrow heavily from previous articles Benson has published. Consequently, the material is balanced, cited, filled with intriguing stories and examples, and source-rich. No bibliography is included (in keeping with it being for the nonspecialist audience), but the Index reveals references ranging from Clement to Coltrane, Socrates to Schmemmann, and Wagner to WALL-E.

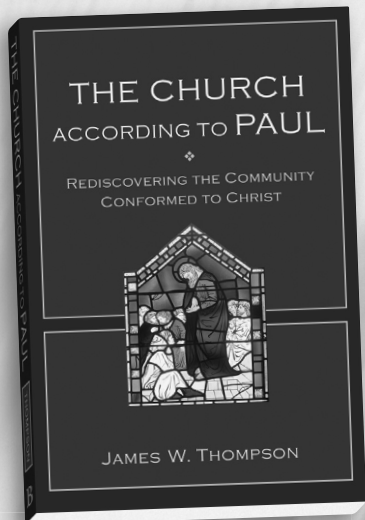
Chapter 1 is entitled The Call and the Response. Benson explains that the Bible is set up as the call and response structure. God calls, we respond. In our liturgy, we call to one another, and we respond. In fact, Benson says that “the fundamental structure of our lives is that of the call and response” (24). The call always precedes me, so I begin by listening carefully. And the improvised response is always a repetition and an improvisation (40). But the improvisation is much more scripted and patterned than one might imagine, as the improviser mimics and follows established patterns already learned by rote. He illustrates with black spirituals and jazz. Black culture in America has most fully integrated the idea of participative response, both in preaching and in music and participation.

Chapter 2: Deconstructing the Discourse of Art. The “modern” (or “romantic”) ideal of the source of art comes largely from Immanuel Kant, who lived in the late eighteenth century. His concept is that of a genius composer or artist who works alone, shut off from the outside world, who creates from nothing an inexplicable miracle of a masterwork. The creator in the romantic world is nearly of godlike status. Benson demonstrates that art was originally intended as a communal act, based on improvisation, and that the romantic (modernistic) notion was a relatively late and brief view. All art is actually based on imitation, with the hope that each borrowing can contribute a little something to the collective work. Modernism led art down a self-destructive road, demanding originality and innovation from each new generation.

Chapter 3: Improvising like Jazz. In this sense, art in worship is much more akin to jazz improvisation and to music of the Baroque era than it is to Romantic works. Together, we fabricate out of what is conveniently on hand, rather than creation *ex nihilo*. Benson says that the entire construct of “high” art is artificial, being built on the false model of artist-as-genius, rather than the folk-level view of art as communal from its start. Whether or not God created from nothing can be debated by theologians. But humans always create from manipulating something that already exists. In this chapter, Benson addresses the sticky matter of copyright law and its complications. Who, after all, actually created an idea? And if copyright law discourages the free use of material, what becomes of creativity? “Everything we do is improvisation . . . we dwell in the world *improvisationally*.” (91) Benson provides a fascinating account of how this communal participation plays out in the assembly of Saint Gregory of Nyssa Episcopal Church in San Francisco (95-97) and other radically traditional churches.

Chapter 4: On Not Being an Artistic Whore. The controversial phrase comes from the novel *My Name Is Asher Lev*. The premise is that artists can become self-aware to the point of selling out to only show or speak positive images. Simplistic solutions and easy answers and happy thoughts are not, in fact, the complete Gospel. If our first and primary audience is God, then we would do well to be honest and complete. When modern art took the place

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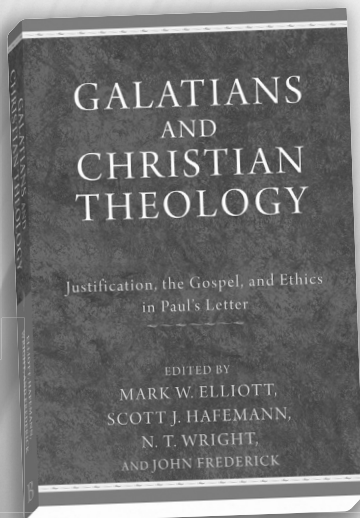


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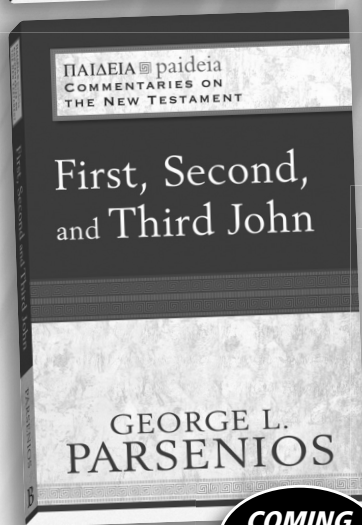


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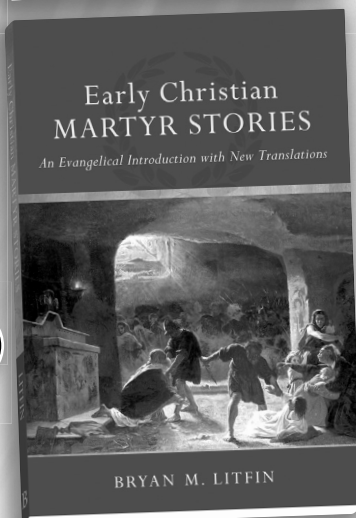


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of religion, then religious art was increasingly marginalized. (106) “So the fact that religion and art don’t mix particularly well in our era is a very recent and unprecedented development.” (106) In such an environment, art that measures up to critical acclaim must be ugly and shocking, while religious art becomes trite and symbolic.

Chapter 5: Becoming Living Works of Art. The majority of the book focuses on what Benson calls “extensive liturgy.” In the final chapter, he explains again that *liturgy* originally refers to how people live. It is surprisingly similar in its original meaning to “music” and “philosophy” and “spiritual discipline” (131). Benson describes the pianist John Bayless as devoting himself to various spiritual disciplines for several hours a day, while “I only spend an hour (at most) per day playing the piano”(132). He provides some very helpful models for how the concepts he describes throughout the book can be applied to “intensive liturgy,” which is “what happens when Christians assemble to worship God” (30). Here he returns to the assembly of Saint Gregory of Nyssa to describe how they involve improvised participation from all when they “do God’s story” (136-138). The intensive liturgy of the corporate church through the liturgy of the Word and the Eucharist then equips the church for extensive liturgy as they live it out in the world.

In short, this volume is a tremendous resource for anyone thinking through the big issues of worship and life. There are wonderful tidbits and examples of best practice in worship, but most likely the pragmatist will not stay in the material long enough to find it. But for those who care about the big picture, this material is a gold mine.

KEN E. READ

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David P. SETRAN and Chris A. KIESLING. *Spiritual Formation in Emerging Adulthood: A Practical Theology for College and Young Adult Ministry.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013. 288 pp. \$21.99.

Over the past decade-plus the study of spiritual formation has collided with the social sciences and the interpretation of popular culture in the area of spiritual maturation to provide readings that attempt to wed social statistical research with practical guides to discipling people into greater Christ-likeness. The current volume, written by Setran, associate professor of Christian Formation and Ministry at Wheaton College and Kiesling, professor of Human Development and Christian Discipleship at Asbury Theological Seminary is a demonstration of this trend. The book provides readers (especially those working with young emerging adults) a well-balanced diet of scholarship concerning the current social trends of young emerging adults with both theoretical and practical application for a variety of ministry settings.

The book is developed on two pillars. The first pillar is the conviction that the good news of the Bible has a great deal to offer young emerging adults as they transition through the tumultuous years from their late teens to their late twenties. The second is the conviction that young emerging adults have the capacity to change current cultural landscapes worldwide because their lives have been infused with the ongoing biblical narrative. While this foundation is not a new phenomenon it forges a reminder for readers throughout the book of why each of eight issues tackled concerning young emerging adult spiritual forma-

tion is so vital. From issues concerning young emerging adult “Faith” and “Identity” to “Morality” and “Sexuality” Kiesling and Setran show multiple facets of ministering to young emerging adults that finds value because of the need for the biblical narrative to find relevancy in the lives of the next generations. A few examples of this aim will suffice.

Addressing the issues of identity formation: “. . . identity is not simply a personal choice or achievement. . . . Christian identity is always tied to a community of truth that bestows an identity—ultimately through baptism—of communal membership in the body of believers.” (79)

Relating with the church: “Teaching, therefore, must be ‘deep’. The church must be willing to teach the whole counsel of Scripture and the particular doctrines of the faith.” (96)

Challenging relational and sexual norms of emerging adults: “When we acknowledge that our yearnings will never be fully satisfied, we can welcome God into our disappointment and then turn toward the abundance yet available through the temporal blessing of relationships, knowing they were never intended to completely satisfy our longings.” (177, quoting Lisa McMinn)

Focusing mentors’ attention: “Mentors must always remember that their chief role is not to see emerging adults submit slavishly to the mentor but to enlist as perpetual apprentices of the ultimate Mentor, more fully themselves as they follow Christ.” (229)

Each chapter shows an abundance of competent research and useful analysis. In addition to painting an accurate picture of emerging adults in America these authors uncover many of the beliefs, values, and assumptions that are currently held as norms for young emerging adults in the early 21st century. A recurring breath of fresh air throughout this work is the consistent effort not only to identify potential hazards or problem issues when working with emerging adults but also to identify potential solutions. The reader is not lead to the valley of death and left there to discern a wise way out; instead a glimmer of light is provided so one can adequately see the prospective steps along the journey. In the end, the development strategy for the book appropriately crescendos in a final chapter on mentoring which links current ministry leaders with the eight issues covered in previous chapters.

While there are times of excessive wordiness that may give readers an occasion to “check out,” this book is well worth the time and effort one gives to make it to the end. The width and breadth of research and subsequent analysis for ministry practice make this volume one that leaders of young emerging adults will want to read.

MIKE CAHILL

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Paul C. GUTJAHR. *The Book of Mormon: A Biography.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012. 280 pp. \$24.95.

This volume presents a thorough, objective account of the nature, development, reception, and impact of the *Book of Mormon*. This work is part of a new series published by Princeton University Press called “Lives of Great Religious Books.” Each book is “written for general readers by leading authors and experts” to “recount the complex and fascinating histories of important religious *texts* from around the world.” More specifically, “these books examine the historical origins of texts from the great religious traditions, and trace how their

reception, interpretation, and influence have changed—often radically—over time.” (dust jacket) Gutjahr accomplishes his task by balancing rigorous scholarship and readability. In addition, he compliments a thorough critique of the *Book of Mormon* and its development, with a level of sympathy that keeps his critique fair.

The book is divided into three main parts: Germination, Budding, and Flowering. The first part deals with the origins of the *Book of Mormon* grounded in the life of its author, Joseph Smith, Jr., and in the religious context that existed in close proximity to its 1830 publication. In addition, Gutjahr navigates the early controversies that arose throughout the nineteenth century in response to the *Book of Mormon*, which he divides into three categories: the supernaturalist or revelatory school, which believed Joseph had, indeed, translated divine revelation from golden plates, the plagiarist school, which held that Joseph had plagiarized from one or more sources, and the naturalist school, which contended Joseph used his imagination to compose a fantastic story. The author, as is true of the entire book, treats each position fairly and gives sufficient detail for the reader to have an accurate picture of the issues and to be able to pursue matters further. The second part focuses on the growing influence of the *Book of Mormon* during the tumultuous beginning of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Under the leadership of Joseph Smith, Jr., Brigham Young, and many subsequent leaders, recognized as prophets of God, the *Book of Mormon* saw a dramatic increase in influence as its notoriety grew through the aggressive evangelism of the LDS Church. The *Book of Mormon* itself experienced several significant, controversial revisions under prophetic direction, and a changing position within the Church’s theology. The third part deals with the spread of the *Book of Mormon* through missionary efforts, its defense through LDS apologetic work, and its rendering through both the visual and performing arts, including satirical critique.

This volume would serve well as a supplemental text to an undergraduate course on contemporary religious movements or American religious history. Beyond its merit as a resource for the teacher, Christians, including scholars, looking for a relatively brief, yet thorough, and objective history of the *Book of Mormon* would find this work very helpful. The fast-growing Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is highly influential in many spheres of influence throughout the world. In particular, the *Book of Mormon*, along with other texts produced by the LDS Church, is available in many languages and is distributed very widely to nations where LDS evangelism has been successful. In order for Christians to adequately engage Latter-day Saints, and those influenced by their message, it is essential to have a thorough and fair understanding of their most important text. This volume is an excellent text for such preparation.

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Don W. KING. *Plain to the Inward Eye: Selected Essays on C. S. Lewis.* Abilene, TX: Abilene Christian University Press, 2013. 288 pp. \$25.99.

In this volume, King compiles a lifetime’s worth of writing on C. S. Lewis. This work, published to coincide with the fiftieth anniversary of Lewis’s death, looks back on forty years

of King's "reading, thinking, and writing about Lewis" (12). The reader senses the depth of insight and care King brings to a subject, but King's interest is not simply academic. King has a sincere affection for Lewis, his "greatest teacher and most influential mentor" (319).

King has two primary goals in this volume. First, he attempts to use his forty years of experience to chart the trajectory of Lewis studies. Second, King hopes to provide a "viable alternative" to common literary approaches such as deconstruction or post-structuralism (13). King, quoting Dorothy Sayers, describes his approach to the reader as an attempt to "sit down before a poem, or whatever it is, with humility to it and clarity to the reader, and begin by finding out and explaining what the author actually did say" (12). The book moves chronologically through King's own engagement with Lewis, first with essays on Narnia, then on Lewis's poetry. Next are essays on Lewis and his relationship with Joy Davidman and Ruth Pitter, and finally King provides a selection of his book reviews on Lewis-related works.

King is at his best when he explores Lewis's poetry. In particular, the middle three essays of this section, "Making the Poor Best of Dull Things: C. S. Lewis as Poet," "C. S. Lewis's *The Quest of Bleheris* as Poetic Prose," and "The Poetry of Prose: C. S. Lewis, Ruth Pitter, and *Perelandra*," provide a convincing argument that Lewis's long quest to become a respected poet substantially shaped his prose. King argues that while Lewis never achieved acclaim as a poet, he wrote prose with a poet's pen. Many readers may be largely unfamiliar with Lewis's poetry; few will be as adept at handling it as King. These essays demonstrate that Lewis's poetry is a rich site for further research.

One wishes that the remainder of King's work were as strong. The essays on Narnia are a pleasure to read, but, as with his other essays, the reader will notice how frequently King promises to "briefly summarize" (15), "examine briefly" (53), "briefly note" (87, 142), or "offer a brief review" (181). The Narnian essays are short, often neglecting the needed analysis to prove them persuasive. For example in "The Childlike in George MacDonald and C. S. Lewis," a more complete definition of what is meant by "childlike" is needed before a valid comparison can be provided. These essays are brief and feel incomplete, but they still have the ability to pique the interest of readers. The selection of essays on Lewis and his relationship with Pitter and Davidman, however, is more puzzling. This reader often wondered why these essays were chosen for inclusion in a work ostensibly about Lewis. While essays devoted exclusively to Pitter's poetry or Davidman's work in communist magazines stretch the stated goals of the work, the essay on cats in T. S. Eliot, Sayers, and Pitter is more confusing. The work is increasingly odd in its final section. The last quarter of the work is comprised of book reviews previously published by the author. This reviewer has never encountered this in an academic text. To be fair, the review essay of *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis* was enlightening, and there is a wealth of scholarly works on Lewis for readers to discover. If, however, King hoped to provide a state of the field, he needs to provide additional analysis. Instead, a new essay—one in which King developed this material and his considerable insight into the trajectory of Lewis scholarship—would have been preferred.

This volume is an odd, uneven book. As one who sometimes tires of reading the jargon-filled, esoteric tomes that pass as literary criticism, King's crisp prose is refreshing. Lewis devotees reading this work may at times feel like they are indulging in a guilty pleasure—carried along by concise essays exploring their favorite author. At times this reviewer certainly did. Despite the occasional pleasure this volume provides, it remains limited in its usefulness. Excepting the section on poetry, the analysis is not sustained or focused enough to be of

much value to literary critics. Professors looking to assign texts to undergraduates studying Lewis could include this in a supplemental bibliography, but other texts are better suited for use in the classroom. Finally, lay readers wanting to wade into a more serious investigation of Lewis may find an entry point here, but it is hard to imagine a lay reader maintaining interest in the later sections of the work. King has devoted over four decades to investigating Lewis; unfortunately this work fails to adequately capture the fruit of his pursuit.

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Michael A. G. HAYKIN and C. Jeffrey ROBINSON, Sr. *To the Ends of the Earth: Calvin's Missional Vision and Legacy*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014. 134 pp. \$12.68.

Those with an elementary grasp of Calvinism are familiar with its core tenets expressed in the acrostic, T.U.L.I.P. Calvinism's soteriology has led several to conclude that any missionary emphasis contradicted its determinism. Haykin and Robinson dispel the contradiction by positing the views of Calvin in his writings to prove a missional reconciliation with his doctrine, and also by showing how heirs of Calvinism shared this missional outlook. Alongside Calvin's and his heir's writings on the subject, history attests to the reform having a missional focus through its spread of Calvin's doctrine from Geneva to France and even the failed attempt in Brazil. Moreover, Puritan preaching and literature manifested an evangelistic zeal in addition to the prayers of Jonathan Edwards and the missionary passion of Samuel Pearce.

The authors successfully argue their premise that Calvinism is not antithetical with missional activity. Early in the book they answer the commonest objections posited against Calvinism by expositing the reformer's beliefs that reconcile his determinism and missional emphasis. Calvin himself was met with many of the same objections of today, but he explained, or clarified, what he meant. The authors reveal these tensions and answer them throughout the book while also establishing the various contexts of each proponent of Calvinism that made it appear that missional activity was nonexistent. Reflections on Calvin's views on prayer, prophetic emphasis on the Word to extend the church, personal conduct, and even government support show that the reformer placed missionary activity at the forefront of his doctrine. Perhaps the most important reflection that relieves the tension between his determinism and evangelism comes through the authors' explanation of Calvin's views on prayer's relation to missionary activity.

Several developments on briefly mentioned themes would have strengthened the argument. The authors cited both the London and Westminster confessions as instrumental to Reformed doctrine. An examination and expansion upon these confessions in the life of Calvinism, and the confessions' reflections on evangelism if it existed, would give greater weight to their argument. Their silence on these may lead the reader to believe that the confessions were also silent or not all that important in Calvinism's missional vision. Furthermore, greater expansion on the Northampton Revival and the Great Awakening would have better contributed to proving their point given the results of each revival. Alongside the revivals in early America, greater explanation of Calvinistic pneu-

matology would complement the work of the revival preachers and their movements as being missional.

One contradicting theme may trouble some readers. The authors mention the Reformation premise of *Sola Scriptura* while at the same time showing Calvin's dependence on Augustine. One need only to read Calvin's *Institutes* to see how indebted the reformer was to the bishop. A reader familiar with Jonathan Edwards' *Freedom of the Will* may also note a heavy Augustinian influence while scripture was secondary. What may be perceived as a contradiction was whether Calvin, and Calvinism as a whole, actually depended more on scripture or Augustine. This is a question unaddressed by the authors that may be troublesome.

Since the Stone-Campbell Movement was born from Calvinism, this information is informative about Calvin and also the root of the Stone-Campbell Movement. The later Cane Ridge Revival had a Calvinistic influence just like the Great Awakening. The intellectual history of the Stone-Campbell Movement is given a good base from this work. This book will be useful for a church history or American history course and provides not only theological, but also Western Civilization themes. Whether one agrees with Calvin or not, the authors prove that Calvinism and evangelism are compatible and complimentary to one another.

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Gregory A. THORNBURY. *Recovering Classic Evangelicalism: Applying the Wisdom and Vision of Carl F. H. Henry.* Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013. 223 pp. \$17.99.

In more than a few ways, the existence of this journal stands in tribute to the theological contributions of Carl F. H. Henry. In the first place, Henry inspired a significant number of us associated with *SCJ* to become Christian scholars as he defined and modelled the “believing academic” in our formative years. At a time when *anti-intellectualism* dominated the conservative Christian community (especially in our Independent circles), the prolific writings of Carl Henry served notice that faith in Christ did not require one to set his/her mind aside from the challenges of non-Christian philosophies or religions. This intellectually respectable faith also included a strong commitment to the Bible's authority and integrity. Because of Henry's influence, *Christianity Today* became must reading for many of us budding biblical scholars and theologians. On a second note, Carl Henry's work with World Vision demonstrated that an informed Christian mind should be coupled with a serious social consciousness and involvement—four decades before Bono! Third, the *SCJ*'s unabashed promotion of Restoration Movement theological distinctives yet without a sectarian spirit well echoes the ethos of Henry who vigorously argued for a unique variety of Protestant Christianity (“Evangelicalism”) but was eager to “collaborate with anyone who was deeply committed to the Great Tradition of the church” (117). Finally, given the *Trinity* pedigree of many of our contributors (a school especially associated with Henry), the shadow of this “classic evangelical” will keep us in academic conversation with the world of conservative, Reformed Protestantism—at least through the next decade or so.

With the rise of a new generation of Stone-Campbell scholars—many of whom have earned prestigious European degrees—there is a growing lack of awareness, even indifference to our past theological mentors who lifted us out of the fundamentalism of the early twentieth century. Sadly, the prodigious legacy of a Carl F. H. Henry may be lost in a relatively short amount of time. The potential consequences of this “ignorance” is already being experienced in evangelical and Stone-Campbell circles with the increasing growth of “pop theology”—a throwback to the pre-War days of conservative anti-intellectualism. More to the point of this review, the current loss of “Henry memory” has in my view, contributed to an academic environment in which both old and young scholars share an inadequate concept of what it means to be “evangelical.” In short, many twenty-first-century “believing scholars” have come to believe that evangelicalism is something to be avoided, a relic from the past. In this light, this volume paradoxically offers both an antidote—and an irritant.

Readers looking for a detailed biography of Carl Henry should consult the subject’s own 1986 work, *Confessions of a Theologian*, rather than this volume. Thornbury, himself recommends such (21), choosing to write on “Henry as a theorist of classical evangelicalism” (33), by focusing on undoubtedly the two most defining works of “Henryism”: *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*, and the six-volume, *God, Revelation and Authority*. Not surprisingly, these two works represent “classical evangelicalism” at its best—and worst.

Let me first begin with the “best,” even though this chapter is the next-to-final one in Thornbury’s book. Entitled, “Culture Matters” (all chapters carry the “matters” theme), Thornbury offers a very helpful—and needed rehearsal of Henry’s initial groundbreaking *Uneasy Conscience*. This volume, originally published in 1947, ushered in a “new evangelicalism” that, unlike its fundamentalist parent, would actively pursue an ambitious social agenda because of its understanding of the Kingdom’s present dimensions. Thornbury notes:

Uneasy Conscience exhibited confidence that even in the worst imaginable period of world history, a globe confused and battered emerging from the Second World War could look to the good news of the Lord Jesus Christ and be transformed—not just as individuals, but as a society. Because Henry held confidence in the epistemological gravitas of an inerrant and infinitely applicable Scripture, he believed that the church had the greatest potential to help meet the needs of an ailing planet. It was this ambitious, optimistic, and robust vision that stood at the genesis of the evangelical movement. By addressing the political, social, economic, and intellectual questions of the age, God’s people have the opportunity to share the gospel that not only makes us right with God, but also makes human flourishing possible. This was the vision of classical evangelicalism (164).

This fine summary of Carl Henry’s landmark book—and still greatest contribution in my estimation—should encourage today’s socially conscious evangelical to read the work that “started it all.” Written after several decades of conservative Christianity’s withdrawal from “this world” (due in large part to its adoption of dispensational theology and rigid creationism), Henry’s volume is a poignant call for people who have a high view of Scripture to return to the Church’s historic mission of bearing witness to the reality of God’s renewing presence in *this world*. *Uneasy Conscience* was in many ways the first salvo in a “new evangelicalism” that would be characterized by the intellectual rigor and constructive cultural engagement that today’s Stone-Campbell scholars have come to appreciate. Strong biblical commitment has been the source of much cultural renewal—especially in the West—and this

is an evangelical's true "birth right," not the antagonism and separatism that early-twentieth-century fundamentalism became famous for. As Thornbury well observes, "What Henry perceived to be true is still the case: the persistent fascination with transcendence in culture, and the reality that secularism fails to offer a better solution for cultural flourishing" (177). And for both Henry and Thornbury, the best agent for that hoped for transcendence, is the kind of conservative Christianity that they espouse. If contemporary sociologist, Rodney Stark's research into ancient Christianity is as credible as Thornbury makes it (and many believe it is), it thus becomes difficult to dispute that the real hope for addressing our globe's great issues (e.g., poverty, human rights, social injustice, and the environment) is found in those who take the Bible seriously (195-196). Inasmuch as twentieth-century liberalism's "social gospel" has oftentimes found itself incapable of sustaining its agenda, the robust evangelicalism that Henry called for has produced significant, thriving ministries of healing (World Vision, Samaritan's Purse, Compassion International, and our own Restoration outreach to the hungry, and IDES).

However, Thornbury's summation of *Uneasy Conscience* also carries with it something that has also contributed to a contemporary disenchantment with evangelicals—by evangelicals, themselves—and that is an alleged conservative dogma termed "biblical inerrancy." To be sure, Carl Henry's *magnum opus* (*God, Revelation, and Authority*) was very much constructed on a Warfield-like conviction that the Scriptures were without error in historical and scientific matters (cf. *God, Revelation, and Authority*, 4:202-210). Not surprisingly, any analysis of Henry's theology will have to spend considerable time on his doctrine of Scripture which heavily revolves around the issue of inerrancy—as well as the *propositional* nature of revelation; two emphases that have invited criticism from conservative scholars ranging from Alister McGrath, to Michael Horton, to Kevin Vanhoozer (97-115). And not surprisingly, Greg Thornbury devotes three of his six chapters to explicating these *matters* that he believes not only defined Henry's evangelicalism but also should still frame what is "evangelical" today. I have little to quibble with in his delineation of Carl Henry's theology. In fact, I believe that if this iconic figure were still alive, he would commend this author's representation of his writings since these three substantial chapters are annotated expositions of the "Fifteen Theses" that are laid out in volume two of *God, Revelation, and Authority* (cf. especially 60-61). Doubtless, he (Henry) would also approve of Thornbury's purpose in rehearsing his thought for the present generation: "We must reclaim the essentials of our Protestant heritage in the spirit of the seminar Kenneth Kantzer and Carl Henry used to convene at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, called 'Know Your Roots'" (208). *Recovering Classic Evangelicalism* is exactly what its title suggests: an apologetic or at least a respectful polemic that the cerebral (and social) "anti-modern" response of Henry and his ilk to the likes of Barth, Bultmann, and Tillich needs to be replicated in today's conservative circles to be "authentically evangelical." While it is true that today's evangelical more correctly responds to the challenges of *postmodernism*, the *credo* of the past generation must be kept intact. And this is precisely where I have my largest problem with this book or even contemporary evangelical leadership; i.e., understanding Henry's theological model to be the *ultimate compendium* of conservative belief rather than as an important but also historically conditioned "epoch" in an ongoing process.

Henry's insistence upon propositionalism and the "inerrancy of the original autographs" were doubtlessly, key foundations that drove the post-World War II evangelical "renais-

sance.” Academic societies like the ETS were established around principles like these. But are these largely twentieth-century emphases inseparable from what it means to be an *evangelical*? I certainly hope not if evangelical scholarship includes N. T. Wright as well as D. A. Carson. Yet, in a winsome sort of manner, Thornbury weaves us to conclusions like these:

The mediating positions of recent internecine evangelical theology with respect to theological method, inspiration, authority, inerrancy, and doctrinal formulation does not seem robust enough. . . . Could it be that a recovery of confidence in propositional revelation and an inerrant Bible is, despite decades of neglect and/or disdain, the last stand between the evangelical community and radical hermeneutics? These may well be the only honest alternatives left to those who take theory and their own convictions seriously (158).

Are these really the only two alternatives (with of course only one being evangelical)? While Thornbury gives some able and generally respectful exposition of “mediating” scholars like Kevin Vanhoozer or the more “edgy,” Peter Enns, the conclusion is always the same: These individuals are stepping outside the true boundaries of our tradition in their reliance upon liberal and even secular authorities. For example, Vanhoozer’s use of speech-act theory (something that Thornbury commends for its creative brilliance) is nonetheless something that is suspect because its naturalistic roots make it a poor candidate for “theorizing about divine revelation.” (114). Would Henry concur with Thornbury’s concern about *theodrama*? Quite probably, but one has to ask why the former should be the final arbitrator over what is valid in the ever-developing field of linguistics? Let me be clear that Thornbury is not questioning the integrity of Vanhoozer, et al.’s faith much less competence of scholarship. Many ETS panel discussions (not to mention the Gospel Coalition publications) would be well served in following Thornbury’s decorum. Yet one is certainly left with the impression that these “mediating folks” might well be drifting outside the fold rather than further defining its parameters. Given his intimate knowledge of Henry in his waning years—“he died a disappointed man” (203)—Thornbury is accurately reflecting his mentor. But again, were Henry’s fears more a failure to see that his seminal work had produced a new generation of *biblical* scholars who were taking his high view of inspiration but allowing the scriptural text to define its own, *messy* boundaries of truth-telling rather than the clean, crisp categories of earlier systematicians? After all, is not the *evangel* a story of God’s salvific work in Christ, a narrative of hills and valleys? In actuality, it seems to me that there is more of a continuous line running from Henry to McGrath, Vanhoozer, and even Enns than is what is often perceived; namely the divine authority and inspiration of Scripture invite us to encounter a text that has been historically received as God’s Word and yet honestly acknowledge the often frustrating complexities that defy dictionary-like precision. Without the generation of Carl Henry there would be no Kevin Vanhoozers to move evangelical theology in its more nuanced varieties. Oftentimes, it is difficult for a parent to appreciate the common DNA that is expressed in less obvious ways in their offspring.

To be fair, Thornbury does acknowledge that Henry had his share of “imperfections” (23-24). However, outside of his comparative silence about civil rights (a common evangelical omission of the day), these flaws were largely inconsequential to his theological method; i.e., poor public speaker, weak Hebrew skills, and verbosity. In short, the aforementioned *hermeneutical* issues that many in today’s academy have with Carl Henry are for the author of

this volume, largely problems generated by those who have abandoned the canons of “classic evangelicalism.” Citing Henry, these “mediating evangelicals” (actually a Henry term) are seeking rapprochement with a post-liberal world of “narrative theory,” that is in essence a betrayal of their conservative heritage for a “mess of postmodern pottage” (204). I would cautiously argue that this development is potentially *bettering* the quality of the soup.

Should *SCJ* subscribers read this volume? By all means; it is a very well-written guide to our evangelical past. Today’s generation of young scholars should know about Carl Henry’s contributions to making possible the contemporary environment where at least in Independent church colleges, serious academics are now valued and encouraged. Our *origins* should be *recovered* and rehearsed to successive generations. On the other hand, if we truly want to honor the legacy of these theological pioneers, we should not merely recite their understandings of philosophy, epistemology, and Scripture, investing in them a permanent quality that time will only undo. Henry was a man of the modern era, and he engaged that world with the tools of the day, some good, some not so good (i.e., inerrancy). Undoubtedly, scholars in the future may criticize us for making too many concessions to the spirit of our age. But that’s the nature of faithful biblical and theological scholarship. Restorationists should appreciate better than most the *ongoing process* of bringing our faith—and life—more in line with the Scriptures. Rather than finding its finality in the writings of Carl Henry, the true *recovery* of evangelical Christianity will not occur until the *consummation*.

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John H. WALTON and D. Brent SANDY. *The Lost World of Scripture: Ancient Literary Culture and Biblical Authority.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2013. 320 pp. \$24.00.

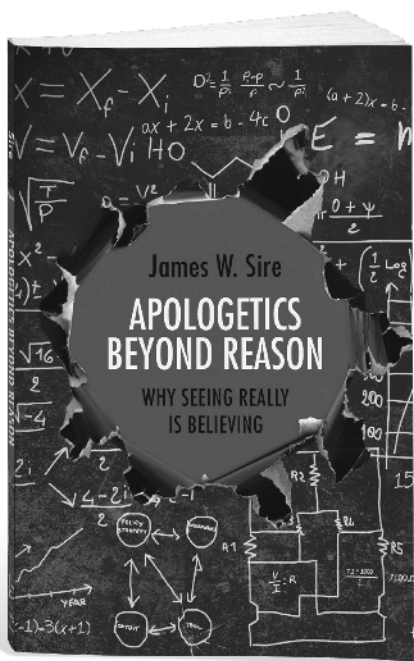
Walton and Sandy teach at Wheaton College and affirm a high view of Scripture, including signing the 1978 Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy. The “Lost World” of the title is the Ancient Near Eastern world (Mesopotamian and Greco-Roman) of orality and textual composition that is often ignored in discussions of the authority of Scripture. Moderns tend to hold an anachronistic view of how books were produced in the ancient world, and even of what a book would have looked like. Walton and Sandy’s goal is to provide a new model for understanding the authority of the Bible which takes into account the ancient world’s transmission of story, tradition, and authoritative material through a long period of orality. According to them only at a late period was the material written down and even then it was subject to editing and shaping by tradents and scribes. What we know as the books of the Bible were late compositions. Within this context then the question arises, what of the authority of the written texts that make up the Bible? How are they reliable and inspired, and indeed, inerrant, if their transmission is so variegated and the ancients were not as concerned about exact verbal transmission as we are. And what of the so-called “original autographs” which some have held as the locus of inerrancy if there were no such documents? Both authors have grappled with these issues before: Walton in *The Lost World of Genesis One* (InterVarsity, 2009) and Sandy in his *Plowshares and Pruning Hooks* (InterVarsity, 2002) and various papers.

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This volume is organized around 21 propositions divided into four parts: The OT World of Composition and Communication (Walton); The NT World of Composition and Communication (Sandy); The Biblical World of Literary Genres (both); and Concluding Affirmations on the Origin and Authority of Scripture (both). The concluding Chapter carries the title, “Faithful Conclusions for Virtuous Readers” which summarizes implications of their findings.

Space does not allow a full listing of all the propositions but as a sample, I will list the four propositions of part 1 that address the OT era: 1) “Ancient Near Eastern societies were hearing dominant and had nothing comparable to authors and books as we know them”; 2) “Expansions and revisions were possible as documents were copied generation after generation and eventually compiled into literary works”; 3) “Effective communication must accommodate to the culture and nature of the audience”; 4) “The Bible contains no new revelation about the workings and understanding of the material world.” There is a reflective chapter that sums up conclusions for understanding the OT in a new way. The NT section by Sandy addresses similar topics about the orality of the NT world. It contains nine propositions.

Proposition 3 is an important one in the OT section. Here Walton adapts the positive aspects of speech-act theory to an understanding of how God accommodated his revelation to human representatives, so that Israel could understand and obey him. Speech-act theory posited three levels of communication: illocution-locution-perlocution. For Walton illocution is God’s reliable, inspired revelation that he gives to his prophet and others (what he said); locution is the form that it takes as it is presented to the people through various genres and rhetoric that the culture demands (see Part 3); perlocution is the result in the lives of the recipients of the locution. Inerrancy and authority applies to the illocution stage, not the locution stage. For example, ancient Israel, and the ancient world, believed that thought and feelings took place in the heart or kidneys. When the OT expresses these ideas they are not revelation on human physiology but accommodation and can be easily understood by moderns.

In oral cultures authorship of a written text is not an important issue. Oral cultures reside authority in the originator of the story or teaching. The story can be passed on by story tellers for centuries, but they have their authority tied to correctly telling the story. The community is the check on the story teller. It has heard the story so many times that it will correct the teller if he strays too far. The community will allow some variation of details but not in the main story line. Walton calls the authority figure behind the story the “fountainhead.” Thus Moses is the fountainhead figure behind the Torah. He may not have taught everything in the first five books of the OT, but the material is in the tradition of Moses, and thus has his authority. Nothing is there that he could not have taught. The same applies to our book of Isaiah. Isaiah is the fountainhead behind the book and everything in it is faithful to what he could have said, though some of it may have come from his disciples (tradents, scribes?). This is the nature of oral cultures. Therefore, modern ideas of original, fixed, written texts that are applied to the composition of the OT are anachronisms and do not come near to fitting the actual process of how the material was transmitted in the ancient world. This is the “lost world.” Walton is not saying that Moses or Isaiah could not have or did not produce all the material attributed to them, but rather that in an oral text culture the issue is not nearly as relevant as in a written text culture.

Sandy's approach to the NT is on the same track as Walton. The first-century Greco-Roman culture was an oral culture first and foremost, even though written documents were being produced at the time. The philosophers preferred oral teaching and dialogue, not written texts. And even "historians" were dependent on oral sources (Propositions 6-8). Oral and written texts could exist side by side, and did, even into the second century. Even then, oral sources were considered superior to written.

The importance and persistence of the oral stage has important implications for understanding the gospels. The *Logos* referred to the oral word, not as we think to the written text. It could not be otherwise since the people of Jesus' era were largely illiterate. Variants existed in the oral narratives and in the later written texts and therefore are not very important. Paul's letters were also products of oral performance first and foremost, and were only written down so they could be read out loud to the churches in Paul's absence (an oral experience) (Propositions 8-13).

The book concludes with a summary of the authors' observations about the implications of their study presented in the style of "it is safe to believe . . ." it is "not safe to believe . . ." or "it is safe to ask. . ." However, these conclusions cannot be read apart from the rest of the book.

Common definitions of inerrancy that focus on written texts are inadequate in the light of what actually happened in the biblical world. Furthermore, the Gutenberg revolution that put written texts in the hands of the people removed the need for the community, a serious loss. This oral model is being used more and more by missionaries in nonliterate cultures for "reportedly, two-thirds of the world's population in the twenty-first century can't, won't, or don't read and write." (94, note 11).

This brief review cannot do justice to the contents and implications of the arguments of the book. The consequences of adjusting our thinking to the characteristics of an oral culture and how that impacts how we think about the reliability and accuracy of the Bible are of great consequence. Perhaps some evangelicals will not be happy with some of the conclusions of this book. Some things dear to the hearts of evangelical defenders of the accuracy and authority of the written text are dismissed by the authors as not really mattering. But, anyone who cares about these issues should study this book.

GARY H. HALL

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Craig L. BLOMBERG. *Can We Still Believe the Bible? An Evangelical Engagement with Contemporary Questions.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014. 288 pp. \$19.99.

Blomberg engages six contemporary questions that have attracted the attention of the liberal media in recent decades, issues over which popular perception has become fairly skewed (due to lack of accurate information). Those six issues involve the reliability of manuscript transmission, the formation of the canon, the translation debate, inerrancy, the weight of figurative language in non-narrative genres, and miracles. A hermeneutic of suspicion dominates popular discourse in these matters, making it difficult to have a fair and reasoned discussion about the evidence. Blomberg presents all of the information necessary for

achieving a fair and balanced view of these matters, a view that he is confident garners our full trust in the reliability of Scripture.

The biggest asset here is the wealth of knowledge that Blomberg brings to the table. I first heard Dr. Blomberg lecture in 2005, debunking several myths behind Dan Brown’s *The DaVinci Code*, which naturally involved questions about the manuscript tradition and the formation of the canon. I found him even then extremely well-read in the pertinent literature, masterfully arranging and communicating that material for those who were seriously seeking answers—both layperson and specialist alike. This book continues that tradition. Not only does he present the long-standing view in each area but also carefully articulates the most recent discoveries and thoughts, at every turn demonstrating how they confirm our belief in the reliability of Scripture. As a professor and faculty member, I particularly appreciate the background stories that Blomberg has access to—discussions that take place in the societies and academic meetings—that are difficult to access in print. These make for fascinating reading and help to set the context from which these issues arise. Blomberg’s lifelong study in the critical issues, his broad knowledge of the primary and secondary literature, and his personal engagement with these problems (in the classroom, as a churchman, and through participation in the discussions of the academic guild) all combine to make this book a significant contribution to modern apologetics.

This book is not without its idiosyncrasies, however. He seems to have an axe to grind with Norman Geisler, and in his discussion of translation issues he (bizarrely, in my opinion) includes *The Message* alongside the New World Translation and the Joseph Smith Translation as translations to treat with caution. The more significant issue is the way some of the terms and concepts involved in a critical discussion of these issues appear without explanation. In the early chapters he is careful to explain some of this insider vocabulary, but in the deeper sections of the book these explanations and definitions disappear, probably in an attempt to keep the reader focused on the pertinent issues and not get distracted by definitions and qualifications. Words like “gnostic” (57, 68), “neo-orthodox” (132), “monogenesis,” “polygenesis” (154), and “mimesis” (172) appear without definition, terms that are well-understood within the academy, but less so among laypersons. Having said all of this, though, I must again come back around to the articulated strengths of this book, for the quirks mentioned are a result of what Blomberg expertly brings to the fore. The issues he addresses are not easy to deal with, and solving the problems posed by a firm belief in the reliability of Scripture requires more than pithy aphorisms and meaningless slogans. To that end, Blomberg’s approach, while a bit more developed than the average book on the reliability of the Bible, is on par with Scripture’s own *gravitas*, and is worthy of the hard issues that arise from critical engagement with it.

Overall, I am impressed with Blomberg’s work. This book is quite helpful and should become standard reading in apologetics courses in both colleges and seminaries. Far from merely an academic textbook, this volume will be immensely helpful for the layperson wanting to dig deeper to find the bedrock upon which to anchor solid trust in the Bible. He demonstrates that we can rely on the manuscript tradition to give us, with a high degree of accuracy, the complete text of both OT and NT. He shows how translation philosophies are nuanced, but not to the point of distorting the text. He demonstrates how a variety of views on any particular genre, text, or issue (even the very issue of “inerrancy” itself) does not destroy the Scripture’s reliability, and shows how integral the miracles of the Bible are to its

inherent message. Plenty of books take up the easy, well-worn paths on Scripture's reliability. Blomberg's contribution is to venture the road less traveled, to ask the difficult questions that skeptics are asking of the text and to seek honest, genuine answers to those questions, proving that Scripture's reliability is as clearly established (if not more so) in modern times as it ever was.

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Derek C. SCHUURMAN. *Shaping a Digital World: Faith, Culture and Computer Technology.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2013. 138 pp. \$14.40.

Schuurman begins his discussion by defining his terms, most importantly *technology* (13). His central assertion, that *technology* is value-laden, follows. Schuurman builds this assertion largely on the foundations of both Marshall McLuhan and Neil Postman, asserting that new mediums bring about new ways of thinking, looking, and interacting (15). Much like the clock, computers are artifacts that have changed every aspect of modern life, and this comes with a host of embedded values (*quantification, data, classification, speed*) and assumptions (*abstractionism, reductionism*) which often fly under our reflective radar (17). Rather than view technology as value-neutral, Schuurman would rather see computer technology as grounded in theology.

Chapter Two expands on the idea of embedded value in technology within a theological framework. He starts with the idea of creation and how computer technology functions as a part of the created order. He sees three foundational vectors in the creation story that layer meaning into computer technology: *the cultural mandate, the Image of God, and the Sabbath rest*. Within these vectors exists an astounding range of reality which defies reductionism. Schuurman here uses Dooyeweerd's modal scheme as a comprehensive framework establishing a view of creation "both diverse and interconnected" yet firmly under a sovereign God (41). This framework of 15 modal aspects allows Schuurman to discuss computer technology as deeply integrated into a variety of norms, laws, and realms of human reality. This construct frames nicely the idea that computer technology, along with even the most intangible human artifacts, have intention and direction ordered by God who governs them via norms (for the more intangible) and laws (for the 'harder sciences'). This system of *creational laws* and *creational norms* will drive Schuurman's view of technology and the fall as well as his discussion of technology and redemption.

Chapters Three and Four build upon the framework by flowing computer technology through the theological lenses of the fall and redemption. Schuurman asserts that computer technology can be viewed much in the same way as agricultural technology. Prior to the fall cultivation technology isn't *different* than it is today; it was unnecessary (64). Schuurman poses the very valid question *without the Fall would there even be a need for most of our technology?* This question infuses the very drive to create technology with theological meaning and is perhaps his strongest argument for a value-laden view of technology. The framework of *norms* and *laws* is again used to highlight technology's function in the Creation after the Fall.

Chapter Four is perhaps the weakest chapter. Having built a framework for viewing technology from a theological perspective, imbued with values by virtue of being an artifact of

the creative process of God and the role of human beings within it, Schuurman seems to falter a bit when transitioning to the practical. His discussion of the redemptive norms of the Kingdom of Heaven as it applies to computing technology is good, but reads less like a discussion of technology per se and more like general admonitions to live in a Christ-like manner (77). Granted, practical implementations of his framework are somewhat outside the scope of his work.

I found this book refreshing. Avoiding both the neo-Luddite position (computer technology makes us dumber, or at least socially damaged) and the first adopter position (10 things you ought to be doing with Twitter), Schuurman seeks to build a framework that assumes technology exists as a theological construct within the reality of God's Creation. As a practical theologian I would agree with the author that everything we do as humans, including construct and use technology, is inherently theological and therefore value-laden. The book's greatest strength lies in this framework and its presentation of technology as something worthy of reflective consideration without oversimplification or alarmist warnings. The book's greatest weakness builds out of this strength: having built the framework he leaves the practical implications largely vague and unexplored.

This volume would serve well for an adult or emerging adult group study, or as a formational text in any emerging ministry (children, youth, college) library. It might also serve well as a discussion-oriented text for the study of digital natives.

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Joel BADEN. *The Promise to the Patriarchs.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2013. 240 pp. \$74.00.

This volume examines the function of the Patriarchal promises in the Pentateuch from a literary-critical, theological, and canonical perspective. As an advocate of the classic Documentary Hypothesis, Baden argues that the promises to the Patriarchs form an integral part in the narrative coherence of the J, E, and P sources. This is contrary to many scholars who argue that most of the promises are secondary additions or redactional creations. Chapter 1 shows how the promises to the Patriarchs, telescoped canonically into one promise, serve as the lens through which the whole Pentateuch is to be read. Chapter 2 critiques the criteria by which scholars of both Documentarian and non-Documentarian persuasion posit the secondary nature of many of the non-P promises, whereas the P promises are considered unified. Baden shows that applying the hyper-critical criteria used to assert the secondary nature of the non-P promises to the P texts would yield the conclusion that the P texts are likewise secondary. Chapter 3 builds a positive case for the narrative integrity of the promises within the scope of J, E, and P. For each of these sources, the Patriarchal promise expresses the central theology of the narrative that cannot be removed without damaging the narrative integrity. Baden groups the non-P promises into two groups. Group A is founded on Gen 12:1-3; 13:14-17, and focuses on Abraham and his descendants being a blessing to the nations (Gen 16:8-11; 18:17-19; 24:7; 26:2-5; 28:13-15; 32:13). Group B is founded on Genesis 15, and has an interest in the Patriarchs' relationship to Egypt (e.g., Gen 21:13,18; 46:3-4; 50:24). With the exception of Gen 22:15-18, which is the only secondary

promise as a conflation of themes from Groups A and B, all the promises can be assigned through their narrative and conceptual links to Group A (= J), Group B (= E), or P. Chapter 4 further defines the contours of the promise in J, E, and P. Each source agrees that the promise of the land and progeny was given to the Patriarchs, but they differ in the emphasis they place on the promise. For P, the covenant is unconditional, there is an emphasis on being fruitful and multiplying, the Patriarchs are sojourners on the land, and their offspring will include kings. In J, there is an emphasis on the land, blessing the nations, the protective presence of God, and ethics according to natural law. E emphasizes the fear of God as the basis of morality, and a prophetic view of the future sojourn and return from Egypt. The final form of the Pentateuch has combined these perspectives, allowing the diversity of J, E, and P to stand side by side with equal authority (ch 5). This creates a statement of theological impartiality reflecting royal (J), prophetic (E), and priestly (P) perspectives, and allows an understanding of God's relationship with humanity from multiple vantages.

Baden's work is a valuable resource for scholars, students, and ministers interested in the theology as well as history of the formation of the Patriarchal promises. His critique of the tendency to view the promises as secondary is trenchant. Within the context of current studies on the formation of the Pentateuch, Baden's work will be challenged by those who do not adhere to the Documentary Hypothesis. According to Baden the "strands of the Pentateuch underwent extensive internal development . . . over multiple generations" (137). Baden thus believes in a supplemental development of the sources internally, but he argues that this process of development of each source took place independent of the other sources, which then were combined by one author at the end of the process of the internal development. Non-Documentarians will challenge the theory of the independent development of the "sources" as well as the whole notion of continuous J, E, or P sources. Regardless of what one believes about the formation of the Pentateuch, Baden's analysis of the Patriarchal promises is theologically and methodologically a valuable constructive contribution to understanding the Pentateuch.

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Gordon WENHAM. *The Psalter Reclaimed: Praying and Praising with the Psalms.* Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013. 205 pp. \$15.99.

Wenham supports a return to singing the Psalms in worship, understanding them as a unit and sequentially. He is professor at Trinity College, Bristol, UK. The book represents lectures delivered over several years.

Wenham regrets the neglect of their power "to capture and mold people's imaginations and attitudes to life." The Psalms are prayers, and the Psalter is "a deliberately organized anthology designed . . . 'to commit oneself to following the God-approved life.'" He traces Jesus' use of the Psalms, their NT use, and their use in the early church. Wenham decries their minimal appearance in some churches today since they address sickness, distress, conflict, broken relationships, and persecution. He understands the royal Psalms as historical: the establishment of the royal line, but also prophetic: looking to "David's greater son". He rejects the use of form criticism; not simply historical artifacts, they are also prophetic, a meaningful unit and sequence.

Wenham draws parallels between the Psalms and the Pentateuch. He sees parallels with the Decalogue, with themes of the righteous and the wicked, and God as Judge. In the chapter on “The Imprecatory Psalms,” Wenham decries churches’ omission of such offending Psalms. He borrows heavily from the writing of Clinton McCann, who says that these Psalms teach us to care for others, bear the burdens of others, and support the poor. The chapter, though more McCann’s than Wenham’s, is well taken.

Wenham affirms the centrality of Psalm 103, and it is more than cultic and historic. Its content is related to Psalms 90 through 102, and Psalms 104 through 106. Its central verse is verse 17: “The steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting.” He engages in extensive exposition of the Hebrew *hesed*, that steadfast love of the LORD. Wenham’s commentary is never far from the present moment. He calls for a renewed hope in the promise of Psalm 103 in an era of falling church attendance, “disgusting greed and corruption . . . , the collapse of family life . . . , and a broken society.”

In the final chapter, Wenham addresses critical questions regarding the national Psalms. Are the references to Israel singular and historical, or do they have a broader context? What exegetical method applies to their interpretation? To what extent is our attention drawn to the context of the original writer or the understanding of its later editors? Wenham leans heavily on the responses of later editors and the broader context. The remainder of this chapter surveys national references in the Psalms, and places value on the passages in sequence. Important considerations for Wenham are whether a nation is righteous or wicked, and what the implications are for righteousness and conflict.

Wenham’s viewpoint “witnesses to an enduring belief among the Jews that God’s promises to David are still valid and that there will be a new David.” Ultimately, the concept of nations is to be interpreted messianically. Wenham traces five primary themes in the Psalms: the appointment of King David, Jerusalem as the dwelling place of God, conflicts between Israel and other nations, the defeat of these nations, and the opportunity afforded other nations to serve God. This discussion is masterful—not all original with Wenham, but nevertheless synthesized well.

The book is strong in its review of scholarship on the Psalms. It is weak because it is disjointed, coming from lectures presented over several years. He does not chart much new territory on the Psalms. A great value of the book may be in convincing more planners of worship to incorporate the Psalms in liturgy. I recommend this book for preachers, for planners of worship, for lecturers on the Psalms in colleges and seminaries, and for libraries of such institutions.

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Dale Ralph DAVIS. *The Message of Daniel: His Kingdom Cannot Fail.* The Bible Speaks Today. Ed. J. A. Motyer. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2013. 169 pp. \$18.00.

The Bible Speaks Today Series seeks to expound the biblical text with accuracy, to relate it to contemporary life, and be readable (General Preface). Unlike traditional commentaries they seek to apply the text to today. Unlike typical “sermons” they seek to take the original

meaning of the text seriously. All are based in the conviction that “God still speaks through what he has spoken” (7). The volume on Daniel is by Davis, a former Professor of OT at Reformed Theological Seminary (Jackson, Mississippi) and the current “Minister in Residence” at First Presbyterian Church in Colombia, South Carolina. This is a replacement volume for an earlier work by Ronald S. Wallace.

The book of Daniel has been hotly debated. Relying on the arguments of Gleason Archer, Robert Dick Wilson, and K. A. Kitchen, Davis defends a strictly conservative position on the book. Critical scholarship claims that Daniel is a fictional character, that some of its history is wrong, that the bulk of Daniel’s “prophecies” are in fact history in the guise of prophecy, and that the only real predictions of the book (Dan 11:36-45) foretell that the “king of the north” (understood to be Antiochus IV) would invade Egypt again and then die in Palestine, but that those prophecies failed. Davis, in contrast, maintains that the book of Daniel is historical rather than fictional, that its history is accurate, that Daniel was a real person who made genuine, predictive prophecies about future kings and kingdoms that have come true, and Davis denies that any of Daniel’s prophecies have failed. Davis applies Dan 11:36-45 (and the “little horn” of Daniel 7) to Paul’s “man of lawlessness” (2 Thess 2:3-4) who in Davis’s view will come at the end of the age, not to Antiochus IV in the Maccabean Era. Davis suspects that the real reason why critical scholarship takes the view that it does is an antisupernatural bias which finds the idea of genuine prediction of the future hard to stomach philosophically.

The semisermonic nature of the book is seen in its many illustrations. For example, his Introduction to Daniel begins with an illustration from the *Reader’s Digest*. Reflecting his ministry setting in the Deep South, he draws several illustrations from the American Civil War. He also draws on World War II political and military history (Hitler, Stalin), the life of Charles Spurgeon, newspaper articles, the doings of dictator Idi Amin, the American Revolutionary war, his own personal experiences, sports (Willie Mays), cartoons (Charlie Brown), and the like. Some of these are excellent and illuminating. Preachers may find them helpful, though those primarily looking for a commentary on Daniel may find more than a few to be extraneous.

The commentary proper does not spend a lot of time on pinning down the interpretation of difficult passages. For example, there is an exegetical question as to whether the 2300 evenings and mornings of Dan 8:14 means 2300 days or 1150 days. Davis refers the reader to the commentaries, saying, “Read Andrew Steinmann and he’ll convince you of the 1150 view; read Stephen Miller, and he’ll convince you of the 2,300 view.” As for his own view, Davis simply says whimsically, “If I were to be held at gunpoint and told to make a decision, I would opt for the 2,300 position,” though he is not sure (109). What interests him more is the question of “why is a two-bit king [Antiochus IV] so all-fired important?” Here he points to the fact that Antiochus’s attempt to abolish Judaism was one of the greatest challenges Jewish believers in OT times ever faced.

One difficult passage is Dan 9:24-27 (Daniel’s 70 weeks). After discussing some of the issues around this passage, Davis rejects the critical view that refers these verses to Antiochus IV, and he rejects the dispensational view that sees Antichrist in the Great Tribulation in Daniel’s seventh week. Instead Davis takes the “weeks” as periods of time rather than years. He sees the 70 weeks as beginning with Jeremiah’s prediction in 594 BC (Jer 29:10-11), one “anointed one” as Cyrus king of Persia who allowed the Jews to restore and rebuild

Jerusalem coming after seven weeks, followed by a longer period of time (sixty-two weeks) where life goes on, then on to the seventh week where another “anointed one,” the Messiah comes and is cut off, followed by Rome’s destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. He comments that this is a view that will displease almost everyone. Davis does not argue in any depth to show why his view is superior to any of its alternatives, nor does he address possible weaknesses in his own view. The work lacks that kind of exegetical detail.

Application involves what we are to believe and how we are to live. Davis focuses the former in Daniel 1 (Daniel’s exile and training) by observing how the book of Daniel affirms that God sovereignly works silently behind the scenes, giving Judah to Nebuchadnezzar, giving Daniel favor before Ashpenaz, giving all four lads knowledge and wisdom, and the like. In Daniel 2, 7, and 11 he emphasizes how the victory of the kingdom of God over the kingdoms of the world can assure God’s people. In Daniel 3 (Nebuchadnezzar’s statue and the fiery furnace) he shows how the three Jewish lads were models of faith resisting the demand to worship a totalitarian state. Davis’s life applications are usually subtle and suggestive rather than direct like a typical sermon.

Davis’s book can be recommended to preachers and general Christian readers seeking a basic understanding and application of the book of Daniel. Those looking for a detailed, exegetical commentary, or for a time-table of end time events, will have to look elsewhere.

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Kevin J. YOUNGBLOOD. *Jonah: God’s Scandalous Mercy. Hearing the Message of Scripture: A Commentary on the Old Testament.* Ed. by Daniel I. Block. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013. 186 pp. \$29.99.

How do we best hear the message intended by the biblical authors? Youngblood’s commentary on the Book of Jonah is one of two commentaries now available in the Hearing the Message of Scripture series. The commentary series aims to discern the message that the biblical author intended to be *heard* through close examination of *how* he presented the message. As such, the series utilizes rhetorical and discourse analysis to identify the structure and thought-flow of the text.

For each the seven main units of the Book of Jonah, Youngblood summarizes the main idea of the passage, describes the literary context, presents his translation of the text fashioned to highlight the unit’s rhetorical structure, outlines the thought of the passage, discusses the structure and literary form, explains various textual components such as words and syntax, and considers particular elements with canonical and practical significance. His fresh translation seeks to capture the rhetorical emphases of the original.

The introductory matters consider the Book of Jonah in its canonical, historical, and literary context. Youngblood concludes that Jonah should be heard first in its unified and independent form and only then related to the larger prophetic and biblical contexts (that is, rather than first concentrating on Jonah and its function within the Book of the Twelve).

Historically, he situates Jonah in the eighth century during the prosperous period experienced by Israel under the reign of Jeroboam II, coinciding with the weak period of Assyrian hegemony. The prophet Jonah mediates YHWH’s mercy both to Israel (2 Kgs 14:24-27)

and Assyria during his days. Yet the suppression of historical detail in the Book of Jonah, its theological and didactic concern for justice and mercy, and “the universality of the book’s message” (31) point to a later date for putting the prophet’s message into writing, which Youngblood locates as the Persian period. The book’s reflections on divine justice and mercy are consistent with Persian period theological deliberations on divine retribution.

The section on literary context summarizes findings from the rhetorical and discourse analysis. Youngblood identifies the genre of the book as primarily prophetic narrative with multiple subgenres. “Thus, Jonah may be characterized as a gentle parody of the traditional prophetic account designed to challenge Judah’s distorted notions of traditional prophetic themes such as divine justice and Israel’s election” (37). Youngblood identifies six main rhetorical tools used by the author: parallelism, alternating scenes, verbal repetition, symbolic use of geography and climate, intertextuality, and textual information gaps. Many of these features are illustrated with helpful charts and figures.

Youngblood has produced a well-crafted, deeply insightful, and highly useful commentary on the Book of Jonah that engenders a deeper appreciation for the message of Jonah and the mercy of God. Ample footnotes point the way for those interested in further study or contrasting opinions. Preachers and teachers will appreciate the close readings of the text and the abundance of connections made with other OT and NT teachings as well as concepts with practical significance. Those interested in doing rhetorical and discourse analysis have a helpful model for patterning their own work. Hebrew language lovers will enjoy the commentary being based on the Hebrew text, particularly the exploration of Hebrew syntax and words in service of the book’s rhetorical aim.

Hebrew references are presented in both transliteration and translation making the commentary very accessible for those less familiar with Hebrew. With minor exceptions, the commentary offers helpful and clear explanations when rhetorical or Hebrew language terminology is leveraged in the discussion. The rhetorical primer on Hebrew poetry in the context of Jonah’s psalm of thanksgiving is excellent. Additionally, Youngblood’s discourse analysis yields a fresh explanation on the function of the psalm within the narrative.

Again, Youngblood situates the book rhetorically as an effort to emphasize divine mercy in order to stem distorted understandings of divine retribution and desires for vengeance circling in post-exilic Judah. More on how the rhetorical situation and the specifics of Jonah’s message illuminate each other would have been a welcome addition to the commentary. It is my sense that the commentary collapses the modern hearer and the original hearer of the text with greater emphasis, understandably, on appropriating the message of Jonah for today’s hearer.

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Lamontte M. LUKER. *An Illustrated Guide to the Holy Land for Tour Groups, Students, and Pilgrims.* Nashville: Abingdon, 2013. 184 pp. \$24.99.

I had the privilege and good fortune to tour the Holy Land in 2007 with a large group from my church. Words cannot adequately express how those 14 days in Israel and the West Bank affected my faith, my life, and even my understanding of the current politics of the

Middle East. With that background, I eagerly dove into this guide to traveling, understanding, and experiencing the Holy Land.

Like most travel books or field guides, the physical aspects of this book make it suitable for a backpack and constant reference. It is filled with helpful photography and the pages are semi-glossy, which help it withstand the rigors of travel. The binding appears sturdy, which is an essential quality for a book designed to log many miles.

The introduction is one of the most helpful aspects of the book. A historical overview of the land provides a quick refresher on all the events that formed the current political realities. This brief history of the Holy Land continues to the present day, which I found extremely helpful. A geographical survey is also helpful for orienting to the physical features of the region. Finally, the introduction provides practical information necessary for touring in Israel (prices and park information).

The body of the book is formed along the geographical regions of the Holy Land: Northern Coast, Galilee, Samaria, Judea, Negev, the Shefela, & Southern Coast. Significant sites and attractions are described with each region. Typically, the treatment of each location includes a helpful photograph, a short history of significant events (both biblical, non-biblical, and post-biblical), directions for physically navigating around the site, and interesting things to look for. Predictably, popular and traditional destinations receive longer descriptions. However, I was pleased to see that every single place I visited during my trip was included.

As the title indicates, this is not a textbook—it is designed for those physically walking the busy streets of Jerusalem or hiking through the dusty trails of Tel Hazor. While this volume would certainly be helpful in a classroom setting, I would highly recommend this book for anyone who has been or is planning to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. If you've already made the trip, flipping through these pages will transport you back. In fact, as I read the book, I couldn't resist looking through my own pictures to relive parts of the trip. If you are planning on making your first tour, you will find this book incredibly helpful. It will guide you through each site and also alert you to interesting features you might otherwise miss. Either way, this little book will greatly enhance your personal experience with the Holy Land.

DON SANDERS

Campus Pastor, Harvester Christian Church
St. Charles, Missouri

G. K. BEALE. *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012. 173 pp. \$17.99.

Beale is well known for his extensive research into the use of the OT in the NT that began with his doctoral work on the use of Daniel in Jewish apocalyptic and Revelation. His edited work with D. A. Carson, *A Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Baker, 2007) provides an almost exhaustive guide to the topic. In some ways the volume under review seems anticlimactic. It provides detailed guidelines for how to properly approach this complex subject and is an explanation of the method used in the *Commentary*.

Beale has developed a nine-step method to use in exegeting NT texts that quote from or allude to the OT. Scholars have taken different approaches to this topic, including the

skeptics who think the NT authors used ad hoc exegesis and had little regard for the context or intent of the OT text. Beale is not one of these. He firmly believes that a fair assessment of the OT and NT texts in their contexts will show an organic relationship and legitimate use of the OT text. Of course this relationship is not simple, and no one approach will do justice to the many different ways the NT authors referenced the OT (contra Kaiser's univocal approach).

First Beale deals with some challenges to considering OT quotations in the NT (chapter 1). Did NT authors just use Jewish hermeneutical methods or did they develop a unique christological perspective? Is there continuity or discontinuity between the testaments? How is typology to be understood? Is it the same as allegory? Can we use the same hermeneutical approach that the NT authors did? Scholars give varied answers and Beale surveys them all.

The first task of exegesis is to determine OT quotes and allusions in the NT (chapter 2). Those quotes with introductory formulas and extensive verbal parallels are easy to identify. However, identification of what are called allusions is a quite different process, so Beale discusses the issue in detail with several examples. He also addresses the newest terminology for this phenomena, "echos" and "intertextuality." Beale offers seven criteria for identifying allusions (33) and a bibliography of books that help the student ferret out allusions (37).

The core of the book is chapter 3 where he describes his nine steps (41-54). These nine steps are: identify the OT reference, analyze the NT context of the quotation or allusion, analyze the OT context, survey how the OT text was used in Jewish literature of the NT era, compare the texts in the original languages, analyze how the NT author uses other OT texts, and also his hermeneutical use, his theological use, and his rhetorical use of the OT. Beale provides explanation for each of these steps. Chapter 4 is also an important part of the book. Here Beale addresses the primary ways the NT authors use the OT, elaborating on step seven. He provides an extensive discussion of typology with special reference to the use of Hos 11:1 in Matt 2:15, a text that has attracted considerable attention. For this reviewer a significant contribution to the topic is Beale's discussion of what he calls "the use of the OT segment as a blueprint or prototype for a NT segment." Here he explores the larger context of both testaments and affirms the relationship between the two in often quite intricate and far-reaching details. Beale includes several charts of parallel ideas or themes to illustrate his point. Beale first finds a repeated pattern in the OT using a particular early text and how that pattern is then picked up in the NT.

Chapter 5 briefly explains the five major hermeneutical and theological presuppositions of the NT authors. These are vital to understand why the authors chose the texts they did and why they used them in the way they did. Chapter 6 provides a guide to how to find and understand first century BC/AD Jewish references to the OT, something that would not be normally taught in a college or seminary course. This chapter includes bibliographies for each of the Jewish sources: LXX, apocrypha, pseudepigrapha, Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Mishnah. The book concludes with a case study of the use of Isa 22:22 in Rev 3:7 (chapter 7). Concluding the volume is an extensive general bibliography and a bibliography for each book or section of the NT.

Beale provides an indispensable guide to the NT use of the OT and the serious student of scripture should have this book on the shelf. Some readers may get lost in the details in some places, but it is important to understand the basic principles set forth by Beale if we are going to understand the relationship between the testaments with integrity.

For many summers I taught a course at Lincoln Christian Seminary on this topic and this book would have been the perfect text. The course was always an eye-opening experience for the students and often produced a paradigm shift in how they studied Scripture. Beale's book has the potential to have the same effect on the reader.

GARY H. HALL

Professor of Old Testament, Emeritus
Lincoln Christian Seminary

Wilfrid J. HARRINGTON. *Jesus Our Brother: The Humanity of the Lord.* New York: Paulist, 2010. 111 pp. \$14.95.

This slim volume is a rather strange offering in the historical Jesus genre. Harrington begins by decrying ahistorical Christology and the tendency to detach accounts of Jesus' death and resurrection from his life and ministry. He promises to direct our attention to Jesus' "characteristically human traits" in their proper historical and social context. He does not, however, claim that such attention excludes the theological. No, at the heart of Harrington's book is the theological claim: "In the human *Jesus* we meet God" (v). Harrington proceeds to give a succinct overview of his method, the genre of the Gospels, and Jesus' life. He gives a brief account of Jesus' social, political, and religious setting and then outlines Jesus' prophetic ministry in terms of his announcement of God's present and future reign, his healings, his use of the title "Son of Man," and his death on the cross.

Harrington devotes the lion's share of the book to surveying the concerns and traits of Jesus. He finds the poor, women, children, sinners, and table fellowship at the heart of Jesus' concerns. The primary trait of Jesus is faith, which Harrington describes as the discernment of God's action in the world that leads to commitment to this God, or "trust in the faithfulness of God" (39). This flows into Harrington's discussion of Jesus' experience of temptation and testing. The next—crucial—trait of Jesus is love, for love of God of fellow humans was Jesus' primary motivation. Jesus sustains this love through prayer with the Father which empowers Jesus' compassion for his neighbors and the hungry (literal and metaphorical). Harrington presents this compassion as a trait that stands in tension with Jesus' religious context, although "religion" (understood in terms of Sabbath, ritual observance, good works, and temple) is another trait in Harrington's picture of Jesus. Again, Harrington underlines Jesus' forgiveness, his friendship with sinners, and his mercy, which stands in contrast to his contemporaries. Harrington's treatment of the next trait, rather awkwardly called "Nature," outlines how Jesus was shaped by and responded to the rural environment of Palestine. To round out Jesus' human traits, Harrington quickly describes Jesus' humor, exasperation, anger, and fear, before offering a cursory summary of the various reactions to Jesus: acceptance, opposition, and rejection. Finally, Harrington concludes with a short explanation of Jesus' crucifixion as a triumphant failure.

Although the parts are generally anodyne, the strangeness of this little book is manifold. For instance, who is the intended reader of this volume? Harrington assumes that the reader knows very little about Jesus but is aware of christological debates and understands terms like *eschatological*. Is Harrington primarily a historian or a pastor? On the one hand, Christian readers unfamiliar with critical academic treatment of scripture will likely balk at the unexplained and unsupported statements about the historical unreliability of the Gospels

intermixed with the exhortations to imitate Jesus. On the other hand, readers familiar with historical Jesus studies will find his frequent appeal to Hebrews and Colossians—not to mention Luke and John—surprising in a text that claims to be presenting the Markan historical Jesus. It is also strange that in a text replete with moral exhortation, Harrington claims that repentance was not a component of the historical Jesus' teaching. Although the back blurb promises more than a "therapeutic 'nice guy,'" Harrington's Jesus preaches transformation without repentance and discipleship without mortification of the flesh. Moreover, Harrington's explanation of the heart of Jesus' message sounds like a slightly updated but basically uncritical echo of Harnack circa 1900: "[Jesus] took his stand on the Fatherhood/Motherhood of God. He believed that all men and women are children of this Parent, that all are sisters and brothers" (18). Where is the Pauline theme of adoption, the Johannine emphasis on Jesus' unique sonship, or the ecclesiology of Hebrews, or the discussion of Jesus as the fulfillment of Israel's story Harrington promised in the preface? While the emphasis on Jesus as the revelation of God is salutary and the lens of liberation theology often helpful, this introductory book is too uneven to recommend it to neophytes and too basic to recommend it to more advanced readers.

LUKE BEN TALLON

Assistant Professor of Theology
LeTourneau University

Sandra BINGHAM. *The Praetorian Guard: A History of Rome's Elite Special Forces.* Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2013. 240 pp. \$34.95.

This volume is the product of a decade of research by Sandra Bingham, a teaching fellow at the University of Edinburgh. Bingham has amassed a great amount of information on this subject and lucidly presented it in this short volume. She states that her purpose is to "set the praetorians into a context that tries to look objectively at the ancient sources, such as they are, and to challenge modern misunderstandings" (8). Bingham's belief is that the guard has not been fully characterized in modern scholarship. The view that Bingham wishes to correct is that the guard served merely as the emperor's bodyguard and, if needed, saw to the execution and selection of emperors. Bingham's work demonstrates that the guard played an important role in the administration and stability of the Roman Empire as well (79).

The first thing that will be noticed by the reader is the brevity of the volume. Of its 240 pages, 86 pages are endnotes and a bibliography/index make up another 27 pages, leaving only 124 pages of text. The book is composed of five chapters. In the introductory chapter Bingham introduces the reader to the plight of scholarship on the subject and establishes her thesis and methodology. From the outset Bingham works to expand the reader's understanding of the guard by introducing a number of divisions within the unit itself. The second chapter comprises the lion's share of the volume and covers the history of the guard from its inception under Augustus to its disbandment in 312 under Constantine.

The third chapter looks at the guard in terms of its organization, bringing to light topics of size, pay, and hierarchy. This chapter engages the relationship between the praetorians and Roman power. Bingham will present the manner in which ancient authors viewed the power held by the praetorians. Chapter four expounds Bingham's thesis by deducing the various duties carried out by the guard, varying from fighting fires to maintaining security via

covert means. Bingham's discussion of the ancient witness to the service of the praetorians is eye-opening. If chapter three related the guard and Roman power, chapter four illustrates how that power was demonstrated through urban management and intimidation. In chapter five Bingham does little more than summarize the conclusions brought forth in each of the previous chapters. Namely, that the praetorians announce, more than anything other than the emperor, the transition from republic to empire in their administrative, protective, and coercive roles.

Bingham's work has much to commend. First of all, it provides a nuanced view of the particular work of the praetorians within the larger machinations of empire. The guard is clearly described as both a visible symbol of power in Rome and a covert force abroad, ensuring the stability and the continuation of *Pax Romana*. Another strength of Bingham's work is the sheer amount of primary source material brought together to form her research. These sources will bring the reader into direct contact with ancient attitudes toward imperial privilege and subjugation. These strengths promise to nuance the social scientific study of the NT and early Christian history. Those who study these centuries for the Christian response to empire will find much worth in Bingham's research.

Nevertheless, this volume has its shortcomings. Two of these relate to the nature of the publication. First are the numerous endnotes. The reader will find that reading this work well will require constant turning back and forth to the notes. This can become tiring, especially with the amount of notations included in this volume. Many readers will also find this work, especially the second chapter, rather pedantic. The amount of detail can slow the reading process and cause one to lose interest. The greatest weakness, however, lies in the lack of connection between this work and the studies of many *SCJournal* readers. To be fair, Bingham does not claim to write for the field of biblical studies. In a field full of books to further our knowledge, the typical *SCJ* reader may find it difficult to read Bingham's volume. One should be mindful, nonetheless, that this work has been well received in reviews by classical journals and is believed to change the field of Roman military studies. It will prove interesting to see how this volume is appropriated into such studies and therefore affect NT studies.

JORDAN COLE STANLEY
Emmanuel Christian Seminary

Geza VERMES. *The True Herod.* New York: Bloomsbury, 2014. 181 pp. \$27.99.

This short book is the final publication of Vermes, released a year after his death. In it, he sets out to offer a corrective to the one-sided portrait of Herod the Great as a blood-thirsty tyrant contained in both Christian and rabbinic traditions (xi). The book begins with four chapters surveying Jewish history from King David down to the Hasmoneans. These first four chapters serve as important background information for the life of Herod the Great, which Vermes summarizes in chapters five through seven. Chapter five examines the lives of Herod's immediate ancestors and Herod's own life before his appointment as king. Chapter six surveys Herod's rule as King of the Jews and is broken into three parts: consolidation of his rule (37–25 BCE), Herod's building projects (25–13 BCE), and the King's decline and death (13–4 BCE). Chapter seven is Vermes's assessment of Herod's life and reign. Vermes sees Herod as having an inferiority complex that he was never able to overcome (98) and that contributed to placating both his superiors and subjects. In these matters, Vermes notes

Herod's loyalty to Mark Antony and later, Octavian, as well as the King's enrichment of Judaea which made life in the region significantly better (100). Herod's inferiority complex also had negative sides: the king's financial irresponsibility and his inexplicable cruelty toward those closest to him (99). Finally, Vermes draws attention to Herod's religious contributions, namely his affection for the Pharisees and Essenes, and most significantly, the rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple (102). This is Vermes's true Herod—a complex figure who expressed a wide range of abilities and emotions. Chapter seven includes a brief discussion of Herod's depiction in literature and film. The book concludes with six short chapters, each giving a brief overview of Herod's descendants who feature in Josephus and/or the NT.

As a general introduction to the intriguing figure of Herod the Great, this book is unrivaled. Some Christian readers may be unhappy with Vermes's explanation of the so-called massacre of the innocents of the first canonical Gospel as a type of midrash that employs the literary tropes of the story of Moses and Pharaoh in the OT (106, 113-119). This minor interpretive issue aside, this volume should serve as *the* introduction for any person—clergy, lay, student, or burgeoning scholar—who is interested in the life and legacy of Herod the Great. While not a scholarly monograph by any means, there are ample footnotes throughout that direct the reader to passages in Josephus, the NT, and other ancient literature as well as a good bibliography of modern sources that offer avenues for further reading and research. The volume also contains many high-quality photographs of key archaeological sites and artefacts that aid the reader in setting Herod and his family in their historic contexts. Most importantly, and in accord with the book's title, Vermes has given his readers a portrait of the true Herod, a king who was driven to extreme, unthinkable violence by his own insecurities, but also a leader of unsurpassed political acumen.

FRANK E. DICKEN

Assistant Professor of New Testament
Lincoln Christian University

Daniel B. WALLACE, Brittany C. BURNETTE, and Terri Darby MOORE. *A Reader's Lexicon of the Apostolic Fathers*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2013. 250 pp. \$34.99.

This volume, edited by Wallace, appears as the second volume in a series of *lexica* intended for burgeoning students of early Christian texts, following Michael H. Burer and Jeffrey E. Miller's *A New Reader's Lexicon of the Greek New Testament* (Kregel, 2008). Wallace, a reputed scholar of biblical Greek and faculty mainstay at Dallas Theological Seminary, has enlisted the aid of two pupils also listed as editors, Brittany C. Burnette and Terri Darby Moore, in the collation of this valuable resource.

Following a brief introductory section, in which Wallace outlines the genesis of the project and its methodological scaffolding, the great bulk of the book's 250 pages are devoted to a treatment of the Apostolic Fathers (AF) texts themselves. Like its predecessor volume, the content of this treatment is streamlined and sparse: concise glosses for words occurring thirty times or less in the NT are provided, partitioned by verse/chapter and listed alphabetically, along with numerical indications of the given word's occurrence elsewhere in the particular text and the AF corpus as a whole. The Greek text follows Michael Holmes's third edition of the *Apostolic Fathers* (Baker, 2007) and the contextually determined glosses are

derived from a collection of standard Greek-English lexicons, including the important third edition of Bauer's *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Christian Literature* (University of Chicago Press, 2000).

In his preface, Wallace suggests the *Reader's Lexicon* is ideally intended for students of the NT who are "in their third or fourth semester of biblical Greek" (14). As such, the decision of the editors to include only words occurring thirty times or less in the NT is a deft choice for it both keeps the book from an undue length and viably offers this volume as a tool for advanced students of biblical Greek not only interested in exploring other apostolic Christian writings but also further honing their lexical mastery of the NT. Students primarily concerned with the history of early Christian thought and practice or Late Antiquity will also find the lexicon a useful aid in their own study of these important texts. Teachers and professors of Hellenistic Greek, NT, and early Christianity may equally consider this book a worthwhile addition to their class syllabi. Moreover, with growing interest in the AF corpus and its important continuities with the NT, pastors and ministers familiar with biblical Greek may also find rewarded interest here as well.

Critiques of this volume are few and rather limited to matters of practicality and presentation. Some may find that the alphabetical arrangement of vocabulary occurring in each verse occludes a fluid reading experience. Were the words to be alternatively arranged according to the order in which they appear in the Greek text, it may provide a reading experience more reflective of the *Reader's* title. Given the book's intended use by budding students of the early church, "especially evangelicals" (11) who may not be familiar with extra-biblical ancient Christian texts, inclusion of a terse bibliography for further reading on the AF corpus would be a welcome addition.

Overall, this book adeptly achieves its modest aim. Wallace's choice to collaborate with his own fledgling scholar-students in the assembly of this helpful volume is itself a rather indicative sign of the book's true merit: this volume ably permits ambitious and aspiring students of the Christian church to deepen their study in a manner that is empowering, not overwhelming.

TAYLOR ROSS
Duke Divinity School

Wally V. CIRAFESI. *Verbal Aspect in the Synoptic Parallels: On the Method and Meaning of Divergent Tense-Form Usage in the Synoptic Passion Narratives.* Linguistic Biblical Studies: 9. Leiden: Brill, 2013. 204 pp. \$140.00.

Cirafesi is a researcher and adjunct instructor at McMaster Divinity College. He is also Associate Editor for the *Biblical and Ancient Greek Linguistics*. He has written a number of peer-reviewed articles particularly on John's Gospel and on the πίστις χριστου debate. This volume is the published version of his dissertation. The Linguistic Biblical Studies series from Brill contains several works that discuss verbal aspect in a robust manner as it relates to biblical studies. This series creates a platform to better understand the intersection between biblical studies and modern linguistics. This volume is the third in this series to concentrate on the semantic value of verbal aspect in the Greek language. The first in the series to do so was *Biblical Translation in Chinese and Greek*, 2009, by Toshikazu Foley, and the next to do so was *Verbal Aspect in the Book of Revelation*, 2010, by David Mathewson. This volume

explains situations in the Synoptic Gospels where the authors portrayed the same event with different tense-forms as the authors desired to focus on the event differently through verbal aspect, rather than reporting on the event with a different temporal reference or copying from a different source.

This volume contains seven chapters and two indices at the back. The introduction and conclusion are the first and last chapters. The second chapter provides a review of literature regarding Greek verbal aspect and then lays out the methodology this research adopts concerning verbal aspect. This chapter collects most of the theoretical discussion regarding semantics and critiques of the theories published by various recent scholars. The third chapter provides a review of literature regarding systemic functional linguistics and then lays out the methodology this volume adopts connecting systemic functional linguistics to Greek verbal aspect. This chapter collects most of the pragmatic discussion related to verbal aspect. The fourth, fifth, and sixth chapters provide discussion of the findings regarding three of the passion narratives in the synoptic Gospels. Each of these three chapters begins with the discussion of the discourse structure of the text, moves to the pragmatics in that structure, and then discusses the verbal aspect of the Greek tense forms in each synoptic account. The two indices enable the reader to locate where modern authors and ancient sources are discussed, respectively.

This volume provides several helpful tests to determine whether or not a perfect tense-form in the discourse is prominent. Basically, if a perfect tense-form attracts other prominent features, then it is prominent (66). Also, the specific word order between the subject and verb often helps determine prominence (100).

This volume fills a gap in literature by discussing the intersection between semantics and pragmatics and then relating the findings from that discussion to the synoptic problem. The primary question this volume seeks to answer is, “why did the synoptic Gospels use different tense-forms when referring to the same event?” This volume shows the relationship between tense-form usage and the discourse prominence and structure, and provides an explanation for tense-form differences between the Synoptic Gospels where commentaries often fail to comment on those differences.

This volume enhances the legacy of the Linguistic Biblical Studies series, by providing its readers with much to consider, both theoretical and practical, regarding the structure and function of the Greek language. Grammar theoreticians and exegetical commentators will both be assessing the methods used, the theoretical matters considered, and the conclusions reached in this volume, for many years to come. Although accessible, this volume is fairly technical, and best serves as either a supplement to the main textbook in a graduate-level, exegetical Greek course, or as a reference resource for biblical scholars.

JAMES E. SEDLACEK
PhD Student
University of Manchester

Jared C. WILSON. *The Storytelling God: Seeing the Glory of Jesus in His Parables.* Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014. 187 pp. \$14.99.

Wilson serves at Middletown Springs Community Church in Middletown Springs, Vermont. This volume seeks to help his audience better understand Jesus’ parables’ mean-

ing (12, 175). According to Wilson, Jesus' parables "are fathoms deep and designed to drive us to Jesus in awe, need, faith, and worship. When we treat them, as 'inspiring tales,' we make superficially insipid what ought to be spiritually incisive" (12). Throughout the book, Wilson clearly stresses the parables' relevance and how they confront contemporary audiences.

In chapter 1, Wilson orients his readers to Jesus' parables. Parables are neither illustrations nor allegories; they are wisdom narratives with a profound twist that speaks to some aspect of God's kingdom. Often this aspect receives particular stress at the end of the parable. Such kingdom stories tend to run powerfully counter to pervading worldviews among Jesus' hearers and to demand that their hearers reshape their worldviews accordingly.

Chapters 2–7 provide vignettes where Wilson reflects on selections of Jesus' parables and their significance for the contemporary church. In these chapters, Wilson particularly addresses parables of the kingdom's: value (the treasure hidden in a field, the pearl of great price, the rich fool—chapter 2), wisdom (the wise and foolish builders, the good and wicked servants—chapter 3), mercy and generosity (the lost sheep, the lost coin, the lost son—chapter 4), justice (the good Samaritan—chapter 5), judgment (the sheep and the goats, the rich man and Lazarus—chapter 6), and condescension (the great supper, the Pharisee and the tax collector—chapter 7). Regularly in these discussions, Wilson provides some general background for the parables in their own historical and literary contexts along with related, sustained theological reflection on challenges that arise for contemporary audiences.

Chapters 8–10 begin wrapping up the book and moving it toward its conclusion. Each of these chapters handles an important piece of the context of Jesus' parables. Chapter 8 discusses parables in the Jewish scriptures, particularly those of Jotham (Judg 9), Nathan (2 Sam 12), and selections from Ezekiel. According to Wilson, these parables point forward to "the salvation only Jesus brings" and that is disclosed in the NT parables (144). Chapter 9 takes up Jesus as the "living parable," largely focusing on the "I am" statements in John's Gospel. Wilson treats these statements as parabolic because "they are complex comparisons that reveal the glory of God in Christ to those who have ears to hear" (145). Reflecting primarily on the parable of the sower, chapter 10 comments on the kingdom's growth. The conclusion continues this trajectory by concentrating on the narrative "twists" that parables often contain and how the church's interaction with the world around it should be similarly surprising because that interaction arises from a radically different story than is told elsewhere.

In many ways, Wilson's volume is helpful, but there are ways in which it could have proven still more beneficial. Throughout the text, Wilson shows awareness of some of the major recurring questions in contemporary parable interpretation (15–36, 121). Wilson's digest of these hermeneutical concerns could be more precise in several instances (19, 27–28). Nevertheless, readers should especially appreciate Wilson's emphasis that Jesus' parables are not soft, "flannelgraph" illustrations or bedtime stories but sharp, incisive narratives that upended worldviews common among their original audiences.

Wilson's contextual sketches occasionally involve anachronistic elements (15, 110). These elements may simply evidence Wilson's efforts to communicate in language recognizable to his own audience. Yet, if part of the book's aim is to correct an overly contemporized and "flannelgraphed" reading of the parables, still a stronger approach might have been sharply to insist on presenting the parables as much in language endemic to their own historical contexts as possible.

Coupled with this point, Wilson draws attention to the powerful counter-narrative dynamic in many parables (15-36, 175-178). Yet, the book's discussions of biblical parables and parabolic sayings frequently devote substantive attention to theological themes related to a given parable(s) rather than to the parables' narratives, or narrative worlds, themselves. The contemporary church would do well to take to heart many of Wilson's reflections and comments in these discussions. Both their force and cumulatively that of the book as a whole, however, would have been that much greater if it had applied the stated narrative or narratological approach in greater detail throughout. Even so, Wilson's volume provides, overall, a good reminder that common stories about how the world works—both in first-century Judaism and in twenty-first-century English-speaking Christianity—sometimes need to be subverted, shown up as untrue, and replaced with stories that are shaped by God's kingdom and that reshape the world accordingly.

J. DAVID STARK
eCampus Director
Faulkner University

R.T. FRANCE. *Luke. Teach the Text Commentary Series*, edited by Mark L. Strauss and John H. Walton. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013. 404 pp. \$39.99.

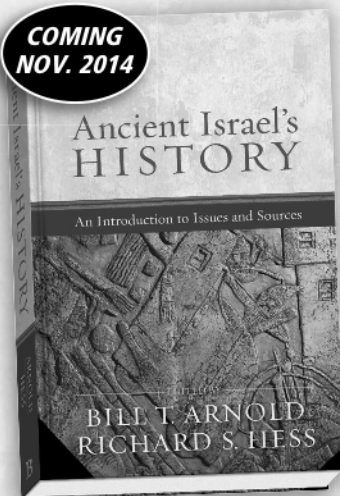
France has been a recognized name among Bible scholars for more than three decades. Earning his PhD from Tyndale Hall, Bristol, in the late 1960s France used his scholarship savvy to become a perennial name among NT scholars particularly in the arena of Gospel studies. He has authored more than a dozen books including *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text* in the popular New International Greek Testament Commentary series, *The Gospel of Matthew* in the New International Commentary on the New Testament series, and *The Evidence for Jesus*. The current volume, the last before his death in 2012, is but another example to readers of his credibility in regard to Gospel studies.

The primary thesis of this series and this volume in particular is “to provide a ready reference for the exposition of the biblical text, giving easy access to information that a pastor needs to communicate the text effectively.” (vii) The offer is for pastors/preachers to engage the Bible (and in this case the Gospel of Luke) as something more than a glorified devotional. In a world where original languages and hermeneutics can often be misused, the goal is the mixed flavor of scholarship, academics, and practical ministry, so preaching and teaching can effectively bridge the gap between a text's meaning and its effective communication and application. France clearly has the preacher in mind in writing this volume.

This volume supports its primary aim of providing meaningful aid to preachers by dividing up the text into manageable sound bites. Each section of Luke is divided into approximately six-page sections. Sections begin with a big idea, move through the text giving sound literary and historical/cultural insight as well as hermeneutical awareness in specific verses along with potential theological markers to consider. Finally, the preacher is given a few catalysts for application that range from modern film to quotes to visual art to poetry. While this volume does not dig deeply into the minutiae of textual details, it does give the preacher carefully chosen details to aid sermon preparation. With several commentary series whose aim is similar (perhaps most notably the NIV Application series) this volume demonstrates a greater clarity and succinctness than do other volumes in comparable series.

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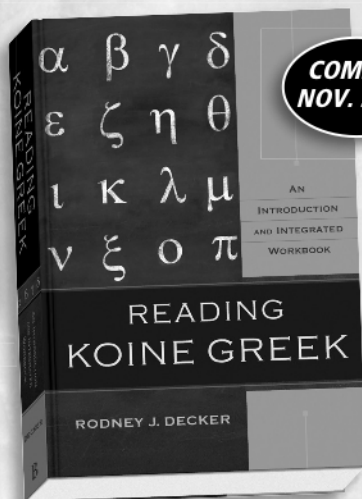
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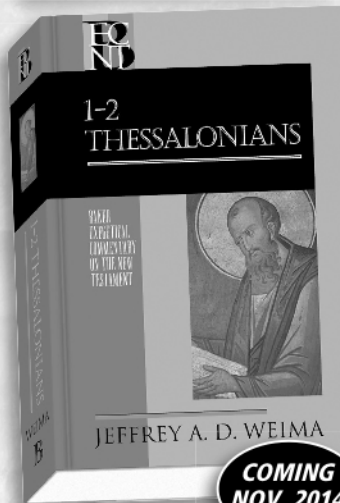


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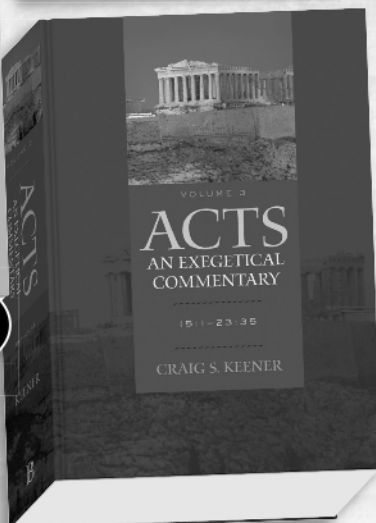


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France rightly affirms the need for continuity between Luke and Acts positing that Luke's works are of utmost importance because of the time periods covered; Jesus' ministry on earth, *and* his disciples' mission after ascension. While France does not stop (per se) to give *special* consideration to many of Luke's unique attributes, neither does he miss them. In two different sections of this commentary that are much beloved (1:39-56; 2:1-20) France gives a well-rounded picture of the narratives surrounding Jesus' birth. Taking nothing for granted, he stops to explain in a few sentences the popular Latin names to the songs of Luke's birth narratives ('Magnificat,' 'Benedictus,' 'Nunc Dimittis') suggesting their value as "expressions of joy in God's saving work" not only for those in the narrative itself but also for the leagues of generations to follow. In addition, France shows intentional scholarship by offering readers fruits from a well-placed word study in Luke 1:45 defining the difference between μακάριος and εὐλογέω in regard to Mary the mother of Jesus. Some Protestant authors may have the tendency to stay away from issues regarding Mary because of a strong Roman Catholic influence, but France does not throw the baby out with the bathwater. Instead, he lifts up the opportunity to "rehabilitate her both as a central figure in God's redemptive purpose and as a model for Christian faith" (22). Moving into the narrative of Jesus' birth France does an impeccable job of gently challenging popular lore surrounding Jesus' initial surroundings. Again, showing keen exegetical insight and process France confronts the idea that Mary gave birth in a barn far from help. One may not agree with France on this particular point, but the fact that he raises the question for the local church leader to wrestle with at all is what makes this commentary appealing.

France's precise brilliance in the narratives of Luke may wane just a bit however in some of Luke's more difficult parables—like the ones found in chapter 16 of Luke's Gospel. For instance, while France offers readers several options as to the seemingly strange commendation received by the dishonest manager, when prompted with exactly why he is commended, he retreats to "well, it is just a parable after all" (261). In addition, France skirts over the difficult literary connection issues presented in 16:16-18 by weakly suggesting that the Pharisees were interested in "different subjects." When he gets to the following parable (16:19-31), while he offers several solid insights into Luke's continued theme of reversal of fortune and the upcoming resurrection of Jesus, he seems to give piecemeal importance to Abraham's presence. In both parables (if they are indeed both parables) France does a good job of presenting the big picture: how we choose to use our stuff on earth affects our lives (or lack thereof) in heaven, but he lacks some of the specific articulation that exists elsewhere in the volume.

For a commentary of this variety France's handling of Luke in this volume offers the reader a breath of fresh air. While aimed directly at the preacher, it is not centered on a homiletically based grid but rather a textual one, providing the reader the high point necessities of the text without requiring them to wade through the quagmire of academic rhetoric. This volume is one this writer deems superb for students of all ages and abilities both in and outside the walls of academia who seek a less critical commentary.

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Roger STRONSTAD. *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke: Trajectories from the Old Testament to Luke-Acts*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012. 144 pp. \$16.99.

Do noncharismatic churches ignore the way the Holy Spirit works in the NT? Stronstad, ordained by the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada and a NT scholar at Summit Pacific College, asserts this idea. Furthermore, he wonders why Bible-based denominations who proclaim allegiance to the NT so readily ignore the charismatic inspiration of the Spirit. He decries the linguistic gymnastics and complicated interpretations that either insist that charismatic gifts terminated centuries ago or, even worse, reduce the Spirit to an abstract concept. With irritation for the skepticism his denomination receives in academia, he sets out to trace the Lukan pneumatology and redeem the respect he claims to have lost.

Stronstad's initial chapter challenges contemporary methodology surrounding the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts. He quotes well-known Lukan scholars and challenges the dichotomy many maintain between *didachē* and narrative. He argues that *didachē* is given more credence than narrative; thus, many passages on the Spirit are ignored. This unbiblical dichotomy, Stronstad contends, is at the heart of the contention in understandings of the Spirit. He insists a fresh methodological approach is needed, one that views Luke-Acts as "theologically homogeneous" as well as understands Luke to be a legitimate theologian, independent from Paul.

In the second chapter, Stronstad surveys the Holy Spirit in the OT. He focuses on an often-neglected passage, where the Spirit equips the builders of the ark with expertise to complete their task (Exod 31). Additionally, he emphasizes the transfer of power from a single leader to larger groups. With these stories in mind, he works to construct the case that the Spirit is never part of conversion-initiation experiences in the OT. Instead, the Spirit empowers people who are already insiders to complete their calling, such as leadership, prophesizing, or artisanship.

In the third chapter, Stronstad explores the Holy Spirit in Luke. He emphasizes the continuity between the Spirit of the OT and Luke-Acts. The Spirit inspires charismatic activity in the birth narrative, as seen in numerous people prophesying. John, for example, is called from the womb for the charismatic mission of a prophetic herald. Jesus carries out a charismatic mission, beginning from the time he receives the Spirit at his baptism. Stronstad emphasizes that both Jesus and John are already virtuous believers when they are filled with the Spirit. Thus, as is seen in the OT, the Holy Spirit is given to equip people for service.

From his analysis of the Gospel, Stronstad moves to chapter 4, where he focuses on Pentecost. Stronstad's analysis leads to "rejecting conventional interpretations of Pentecost." The event itself has no "soteriological attributes" for the disciples; the gift of the Spirit instead has a solely charismatic significance. It leads to the equipping of the disciples for service. When the Spirit is transferred, "they become a charismatic community, heirs to the earlier charismatic ministry of Jesus." His analysis of this event is the key to interpreting all other stories concerning the Spirit in the remainder of Acts.

The next chapter investigates the work of the Spirit in the newly formed charismatic community. He argues that in every instance of a person being filled with the Spirit, the person (or group) is already a pious believer. They are filled for missional purposes, not soteriological. Acts 10 is an exemplar of Stronstad's interpretation. Cornelius's introduction serves to show that by "any (and every) NT standard, [he] was a Christian before the Holy Spirit

was poured out upon him.” It follows a similar plot line to Pentecost—the Spirit is poured out on a group of people who are already initiated in the charismatic community in order to give them gifts for their charismatic vocation. This again highlights Stronstad’s argument that the baptism of the Spirit is about vocation, not conversion-initiation.

Stronstad’s final chapter repeats the major thrusts of the previous chapters. Following these reiterations, he issues a challenge to the Christian community regarding Luke’s pneumatology. He chastises those who let their prejudices result in flawed interpretations of the charismatic work of the Spirit. This has led to generations of Christians who serve God without the empowerment of the Spirit as well as to the marginalization of Christians and scholars who refuse to “emasculate” the Spirit. He concludes with a plea for scholars to reexamine Luke-Acts and for laypersons to let the Spirit work without restraint.

The author is irritated at the way certain groups treat charismatics. His questioning of modern scholarship’s handling of the Spirit is a valuable challenge and worthy of reflection. Stronstad’s detailed analysis of Pentecost is also an excellent source for charismatic reading of Acts 2. His point of view brings out certain colors and vibrancies in the well-known story that many readers quickly pass by. Furthermore, his argument that the Spirit falls upon the disciples not for a conversion experience, but for vocational purposes is difficult to ignore. He rightly asks why the Spirit cannot do the same in other contexts. More importantly, he asks why many Bible-based churches that view Acts as a model, ignore the charismatic work of the Spirit. While Stronstad brings up many valuable points, his work has its problems as well.

From the beginning, Stronstad’s work suffers from a lack of definitions for fundamental terms. For instance, the term charismatic is used to refer to numerous activities, ranging from worshipping God to speaking in unknown languages. This allows him to deem nearly anyone as charismatic, from Moses to the early church. His argument that the modern noncharismatic Christians are unfaithful to the biblical charismatic tradition becomes very convoluted when any religious activity is considered charismatic. Furthermore, he seems unable to consider anything that is beyond the range of his thesis, such as other purposes at work in the Cornelius story.

This brief study can function dually as an apology for charismatic believers or a critique of noncharismatic Christianity. It is recommended for the interested layperson or as a supplement for the biblical student interested in Luke’s pneumatology.

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Charles L. QUARLES. *The Illustrated Life of Paul.* Nashville: B&H, 2014. 292 pp. \$29.99.

More than 20 years ago, Victor Paul Furnish mused: “If Paul commands attention still, it is not because he is or ever can be fully understood, nor because anybody can ever succeed in putting him in his place, however one wishes to construe this phrase. It is partly because his labors and letters have so profoundly shaped the history of Christianity from his day to ours” (“On Putting Paul in His Place.” *JBL* 113.1 [1994]).

From the outset of Quarles’ attempt to “put Paul in his place,” the reader quickly encounters an authorial desire to narrate the life of Paul with a sharp awareness that listen-

ing closely to Paul's story is highly educative and formative for contemporary understandings of faith and theology.

The first three chapters of this volume provide a glimpse into Paul's life before he embarked on his first missionary journey. Predominately taking cues from Acts, the next four chapters are dedicated to the people and places that Paul encountered throughout the Mediterranean. A chapter for each missionary journey, plus one chapter devoted to the Jerusalem conference, functionally invites Paul's letters to be read in light of the vicissitudes of travel, conflict, and pastoral care. The final two chapters explore Paul's trials before Felix, Festus, and Agrippa; his tumultuous journey to Rome; and the possible outcomes for Paul's ministry prior to meeting a martyr's death.

One of the great strengths of this volume quickly surfaces in light of more than 150 color photographs and maps. Not only is Quarles' writing comprehensible to a broad audience, but the sheer volume of illustrations also encourages readers to pay close attention to the relevance of geography, art history, and archeology.

Another standout feature of this book is Quarles' vivid and imaginative depictions of Paul's life and travels. More than simply recounting Paul's experiences, this volume attempts to capture the emotional and relational dynamics that drive the plot. However, for as much as this often enriches the reading, there are various points where a fine line exists between imaginative textual reconstruction and gratuitous narration. Take one example toward the end of Paul's life: "When Paul looked into his sister's face, he still saw his father's eyes, and her smile was just like his mother's. Looking into her face always brought back 'a flood of memories'" (194). Or, consider Quarles' attempt to capture the unspoken during Demetrius's speech in Acts 19:25-27: "How dare this manipulative little Jew attack the majesty of the goddess" (167)! Or, when Paul is brought to appear before Felix, Quarles inserts the line, "Paul smiled inside at Felix's presumption that he was wealthy just because he was a Jew" (219). This is just a sampling of places where Quarles' attempt to add pastoral depth and psychological nuance sometimes resulted in awkward distractions to the overall flow of the work.

For as much as Quarles' book truly is a welcome contribution, there are a number of other issues warranting critical attention. Those with an interest in Pauline studies will likely be most disappointed in conclusions that fail to take into account other interpretive and theological possibilities (law, baptism, predestination, and justification). To cite one interpretive example, in his comments on Gal 4:12-16, Quarles presents Paul as a victim of a "serious eye disease" (8). Although this is certainly a longstanding interpretive option, to altogether avoid mention of Galatians commentators (Betz, *Galatians*, 227–228; Martyn, *Galatians*, 421) who suggest a literary motif expressing the Galatians' solidarity seems mildly curious. To be sure, Quarles has well-formed judgments and is a passionate, attentive reader of Paul. However, the fact that these opinions are sometimes regarded as sole, monolithic interpretive conclusions is regrettable.

Putting Paul in his place is no easy task. Quarles' weaving of Paul's journeys and trials into a coherent narrative should ultimately be commended, and any criticisms of his work should not dilute this very approachable book. In the end, scrutiny in regard to imaginative insertions and a lack of other interpretive opinions effectively draws attention to the work's primary audience. Academicians and serious students of Paul will likely find this volume to be entry-level, and at times fanciful, reading. For the layperson looking to trace the particu-

lars of Paul's life and ministry, Quarles' narration is a highly stylized, readable, and superbly illustrated volume.

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Graham H. TWELFTREE. *Paul and the Miraculous: A Historical Reconstruction.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013. 416 pp. \$32.99.

Twelftree begins by noting that Paul has been widely studied as a theologian while his views on the miraculous have generally been neglected. This neglect has been produced primarily because critical scholars have deemed Luke's account of Paul's life in Acts to be unhistorical. Twelftree examines the extent Paul's ministry and teaching included the miraculous. The book consists of five parts addressing the person of Paul, Paul's inheritance, Paul's testimony, Paul's interpreters, and Paul's relationship to the miraculous.

Part 1 introduces a survey of the person of Paul. Twelftree offers three steps for this process. He suggests the first step is to discover what Paul inherited from his heritage—Jewish and Christian. This will be done in Part 2 of the book. The second step will involve examining Paul's "orthonymous" writings (Twelftree's term for what he deems to be the genuine Pauline epistles) to see how Paul views the miraculous in terms of his ministry. This will be accomplished in Part 3. The final step for Twelftree, Part 4 of the book, is to examine Paul through his interpreters (Acts of the Apostles, pseudepigraphical literature, and postcanonical literature).

Part 2 delves into Paul's heritage which forged Paul's views on the miraculous. He begins by examining Josephus, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and Philo, spending time on "zealous Jews," the Pharisees, rabbinic literature, and the synagogue. He then moves to talk about the early Christian view of the miraculous. Twelftree concludes that, while there is a historical connection between Judaism and miracles, it was not necessarily the contemporary connection. He demonstrates that the prophets were associated with the miraculous and suggests that Paul's claim of being a prophet allows for the possibility of miracles. It was not common to think of a miracle worker being an evangelist in Hellenistic and Jewish contexts. The tradition of miracles in early Christian settings is well attested. This contrasts with the lack of the miraculous in other Jewish and Hellenistic views that influenced Paul.

Part 3 deals with Paul's own testimony and experiences. Twelftree avoids using any miraculous experience that does not include an adequate description of both the experience and its implications. A wide range of experiences are presented in Paul's writings, and Twelftree analyzes what contributions these experiences had on Paul's theology. Twelftree concludes that Paul's goal was not to perform miracles, but that as he ministered to others, the Spirit moved in miraculous ways.

In the penultimate section, Twelftree turns to the interpreters of Paul. Acts of the Apostles, as the earliest canonical presentation of Paul, is considered to be one of the most reliable sources. There are a variety of miraculous events recorded in Acts that reinforce Twelftree's conclusions in the preceding chapters, further advancing the portrait of the historical Paul as a man associated with the miraculous. Both canonical and noncanonical texts are examined for information regarding how Paul was perceived by his contemporaries and those in the next century. This search for the "remembered Paul" follows the majority view

on later pseudepigraphical writings in the NT. Twelftree's conclusion of this study is that Paul is not remembered as a miracle worker, though miraculous events are recorded in his ministry.

The final section notes the profound influence that Paul has had on the NT and the Judeo-Christian world at large. The typical presentation of Paul as one to whom miracles were of little or no importance is also discussed, and Twelftree's conclusions counter this presentation of Paul. He defends Paul's association with the miraculous and claims that Paul was not attempting to remove miraculous elements from Christianity. Thus remedying the tendency to neglect the miraculous in Paul, additional research could discuss the implications of the miraculous in Pauline theology, for Pauline scholarship, and as it relates to the miraculous in today's church.

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Joseph A. MARCHAL, ed., *Studying Paul's Letters: Contemporary Perspectives and Methods*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012. 247 pp. \$32.00.

Crucial to the art of interpretation is learning to ask good questions. Teachers are responsible for guiding their students to ask particular questions, but it can be difficult to think of texts in new ways, to raise new questions. The discipline of biblical studies has been asking historical-critical questions for a long time, operating under the assumption that these questions yield the most pertinent answers. In this volume, Marchal has assembled an array of accomplished scholars and teachers who are asking different questions and, in this volume, attempt to introduce undergraduate students to these questions and their motivations. The result is a stimulating exploration of interpretive approaches that invite beginning readers to critically reflect on how to study Paul's letters.

After a brief introduction by Marchal explaining the origin and intended function of the book as an undergraduate textbook, there are eleven chapters that introduce and provide an example of a particular approach to reading Paul's letters. Each chapter also includes end-notes and brief bibliographies for readers to learn more. Although the essays are not classified this way in the book, it appears to this reviewer that there are two categories of essays. First, there are chapters on historical approaches to Paul's letters. This category includes chapters on historical criticism by Melanie Johnson-DeBaufre (13-32), rhetorical analysis by Todd Penner and Davina C. Lopez (33-52), spatial perspective by Laura S. Nasrallah (53-74), economic approaches by Peter S. Oakes (75-92), visual perspective by Davina C. Lopez (93-116), and Jewish perspective by Pamela Eisenbaum (135-154). Each of these essays draws on postmodern critical theory but primarily focuses on reading Paul's letters in their original context.

Particularly strong historical chapters are the contributions by Laura Nasrallah and Peter Oakes. Nasrallah writes about spatial perspective in reading Paul's letters and demonstrates the theoretical importance of place, how space is mapped in Philippi as a Roman colony, the place of Paul in relationship to the Philippian church, and the spatial geography of Christ in Philippians 2. Attentiveness to these spatial features provides unique insight to reading Paul's letters. Oakes presents the assortment of economic approaches to the letters in a readable

and engaging way and then demonstrates the application of these approaches in a brief analysis of Romans 12. These chapters may focus on less common approaches to Paul, but they are still chiefly concerned with reading Paul's letters in their historical context.

The second category of essays is less historical and more ideological. While none of the ideological-critical contributors dispense with historical criticism entirely, their primary concerns are the positions and assumptions of the interpreter. For the most part these essays argue that the "right" questions in biblical studies, and particularly Pauline studies, have been too narrowly historical, textual, male, heteronormative, privileged, and racist. As some contributors to this volume might put it, the "right" questions have been white questions, straight questions, and male questions. Among the ideological-critical chapters are the following essays: Feminist interpretation by Cynthia Briggs Kittredge (117-134), African American approaches by Demetrius K. Williams (155-174), Asian American perspective by Sze-Kar Wan (175-190), Postcolonial approaches by Jeremy Punt (191-208), and Queer approaches by Joseph A. Marchal (209-228). These essays provide a valuable contribution to the large body of introductory books on Paul by giving expression to voices that are rarely heard by beginning students.

While each of the ideological-critical chapters provides valuable perspective that merits attention, particularly strong were the chapters on Feminist, African American, and Asian American readings of Paul. The chapter on Feminist interpretation by Cynthia Briggs Kittredge combines careful historical reconstruction of Paul and feminist criticism. Rather than reconstructing Paul as a feminist, she points out the complex reality of early Christianity to find feminist resources. The essay on African American approaches by Demetrius K. Williams is a fascinating analysis of the ethical implications of interpretation applied to the Pauline corpus in regard to slavery. Williams' essay is set apart by looking at the reception of Paul's letters in different social and political contexts. Sze-Kar Wan's contribution on Asian American perspective draws from Asian American experiences as simultaneously "perpetual foreigners" and a "model minority" to illuminate Paul's experience as a diaspora Jew and then as a member of the Jesus movement. These chapters draw from unique perspectives to raise important questions about Paul, how to interpret his letters, and the ethical implications of interpretation.

Alongside a more traditional introduction, this volume would be a worthwhile textbook for advanced undergraduates or beginning graduate students, challenging them to think about how to read Paul's letters and why it matters. Nevertheless, the book lacks any treatment of theological readings of scripture, which are crucial to so many of the ideological questions raised. How do Paul's letters function as "Scripture" even though they were produced in a patriarchal culture? How do Christians read Paul's Jewish writings as their sacred literature? This fine compilation of essays never addresses how theological interpretation might be a resource for reading Paul's letters. This is particularly odd because the most pervasive approaches to Paul's letters in the contemporary world are theological, and yet theological approaches are rarely given a voice in the academy. As with any compilation, the essays are a bit uneven. Some chapters focus especially on theory while others provide more substantive interaction with Pauline texts. Still, as an introduction to Paul, this volume fills a significant gap and merits use in the classroom.

Students from the Stone-Campbell tradition will likely find much that is foreign to their approach to Paul's letters in this book. Yet the issues raised are relevant in contemporary

social and political discourse as well as Christian ethics. There are plenty of good reasons to invite students to engage these essays. Aside from providing a point of contact between the Bible and the contemporary world, these essays invite readers to hear voices that have been marginalized, something that thinking Christians should be eager to do. Teachers should welcome the opportunity for these essays to challenge their students' thinking and develop more nuanced and responsible readings of Paul's letters.

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Raymond F. COLLINS. *Second Corinthians. Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013. 320 pp. \$30.00.

This volume on 2 Corinthians is part of the *Paideia* commentary series by Collins, and is a welcome addition to the libraries of pastors and serious students of the epistle. An esteemed NT scholar and Roman Catholic priest, Collins brings his wealth of knowledge to the interpretation of 2 Corinthians in a digestible and informative commentary on one of the most challenging NT books.

The volume begins with an introduction and brief commentary on the letter opening (1:1-2) that orients the reader to the major themes and issues in 2 Corinthians. Collins explains the numerous partition theories of the epistle, also referenced in the body of the commentary at salient points. The commentary then proceeds as follows: Ministerial Crises (1:3–2:13); Paul Explains and Defends His Apostolic Ministry (2:14–7:4); The Arrival and Report of Titus (7:5-16); Service to God's Holy People (8:1–9:15); An Aggressive Taskmaster (10:1–13:10). The *Paideia* commentary series is written for the student audience, and the series as a whole provides interpretation of rhetorical units rather than a verse-by-verse analysis. Each chapter is divided into three sections: introductory matters, tracing the train of thought, and theological issues pertinent to the contemporary Christian. Collins does not set out to prove various partition theories that have sometimes dominated scholarship on 2 Corinthians. Rather, he refers to relevant debates in secondary literature at appropriate points and keeps the focus on the final form of the text.

This book offers a comprehensive introduction to the content and theology of 2 Corinthians. Collins's extensive knowledge of the wider Greco-Roman world assists the reader in understanding the text in its ancient environment with helpful references to ancient archaeology, Greek texts, Hellenistic Judaism, Roman writers, and philosophical movements. Some highlights are Collins's treatment of Paul's ministry of reconciliation in 5:11–6:10 and the "letter of tears" in 10:1–13:10. The strength of this book is apparent in the discussion of 6:14–7:1 where the inevitable discussion of authorship arises. Collins acknowledges the major debates regarding authorship and the possibility that the passage is an interpolation, but directs attention to the final form of the passage. The brief treatment of the theological issues in this difficult passage shows how the use of Scripture affirms the Gentile mission and how sacred texts continue to be interpreted in new contexts, regardless of authorship. On occasion, however, the discussion of rhetoric overshadows that of theological issues, and Collins does not always make the connection between the ancient text and the contemporary Christian.

This book is recommended for advanced undergraduate and seminary students as well as the libraries of pastors. The challenge of writing a commentary on 2 Corinthians that interprets the text in its final form is not to be underestimated, and it is a task that Collins skillfully accomplishes. This is particularly advantageous to the student who is less interested in the details of partition theories than a thorough understanding of the content and rhetoric of the letter to use in ministerial settings. Scholars who specialize in 2 Corinthians and Pauline studies will not find detailed arguments about the nuances of the text, but rather a concise volume geared to an introductory comprehension of the epistle. The goals of the commentary series preclude extensive discussion on topics such as pneumatology or soteriology, which classrooms will need to supplement with additional works. As in all *Paideia* commentaries, there are helpful sidebars and text boxes that point out interesting features of the text and highlight ancient sources for quick references. A detailed index helps in navigating the volume with ease, and an up-to-date bibliography offers direction for advanced research to the serious student.

In sum, this book continues Collins's contributions to the field of NT studies. It is a useful volume for a seminary or advanced undergraduate classroom as well as the minister's library. The focus on the rhetoric and theology of 2 Corinthians strengthens its usefulness for these audiences, though the reader will need to make his or her own connections between the text and contemporary ministry on occasion. This book is ideal for those seeking a fresh interpretation of 2 Corinthians.

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Stephen E. FOWL. *Ephesians: A Commentary*. The New Testament Library. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2012. 249 pp. \$40.00.

Fowl has written a succinct commentary which maintains its focus upon the argument of the text rather than scholarly discussion. This becomes evident in the smaller size of the commentary, the presence but limited scope of the bibliography, and the important but contained number of footnotes. For those looking for the wider scholarly discussion, he points readers to Andrew Lincoln, Ernest Best, and Harold Hoehner (and he relies upon them in his discussion). Avoiding modern myopia, he also mines premoderns such as John Chrysostom, Thomas Aquinas, and John Calvin for insights.

The commentary has a standard introduction that discusses argument, outline, authorship (including the relationship to Colossians), audience (including a discussion of Acts), and occasion. Each section has the author's translation with textual and translation comments, followed by more detailed explanations of the text tracing the wider argument rather than a deep verse-by-verse discussion, and is bookended with comments tying the unit into the overall argument and some contemporary theological reflection. Fowl claims to have designed his work to help reinvigorate and reform the practice of reading Scripture theologically with the aim that "Christians are called to read, interpret, and embody Scripture in ways that deepen their love for God, for each other, and for the world" (2). Concerning purpose, Fowl describes the letter's argument as relating how the Ephesians are included in and

must respond to “God’s drama of salvation” (3) which reaches its climax with everything being brought under Christ.

On the whole, Fowl avoids extreme interpretive positions, and stays neutral when he does not see the text providing clear evidence. Some readers will find this approach refreshing while others will want more decisiveness. Thus, concerning authorship, he writes, “I genuinely do not know whether Paul wrote Ephesians” (27–28) but sees the historical evidence pointing to the author being Paul or someone close to him within a decade or two. Concerning audience, Fowl is agnostic but concludes that the letter is broadly occasional.

Throughout, Fowl engages in the wider historical context and makes use of a limited explanation of key Greek terms, which are transliterated and discussed in a manner that those unfamiliar with the language can understand. For example, *hagioi* (“holy ones, saints”) is not describing moral achievements, but designates a body of people set apart by God in Christ just as Israel was in the Septuagint (Exod 19:6; 23:22; Lev 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7,26; Deut 7:6-8) (31-34).

As a theological commentary, Fowl discusses how specific passages connect with larger convictions about God and the world. Some readers may want him to clarify his methodology (which he discusses elsewhere in his *Engaging Scripture* and *Theological Interpretation*), while others may want him to expand his comments. For example, he writes, “Much of the best theological reflection on the global composition and global mission of the church looks to Eph 2:11-22 as a central text. . . . [with] its emphasis upon reconciling of previously hostile groups into the body of Christ in ways that transform but do not require the erasure of national, ethnic, or cultural identity” (102). Another example, the household codes in Ephesians 5 illustrate how to engage with society and interpreting the world christologically. “If the Ephesians and all Christians learn this skill of seeing and interpreting their world through Christ-focused lenses, even as various social and material and political circumstances change, they will be able to continue to “walk in a manner worthy of [their] calling . . . and recognize some alternative practices of other Christians in different circumstances” (198).

For a person wanting to become familiar with the general argument of Ephesians with a broad understanding of historical context, a dose of scholarly discussion, and avoiding potential rabbit trails, this commentary may be helpful. For others seeking verse-by-verse explanations consistently using the Greek, a historical-critical approach or more modern methodologies including diverse readings, or engaging Ephesians in a manner that is enriched by the chorus of scholars, they may want to seek a larger, more extensive volume. As a clearly and concisely written work, this volume may be useful for a general survey or undergraduate course, but other commentaries would be better consulted for richer study.

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Dale ALLISON. *The Epistle of James. International Critical Commentary.* New York: Bloomsbury, 2013. 790 pp. \$130.00.

Allison, currently the Richard J. Dearborn Professor of New Testament, Princeton Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, well-known for his highly regarded

work in historical Jesus studies and Matthew, has taken up the challenge of the unsung, little epistle of James. Once again he demonstrates a thoroughness of research, depth of exegesis, and command of the issues beyond compare. Maintaining, if not exceeding, the already high expectations of an ICC commentary, this commentary will stand for generations as the one any serious student of James will want to consult over and over again.

What stands out after Allison's 109-page introduction is his unparalleled tracking and interaction with every previous work of value on James from the early church fathers to today (including all my five articles, two commentaries, and published Ph.D. dissertation on James). In addition to the vast bibliography, Allison lists all relevant articles and books in a footnote at the beginning of each exegetical section. But he does not just list them. Interaction is wide and deep, as Allison pulls up someone's work as representative of a view with relevant quotations sometimes, or respectfully to take exception to a view, as Allison teases out to his own decision, always at the end. Though a thick commentary, the reading goes relatively quickly because the footnote section averages half the page.

Allison approaches each portion of James in the same manner. This begins with "A History of Interpretation and Reception," which can be fairly brief or quite involved, depending on the portion of James under discussion. Here he interacts with church fathers, reformation leaders, early exegetes, contemporary interpreters, occasionally bringing in classic sermons, say from John Wesley and T.G. Selby on Jas 2:19. He does not always show his hand in this section, using it rather to set the stage for his own exegetical analysis that comes after. His "Exegesis" section begins with considering the place of the portion of James in its textual context and then some type of structural analysis of these verses, sometimes in outline form, sometimes using other methodologies. Before getting to verse-by-verse analysis, he considers the overall point of these verses.

The verse-by-verse analysis, as expected from an ICC commentary, examines the words and phrases in their original Greek. Here Allison brings to bear any relevant uses of the words paralleled in Greek and Jewish literature, and of course the Hebrew Scriptures. He often looks for influences from these texts on statements in James. He will move from this deep analysis to interpretation, keeping still mindful of relevant ancient or contemporary interpreters. One has to probe carefully sometimes to get to his often fairly brief statement of conclusion in interpreting a situation, but it is usually there. Allison constantly keeps his overarching view of James in mind as something to be demonstrated. Often he attempts to show how it helps to lead to the superior interpretation. He believes deeply that his larger view of James comes from reading the text carefully.

Allison approaches James with a ready awareness of what he calls the "plasticity of texts, and how easily and thoroughly they succumb to interpretive agendas" (2). He encourages humility of everyone who seeks to interpret a biblical text because they are adding to "a centuries-long, unfinished history of effects" (2). He is not so naïve as to think he somehow can stand outside of these things. Yet, he does not shrink back from being bold in asserting his assessment of the situation of James as adding significantly to this history. He also is very aware that people other than exegetes, theologians, and those in the church access biblical material like James. Christian scriptures are public literature too and are taken into the world of artists, writers, and even politicians (3).

Allison's overarching view of James is original and provoking. In the process of pouring over the contributions of others and key points in the text of James he comes to the con-

clusion that James is a pseudepigraphal work written after AD 100 by a Christian within a Christian community that continues to worship with Jews in a synagogue. It is written purposely without an overt Christian message to a mixed audience of Christians and Jews, in order to provide a subtle demonstration that the values of Christianity are in synch with the values of Jews. It is a soft agenda to show that Christianity is all-inclusive. The idea is “to maintain irenic relations with those who did not share their belief that Jesus was the Messiah” (43).

One important aspect that leads Allison to the scenario above is his dealing with the use of “synagogue” in Jas 2:2. He does not consider this to require a date for James before AD 70 because he believes “the parting of ways must have varied from place to place and from group to group” (12) and that evidence shows some “Christians attending synagogues in the fourth century” (12). He also does not consider it possible for a “son of Mary and Joseph” (26) to have written at the level of Greek demonstrated in James. Something new that Allison adds to the mix is that the blessing and cursing of 3:10 is an intended counter to the *Birkat Ha-Minim*, a portion of the Jewish Amidah, that was developed to curse heretics including Christians, that “was promulgated after 70” (29). Allison also looks to older arguments: James depends on 1 Clement and Hermas, with which there are many parallel passages; and that James at least parallels in form to Bar 78-87. Allison also views the church order that seems to be assumed in 5:13-20 as too organized for first-century Christianity.

Though all these issues are convincing to Allison, they still amount to a matter of opinion about many things. While I totally agree that the dominant aspect of James is its Jewishness, I find it more difficult to be persuaded regarding the scenario Allison draws. It seems much too subtle for people of such times, much less Christians. It rings as itself an intrusion of a modern possibility into an ancient text. Much of the argument Allison presents for its Jewishness and primitive Christian notions can be seen to reinforce a view of an early date for the epistle, when we know Christians might still be in their own synagogues before there were any Gentile converts and before Paul’s significant missionary career and writings. As to church order, it is difficult to persuade that 5:13-20 presents anything other than elders as leaders who have functions, something that corresponds with Jewish synagogues and is not anything much new other than they believe in the power of Jesus to heal, not hard to imagine given the material that appears in the Gospels. If this was a Christian group mixed into a Jewish synagogue, why wouldn’t they have mixed Jewish eldership practice with Christian beliefs?

Allison brings much enlightenment to many parts of James and lines out all the other options respectfully and well. Regardless of how anyone thinks of his overall scenario, his volume certainly should be welcomed for reinforcing at every turn reading James through the eyes of a group who are deeply committed to both their Hebrew faith and their belief in Jesus, whether they are in a Jewish synagogue or their one Jesus synagogue. Allison’s work on 1:22-23 regarding being a hearer and a doer of the word does make me think of the readers in “a religious setting in which Torah is read” (327). However, he goes too far in moving to a conclusion on 2:14-26, where he strongly suggests that James’s origin “may represent a community that took itself to be at odds with Paul” (451).

I do not deny that what James says in that key passage has to presume Paul’s teaching, but I think it intends to balance how Paul can be understood as even Paul himself attempts to do in his own writings. The presence of this passage does not wayside a pre-70, pre-death

date of James, or a late 40s date (as Paul's teaching was in its earliest stages). I agree heartily with Allison that James should be read with Jewish eyes and not theologically Christian eyes that dominate our reading of other epistles, and I have learned much from his contribution. I do think the later one pushes the date for James, regardless of one's reading of evidence, makes Allison's overarching scenario of a Jesus community in a Jewish synagogue less and less likely. However, the earlier the date, the more likely it may be correct.

This is a magisterial volume, a resource for the ages that contributes an original theory of reading James that is for the most part conceived from delving deeply into the text for many to continue to weigh. One cannot expect any more than that from a commentary. Only those with Greek acumen and a good knowledge of ancient sources will benefit highly from its use, though others may read his interpretation carefully and pay dividends. Anyone can mine the rich bibliography with benefit.

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