

# BIBLICAL THEOLOGY: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE



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## *Book Reviews*

*A Biblical Theology of Gerassapience.* By Joel A. A. Ajayi. *Studies in Biblical Literature.* Volume 134. New York: Peter Lang, 2010. 267 Pages. Hardcover, \$15.99.

Perhaps one's interest in studying the themes of aging and wisdom grows more acute as he or she increases in age and the appellation of sagacity grows more and more elusive. Such was certainly the case for this reviewer. Toward that pursuit, Joel Ajayi has produced a thorough, scholarly, and thought-provoking book on the significance of aging and wisdom in the Old Testament. While he is careful to acknowledge that long life is certainly no guarantee of wisdom, Ajayi demonstrates a clear relationship between these two themes.

The book begins with a comprehensive literature review on the subject of elders in the Old Testament. Ajayi demonstrates detailed research that is critically analyzed. The author is not afraid to point to deficiencies within earlier works, but when he does, he carefully delineates his position with reason and research.

Throughout the work, the author displays keen language skills that are informed by Hebrew grammar, syntax, and ancient Near Eastern comparative analysis. He not only traces the various words and phrases used in the Hebrew Bible for elders, he demonstrates how they are used and connected. Similarly, in his discussion of wisdom, Ajayi both defines the term and analyzes its uses in Scripture, synonyms, characteristics, contextual parallels, and antonyms. After a systematic examination of the term, his summative definition (69 ff) is by no means original and understandably general, but captures the essence of this biblically rich concept. He helpfully demonstrates the intellectual as well as practical aspects of wisdom and accurately concludes that true wisdom ultimately finds its origin in Yahweh (74).

Ajayi acknowledges that the Bible offers no definition for "old age" (102); thus, any discussion of the role and significance of elders is depending on its use in context. Nevertheless, according to the author, the connotation of elders in the Old Testament appears to shift in "semantic nature and/or social religious function" (102) throughout the period recorded in Scripture. He maintains that the concept of elders in the Old Testament originally seems exclusively related to chronological age, but develops into a leadership function that may not necessarily refer to one who is advanced in age. Unfortunately, his tracing of such development is somewhat inhibited by his ambiguity regarding the historicity of the "real historic figures" of the pre-monarchical times (115). However, he finally concludes that the "folkloristic nature of several parts of these materials . . . are reflective of some transmitted traditions" (115).

Ajayi contends that the major function of old age, or gerassapience (a term he coined) is didactic. That teaching or guidance coupled with the respect inherent with seniority in the community allows for the leadership influence of elders. Ajayi traces many such evidences throughout Scripture concluding that the functional elements of gerassapience include: instruction, counsel/guidance, lifestyle legacies, and literary legacies (211-12).

Despite the obvious limitations of tackling two such broad fields as wisdom

and elders in the Old Testament, and occasionally getting sidetracked chasing text-critical rabbits, Ajayi more than admirably contributes to the field. The work is well-written, thoroughly researched, and meticulously documented. Students and teachers will find much to stimulate knowledge and further research. Where further analysis is needed, Ajayi helpfully points the way. Finally, readers will both experience the profound influence of many of the senior saints who have gone before us and be challenged to leave behind our own legacies of faith.

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***The Jewish World Around the New Testament.* By Richard Bauckham. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010. 560 pages. Softcover, \$60.00.**

*The Jewish World Around the New Testament*, released by Baker Academic, is a reprint of the WUNT monograph published in 2008. Around the time of its original publication came Bauckham's *Jesus and the God of Israel*. This collection of essays centered on the belief of early high Christology by the early church, whose doctrinal beliefs were framed by its mother religion—the Jewish monotheistic religion of Second Temple Judaism.

*The Jewish World Around the New Testament*, on the other hand, is a collection of essays without a common thesis running through the variety of writing. Instead, they represent a wide range of interests and discussions in the Jewish world for Bauckham and biblical researchers. This Jewish world is much more involved than simply the Torah, the New Testament accounts, and the significance of the temple in Jerusalem—although all of these are included. Bauckham extends the exploration to a wider range even within Second Temple literature, from the apocryphal *Martyrdom of Enoch and Elijah*, *2 Baruch*, and Tobit, to the peculiarities in the historical writings of Josephus. Bauckham is not in any way suggesting that noncanonical sources should be considered for canonization, but instead, by looking at how the Jewish world contextualizes the early Christians, Bauckham offers new lenses to glean ways of understanding a world that seems so far removed from the modern era.

All of the articles are reprints from as early as the seventies to 2008. They are all worth a second take and a second publication, judging by the contributions that they have made in the discussions surrounding Jewish literature as they relate to the rise of the Christian community in that period. Bauckham often responds to certain notable works, like J.D.G. Dunn's *The Parting of the Ways* for example, and carefully parses them for valuable insight into the Jerusalem church and their temple practices (187). Similarly, in "Pseudo-Apostolic Letters," Bauckham deals with the challenges posed by certain writings in the New Testament with pseudepigraphal tendencies and how these patterns parallel those reflected in Jewish pseudepigraphal writings (132-37).

Bauckham is careful not to blur the line between the canon as it stands from those works that are excluded from the canon. The book of Daniel, for example, is one that he undertakes as apocalyptic literature, but the discussion of the work is not reduced to the normal polarity of dating, which chooses between sixth or second century. Rather, he examines the complexities within the content of canonical works, positing the dating of the Daniel tradition as having "dual affinities," developed over time, incorporating Babylonian mantic wisdom as well as the Hasidic apocalyptic of the later years ("The Rise of the Apocalyptic," 46).

In ecclesial settings, these issues may not amount to much when delivering expositions of the canonical text, but in scholarly debates, these issues of the Jewish world matter a great deal. No student or teacher should shy away from these dialogues. Bauckham has done a great service to present the variety of positions as they stand and as they are juxtaposed with their contrary opinions.

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***The Bible and Ecology: Rediscovering the Community of Creation.* By Richard Bauckham. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010. 226 pages. Softcover, \$24.95.**

In this brief work, Bauckham, well-known professor of New Testament studies, addresses the question of the relationship between human beings and the rest of creation. He begins the work with the concept of the dominion of mankind in the creation account. This foundation leads to a multitude of issues which Bauckham introduces in four respective chapters throughout the remainder of the book. Underpinning the entire work is Bauckham's belief that the relationship of humans to other creatures, including both animate and inanimate, is more complex than the traditional concept of stewardship or dominion. The relationship, which Bauckham calls the community of creation, involves interconnectedness and interdependence of all living things instead of the idea that the non-human creation was created for the sake of humans, an idea not even present in the creation account.

Admitting the wide influence that the concept of stewardship has had upon Christian living, Bauckham notes several limitations of stewardship as a controlling model for understanding the relationship: it elicits an unwarranted hubris of humanity; it excludes, or at least minimizes, God's activity in the world; it lacks specific content; it sets humans over creation instead of within it; and it tends to isolate Gen 1:26 and 28 from the rest of Scripture (2–12). After an analysis of Genesis 1, he concludes that the text speaks to humanity's solidarity with all creation. Mankind, made in the image of God, is to exercise responsible care of creation, ruling not in a role that sets him over creation, but within the order and according to the example that God has set forth—one of kindness, compassion, and preservation.

In chapters two through five, Bauckham expands upon the synthesis that he offers in the first chapter. Using Job 38–39, and expanding upon the mandate of dominion found in Genesis 1, he argues that God desires that humans possess a cosmic humility. The relevance of the subtitle of the work comes out especially in chapter three. Writing, "This is a theocentric, not an anthropocentric world" (79), Bauckham argues from Psalms 104, 148, and Matt 6:25–33 that instead of setting humans apart from creation, the concept of dominion should take place in a community as humans relate to other fellow creatures in a reciprocal manner. In addition to those passages in the Old Testament that speak the praise of all creation, Bauckham sees the aspects of community in various texts which speak to the mourning and lamentation of the non-human creation. In chapter four, Bauckham examines the concept of wilderness, arguing that the distinction between wilderness and orchard in Scripture speaks "to the historical disruption between humans and wild nature" (115). Bauckham, in the final chapter, argues that the foundation that is set in the Old Testament is assumed going into the New Testament and that the New Testament often uses comprehensive language to include all creatures as a part of God's redemption which accomplishes "not the replacement but the renewal of

creation” (150).

This volume is a valuable contribution toward a proper understanding of what the Bible says about the non-human creation. Bauckham succeeds in showing that the Bible is about more than simply the relationship between humans and God. He should be commended in allowing the Scripture to drive his argument and in avoiding the current ecological crisis. He notes, however, that the recent interest of society in the relationship between humans and nature provides the context for reading “with our eyes retrained to see that the Bible also takes our relationship to the non-human creation with absolute seriousness” (146). Toward the end of the book, Bauckham probably oversimplifies the reason behind the modern Christian belief that the Bible is concerned with salvation history rather than creation theology. It can be argued that, in addition to “the technological project of domination” (150), the emphasis on individual salvation since the period of the Reformation has also played a major impact. Some readers may be uncomfortable with Bauckham’s acquiescence regarding an old earth and his high view of science. The reader may also feel at times that Bauckham is not going far enough in the way of applying what he says to Christian living. What he makes clear, however, is that there is much more work to be done in the area of the Bible and ecology. Bauckham’s most important contribution is that he raises numerous possible implications that a proper understanding of creation has upon systematic formulations of the doctrine of creation, the holistic nature of redemption, Christology (especially regarding the role of the cross), and the eschatological topics of the kingdom of God and the eternal state.

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***The Godly Home.* By Richard Baxter. Edited by Randall J. Pederson. Wheaton: Crossway, 2010. 224 pages. Softcover, \$17.99.**

Reading the work of Puritan authors can be an humbling experience. In an age when we believe we know more than everyone who has ever lived before us, reaching back to the authors of previous centuries requires a measure of humility and a receptive spirit. The work of Richard Baxter is generally well-known; therefore, those familiar with this author will not be surprised to hear that this volume speaks directly into the context of the twenty-first century church. *The Godly Home* is an edited and slightly updated version of the second part of Baxter’s *A Christian Directory*. The second part of that work specifically addresses “Christian Economics,” or family duties. In the introduction, J. I. Packer offers two reasons for reprinting this Puritan discourse on the family: 1) “in the Western world at least, and increasingly elsewhere, the family is in deep trouble;” and 2) “on this topic, no less than on many others, Richard Baxter was superb” (12).

After beginning with more general directions for marriage, Baxter moves from topic to topic addressing such ideas as family worship, the oversight and governance of families, the father’s role in managing a family, education of children, and the duties of various members of the family to each other. The structure is consistent throughout the work as he makes a statement (labeled as a “direction”) and then explains it. Thus, one can grasp the main ideas of a chapter merely by looking at the direction statements in each chapter.

This book is not for the casual reader who wants to feel better about his marriage or parenting. Instead, Baxter’s work serves as a source of conviction,

challenge, and introspection to the one who reads it. One section of the book that provides a great deal of challenge and conviction for the reader is Baxter's discussion of family worship. Family worship has become more popular in recent days as a discipline for Christian families. On many levels, it almost appears as a new concept. However, Baxter demonstrates that family worship has long been an element of the Christian life. He urges his readers to participate in worship as a family unit on a regular basis. In fact, he states, "We are bound to take all fit occasions and opportunities to worship God. Families have daily (morning and evening) occasions and opportunities; therefore, they are bound to take them" (94).

The weakness of this book comes from some of the cultural context of Baxter's writing that has not bridged the three centuries since its original publication. Much of the language has been modernized in this edition to avoid some of the awkwardness of seventeenth-century English, but not everything can be smoothed over by changing a few words. Even with some of the older language and contextual elements in place, this is still a volume worthy of the time necessary to read it. Overall, this edition of Baxter's work is in keeping with the quality and insight of his other writings. He successfully bridges the gap of more than 300 years since its original publication in most places and speaks directly to issues that we currently face in the twenty-first century. One should note, however, that this book is not light reading to be skimmed at one's leisure. Instead, it requires concentration and time to digest the substance of what Baxter believes to be God's instructions for the family.

Evan Lenow

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*Politics for Christians: Statecraft as Soulcraft.* Francis J. Beckwith. Downers Grove: IVP, 2010. Christian Worldview Integration Series. 175 pages. Softcover, \$18.00.

In an era of statism and unpopular, unethical statesmanship, Francis Beckwith attempts to create a Christian worldview of political "soulcraft" based upon the need for Christian citizenship. Christians have inherited in the history of ideas the responsibilities for shaping the public arena. The main contention is phenomenological, that is, Christians should hold back in abeyance their political beliefs before they engage in the political spectrum. In this day of talk radio, pundits, spinoffs, and clichés, a phenomenological approach to politics is certainly needed, but difficult to achieve in the market place of ideas. However, his call for an understanding of the foundations of political science, its history, its laws, and its founders, should provide a fundamental origin for those duties as a citizen. After all, it is the wisdom of applying these precepts that makes political science not merely the accumulation of knowledge, but transformational values for the society. What better way for a Christian to transform the culture for Christ's values?

In his series preface, Beckwith addresses students with a personal tone, imploring them to integrate Scripture and faith with a unified private and public life. His introduction serves more as pedagogy for integration in education rather than an introduction to the book. Beckwith is then justifying his study as a part of the series for the Christian Worldview Integration Series. Finally, Beckwith addresses the "introduction" or thesis of his book: "In this book, *Politics for Christians*, the author discusses how Christians should think about their role in the public square. He argues that, liberal democracy, if properly understood, permits Christians to influence and shape their nation's political and cultural institutions in order to

advance the common good. Moreover, the liberties we cherish—such as the freedoms of speech, religion and association—seem to depend on a natural moral law that is best explained by the existence of God. The author introduces the reader to the study of politics by exploring several issues central to a Christian engagement in politics: the discipline of politics, liberal democracy and the Christian citizen, separation of church and state, secular liberalism and the neutral state, and God and natural rights” (26).

Beckwith would do better in introducing the reader to these essential issues in his book rather than spending time justifying the publisher’s series theme. Although admirable in his desire for uniting scholarship and theistic Christianity, Beckwith emphasizes the educational methods rather than introducing the content of political science.

In his introduction, Beckwith criticizes the approach of “politics plus the Bible,” offering his approach instead, “complete truth in Christian virtues” (34). Although he admits we live in a fallen world of politics, the Bible offers universal values through biblical virtues. He makes no apology for addressing conservative Christian values since liberals claim never to mix religion with politics. He summarizes chapter one, describing how universities and colleges teach liberal democracy, and how Christians can encounter those teachings with community-oriented interests. He spends the next three chapters emphasizing the issue of separation of church and state, the neutral approach to the state in liberal democracy, and the role of God, natural law, and the natural moral law. Beckwith claims there can be no neutrality in the politics of the state since politics is an outcome of social and political philosophy, a branch of ethics, or axiology, filled with presuppositions and value systems, including secular humanism or liberal democracy. He desires citizens to enter into a pluralistic society with a legal view that supports religious liberty and allows citizens to make a public case for their views (38). Therefore, in chapter four, Beckwith argues the liberal democratic state cannot remain neutral for those who oppose its views. In chapter five, Beckwith argues for the existence of natural rights based upon a natural moral law best accounted for by the existence of a God who is the source of the natural law (39). In the conclusion, Beckwith urges students to become involved with the “messy conflict” of politics (165).

Although Beckwith’s book serves as a short introduction to political philosophy, the preface to the series serves the instructor more than the student as the audience. He calls for a foundational understanding of the history of political philosophy, but only quotes or alludes to the classical theorists like Aristotle, Plato, Locke, and others, scarcely throughout the book. His contemporary approach emphasizes contemporary issues like separation of church and state, narrowing the scope of his book. A better historical survey for political philosophy is the historical collection of primary sources from Hackett publications, and a better integrative study of the Bible and politics is Wayne Grudem’s book from Zondervan publications, which actually practices the integration of Scripture with politics. However, Beckwith’s book is admirable for what it is, as a beginning book for students in political philosophy.

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*The Word of God for the People of God: An Entryway to the Theological Interpretation of Scripture.* By J. Todd Billings. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010. 235 pages. Softcover, \$18.00.

J. Todd Billings joins the collection of theologians writing on the subject of theological interpretation. Billings' purpose for writing is to provide an accessible resource on the topic for students and church leaders who may otherwise remain outside the direct impact of this development at the nexus of biblical studies, systematic theology, and hermeneutics. In accord with Billings' intent to provide a book which widens the influence theological hermeneutics, his work demonstrates the strengths of readability, explanation of unfamiliar terminology, clear organization and a broad scope rather than focusing on technical discussions.

Billings provides his reader the service of defining theological interpretation on the first page of the introduction. He defines it as "a multifaceted practice of a community of faith in reading the Bible as God's instrument of self-revelation and saving fellowship" (xii). He sets the interpretation of Scripture in the context of reading for the purpose of faith seeking understanding. Specifically, he asserts that the readers should approach with the expectation that Scripture will provide "an encounter with the triune God himself" such that the Word of God in Scripture is a guide to a life of faith (8). This approach to Scripture is placed in opposition to viewing the Bible as a storehouse of theological building blocks (propositions) on the one hand and a resource for authoritative warrant for the interests of the interpreter on the other hand. The foundation of the correct approach to Scripture is the acknowledgment that reading is a theological task which inescapably involves theological presuppositions. In contrast to historical-critical presuppositions, Billings opts for a reading based upon the rule of faith which "emerges from Scripture itself, but is also a lens through which Christians receive Scripture" and "identifies the center and the boundaries of a Christian interpretation" (29). In the body of the book, Billings provides discussion on the place of general hermeneutics and biblical criticism, the strong role the doctrine of revelation must take in theological interpretation, the impact of the reader's context, the role of the Holy Spirit in interpretation, the value of pre-modern biblical interpretation, and scriptural interpretation as a spiritual discipline in the life of the church.

The value of the book is that it provides what the subtitle indicates: an entryway to the theological interpretation of Scripture. In doing so, Billings has provided many features helpful to churchmen and students where other works on theological interpretation fall short. One notable (if not altogether simple) feature is that Billings provides a definition for theological interpretation in the introduction to the book that is then explicated in a clear theological progression throughout the remainder of the text. The many strengths of the book include a constructive appreciation of pre-critical interpretation for modern interpretation, a strong connection between biblical interpretation and the spiritual life of the individual and church, a theological perspective on biblical criticism, the manner in which the Holy Spirit conducts a "varied yet bounded" work in interpretation, and the importance of revelation as a theological starting point for Scripture.

There is, however, a point of potential improvement with Billings' work. Chapter three, entitled "Revelation and Scripture Interpretation," provides an account of how Scripture relates to the revelation of God. The two consequent attributes of Scripture as revelation that influence interpretation are that Scripture



is inspired and is a canonical unity. Billings' point here follows that approach which argues Scripture is best understood in light of its relationship to God himself. This relationship is mediated through human elements which are specially used by God as his means for communication. Concern arises not in what is emphasized in terms of the Bible's authority as a function of how God uses it, but in what is omitted, specifically that the text itself is revelation and therefore inerrant and authoritative. The absence of explicit discussion on this point leaves Billings' reader open to wonder what the bottom line reliability of the Bible has for communicating God's revelation as opposed to other functional means of communication God may employ. Given Billings' overarching emphasis that interpretation is for the church, it is likely that he grants the text authority making this omission a point of emphasis, yet such a point deserves mention because of its importance. Overall, Billings has provided an excellent introduction to the benefits offered by theological interpretation that is unique to date in terms of its readability, breadth of discussion, and potential to edify the church.

Jon Wood

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*Crossing Over Sea and Land: Jewish Missionary Activity in the Second Temple Period.* By Michael F. Bird. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010. 208 pages. Softcover, \$24.99.

This book grew out of a footnote! The pregnant footnote was in *Jesus and the Origins of the Gentile Mission*, which Michael Bird wrote in 2006. In the footnote, he touched on the question of Jewish missionary activity in the Second Temple period based on his current research; however, he did not have an opportunity to explain properly his conclusions until this present volume (1). In *Crossing Over Sea and Land*, Bird asserts the lack of a concerted or organized Jewish missionary activity, thus offering "an update, revision, and sometimes a challenge" (viii, see 12-13) to his mentor Scot McKnight's earlier work, *A Light among the Gentiles: Jewish Missionary Activity in the Second Temple Period*. Bird mostly sides with McKnight in demonstrating that the sparse Jewish missionary activity among the Gentiles did not help contribute to early Christian evangelism among Gentiles (6, 12-13). Thus, Bird demonstrates that these Jewish activities were not an organized mission (7, 76, 97-98, 132, 148-50). Proselytizing Gentiles was rare and spasmodic (149), and the conversions of Gentiles to Judaism usually occurred at the initiation of the Gentiles (13).

To modern Christians unfamiliar with these modern studies, an assertion of concerted Jewish missionary activity at any time may come as a surprise, yet this was the prominent scholarly view a century ago (8-9). Certainly orthodox Jews in Paul's day (Acts 4:15-18; 5:17-18, 27-28; 14:19; 17:5-9, 13; 18:12-13; 19:9; 21:27-28; 22:22) as well as today strongly resist what they call proselytizing, such as Christian evangelism among fellow Jews, but they rarely go on the offensive actively to seek converts to Judaism.

The extant evidence is fragmentary (a helpful appendix lists the source texts in the original language along with an English translation, 157-76), so it results in differing interpretations among scholars. Bird correctly describes how part of the controversy over whether or not the Jews had an organized mission is due to differing definitions of words such as "Jew" and "mission," so he starts this helpful

study by defining terms (17-43).

Bird effectively engages with and refutes scholars who assert organized Jewish missional activity, such as Louis Feldman (11, 111). Bird does a good job in examining and interpreting the pertinent Palestinian evidence (rabbinic literature, Qumran literature, and inscriptions, 55-76), Diaspora evidence (i.e., Philo, Josephus, and apologetic-propagandistic literature, 77-132), and the New Testament and early Christian literature (133-48).

Matt 23:15 is the strongest NT indication of a possible Jewish mission to the Gentiles, and the book title comes from this verse. However, Bird effectively offers three alternate, plausible interpretations for Pharisees and scribes crossing land and sea to make one convert that avoid the interpretation of proselytizing Gentiles: (1) converting other Jews to the Pharisee sect, (2) converting God-fearers into full Jews, or (3) converting God-fearers to a zealot-like rebellion against Rome (68-69). Yet, this reviewer disagrees with what Bird calls the clearest example of Jewish missional activity in the New Testament: Jewish Christian proselytizers (also known as Judaizers, although Bird dislikes this term) (136-37, 146). It seems they were simply a reactionary movement against Christianity, and they tried to reclaim Jews who became Christians rather than seeking to convert Gentiles.

Bird teaches theology at the Bible College of Queensland in Brisbane, Australia. Along with N. T. Wright, Bird was a featured lecturer at the 2010 Institute for Biblical Research meeting in Atlanta. He is an engaging speaker, and in *Crossing Over Sea and Land* he gives a fascinating book that ought to be of interest to both Christians and Jews who are interested in their history, which in turn, helps one better understand both faiths today.

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*A Handbook of New Testament Exegesis.* By Craig L. Blomberg and Jennifer Foutz Markley. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010. 298 pages. Paperback, \$22.99.

Craig Blomberg has written an excellent volume on New Testament exegesis. Jennifer Markley, a former research assistant to Blomberg as well as graduate assistant at Denver Theological Seminary, wrote the first drafts of five of the chapters, but Blomberg gave the final touches on all chapters, so the book has a unified style throughout (ix). Gordon Fee's *New Testament Exegesis* inspired this present volume, which Blomberg intended to be more expansive (xii). Blomberg organizes his book around the ten primary steps in the process of exegeting the New Testament, and he devotes a full chapter to each step.

Blomberg aims at a large audience—both specialist and non-specialist, and those who know New Testament Greek and those who do not (xii). He does accomplish this purpose, giving ample explanations. He always translates the Greek; however, English transliterations would have made this handbook even more accessible to readers who do not know Greek (i.e., 154-59, 183-87). There are some helpful tables, such as the textual criticism worksheets and examples (30-35) and the one describing the differences between formal and functional equivalence Bible translation (46). However, a table that plots the major Bible translations on the formal/functional equivalence grid would be helpful. Baker Academic added sidebars throughout the text, and they are very handy for summarizing the major points in each chapter (i.e., 19, 87, 119, 126).

Strengths of the book include, first, ample illustrations for each exegetical lesson. Second, Blomberg devotes an entire chapter on how to interpret the most difficult texts (chap 7). Third, Blomberg gives fair and balanced descriptions, and critiques of various interpretive options on the difficult texts—often returning to them later in order to illustrate the use of different exegetical tools (e.g., on Heb 6:4-8: 102, 171-72, 221, 234-35)—or controversial issues, such as the inclusive language debate (50-53). However, this reviewer disagrees with his positive view on using inclusive language (52-53). Fourth, he employs helpful metaphors or illustrations to explain his points—especially at the beginning of his chapters (37, 63, 93). Fifth, the chapter on application is unusual in books on exegesis because it is such a subjective area; however, Blomberg does an excellent job in giving keys to the appropriate application of the text once one has thoroughly accomplished the exegesis—including the important admonition to “leave room for the Holy Spirit” (267).

This is an excellent textbook that will benefit any student or teacher of the Bible, including both those who know Greek and those who do not. For instance, in the necessary chapter on outlining, there is a section for people who know Greek (197-210) and a section for those who do not (210-17). However, here are some suggestions for some improvements in this handbook in addition to the suggestions above. First, expand the description of how electronic Bible software can aid in this process other than the very brief mention of the tools (130; 170n5; 196n1). Second, although the use of footnotes rather than endnotes in this book is a great formatting choice, it is not necessary to give a full citation of the first mention of a book in every chapter (such as the full citation of his *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* that continually reappears (i.e., 102, 124, 168, 228, 241). Third, the statement that the New International Commentary on the New Testament is based on the NIV translation is partly wrong (170n6). The author of each volume chose which text he used in his volume. Early volumes tend to use the ASV (e.g., Mark, Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians by Grosheide), later volumes tend to use the NIV, and R. T. France (Matthew) used his own translation. However, these are minor criticisms; this handbook is excellent.

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***Reformed Dogmatics: Abridged in One Volume.* By Herman Bavinck. Edited and Abridged by John Bolt. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011. 848 pages. Hardcover, \$59.99.**

Abridging the work of a theological giant is a daunting task. Critics of the art of abridgment will invariably argue that what is cut entails a loss of substance that the virtue of brevity cannot overcome. In this volume, John Bolt attempts to present the core of Dutch Reformed theologian Herman Bavinck’s major work. Having recently translated the four volumes of *Reformed Dogmatics* into English, Bolt is uniquely suited to this task and undertakes it with a deep respect for and familiarity with Bavinck’s classic work.

In his abridgement, Bolt seeks to provide an “outline” of *Reformed Dogmatics* that will capture the heart of the original and aid readers in catching the flow of Bavinck’s theology. Before each chapter in his previous translation, Bolt provided a précis that outlined the content and flow of the subsequent section. These editorial reflections became the building blocks for this “one-volume summary of Bavinck’s

theology” (xi). In this task, Bolt strives “to preserve Bavinck’s own voice, even his own words, keeping [Bolt’s] transitions and paraphrases to a minimum” (xi). He hopes that “even the most attentive readers will hear only Bavinck’s voice throughout” (xi).

In order to achieve this condensed version, Bolt has added editorial footnotes that provide “additional historical comments when reductions in the text make them necessary, illustrative references to contemporary thinkers and issues under discussion in the text, and updated bibliographic material” (xii). These footnotes are the method Bolt uses to orient readers to the content that was omitted from the larger volumes. Bolt also develops some of Bavinck’s citations and clarifies historical matters mentioned that might confuse/mislead uninformed readers. These editorial notes are typically complementary to Bavinck’s positions. In the few cases where there is a contrast between an editorial comment and the main text, Bolt clearly marks this in his note. For example, in the discussion of the mode and manner of Baptism, Bavinck’s text reads, “Apart from Baptist churches and mission fields, most now know baptism almost exclusively as infant baptism” (667). Bolt comments in a footnote that “while this may have been true in Bavinck’s day, it clearly is not true in the third millennium thanks to the explosive growth around the world of evangelical Pentecostalism” (667n46). Again on Baptism, Bavinck states that “because of the rapid expansion and ordinary occurrence of adult baptism in the first and second centuries of the church, direct witness to infant baptism is lacking until the time of Tertullian” (670). Bolt notes, though, that “this judgment may be in error thanks to new historical evidence” (670n51). He then points to Joachim Jeremias’ volume on *Infant Baptism in the First Four Centuries* (London: SCM, 1960). Sometimes, too, Bolt adds a citation or expands on a reference that Bavinck originally omitted (e.g., 542n51). On the whole, Bolt’s notes are unobtrusive and enhance the volume’s usefulness to contemporary readers.

Most of the material Bolt omits consists of Bavinck’s extensive interaction with historical figures and his historical theological reflection. While many would consider this unfortunate because historical theology is one of Bavinck’s contributions, Bolt’s goal is simply “to reduce the amount of detail without sacrificing the important concreteness of Bavinck’s discussion” (xii). Instead of including Bavinck’s extended interaction, for example, Bolt might list which theologians Bavinck cited in the original (see, e.g., 530n17). In doing so, Bolt reduces the work from 58 chapters to 25, and 3,000 plus pages to just below 800. He also transfers some sections to others in order to streamline the topics and mirror the “classic order of Protestant Orthodoxy” (xii; e.g., the section on providence is rearranged, see 297n104).

Serious readers of Bavinck will still want to have the four volumes of *Reformed Dogmatics* on hand for reading and reference. To facilitate this cross-referencing, Bolt has helpfully maintained the bracketed section numbers of the translated volumes. In his editorial work, Bolt consistently takes “whole sentences and even paragraphs directly from the larger work but [rearranges] them to fit a new, abridged, narrative structure” (xiii). The result is a volume that is not quite Bavinck and not quite Bolt. However, as a gateway into Bavinck’s theological framework and approach to the task of systematic theology, Bolt’s Bavinck retains a distinctive voice that has considerable value and will serve well readers who lend him an ear.

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*Calvin's Ladder: A Spiritual Theology of Ascent and Ascension.* By Julie Canlis. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010. 286 pages. Softcover, \$32.00.

Julie Canlis' book, *Calvin's Ladder* offers a new interpretation of the oft-ignored aspect of ascent in Calvin's theology. She assigns the theme an explanatory power greater than its role in Calvin's eucharistic theology (112-13). In the doctrine of spiritual ascent and the communion/participation with Christ to which the ascent leads, Canlis find a nuanced understanding of several other elements of Calvin's theology, especially Calvin's Christology and soteriology.

Canlis traces ascent theologies from Plato through Christian appropriations and rejections of that starting point (chap 1). Last on the itinerary, to borrow Canlis' metaphor, was Calvin's ascension theology, which, while retaining souvenirs of previous thinkers, had a different foundation. For Calvin, ascent was not a way to participate in an impersonal ontological divinity as for the Platonists but rather the means of ascent toward participation with the person of Jesus Christ (50).

Calvin understood creation in light of participation. In Canlis' perspective, Calvin wove Christ into the pattern of creation (71). By the Fall, therefore, mankind lost participation with Christ in creation (83-87). The way for Calvin's Christology is thus paved, for Christ restores that lost communion. Christ's mission not only rescues and appeases but more fundamentally it is the movement of Trinitarian love toward sinners bringing the lost back into communion with that love (92). The pneumatological implication is that the presence of the descended Spirit after Christ's ascension is the historical means of present communion until an eschatologically fulfilled communion is realized (117-18).

Canlis later describes the state of communion in the life of the believer. It is the Spirit who binds the believer in participation with Trinity in accordance with the imagery of adoption (148). The role of the eucharist in this is important. Calvin's doctrine was not developed simply as his contribution to the controversy of his day but rather the fullest expression of his doctrine of participation (161). In Canlis' participatory interpretation of Calvin's theology, the eucharist is not just a glimpse of ascent but rather that ascent seen in full exposure.

Canlis portrays the participatory theology of Irenaeus, providing an in depth treatment beyond mere comparison with Calvin's theology. She recognizes several differences, including Irenaeus' anthropological and Calvin's Christological starting points (230). Her understanding is generally more sympathetic toward Irenaeus, saying that his theology could act as a corrective to Calvin's (233). She fears that Calvin's participatory theology led to undesirable implications such as penal atonement, depravity, and moralism (243). This provides a starting point for a discussion of the value of these theologies for contemporary theological development.

One must be aware of Canlis' use of certain terms. The work stresses the concepts of ascent and participation—the former being the means of attaining the latter. She uses participation and communion (and less often union or presence) synonymously, or so it seems at first. She has a difference in mind to the point that she could say, "participation is nuanced with communion" (60). She says that all the terminology overlap in meaning but even then after having said that communion was the fruit of participation (14). What exactly the difference is unfortunately is not made clear from the beginning in any concise definitional form, leaving readers to discover for themselves the difference as they read. It would have been beneficial to have taken a moment to distinguish these ideas at the outset in order to avoid

any confusion in attempts to locate what must be a very fine line between the terms.

Generally, Canlis avoids the temptation to exalt the subject of her study to become the dominant or central theme of Calvin's theology. Rather, she hopes to bring into the open a significant trait others have often overlooked as, for instance, typified in his doctrine of adoption (131). Canlis still somewhat tends to see the doctrine above other theological characteristics. She criticizes Torrance's description of Calvin's mirror metaphor for not giving place to participation (80-81). She also thinks that the Spirit as bond of communion was significant enough that she finds it odd that the title of Book III of the *Institutes* did not include the Spirit (148). Additionally, although the ladder image is not foreign to Calvin's writings, Calvin himself did not use it broadly as Canlis does as a metaphor for ascent. The ladder as a unifying image for Canlis gains weight from Plato's initial usage in the Symposium.

Most admirably, Canlis' work does the work of a church historian with proper purpose. She does not forget that her effort is in service to the church and she believes that Calvin has something to say today (24), especially within her own Reformed tradition, which tends to play down such participation (13). As such, *Calvin's Ladder* gives the church a tool for crafting its own theology by rediscovering the communion and ascent that Calvin felt was so vital to the Christian life.

Peter Coleman

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***The Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism.* Edited by John Collins and Daniel C. Harlow. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2010. 1397 pages. Hardcover, \$95.00.**

This is the first of its kind reference work that focuses on Second Temple Judaism. While the title says that it is a dictionary, it is not merely a source that provides definitions of terms. This is a synthetic research volume whose entries are major articles of the particular subject; complete with a review of the scholarly literature and issues, and a comprehensive bibliography. The dictionary consists of two parts: the first part contains major essays that make up 20% of the book. The second part contains 520 alphabetical entries.

The first part includes 13 major essays addressing issues and aspects of Judaism between the Hellenistic and the second century AD. The essays are, "Early Judaism in Modern Scholarship," "Jewish history from Alexander to Hadrian," "Judaism in the Land of Israel," "Judaism in the Diaspora," "The Jewish Scriptures: Texts, Versions, Canons," "Early Jewish Biblical Interpretation," "Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha," "Dead Sea Scrolls," "Early Jewish Literature," "Archaeology, Papyri, and Inscriptions," "Jews among Greeks and Romans," "Early Judaism and Early Christianity," and "Early Judaism and Rabbinic Judaism."

The second part contains the 520 entries. The entries focus on Second Temple Judaism in ancient Palestine, and the Diaspora. Emphasis is placed on entries that are important to Biblical studies, early Judaism, and history. Major topics include, "Primary Languages of Jews during the Second Temple period," "Secondary Languages" (e.g., Armenian, Ethiopic), "Literary Genres," "Biblical Texts, Versions, and Canon," "Hebrew Bible," "Apocrypha," "Pseudepigrapha and Hellenistic Jewish Texts," "Dead Sea Scrolls," "Philo of Alexandria," "Josephus," "Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism," "New Testament," "Rabbinic Literature," "Groups and Dynasties," "Social, Political, Economic, and Cultural Life," "Biblical Figures

in Early Jewish Interpretation” (e.g. Abraham, Moses, Melchizedek), “Mythological and Primordial Figures, Places and Events” (includes Angels, Behemoth, Serpent, Sons of God), “Religious Beliefs and Influences, Practices” (including Asceticism, Burial Practices, Celibacy, Crucifixion, Intermarriage), “Religious Institutions,” “Jewish Revolts,” “Cities, Countries and Regions,” “Archaeology,” and “Modern Interpreters of Early Judaism.”

While the promotional literature states that many of the entries contain “cross-references,” a perusal of several articles shows that this is very minimal. For example, the entry on Jerusalem mentions *miqva’ot* (792) as spreading throughout Hasmonean Jerusalem, but it does not cross-reference the article on *miqva’ot* (924-256). This is also the case whenever there is an article on a major historical figure (e.g. Josephus, Paul) that does not have references to articles on that person’s writings. The entry for Qumran does reference the articles on Dead Sea Scrolls and Essenes but not any cross-listings for Josephus, Pottery, or Archaeology. While this type of cross-referencing would be cumbersome, perhaps indexes in the back would be beneficial to those using the dictionary. This would be especially valuable to those who are unfamiliar with the discipline of Early Judaism, but would use this dictionary as a valuable resource (e.g., students, scholars of New Testament or Early Church, pastors).

The field of Second Temple Judaism has emerged as a major discipline within scholarship and is only beginning to be explored by Christian scholars. While it has flourished as an auxiliary approach within history, rabbinic studies, and New Testament studies—it is now recognized as a stand alone discipline within the field of Biblical studies. This reference work provides an excellent introduction to what will be an important and viable aspect of Biblical studies, particularly historic Jesus studies, as well as the New Testament texts and early church fathers in their historic context and trajectory. The approach will be unique to seminary students and pastors. You will not find entries for Gospel or New Testament, but you will find each of the Gospels as well as the Jesus Movement and Jesus of Nazareth. Under the topic of Miracles and Miracle Workers there is no reference to the New Testament but a discussion of Miracles in Second Temple literature. While seminary students will initially find this dictionary difficult to use, once they are immersed in this field they will find that this dictionary will provide a wealth of data for study. One example is the entry on Beatitudes (4QBeatitudes) (434). While this entry is specifically focused on a Dead Sea Scroll found in Cave 4, the entry provides important data for this specific and unique literary form that was common in the Second Temple Period. Naturally, this is the same literary genre used by Jesus in the famous Sermon on the Mount and provides a reader with an important avenue of research for this text.

The list of contributors is a who’s who of scholars both Jewish and Christian, with 270 authors from 20 countries. The dictionary contains over 150 illustrations, maps, photos, drawings, and plans. The bibliographies are extensive and up-to-date making this an excellent starting point for research. This volume is important for seminary students and New Testament and Early church scholars. It places the writings of the early church and life and ministry of Jesus within its proper historical context. While it is theoretically a reference work, because of the extensive surveys and overviews, this can easily be utilized as a textbook for graduate studies. This volume should be the first consult in any research of the Second Temple Period. While it is focused on early Judaism, any student, faculty, and interested lay person

will find this a valuable investment for their library.

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***Luke: A Handbook on the Greek Text.* By Martin M. Culy, Mikeal C. Parsons, and Joshua J. Stigall. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010. 802 pages. Softcover, \$49.95.**

A common problem for the serious student of New Testament Greek is the paucity of resources which analyze the Greek text line-by-line. Though commentaries will often cover important grammatical constructions, inevitably the student will find that commentaries and grammars do not answer some grammatical and syntactical questions. This is the conundrum *Luke: A Handbook on the Greek Text* solves. In this handy, yet solid volume, Martin Culy, Mikeal Parsons, and Joshua Stigall provide a grammatical introduction, translation, and word-by-word analysis of the Greek text of Luke. The book is a tremendous help to Greek students who regularly ask “Why?” of the text.

In the introduction, the authors provide some general analysis of Luke’s grammar, providing brief evaluations of Luke’s use of discourse-level conjunctions, participles, verbal aspect, and word order. This offers the reader preparation for interpreting some of these more difficult features of the Greek language. Perhaps the most important section here is the overview of verbal aspect in Luke. The authors lay out the current debate on aspect, and explain how that research affects the interpretation of Luke. Their main point is that perfective aspect often points toward mainline narrative material, while imperfective aspect points to background narrative material (xxviii). Though the jargon of the discussion could be burdensome for those not versed in this technical debate, it is nice to see that the research is beginning to find its way into reference works such as this. In fact, the entire series is applying recent research. Following Conrad and Pennington’s work on deponency, the series typically sees verbs which are usually viewed as deponents as being true middles (xiii). Some of these technical introductions may be overwhelming for the intermediate student, but more advanced students will find them stimulating and enlightening.

The real meat of the book, however, is the translation and analysis. The authors translate each pericope of Luke, then provide verse-by-verse analysis. The translations are smooth, yet obviously informed by interpretive decisions made in the analysis. Words implied or not included in Greek are placed in parentheses. Following the translation, each verse of the pericope in Greek serves as a heading. Under the heading each word or short phrase of the verse is given and analyzed. Each part is described with regard to relevant morphological and syntactical information, such as tense, lexical meaning, case, verb form, etc., but the authors also offer interpretations of many of these grammatical features. For interpreting the syntax, categories are used like those found in Daniel Wallace’s *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, though interpretive categories are not given for verb tenses (for more on this see, xi).

The analysis for each word or phrase varies in length, though no entry is longer than a short paragraph. In some cases, readers find simple entries including only parsing information or the interpretation of a case (e.g., subjective genitive), but at other times, the authors provide discourse-level details. For example, regarding ἐγένετο in 1:8, the authors use half a page to parse the verb and to explain how



the verb “introduces ‘the event line’ of the narrative following the background information on Zechariah and Elizabeth” (10). This particular entry refers to several other researchers, offering the reader other opinions and options for further study.

At the back of the book, the authors have included a short glossary of technical terms, a bibliography, a grammar index, and an author index. The glossary is a wonderful aid to those unfamiliar or far removed from intermediate to advanced grammar. Also, the grammar index conveniently provides occurrences of all the grammatical features within Luke, making it a great supplement to the Scripture index of grammar textbooks, like Wallace’s, for finding examples of certain constructions. All of the back matter will be helpful for the inquisitive reader or researcher.

The danger of this book is that it could become a crutch. With so much information on the Greek text, one might not have to think for himself about possible interpretive options. However, this problem is no worse than the problem of using Bible software to parse verbs. The book is what the reader makes of it. If used as a reference for stumping questions, it will guide the reader into further research, but if used it to solve every Greek interpretive problem, one might as well stick to English translation.

I highly recommend this book and series to those seriously interested in Greek and who want to further develop their Greek skills. Some of the technical jargon could be overwhelming for intermediate students, but the main sections of the book would be helpful for anyone from the student to the scholar.

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***Redeeming Singleness: How the Storyline of Scripture Affirms the Single Life.* By Barry Danylak. Wheaton: Crossway, 2010. 256 pages. Softcover, \$16.99.**

Any search for good, biblically-sound books addressing the issue of singleness is most likely to leave the searcher disappointed and frustrated. Even the majority of Christian books on singleness generally leave the reader with a bad taste in his or her mouth. They either bemoan the problems found in marriage and suggest that it is better for singles to remain unmarried, or they serve as little more than a dating guide for Christian singles to find their perfect mate. Neither one of these outcomes, remaining single or finding a mate, are inherently wrong, but the methodology that most Christian singles books employ only separates itself from the magazines found at the grocery store checkout line by the smattering of Bible verses pasted across worldly wisdom. Thus, the reader will welcome a breath of fresh air upon opening this book with the expressed purpose of reflecting “on the purpose of the biblical affirmation of the single life by exploring how singleness itself fits into God’s larger purpose of redeeming a people for his glory” (15). Barry Danylak, a PhD candidate at the University of Cambridge, offers this new book as a different look at the role of singleness in God’s plan for redemption and how it affects the contemporary church’s understanding of the single life.

Danylak opens the book with an eye-opening look at singleness in the American culture and its impact on the church. His statistics about lack of church involvement, low commitment, and sparse financial contributions among singles coupled with the cultural retreat from marriage paint a grim picture for the future of the church in America. However, he believes that the church can overcome this

potentially dire situation. He admonishes his readers, “The composite message of the data is clear: the future life and vitality of the evangelical faith will require greater engagement with single adults both inside and outside the walls of the local church” (19).

During the six main chapters of the book, Danylak’s work reads like a biblical theology of marriage. He begins with a discussion of marriage and procreation from the creation account and moves to the establishment of the Abrahamic covenant and the blessings that were passed down through the generations of that covenant. The author rightfully asks the question for his readers about what this has to do with singleness and sets up a later comparison to spiritual offspring as a source of blessing (52–53). In chapters 2–4, Danylak continues to trace the results of the Abrahamic covenant through the history of Israel and documents the various times that singleness appears in the Old Testament, usually as a liability but sometimes with blessing.

In chapters 5–6, the author finally gets to the heart of biblical teaching on singleness. He offers a lengthy discussion on Jesus’ teaching about marriage and singleness, noting that Jesus has a surprisingly positive perspective on remaining unmarried. He then exegetes Paul’s discussion of singleness in 1 Corinthians 7 as a charisma for the church. He concludes that both Jesus and Paul retained a positive outlook on singleness because they recognized that the responsibilities of marriage could take away from a singular focus on ministry. In addition, being part of the body of Christ would provide a “new family” for believers whose bonds were even stronger than an earthly family (168).

As a biblical theology of marriage and offspring, Danylak’s work certainly excels because he traces the role of marriage and children in the covenants that God established with his people as an avenue for blessings. This is in keeping with an overall commendation of proper family relationships that one can see throughout the corpus of Scripture. In addition, he waded through some difficult waters to provide sound, theologically-grounded exegesis of Jesus’ and Paul’s teaching on the single life. There are some difficulties with those passages that Danylak handled skillfully and demonstrated his ability as a theologian.

As a biblical theology of singleness, which Danylak claims to have written, the book is a little lacking. He definitely handles the limited Scriptural teaching on the subject well, but the book gets weighed down in his lengthy discussions of marriage, offspring, and the difficulty of singleness in the Old Testament. While those are important topics to the discussion, a full two-thirds of the book is devoted to marriage and offspring and only one-third to the issue of singleness. The interesting thing is that he recognizes this as an issue in a couple of different places in the book, but he leaves the reader wanting with his promise of more to come later in the book. Finally, after his buildup in the introduction where he notes the pressing need for the church to engage singles both inside the church and in the culture, the book lacks a discussion on how actually to begin such engagement.

Despite its weaknesses, this book still has value for those interested in engaging singles with a gospel-centered focus. Danylak effectively dismisses the myth that singles are second-class citizens and shows how the single life can be a testimony of God’s faithfulness and unfettered devotion to the gospel. He concludes, “Christian singleness is a testimony to the supreme sufficiency of Christ for all things, testifying that through Christ life is fully blessed even without marriage and children. It prophetically points to a reality greater than the satisfactions of this present age by

consciously anticipating the Christian's eternal inheritance in the kingdom of God" (215). In this closing statement, he confirms what he intended to do—show that the ultimate redemption story of Scripture affirms the single life.

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***The Book of Hosea.* By J. Andrew Dearman. *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010. 408 pages. Hardcover, \$29.70.**

In a field where commentaries are legion and with a book on which interpretations abound, Andrew Dearman has produced a work that contributes to the field and accomplishes the lofty purposes established as part of the NICOT series. The commentary is well-organized, thoroughly researched, and carefully documented. Moreover, the style is clear and readable. It is a work not likely simply to sit on one's bookshelf, but will be referenced time and again.

Throughout the work, Dearman presents reasoned conclusions, but is also respectful of and interacts with those of dissenting opinions. He holds interpreter's feet to the fire with his insistence that one's interpretation of the book must "begin and end with the text" (81). Moreover, he takes issue with those who too narrowly confine the root metaphor in Hosea simply to the institution of marriage. Instead, the author explains that the fundamental metaphor of the book is about the household (44-45). He noted that Hosea was the first biblical writer to employ the metaphor of husband for deity, later employed by Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel (54).

Dearman makes a strong case for traditional authorship and also maintains that there is "little or nothing in the book itself [that] requires a date later than the end of the 8th century B.C." (6). Still, the bulk of his work focuses on the final form of the text. Despite the difficulties in the Hebrew text of Hosea, which Dearman describes as "among the most difficult in the OT" (9), the text is well-translated and the author's interaction with the Hebrew throughout conveys his considerable linguistic skills.

The organization of the commentary is helpful. The work begins with an introduction covering the literary features, historical background, the theology of the prophet, and concluding with an exhaustive bibliography of the book. Next, the section on Text and Commentary is subdivided into five chapters corresponding to Dearman's outline of the book. Except for the fact that two of the headings carry the exact same title, the outline flows logically with the book. The last section of the book is comprised of ten helpful appendices.

Throughout the work, a number of timely excursions are added which enhance the understanding of the book. Reader's who might normally be tempted to gloss over such sections will find the expositions on "Similes and Metaphors" (11-13), "Wordplays on Names and Their Reversals in Hosea 1-2 and the New Testament" (100-102), "David Their King" (142-45), "Being Raised on the Third Day" (193-95), and "Israel and Sonship" (278-80) alone worth the cost of the book.

In the end, it is Dearman's skillful treatment of the textual difficulties and thorough treatment of the first three chapters of Hosea that stand out as the strengths of the commentary. Students, scholars, pastors, and all others interested in a better understanding of Hosea will find this volume useful.

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*Did the First Christians Worship Jesus? The New Testament Evidence.* By James D. G. Dunn. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010. 168 pages. Softcover, \$20.00.

James D. G. (Jimmy) Dunn, Lightfoot Professor of Divinity Emeritus at the University of Durham in England, is a prolific scholar in both Jesus and Pauline studies, and while he can be thought-provoking and engaging, he can also be unorthodox in his views. This short book is an example of all three of these characteristics. Dunn wrote it primarily as a response to Larry W. Hurtado's books *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotions to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (2003) and *How on Earth Did Jesus Become a God? Historical Questions about Earliest Devotion to Jesus* (2005) and Richard Bauckham's *God Crucified: Monotheism and Christology in the New Testament* (1998) and *Jesus and the God of Israel* (2008). Dunn states at the outset that he substantially agrees with much of what those two writers say on this issue of early Christian worship of Jesus (4), and certainly Hurtado and Bauckham have done much research and writing in this subject area already. However, Dunn writes this present volume: (1) to focus more narrowly on the first generation of Christians, and (2) to look more at the whole picture, which includes New Testament texts which are more "controversial" and appear to answer the book's question negatively (2-3). Thus, Dunn's thesis is that the first generation of Christians did not worship Jesus as God or by himself; rather, they worshipped him as a means to God. So, they worshipped God through Jesus and in the power of the Spirit (6, 146-51). So, in short, Dunn's answer to the book's title question is an unqualified "No." Dunn even calls the question "rather naive" (53) and "potentially misleading" (150).

Dunn is certainly convinced he proves his case, and he does make some interesting points in defining worship and in examining the Greek and Hebrew terms used for worship (7-22) as well as what practices were involved in worship (29-58). However, Dunn misses the mark because he appears to fail to believe Jesus is truly God and was worshipped as God by the first generation of believers. He really ends up with an adoptionistic type of Christology (144-46). Dunn seems more comfortable describing Jesus as the man God used than as the God-man. For instance, he minimizes the denotation and connotation of the term "Lord" used for Jesus (and the accompanying worship of him in Philippians 2:11) (104-07).

There are other problems in Dunn's perspective. It does not help his case that Dunn disbelieves parts of the Gospel of John. Sadly, this point of view is typical among modern New Testament scholars, but it is a flawed point of view. For instance, Dunn claims John the Evangelist put some sayings in Jesus' mouth that Jesus never said, such as the "I am" statements, which Dunn claims the Synoptic Gospels would have mentioned if Jesus had actually said them (119)! Of course, this erroneous argument is an argument from silence, which is one of the weakest arguments one can make. Unfortunately, Dunn ignores one of the clearest New Testament verses on the book's subject: when Thomas proclaimed to Jesus, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28). Interestingly, he claims one cannot know if Jesus would have approved of anyone worshipping him (93), yet this is exactly what Thomas was doing in that statement. Another disappointment is when Dunn claims Enoch, Moses, and Elijah were "ancient, legendary or even mythical figures" (89). Well, they were ancient!

Dunn is an eminent scholar and a good, meticulous writer. He knows how to lead the reader carefully through the fruits of his research. Throughout this book

he carries on a rich “dialogue” with Bauckham and Hurtado in both the text and voluminous content footnotes (e.g., 3-5, 9-11, 15-16, 22, 29). Yet, on this issue, Bauckham and Hurtado get it right and Dunn does not.

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*Evangelism Is . . . : How to Share Jesus with Passion and Confidence.* By Dave Earley and David Wheeler. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010. 358 pages. Softcover, \$24.99.

Why is it that a number of believers in Jesus Christ do not evangelize? Perhaps they find themselves gripped by either a fear of the unknown or their own unpreparedness. In *Evangelism Is*, Dave Earley and David Wheeler offer substantive answers to fearful, would-be personal evangelists concerning their questions about and preparation for evangelism. Possessing more than twenty years of experience as both a church planter and a pastor, Earley has written over a dozen books. Now he teaches courses in both pastoral ministries and church expansion at Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary in Lynchburg, Virginia. David Wheeler, credited with popularizing servanthood evangelism, serves as professor of evangelism at Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary. Together, Earley and Wheeler have compiled forty concise essays that explore the motive, meaning, manner, and methods that frame an effective understanding and practice of personal evangelism.

Before they present their concept of evangelism, Earley and Wheeler address a number of common myths concerning evangelism (vii–ix). They build a case against these misconceptions and, in doing so, assemble a strong foundation in order to define and describe a healthy view of evangelism. Earley and Wheeler use both Biblical and narrative approaches in explaining what “evangelism is.” By employing Biblical exposition at times, while simply offering scriptural support at others, the authors establish Scripture as the authoritative basis for their evangelistic propositions. The inclusion of the authors’ own personal experiences and encounters in evangelism demonstrate that evangelism will always be caught more than it is taught.

*Evangelism Is* challenges readers’ thoughts and ideas concerning evangelism. In fact, one may be forced to question certain presuppositions about evangelism. However, readers may want to question Earley and Wheeler on some finer, more minute points. First, Wheeler asserts early in the book that evangelism is not “the same as ‘missions’” (viii). He makes a case against blurring the lines between evangelism and missions, arguing that attempts to do so have caused evangelism to lose “its distinctiveness and importance to the church” (viii). However, Earley later appears to combine evangelism and missions in his chapter on “Evangelism is being a Missionary, Not a Mission Field” (101 ff). Second, in his discussion on the Holy Spirit’s role in evangelism, Earley submits a chart with no explanation or title (140). The chart assigns God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit to specific historical times. Because he offers no explanation concerning the content of the chart, novice believers might incorrectly surmise modalistic teaching here. Last, Earley’s essay, “Evangelism is Sharing Your Story” (245–51), and Wheeler’s essay, “Evangelism is Sharing Your Recovery Testimony” (260–67), both deal with issues related to sharing one’s testimony. Is not the content similar enough to combine these essays into one chapter? To do so would make the work’s treatment of utilizing

testimonies for evangelism more concise.

Regardless of these questions concerning the book's clarity, the content of *Evangelism Is* provides readers with some highly useful information. Earley and Wheeler summarize the contents of each article in a concluding section. They utilize a number of these concluding remarks to offer readers helpful suggestions in order to apply each chapter's content (e.g., 16, 101, 117, 154, 202–03, 226–27, 251, 259, 267). In addition, Early and Wheeler present strong arguments against a “gift” of evangelism (vii, 20), as well as a convincing argument for the use of public invitations (283–90).

Despite its merits, *Evangelism Is* is not without its weaknesses. First, Earley neglects to include key scriptural passages in his discussions on the Great Commission and spiritual gifts. John 20:21 is absent from his list of Great Commission passages (17–18), as well as Ephesians 4:7–16 in his discussion of spiritual gifts (176). Second, Wheeler makes the foundational case that “evangelism and discipleship are uniquely dependent on each another” (viii); however, neither he nor Earley formally explores or examines the subject of discipleship. Finally, while the authors explain and describe evangelism as a process leading to an event, they do not sufficiently address or emphasize a spontaneous kind of evangelism that begins with an event and leads to a process of life-long discipleship.

Evangelism instructors and educators will find *Evangelism Is* a helpful textbook for a course in basic evangelism. Despite the book's appeal to those studying in the academy, it also speaks to those sitting in the pew. Pastors and ministers in local churches will find they can select any of the book's chapters as stand-alone articles in order to assist them in equipping the members of their congregations to evangelize.

Matt Queen

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

***Key Questions About Christian Faith: Old Testament Answers.* By John Goldingay. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010. 345 pages. Softcover, \$19.99.**

This collection of essays brings together twenty-five essays from John Goldingay's celebrated career. With only a few exceptions, the essays have been previously published elsewhere. Each essay answers a popular question such as, “Should I tithe net or gross?” or, “How should we think about same-sex relationships?” Goldingay attempts to answer these questions from the perspective of a Biblical theologian rooted firmly in the Old Testament.

It should be noted that despite the title, this is not a collection of exclusively Old Testament answers. Goldingay admits as much in the preface writing that these answers find their “center of gravity in the Old Testament” (xi), but come from the entire Bible. It should also be noted that whereas the collection intends to present Biblical theological answers, it is nevertheless organized in a systematic format; moving from essays on God to man to sin to covenant to eschatology with the bulk of cultural questions on topics such as animals, gender roles and homosexuality near the end.

Goldingay rapidly moves from passage to passage in order to make his points, repeatedly aiming the reader back to the Biblical text. He also regularly discusses events from his personal life in order to illumine his points. The stories of his relationship and love for a severely disabled wife make his arguments all the more authoritative when speaking of how disability relates to Biblical anthropology.

Goldingay is an engaging writer with a warm writing style.

With such an engaging writing style and frequent focus on the Biblical text, it makes it all the more difficult not to recommend this book. Whereas Goldingay should be praised for his careful attention to the biblical text, he should be rejected for his hermeneutic, which leads to unorthodox conclusions. The most influential hermeneutical principle leading to such faulty conclusions comes from reading human personality into the text and even into the nature of God himself. For instance, Goldingay describes God as having dominant and secondary personality traits, just as humans do. He images God as a bundle of emotions, sometimes spilling out in anger, but usually keeping his “temper under control” (12). Complex and contradictory emotions in God do not cause a problem for Goldingay because he thinks they reflect human emotional states and thus reveal something of what it means to be created in God’s image. Goldingay projects human categories onto God with regularity in these essays. He makes his hermeneutic explicit when he suggests that since “human beings are made in God’s image . . . using human models to understand God is illuminating” (40). Although Goldingay opposes using philosophical and theological categories to understand God, unless they are explicitly outlined in the text, he nevertheless regularly reads human emotional, mental and psychological states onto God in a similar manner.

The clearest examples of this hermeneutic leading to unorthodox conclusions come in the chapter considering whether or not God has surprises (25). Goldingay argues that both classical and open theists are incorrect. Instead of presenting a *via media*, as he often does in regards to other topics in this collection, Goldingay goes beyond the open theists in his rejection of orthodox theology. He says that God “gains knowledge in the same way as anyone does,” and that God “can find out anything” (34), but must look to find it. He claims that God has both “hardwired” innate and empirically learned knowledge. Whereas the open theist argues that God knows all things present and past, Goldingay suggests that God must even discover information about the present, although He has the power to find whatever he seeks. In regards to human hearts, Goldingay says that “God does not automatically know what is in them but can look in and discover what is there” (34).

Obviously, such views must be rejected by Baptists who confess that God’s “perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future” (2000 *BF&M*, II). Goldingay realizes that most Christians interpret his key passages anthropomorphically, but he rejects such readings for more literalistic ones. Strangely, he rejects this literalistic hermeneutic when discussing gender roles or other culturally controversial topics where the conservative position finds support in a literal reading of the text.

In summary, this collection of essays show how one prominent Old Testament scholar views a wide range of topics, and does give a stronger emphasis to the writings of the Old Testament than most popular Christian writing. Still, the negatives outweigh the positives and conservatives will need to look elsewhere for orthodox applications of the Old Testament to Christian life.

G. Kyle Essary  
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (IMB)

*The Temple in the Gospel of Mark: A Study in its Narrative Role.* By Timothy C. Gray. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010. 226 pages. Softcover, \$43.00.

Timothy C. Gray, president and professor of Sacred Scripture at St. John Vianney Theological Seminary in Denver, has written an interesting narrative study of Mark's Gospel with an emphasis on how Jesus relates to the Jewish temple (3). This book is an adaptation of his dissertation, first published in 2008 by Mohr Sierbeck in Tübingen, Germany.

Gray analyzes the temple motif in Mark from both an intertextual (looking at connections with Old Testament texts) and intratextual (examining the texts within Mark) perspective. The uniqueness of this approach comes in demonstrating how the intertextual and intratextual elements in Mark are integrally related—especially how the Evangelist wove Old Testament themes into his narrative (3-6). Yet, Gray shows Mark was doing more than mere proof texting. Instead, he was a “sophisticated author who often employs the contextual richness of the OT texts he uses, which he interweaves into his wider narrative” (5).

Strengths of the book include: (1) thorough exegesis, (2) good balanced incorporation of both intertextual and intratextual elements, and (3) his careful handling of Mark's literary tools, such as intercalation (5, 8, 100-02, 151), gap (50), and inclusio (110, 146). In addition, Gray does a commendable job of wedding narrative criticism (a synchronic criticism that normally ignores historical aspects of the text) with diachronic criticisms (those that deal with historical matters), such as redaction criticism (4, 23-43).

However, Gray's starting point, major date assumption, and conclusion are problematic for this reviewer. First, his starting point is the contention that Jesus in the Gospel of Mark is a construct by the Evangelist rather than an accurate picture of the historical Jesus (79, 145). Thus, there is the “Markan Jesus” (76, 145, 198), who is allegedly different from the historical Jesus. However, the Jesus of Mark is the Jesus of history. Second, Gray's date assumption is that Mark wrote during or after the AD 70 Roman destruction of Jerusalem and the temple (38, 98-99, 153-54). This date is problematic because Gray comes close to saying Jesus' prediction of the future fall of the temple was a prophecy *ex eventu* (written after the event fulfillment rather than before it) rather than a genuine prophecy. Thus, Gray appears to say that Mark artificially concocted the scenes in the temple for his narrative, such as Jesus' temple cleansing (78). Although it is possible that Mark wrote a post-AD 70 theological interpretation of the actual historical events of what Jesus said and did, Gray does not clearly make this claim, and he claims Mark may have invented events. However, if Mark wrote pre-AD 67, as this reviewer believes, then much of Gray's entire thesis vanishes.

Third, Gray goes beyond the evidence in Mark to claim that Jesus is the new temple (198-99). Of course, the temple is prominent in Mark 12-16 because it was prominent in Second Temple Judaism, Certainly Jesus' atoning death ended the need for temple sacrifice; however, Jesus' atonement did not make him the new temple, nor did Mark present him as such.

Unfortunately, Gray limits the fulfillment of Jesus' eschatological sayings to the first century AD. So, the crucifixion/resurrection of Jesus and temple destruction, as well as the events leading up to those two destructions, are all that Jesus anticipated. Thus, Jesus was the eschatological new temple (150, 178-79). Why could not Jesus have also anticipated and addressed his second coming as well?



Mark continues to be a popular testing ground for new interpretations, and scholars consider this Gospel to be a masterful writing. Gray gives a good example of how to employ narrative criticism to Mark while taking into account the historical events in the text even though his ultimate conclusion goes beyond the text.

James R. Wicker

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

*A Basic Introduction to Biblical Hebrew.* By Jo Ann Hackett. Peabody: Hendrickson, 2010. 302 pages. Hardcover, \$39.95.

Jo Ann Hackett provides a welcome addition to the ever-expanding introductory literature of Biblical Hebrew. This introductory grammar demonstrates the skill of a seasoned grammarian and lexicographer. Intended for a one-semester period (10-15 weeks), *A Basic Introduction to Biblical Hebrew* makes several unique contributions to the study of the Old Testament.

While the content of her grammar is similar to other introductory works, Hackett's orientation, linguistic labeling, and descriptions stand apart from earlier grammars in at least four ways. First, she highlights the first-person in her presentation of verbal paradigms (67). Her justification for doing so seems to be pedagogical in that she aligns the paradigm with pronominal suffixes and stays with the familiar order of learning in English (xix). Second, Hackett presents the order of the conjugations in a unique way. She discusses the prefix conjugation (imperfect), and then moves to the imperative, the consecutive preterite, and finally the suffix conjugation (perfect). The purpose of the organization is to provide the proper foundation for discussing the consecutive preterite (xx). Third, as already noted, Hackett uses descriptive labels for conjugations differently than other grammars. While the terms "prefix" and "suffix" are not novel designations, several current introductory grammars continue to label the conjugations as "imperfect" and "perfect," respectively. Furthermore, Hackett breaks away from the rhetorical pattern of past grammarians by offering a new term, "consecutive preterite." Fourth, she presents the strong verb by discussing all of the verbal stems (chaps 12-24), after which she explains the weak verb in its various forms (chaps 25-30).

The format of the grammar allows for a user-friendly approach to learning Biblical Hebrew. This is evidenced in the overview and scope paragraphs (chaps 1-6), the single and double lined boxes containing interesting and essential information, and the use of Hebrew numbering system for the chapters. The whole design keeps the student in mind. The exercises concluding each chapter, though artificial, benefit the student greatly. To assist in the exercises, Hackett provides a CD which is particularly important for first-semester language study. On the CD, Hackett and an equally well-known scholar, John Huehnergard, provide most of the pronunciation for the alphabet, vocabulary in each chapter, and Genesis 22:1-19. While these features benefit any introductory Hebrew class, classes that meet only once a week or online courses may profit even more.

Another salient feature of the textbook's CD is the answer key for the exercises of each chapter. In addition to helping students who are outside of a typical classroom setting, the answer key provides immediate feedback. While an answer key may hinder a lazy or apathetic student, it has the potential to stimulate interest, curiosity, and confidence.

While the pedagogical nature of the work is worthy of praise, there are aspects

of the format that could be improved. The dense paragraph laden presentation forces a student to find many of Hackett's illustrations inside the paragraphs rather than after paragraph-formatted explanations. While it allows for a condensed book, the format makes a brief overview of chapters difficult. Not surprisingly, Hackett's overall discussion of grammar is appropriately succinct and well-founded. The presentation of the piel stem, however, does not explain the current linguistic evidence well (140). Placing the label "intensive" in the first category within the piel stem may lead students to erroneous conclusions of former generations.

As a first-semester grammar, *A Basic Introduction to Biblical Hebrew* provides a helpful invitation to the text of the Old Testament. Seminaries that require only two semesters of Biblical Hebrew may benefit from using it as a first-semester text. This structure would allow the second semester to focus on the details of syntax. Despite the work's clear presentation of grammar, it remains to be seen if scholars will adopt Hackett's organizational scheme of verbs and her descriptive labels.

Ethan Jones

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

***Colossians and Philemon. Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament.* By Murray J. Harris. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010. 272 pages. Softcover, \$24.99.**

Murray J. Harris is professor emeritus of New Testament Exegesis and Theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. This book is the first of the EGGNT series, of which many more will be welcomed by scholars, pastors, and students alike.

Harris deals in only a few pages with the introductory matters. He considers Paul the author of both Colossians and Philemon, arguing briefly from the affinities between the two letters, especially Paul's co-workers mentioned in each epistle. He writes, "If Paul authored Philemon, it seems a priori likely that he also wrote Colossians, given these remarkable similarities of circumstance" (3). He opts for a dating during Paul's first Roman imprisonment for both letters (4, 207-209) and states that Paul wrote the letter to exhort them away from their relapse into paganism as well as to combat false teaching (5). Harris refers the reader to external sources for further reading on these matters.

The purpose of the series is to deal extensively with grammatical and syntactical issues, while briefly explaining the implications of such issues for theological interpretation. Harris' interaction with the secondary literature is immense and his layout of various grammatical and syntactical options is superb. Each section begins with Harris' custom block diagram, intended to explain the structure of the passage. Next comes Harris' exegetical spadework, followed by a list of suggested further readings for topics that surface in text. Last, Harris provides homiletical suggestions in the form of a bare sermon outline. After the full text has been examined, a translation of each epistle is given in its entirety: first a literal translation, followed by an extended paraphrase.

Harris clearly states his exegetical decisions and theological conclusions throughout the book. This contrasts with a similar series, SIL International's Exegetical Summaries series. SIL's series focuses solely on grammatical and syntactical issues and explains the positions of a multitude of secondary literature, but the authors make no decisions themselves. They are neutral providers of information. Both series have their advantages, but Harris' volume makes a greater contribution

to scholarship since he makes arguments that may be evaluated and appropriated.

One way Harris could have improved the volume is to include more discussion of Pauline theology in exegetical decisions. While he does make references to passages elsewhere in the Pauline corpus, his discussions on passages involving words such as “body,” “flesh,” “rulers and powers,” “elementary spirits” (στοικεῖον), etc., would have been enriched by a brief discussion involving a more comprehensive Pauline theology. The reader will only find recommended resources for further reading, and it seems unfortunate that Harris does not expand his discussions to include his knowledge of the field.

Harris’ work is the first of many eagerly awaited volumes that will aid the student and pastor in studying and preaching while also contributing to scholarly discussions on key passages where grammatical and syntactical issues are in dispute. Any serious student of Colossians and Philemon should own this volume.

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***Luther and the Beloved Community: A Path for Christian Theology after Christendom.***  
By Paul R. Hinlicky. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010. 405 pages. Softcover, \$45.00.

Paul Hinlicky’s *Luther and the Beloved Community* is a systematic theologian’s pathfinding for theology in creedal traditions confronting post-Christendom. Drawing inspiration from Luther, or what he calls, “my Luther,” by which he means the emphases he draws from Luther, Hinlicky converses with several disputable issues in this transitory time. His vision for appropriating Luther for contemporary theology is not limited to the Lutheran tradition but hopes to extend to inform all creedal Christianity in order to develop an ecumenical direction of thought to face post-Christendom.

The book is not for the uninitiated. Consistent use of untranslated Latin and many undefined terms suits that audience but unfortunately terminology specific to Hinlicky’s project is also left undefined. Readers unfamiliar with Hinlicky’s work are thus left without resource to understand the meanings of “beloved community” or “critical dogmatics” (which I can best describe as theologization rejecting synchronic systemization, favoring a diachronic approach mindful of ecumenical creedal orthodoxy). Also, this is not intended to be a work of historical theology but rather an appropriation of a historical figure’s thought in dialogue with contemporary issues. As such, church historians and systematic theologians both will have the delight of encountering new ideas that can stretch their attempts to appropriate historical theology or to find historical inspiration for theology.

As in *Paths not Taken*, Hinlicky uses the path metaphor for the direction of Christian theology. *Luther and the Beloved Community* intends to set up a starting point for the continued path of theological enterprise; a veritable prolegomena to any future theology. Hinlicky majors on setting Luther’s thought, or at least his vision of Luther’s thought, against post-Christendom thinking, but Hinlicky does not present a unified vision for how theology should proceed. It is as though the path has been obscured by the wild brush of such thinkers as Josiah Royce or William James. Dissappointingly, Hinlicky approaches the obfuscated path with a theological machete, albeit a particularly sharp one, not to cut away the foliage but merely to point to each branch in the way and to declare that there is a path underneath. While there is value knowing where the path is and what problems are in the way,

this must be understood as only an initial task doing little path clearing itself.

This is not to say that the book is unorganized, but direction is elusive. Even the last chapter, "By Way of Conclusion," provides little conclusive direction for the path to be taken but rather presents a few other issues more briefly than the other issues addressed. The impression is that the work is not to stand alone but serves as a part of a larger project, including *Paths Not Taken*, since the chapters are Hinlicky's settings of Luther, or at least his conception of Luther, as interlocutor to several issues with a common goal in mind for each. The book as a whole seems, then, to be setting some groundwork for what direction Hinlicky may have in mind for post-Christendom theology but his final answer is not found here. One is left picking through the book for the occasional nugget like his insistence that preaching should not be based on human persuasion but rather on the exaltation of the cross (138).

Although Luther was Hinlicky's theological "resource," Luther's authentic voice is often not heard. Rather than citing Luther specifically, Hinlicky often stated his view of Luther's theology without grounding those inferences in any specific writing from Luther. For instance, speaking of correlations between Anselm, Luther, and Paul on the atonement, Hinlicky thoroughly cites Anselm and the text from Paul from which Luther derived his idea but merely states what Lutheran belief has been (90). Further, using Luther as a resource rather than a guide allows Hinlicky divergence from Luther's thought. One must question the use of "my Luther" rather than an attempt to discover Luther himself. Initially, the concept of the beloved community takes a much more directive role in Hinlicky than in Luther. Meanwhile, Hinlicky draws conclusions from some of Luther's ideas to which Luther would certainly object. When advising churches to recognize homosexual unions because homosexuality is a disorder of the Fall like a disease rather than a sin (215-216), one must wonder whether Luther would appreciate sexual immorality parading as a God-ordained institution being an anticipatory model of eschatological community. More suspect are instances when Luther, even in interpretation, is left out of the conversation. For instance, he is notably silent for most of the discussion on the New Perspective.

Hinlicky has invested serious thought into many issues but the full formulation of his thought remains forthcoming (xv). This book would be better read as a collection of essays rather than as a monograph since most of the materials are of independent origins (xxiii). Without the end yet in sight, however, it remains difficult to grasp the full import of what is presented.

Peter Coleman  
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

*The Westminster Handbook to Theologies of the Reformation.* Edited by R. Ward Holder. The Westminster Handbooks to Christian Theology. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2010. 218 pages. Softcover, \$30.00.

*The Westminster Handbook to Martin Luther.* Edited by Denis R. Janz. The Westminster Handbooks to Christian Theology. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2010. 147 pages. Softcover, \$30.00.

Is the only thing you know about the Thirty-years War that it lasted thirty years? Do you keep forgetting which soft drink company distributes Agricola? Can you never remember what Luther taught about consubstantiation? Most

students early on in their theological studies have a difficult time keeping track of the universe of new terminology, unfamiliar names, and foreign concepts to which they are introduced in systematic theology and church history courses. It is for this audience that Westminster John Knox has been publishing its series, *The Westminster Handbooks to Christian Theology*. The latest installments of this series are *The Westminster Handbook to Theologies of the Reformation* and *The Westminster Handbook to Martin Luther*.

The selection of articles in *The Westminster Handbook to Theologies of the Reformation* goes beyond simply the time period of the Reformation. Articles like those on Augustine and on Gratian reflect aspects of church history from which reformers drew inspiration or against which they strove when those ideas were still in force. Also, articles on Wyclif and Hus demonstrate a sensitivity toward acknowledging proto-reformers who came well before 1517 but who plowed the soil out of which the Reformation would grow. The reformers saw themselves as part of the tapestry of ecclesiastical history that had gone before and students utilizing this handbook will not be deprived of reference to those who, though living outside of the Reformation era, were integral figures in the minds of the reformers.

Beyond the biographies of both major and minor figures, the handbook also touches on the events, creeds, and theology of the era. The theological articles are not limited to the traditional categories of Christology, sacramentology and the like but also touch on symbols and images important in the minds of the reformers such as Calvin's doctrine of accommodation or Luther's image of the blessed exchange. Further, article selection is sensitive to the broad range of categories involved. The handbook does not narrow its focus to the Lutheran and Reformed tradition but extends its range to include the Catholics, radical reformers and even more fringe topics like Servetus and magic.

This volume is also to be commended for its wide range of scholars involved in the project. The lineup includes scholars from a variety of confessional stances. Also, the broad base of historical interpretations is extended by the inclusion of both established scholars like R. Emmet McLaughlin and Randall Zachman and younger scholars like Geoffrey Dipple and Edwin Tait.

In contrast, *The Westminster Handbook to Martin Luther* is not an edited multi-author volume but is left to the capable hands of Denis R. Janz. The selection of articles in this volume has less variety than the other volume. Janz' handbook focuses almost entirely on theological categories, whereas Holder's handbook includes events and personalities. So, one looking up Luther's participation in the Marburg Colloquy would have to look under the "Lord's Supper," but Luther's relationship to personalities like Karlstadt remain less identifiable. The Luther handbook also includes a chronology listing the events and writings.

Both handbooks improve on earlier volumes in the series by bibliographies to the secondary literature in the fields. For reference to primary sources, the Reformation handbook provides a separate bibliography while the Luther handbook prefers to use extensively cited primary sources exclusively to model the content of the articles. This method provides the reader with ready access to Luther's words but is not as helpful in introducing students to the debates that accompany Luther scholarship such as the question of the Finnish school of interpretation.

These handbooks provide students with reference that can be a helpful accompaniment to introductory courses. Even scholars whose primary interests are in other fields might appreciate the volumes in this series as quick refreshers when

their research interests touch on these subjects. In this spirit, further volumes in the series are anticipated.

Peter Coleman  
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*Reclaiming the Old Testament for Christian Preaching.* Edited by Grenville J. R. Kent, Paul J. Kissling, and Laurence A. Turner. Downer's Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2010. 256 pages. Softcover, \$23.00.

This book begins with the noteworthy goal of reclaiming the 78% of the Bible that is often neglected in the pulpit (11). To the detriment of the church, the Old Testament is frequently merely cherry-picked for Sunday School favorites, while much of the text remains neglected in our preaching and teaching. This work presents a clear and consistent focus on the relevance of the Old Testament for contemporary Christian proclamation. It effectively and consistently reminds the reader of the riches and resources of the Hebrew Bible.

The book consists of a collection of articles by an impressive list of contributors on various literary genres of the Old Testament. The articles cover narratives, laments, poetry, wisdom, apocalyptic, and prophecy. In addition, three of the articles are based on individual books (Songs, Isaiah, and Ezekiel). These articles are all well-written, but tip-toe into the arena of "one of these is not like the other," as it is not established why these three books were chosen as opposed to others. Since the rest of the chapters are genre-based, a brief explanation behind the selection of these books, which would not be difficult to justify, would have been helpful. The last two articles cover difficult texts in the Bible and preaching Christ in the Old Testament.

Organizationally, the chapters are similar. Each chapter contains a discussion of the genre or section under consideration, important considerations for preaching, and concludes with a representative sermon outline. Especially noteworthy is Longman's article on wisdom, with several extended sections of practical applications and preaching helps on theology, exegetical issues, organization of the books, and even authorship.

There are a number of noteworthy features of this book. The articles accentuate the strengths of the various contributors, yet focus the readers' attention on practical tips for preaching. Critical issues are addressed toward the goal of their exposition. The emphasis of focusing on the genre of the passage under consideration as key for its interpretation is well-taken. In addition, the practical applications highlighted by many of the authors make the work valuable and the Biblical text current.

Perhaps the most helpful of the articles is by Wenham on preaching from difficult texts. He tackles the thorny issue of preaching such passages as genealogies, sacrifice, slavery, talion, Genesis 1, violence, and imprecatory psalms. Curiously, the sermon outline that he included did not come from any of those difficult passages, but the chapter provided useful guidelines.

The article by Turner may not have been the strongest start for the book. In his article, Turner makes some effective points about the importance of understanding the plot in Old Testament narrative. In addition, his point about preaching a pericope within its context is solid (18). However, those who affirm the literal historicity of the text will likely find unpalatable his suggestion that such a belief is "extreme" (14). Further, he seems to set up a straw man argument based on a misrepresentation of Hadden Robinson's Big Idea principle, and then proceeds to espouse a strategy that

is oddly similar (22). The use of citations and the bibliography section are somewhat inconsistent among the authors. Several of the articles make significant use of footnotes (Turner, Kissling, Villanueva, Wenham, and Moberly), with Wright's article making only sparse use of them (and only referencing his own works), while Williamson's article had none.

Overall, the book is a very good resource for students and Christian servants. It would be useful as supplementary reading in a preaching course or even an Old Testament theology course.

Deron J. Biles

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

*Martin Bucer's Doctrine of Justification: Reformation Theology and Early Modern Irrenicism.* By Brian Lugioyo. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. 256 pages. Hardcover, \$49.00.

Few Protestant reformers have had the monumental impact on the formation of the Protestant Church in Europe with so little historical recognition than Martin Bucer and Heinrich Bullinger. It is no exaggeration to state that John Calvin's influence on Protestant ecclesiology would have been negligible had his mentor and father in the faith, Martin Bucer, not invested such capital in the young reformer at Strasbourg. Called the *Vermittlung*, the "in-between" pastor, Bucer was best known for his middle stance theologically (between Luther and Zwingli), ecclesologically (between Luther and Bullinger), and geographically (living on the edge of France, Germany, and Switzerland). Professor and author, Brian Lugioyo, says of Bucer, "He was neither a Lutheran nor Reformed. He saw himself as a follower of Luther and a mentor to Calvin. He was a humanist and theologian, pastor, diplomat, author, and disputer . . . mediating between Protestants, Anabaptists, and Catholics, he was [truly] a reformer in-between" (8). A prodigious reformer in his own right, Martin Bucer set the stage for both theological and ecclesiastical reform in Germany, Switzerland, and England while championing peaceful negotiations between leaders of both the Roman Catholic Church and Protestant reformation. As such, Bucer was unfortunately disparaged and discredited by both sides throughout his ministry.

In this work, Brian Lugioyo presents a compelling case that Bucer developed a strong view of justification by faith independent of outside influences. A new contribution to Bucerian study, Lugioyo writes with force and clarity, unearthing older historical analyses of the forgotten reformer. Through an exhaustive examination of Bucer's commentary on the book of Romans, Lugioyo argues that Bucer's thoughts on justification were not only original to his own conception of Pauline theology, but intensely applicable to his generation's debate raging between Protestants and Catholics. Painstakingly, Lugioyo's research indicates that during many of Bucer's arbitrate disputations with varying sides of the theological and ecclesiological debate, Bucer never departed from his central understanding of the core tenet of Protestant theology, namely justification by faith and not works. Lugioyo states, "For Bucer reform could not be achieved at the expense of the truth of justification as he understood it" (12). Thus, as a new standard for the contribution toward Protestant Bucerian studies, Lugioyo's work serves as a firm response to historical critique that Bucer's development of justification by faith was simply a compendium of "mediating theology."

At the outset of his work, Lugioyo displays Bucer's life, ministry, and

theological method as that of consistency. Lugioyo authenticates that Bucer held to a consistent definition and use of the doctrine of justification by faith as early as 1536 and represented this view faithfully during the religious colloquies of 1539-1541 and thereafter. Lugioyo then compares Johannes Gropper's view on justification in the *Enchiridion* as a stark contrast to Bucer. Gropper, who as a moderate Roman Catholic reformer, wrote eloquently concerning the Roman Catholic perspective on justification and accompanied his archbishop to various disputations and colloquies where he interacted with Bucer. In contradistinction to Gropper and the Roman Catholic position, Lugioyo demonstrates that Bucer held believers' justification to be both declarative and effective since justification derived from God's imputation rather than a progressive impartation. Lugioyo notes that Bucer believed and taught that God declared men righteous and just only through Christ's mediating work as employed through faith by Holy Spirit's leading. To this view of justification, Bucer never waned or relented. Rather, Bucer launched his reformational ministry on his independent study and biblical conception of Paul's use of justification by faith.

To be highly recommended, this book is helpful on many levels for pastors, theologians, and historians. An impactful study, Lugioyo balances with ease a book about neglected reformational history, insightful exegesis, and practical theology which he smartly coalesces for contemporary application. In the ever-growing discussion on practical methodology of the needed theological discourse within one's community, Lugioyo's work on Bucer is among other things an encouraging study on theological methodology for conservative evangelical Protestants wishing to engage both moderate leaders and non-believers in a post-modern and post-evangelical nation. As Lugioyo brilliantly articulates, men of faith and passion for God's truth do not have to relent their theological position in order to engage effectively competing postures or negotiate compromise in non-essential matters. If Lugioyo leaves anything with his blessed readers, he leaves, as a modern example to follow, an informed portrait of a godly reformer who led men guided by coherent theological convictions. Bucer, like Lugioyo's work reflecting a newly discovered dimension of the reformer's theology and doctrine, will positively impact successive generations for truth and peace.

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***Joshua.* By J. Gordon McConville and Stephen N. Williams. *The Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010. 278 pages. Softcover, \$20.00.**

Joshua is the fourth book to be covered in the Two Horizon's Old Testament Commentary series, in addition to Genesis, Lamentations, and Psalms. As the other volumes in this series each had only one author, this one adds a different dynamic to the series. The two authors, both noted scholars in the field, bring different perspectives and emphases, but they also add a layer of redundancy and occasional disagreements. Like the other books in this series, the intention is to bring together theological exegesis and theological reflection. The book is organized around alternating sections by the authors with some concluding interaction between them. McConville begins the commentary with a brief introduction that outlines the general content of the book, which is God's fulfillment of His promise to give the Hebrew people the land of Israel and the subsequent distribution of the tribes



within the land. Early and often in the short introduction, McConville highlights what becomes a prevalent theme throughout the commentary, the interrelationship between theology and history within the book of Joshua.

In the next section, McConville offers a compendious commentary on Joshua. The strength of this section is the demonstration of the interconnectedness of the book of Joshua with the rest of Scripture. However, the exegesis is marked by somewhat limited interaction with the Hebrew and an over-reliance on a limited number of sources. Of the 113 citations in the 80 pages of commentary, 46 of the references derive from three sources (Hawk, Nelson, and Hess).

The Theological Horizon section, by Williams, begins with a helpful discussion of the land. He includes an extended and thorough discussion on the question of genocide in the book. However, in trying to address questions related to science, he awkwardly backs himself in a corner and ends up presenting a thesis which questions the omnipotence of God (163). The next section, by McConville, addresses “Joshua and Biblical Theology.” It is not readily apparent how this section is distinguished from the previous section by Williams. In fact, both chapters include somewhat lengthy sections on the theological significance of the land and the question of evil and violence. McConville also includes in this section a discussion of the relationship of Joshua with books of the Pentateuch along with Judges and Kings.

Interestingly, this volume also includes sections where each author interacts with the material from the other. Williams uses his chapter to take issue with McConville on what he perceives to be McConville’s attempt to differentiate between biblical and theological approaches to the Biblical text. McConville, in his response to Williams, curiously spends the entire section emphasizing an area on which the two authors agree. In fact, the question of the historicity of the text is a recurrent theme throughout the sections by both authors. Yet, though the question repeatedly occurs in the commentary (3-5, 6-7, 10, 29, 31, 53, 119-20, 154-70, 171-72, 190, 194-99, 207-14, and 230-35), with the authors clearly questioning the book’s historicity at several points, the authors essentially conclude rather benignly that the question itself does not really matter. One wonders, if the question of the historicity of the text is indeed a “distraction from engagement with the text as text” (213), and if it actually is the “prevailing view” (4) that the book is not factual, why is the matter so frequently and extensively addressed in a work with such limited space for commentary on the text?

In the end, even given the stated parameters of the series, this volume would have been strengthened with more collaboration between the authors which may have reduced some of the redundancies and allowed for greater interaction with the text. In this case, one of the horizons clearly overshadows the other, with theological exegesis getting the shorter end of the stick. Seemingly underserved are some of the rich exegetical gems of the book of Joshua that are overshadowed by the author’s theological preferences.

Deron J. Biles

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*The Gospel of John.* By J. Ramsey Michaels. *New International Commentary on the New Testament.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010. 1094 pages. Hardcover, \$65.00.

J. Ramsey Michaels is Professor Emeritus of Religious Studies at Missouri

State University. He took on a difficult assignment when he agreed to write a commentary on John intended to take the place of Leon Morris's respected volume in the New International Commentary on the New Testament series. Leon Morris's commentary has long been valued by Evangelical scholars and pastors for its conservative judgments on historical issues and for its insights into the theology of John's Gospel. Evangelicals will not find these same strengths in Michaels's commentary on John. Michaels's commentary is quite distinct from its predecessor and it will probably appeal to a more specialized audience.

The value of Michaels's work will become clear if we first look at its chief characteristics. Unlike other volumes in this series, Michaels does not include significant interaction with recent scholarship on John. When he does interact with other commentaries, Michaels favors Bultmann, Schnackenburg, and Brown. These are all well-known commentaries on John, but all are thirty plus years old. Along these lines, it is noteworthy that Michaels cites Church Fathers, like Chrysostom and Origen, more often than he cites most recent scholars. Although Michaels's footnotes are plentiful, they are more likely to contain interaction with the Greek text than interaction with scholarship.

Michaels's footnotes point to both his emphasis and area of strength. He wants to tie his commentary closely to the Greek text. He makes a number of helpful comments about John's grammar and syntax in footnotes. In addition, Michaels makes frequent comments about textual variants. Some of these are in the actual text rather than limited to the footnotes. Readers who are working through the Greek text will appreciate Michael's help with John's Greek and with textual variants. It appears, then, that Michaels primarily intends to provide the reader with his own close reading of the Greek text of John. Such a commentary could be quite useful, as is the case with Michaels's commendable volume on 1 Peter in the Word Biblical Commentary. Michaels's work on John is more difficult to recommend with enthusiasm, because it does not contain the same depth of theological insight that one can find in other recent commentaries on John or in its predecessor by Leon Morris. This lack of depth becomes clear, for instance, when one looks at his treatment of significant verses related to the death of Jesus in John (like John 1:29, 6:51-58, 19:31-37).

In sum, Michaels's detailed commentary is useful and insightful for someone who is working through the Greek text, but it will be less useful for someone who is looking for a commentary that will treat each verse with an eye to its contribution to the theology of the Gospel of John.

Paul M. Hoskins  
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*A Theology of James: Wisdom for God's People.* By Christopher W. Morgan. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2010. 218 pages. Softcover, \$17.00.

Christians today are the living expressions of God's heart toward the world. Though this biblical concept may be frightening for many leaders of the church who see Christians behaving badly, the reality is that God has charged every believer with the task of faithfully living-out the Christian message (the gospel) before a watching and spiritually needy world. Attempting to help each maturing believer walk more faithfully in tune with God's heart, Christopher Morgan has written a comprehensive and intensely practical biblical exegesis of the book of James,

insightfully subtitled *Wisdom for God's People*.

As a continuation in the Explorations in Biblical Theology series, a reformed-perspective-driven series intending on addressing popular and needed biblical theology within the church, the book of James comes as the third installment following a rich exposition of Romans and Mark. On the heels of such foundational Biblical study in Romans and Mark within the series, the task fell to Morgan to write a practical theology for the church and community. Thus, Morgan writes in a fashion to render a practical outworking of useful theology in community with a keen adherence to Biblical exegesis. In short, Morgan accomplishes his task and produces a very helpful volume for the growing Christian desiring to live more like Christ.

*A Theology for James* contains many positive elements which are intended to help the reader (1) learn empowering Biblical theology, (2) reflect on newfound truths concerning God's heart toward ministry, (3) apply these truths to daily life, (4) and even help direct others to learn the practical theology of James. Unique to this commentary, Morgan organizes the entirety of his text around the six major themes of James (wisdom, consistency, suffering, the poor, words, and the law). Instead of the expected chronological exegesis of the text, Morgan utilizes the theological themes within James to expound both exegetically and theologically on the major topics which James develops in his epistle. Also, unlike technical commentaries which assume the reader is adept with primary languages, Morgan translates the more critical phrases of the Greek text, allowing both the layperson and untrained clergy to benefit from the primary sense of each pericope. Exegeting each section of the text with clarity, Morgan ultimately takes each of James' six biblical themes and demonstrates their spiritual connectivity as one source for a unified Biblical theology of the book.

Also helpful, Morgan includes a chapter comparing Paul's theology with James', demonstrating that the epistles in the New Testament core are both uniquely divine and inspired by God to advance a central unified (theme) message to the world. Further, in his book, Morgan unpacks how every Christian can apply the practical theology of James in a chapter he entitles *Theology at Work*. Using an encouraging balance of theological axioms to remember, Scripture to memorize, and pointed questions upon which to reflect, Morgan turns his exegetical commentary into a practical field manual on the daily Christian life. In this combined commentary and workbook, every layman along with those in the ministry will benefit from the practical questions to answer or use as a discussion guide for small groups.

In this volume, Morgan exerts outstanding effort not only developing the critical theology which makes the book of James so insightful to the human heart, but he brilliantly exploits the truths of James to help the growing Christian daily advance their walk into Christ-likeness. The fact that this little volume is affordable, conservative, theologically-driven, and intensely practical for personal study or groups make this particular book a great addition to every theologian's, pastor's, or serious layman's library.

Matthew Harding  
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*Paul and Scripture.* By Steve Moyise. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010. 151 pages. Softcover, \$21.99.

Was Paul faithful to the trust of the Old Testament Scriptures with which he worked to explain Jesus Christ? Was Paul inventive in his exegesis and theological application of the Old Testament or did he serve as a descriptor of what had been communicated before? How exactly did Paul use Scripture? These questions are a few that inevitably arise from reading Paul's corpus with an eye toward the Old Testament influences on his letters. In this brief book, Steven Moyise undertakes the task of demonstrating the varied ways in which Paul makes use of authoritative Scripture in the composition of his works. Moyise's survey includes Paul's use of Old Testament Scripture in the following categories: the creation stories, Abraham narratives, Moses, the Law, the Prophets, the Writings. Following the analysis of the preceding categories, Moyise provides a short survey of modern approaches to Paul's use of Scripture.

The introduction to the book makes mention (without being detained by the discussion) of what sources would have been available to Paul, noting the prominence of the LXX as Paul's primary source while acknowledging the place of the Hebrew text and extra-biblical sources. Moyise acknowledges the disputed status of Pauline authorship for several of the letters traditionally attributed to Paul. However, this does not hinder his discussion because he finds the majority of Old Testament references in the "undisputed" letters, thus making the authorship of the disputed letters insignificant for his study.

After unpacking Paul's use of the creation narrative, Moyise concludes that Paul's primary purpose was to use the Genesis narratives to support his Christological arguments in Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15. Following his treatment of Moses, Moyise turns his attention to Paul's use of Abraham. The primary focus of the relationship between Paul and the Abraham narratives is that faith is the identity marker for belonging to God's people based on the fact that God's promise to Abraham came before circumcision. Turning from the Abraham narratives, chapter four contains Moyise's analysis of Paul and the Law. Moyise provides an appreciative account of the New Perspective's ability to explain in a unified way Paul's varied statements about the Law and justification. Yet, Moyise does not seem to commit fully to the New Perspective as a thorough explanation of Paul and the Law, leaving open the option that the Old Testament contains multiple voices concerning the relationship between the Law and Gospel, which at certain points may even be competing. While Moyise is not entirely clear on the details of his position concerning Paul and the Law, it appears by his account the "covenantal nomism" of the New Perspective has the most to offer in explaining Paul's approach to the Law.

According to Moyise, Paul utilizes the Prophets to make the point that the gospel is God's extension of salvation to the Gentiles beyond the Jews. The fact that the Jews failed to believe while Paul's ministry was successful among the Gentiles became a hermeneutical lens with which he read the texts of the Prophets. Moyise draws out three ways in which the writings of the Prophets were reapplied along these lines. First, "Paul finds references to Gentiles in texts that spoke about the restoration of rebellious Jews" (85). Second, Paul finds reference to the Jews' current unbelief in texts that speak of Israel's former unbelief. Third, Paul finds references to the salvation of Jews and Gentiles in texts that speak of the restoration of Israel from exile. In Moyise's analysis of Paul's use of the Writings, he finds the same pattern

of use previously mentioned with reference to the Prophets. Specifically, Paul uses the Writings to demonstrate the inclusion of the Gentiles. The book concludes with a chapter summarizing the modern approaches to Paul's use of Scripture. In this chapter, Moyise provides three approaches: the intertextual approach, the narrative approach, and the rhetorical approach. In summary, Moyise claims an eclectic use of the aforementioned approaches with an acknowledgment that "one's overall view of Scripture is bound to have an effect on how one analyses Paul's use of it" (124). Additional features include appendices which provide an index of all of Paul's Old Testament quotations and a summary of Paul's quotations for Isaiah.

Moyise's concluding chapter on modern approaches to Paul's use of Scripture illustrates the point that each approach inevitably contains its own unifying theme. When this author searches for such a theme in Moyise's book, he arrives at the conclusion that Moyise consistently thinks Paul's use of Scripture was functional. Under Moyise's view, Paul held certain beliefs about Christ; therefore, he looked to the creation narratives to support his beliefs. Similarly, Paul thought his mission to the Gentiles was of such importance that he returned to the Scriptures "to find the promise that the Gentiles would be blessed in Abraham" (45). Further, Paul's participation in the inclusion of the Gentiles through the gospel led him to find support in the Prophets and Writings by applying texts about Israel to the Gentiles.

This functional mindset may be contrasted with an account of Paul's use of the Old Testament in which his assertions about Christ arise from the Scriptures themselves. Absent from Moyise's functional account is consideration for how the canonical content of the Old Testament may have produced Paul's interpretations of those Scriptures. Similarly, Moyise does not appear to acknowledge that Paul's authoritative Christological hermeneutic may have been a product of his reading of Scripture which in turn produced his functional hermeneutic. Despite these points which note a limitation in the scope of Moyise's approach, Paul and Scripture provides a useful introduction to a modern approach to Paul's use of the Old Testament.

Jon Wood

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*The Naked Anabaptist: The Bare Essentials of a Radical Faith.* By Stuart Murray. Scottdale, PA: Herald, 2010. 190 pages. Softcover, \$13.99.

As the Western world heads further into post-Christendom, Stuart Murray contends that the Anabaptist tradition offers "a prophetic movement whose voices we need to hear today" (33). Murray provides an introduction to the heritage of the Anabaptist tradition for those unfamiliar with Anabaptism and for those whose curiosities have been piqued by contact with that tradition. That introduction comes via Murray's outline of the core convictions of contemporary Anabaptists and a narrative of the movement's history.

Murray, writing primarily for a British and Irish audience, joins many scholars hoping to identify the central distinctive of Anabaptist (or in Murray's case, neo-Anabaptist) thought. For Bender it is discipleship while it is a more nuanced idea of "existential" Christianity for Friedmann and ecclesiology for Littell. Murray's distillation is not as reductionistic. He finds seven core convictions, namely following and worshiping Jesus, Jesus' centrality, the end of Christendom, the danger of associating Christianity with established society, a distinctive believers'

church ecclesiology, the interconnectedness of the spiritual and the economic, and the importance of peacemaking (45-46). In these core convictions, Murray seeks to provide a view of “naked” Anabaptist–Anabaptism in a non-enculturated form, without the “clothing” various inheritors of the Anabaptist tradition wear (43-44). While Murray speaks figuratively of the unique cultural forms different Anabaptist communities take, the metaphor aptly points to his purpose of introducing Anabaptism to those who might only be familiar with the literal distinctive dress of many Anabaptist groups. The bulk of the book (chaps 3-6) go into greater depth about what these convictions mean for present-day Anabaptists.

Though Murray’s first conviction shows an affinity to earlier suggestions of what the essence of Anabaptism might be, it is the third and fourth convictions that shape the basis of Murray’s purpose for the book. Murray often speaks of Anabaptist convictions making “sense in a post-Christendom culture” (49) and of Anabaptism as “a movement whose time has come” (22). In introducing outsiders to the Anabaptist tradition, Murray presents a group that has longed wrestled with the question of how the Christian faith might operate outside of societal privilege, a condition more acute among Murray’s primarily European audience than yet in the United States. Murray notes that Anabaptists always had a minority status but “the Anabaptist heritage of operating on the margins of Christendom means that this tradition has distinctive contributions to make as western Christians from all traditions move from grieving the end of Christendom” (81).

Murray’s work, though not scholarly, is well informed. After detailing the core convictions, Murray gives a competent introduction to Anabaptist origins, noting the diversity out of which the movement eventually coalesced (136). Having identified central tenets of sixteenth-century Anabaptism, Murray briefly narrates the development of the movement while pointing to contemporary expressions. The contemporary expression on which Murray is most focused is what he labels the “neo-Anabaptists,” who are those from various denominational backgrounds that bring Anabaptist influence into their own traditions (154). It is at this point that Murray finds an affinity with the emergent churches. He often quotes Brian McLaren approvingly, repeating that the emergent church of today follows the spirit of the Anabaptist of centuries ago (27, 96-97).

Part of Murray’s goal in introducing Anabaptism is to give an honest portrayal of the movement including the faults to which Anabaptists have been susceptible. Though Murray is not idealistic about Anabaptism in either its early or contemporary forms, he remains apologetic. For instance, when remarking on the tendency of Anabaptists to practice church discipline in an excessively harsh manner, Murray shoots back that “at least they didn’t execute those who stepped out of line” (104). That certainly is a critique of the typical response toward Anabaptism of Christendom, of which he is severely critical. Despite his admittance of Christendom’s “achievements and treasures” (72), one would be hard pressed to find Murray identifying what any of these might be. Nonetheless, Murray’s recognition of the similarities between the situations faced by the Anabaptists and by the whole of Western Christianity is incisive, providing a helpful starting point for both churches and individuals in confronting the shift to a post-Christendom society.

Much has been written about post-modern philosophy and how the church should respond to those changes but *The Naked Anabaptist* alerts the church to the parallel concern of post-Christendom, with which the church must also interact. In many ways Murray has stripped Anabaptism down to its barest essential so that

those who must face the advent of a post-Christendom world might have guidance, even if not a complete goal, from a tradition that has historically operated outside of Christendom. The goal of historical theology is thus upheld—that the answers of those who have gone before may inform the questions that are faced today.

Peter Coleman  
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*Psychology & Christianity: Five Views*. Edited by Eric Johnson. Second Edition. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2010. 319 pages. Softcover, \$14.99.

Over the last several decades, evangelicals have taken a variety of different positions regarding the proper relationship between psychology and Christianity. Eric Johnson and his colleagues have taken the occasion of this book “to dialogue publically about these differences” (7). Johnson is the director of the Society for Christian Psychology (AACC), an associate editor for several journals, has authored *Foundations for Soul Care*, and serves as a professor for Pastoral Care at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.

The text is a revised version of an earlier edition, *Psychology and Christianity: Four Views*, which was published in 2000. The current edition has both similarities and differences from the first edition. The format and structure is virtually the same. There are seven chapters in the book. Johnson offers his own introduction and conclusion. Every additional chapter consists of a “view” or model being promoted by a distinguished advocate of that view. Once a view is presented, each alternate view has a brief opportunity (3-5 pages) to critique and challenge the particular model presented. This occurs in five separate chapters in the book, with each topic being given equal time to both promote its beliefs as well as respond to opponents. Readers of the first edition will notice some common content with the earlier volume, although when that occurs it is usually refreshed, updated, and set within the contemporary dialogue.

There are, however, two particular items that are especially important to notice when comparing with the first edition. Gary Collins, who represented the integrationist position in the earlier version, does not appear here. Instead, Stanton L. Jones assumes that task. Additionally, as the title indicates, there is a new or “fifth” view being added. The four models originally found in the first edition are found here again, with the transformation psychology view being explained and included as the fifth model.

David Myers presents first with his levels-of-explanation model. This view can be described as an approach which values all the different academic disciplines, and recognizes their “place” in contributing to humanity’s well being. We do not need to confuse these levels (33), but rather with humility (49) should see psychology as a scientific perspective, much like theology and chemistry, from which we can study nature and our place in it (51). Myers argues that sometimes this psychology may challenge certain [theological] assumptions, and that this may help “keep alive that ‘ever reforming’ Reformation spirit” (75).

An integration view is explained by Stanton L. Jones. This model “surmises that Scripture does not provide us with all we need in order to understand human beings fully, and that there is a legitimate and strategic role for psychology as a science” (101). The integrationist, however, believes that God’s Word and His answers must form the foundation and structure for the practice of a Christian psychologist (101).

A Christian Psychology view is presented by Roberts and Watson. This model attempts to examine and capture the great “psychological” insights from great Christian thinkers from history, indeed even Christ and Scriptures. They write, “We wish to develop a psychology that accurately describes the psychological nature of human beings as understood according to historic Christianity” (155). The authors examine, for instance, the Sermon on the Mount, and mine the psychological treasures found therein (157-64).

Coe and Hall present the newest model, the transformational psychology view. This perspective believes that ultimately psychology must be done as an act of love (199). Doing psychology within a tradition should be suspended, and replaced with doing psychology anew in the Spirit (201). The authors develop a model that is very person or practitioner centered. The sanctification or “goodness” of the person practicing psychology is the fundamental element of correctness. Thus, it is the “good person” which is most able to do psychology (215).

The last perspective presented is the Biblical counseling model. Powlison offers one of the most unique descriptions of psychology in the entire text, defining it in six different “levels,” Psych-1 through Psych-6 (249-61). Psych-1 is the most basic component of psychology (descriptive facts only). Ultimately, Psych-6 is the most complex, referring to a mass ethos or pop culture zeitgeist. With each level, Powlison offers guidelines with how a Christian should think, interact, and “integrate” with that particular “psych.” He concludes his chapter with an interesting case study, applying all six levels to the case and counselee.

There is much to be commended concerning this effort. Although the chapters are not long enough to provide a detailed explanation of each view, the reader will gain an understanding of the distinctives of each model, as well as the critiques to which each advocate must respond.

The dialogue is lively, and the spirit and tone is amicable for the most part. There are a few occasions, however, of misrepresentations and caricatures. Conservative evangelicals are typically in the cross hairs when this occurs, being depicted as fundamentalist (29), Amish (286), and refusing to crawl out of their cultural ghettos (29). These unfair portraits, however, are the exception and not the norm.

Some of the biggest weakness are found in Johnson’s introduction as he attempts to frame the “crisis.” He describes the long history of Christianity “integrating” with science and secular thinkers, and uses this history as an appeal for contemporary consideration (9-20). He commits the error, however, of equating modern psychology with science. This subject itself is a debated topic, and would have been a valuable addition for clarity and consideration. Although he partially handles objections in a footnote (21), this is an important, formative point in the book and thus should have received comprehensive treatment. Additionally, Johnson advances the idea that the crisis being debated in this book is similar to other sociological crises insofar as an established “tradition” is being challenged. Throughout the introduction, and later in the conclusion, models are considered for understanding how to dialogue with, interpret, and systematically arrange competing theories within any given “crisis.” The goal is then to cherry pick the best of what each system has to offer, arriving at a final “metasystem” of thought (308-10). Although there could be fruit to this undertaking, this solution is indicative of the philosophical, rather than theological, orientation of the text.

Overall the book is an enlightening read that will edify its readers. Students



and teachers in psychology, counseling, and the pastoral field should consider this a must have in their collection. Not only is it being debated in the class room, but our pews and homes are filled with the fruit, and sometimes confusion, of these competing views. It is highly recommended.

Travis Trawick  
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***Introducing the New Testament: A Short Guide to its History and Message.* By D. A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo. Edited by Andrew David Naselli. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010. 163 pages. Softcover, \$12.99.**

This volume provides a condensation of the popular New Testament introduction by Carson and Moo. Naselli, a PhD student at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and research assistant to Carson at the time, earned editor status by providing the initial condensation of the longer work. For each New Testament book, the authors discuss the content, author, genre, date, place, audience, purpose, and contributions. Additional chapters discuss the Synoptic Gospels and Synoptic problem, focusing on issues rather than scholars, New Testament letters, including a discussion of pseudonymity and pseudepigraphy, and Paul as apostle and theologian, including several pages on “The New Perspective.”

The first chapter, “Thinking about the Study of the New Testament,” rightfully omits almost all of that which appears in the corresponding chapter in the original volume. The chapter on the New Testament canon is absent, although one may wish that this chapter would appear in an abbreviated form rather than having been omitted. Unlike the original volume, footnotes are completely absent. Additionally, each chapter closes with questions for review and discussion.

This text-only volume (except for one map) aims at a popular audience yet still addresses significant issues. The condensation effectively introduces issues and creates a desire to learn more without leaving the reader stranded. The authors provide an evangelical response to perspectives of critical scholars. In this form, the book would not be appropriate as a regular text in a graduate or undergraduate course on the New Testament. However, it could certainly serve as a supplemental text at either level to point students quickly to significant issues in each book. Furthermore, the text might serve well in a one-semester survey of the entire Bible at the undergraduate level. In the local church, an academically minded believer may find the text helpful.

Some readers in the target audience may prefer a volume with extensive images and color. For these, this black and white text may prove bland. Some may also find the discussions too weighty even though significantly condensed. Perhaps the greatest challenge in producing a short introduction is to summarize the contents of a New Testament book effectively, particularly the Gospels. The summary of Matthew is the most challenged in this text, yet the volume as a whole meets this challenge well.

David Hutchison  
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*An Ethics of Biodiversity: Christianity Ecology, and the Variety of Life.* By Kevin J. O'Brien. Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2010. 221 pages. Softcover, \$26.95.

The contemporary environmental movement is awash with ethical scholarship pointing toward the urgency of action to preserve the ecological stability of Earth. O'Brien's monograph is no exception to this trend as he argues from a Roman Catholic perspective for the preservation of biodiversity on the earth and the urgency for action, particularly among the religious communities, to slow the rate of species extinction.

In many ways, this work espouses a typical secular ethics of the environment. The first chapter focuses on defining biodiversity and beginning to emphasize the apparent impact of humans on the rate of species extinction. In chapter two, O'Brien relies on the arguments of the 1992 Earth Summit's Convention on Biodiversity to support his argument that biodiversity is valuable. The religious flavor of O'Brien's ethics of biodiversity becomes apparent in the third chapter where he asserts a sacramental perspective on biodiversity. In chapter four, O'Brien shifts his focus from the justification of the preservation of biodiversity to an examination of the scale of action necessary to preserve it on a global scope. O'Brien argues in the fifth chapter for a balanced approach, considering the principles of subsidiarity in comparison with socialization. O'Brien spends the next chapter extolling the merits of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 and recounting various victories the environmental movement in the US has tallied against economic development. In chapter seven, O'Brien also briefly addresses the topic of dominion of man, but defines dominion as an unfortunate power that humans have to negatively impact the welfare of the environment. Chapter eight focuses on cultural diversity and biodiversity, labeling the two forms of diversity as homologous. Then the penultimate chapter examines the relationship between environmental efforts and liberation theology. The final chapter is a brief conclusion to the discussion and an exhortation for social action.

This book reads much like a secular ethics of the environment, which is a significant weakness for a text purporting to be Christian. Early on, O'Brien declares his sympathy with the theory of macro-evolution and his antipathy toward an acceptance of the historicity of Genesis. O'Brien goes on to state that his ethics of biodiversity are dependent on "openness to the reality of evolution" (31). This view of God's limited involvement in the development of biodiversity hampers his attempts to explain the value of biodiversity. The majority of the arguments support the instrumental value of biodiversity, but the last argument O'Brien outlines is a naked assertion that biodiversity has value beyond human interest. O'Brien recognizes that there needs to be a stronger argument for the intrinsic worth of biodiversity, so he looks to the concept of biodiversity as sacrament to provide that argument.

A second weakness is that O'Brien advocates for community involvement by Christian organizations, but not in a way that seems consistent with evangelical worship and ecclesiology. According to O'Brien, in order to firm up support for conservation the religious communities of the world need to work for the moral formation of their adherents with a positive view toward biodiversity. O'Brien cites examples such as a blessing of animals conducted in New York City (135), and urges the use of "scriptural interpretation, imaginatively applying ancient, sacred texts to contemporary issues" in order to inculcate a sense of moral responsibilities (137). Subsequently, O'Brien points to a contemporary application of Noah's ark as

beneficial to an ethics of biodiversity.

A third weakness is the strong emphasis of reliance on government regulation in this book. O'Brien celebrates the recent advances in government regulation and apparent growth in public concern for biodiversity, but concludes with a plaintive statement that human intervention in the environment is the best hope for biodiversity and that immediate, intensive action is required. Regulatory solutions are tenuous, O'Brien argues, because the law rests on political foundation which could shift in the future.

One strength of this volume is that O'Brien effectively differentiates between the sacramental value and the sacredness of the environment (61). By making this distinction he narrowly avoids a pantheistic approach to the environment. Instead, O'Brien asserts that biodiversity helps individuals to comprehend their role as a part of the interrelated ecological web of the Earth and accept their place as equal to all other creatures in the creation. The equality of all creatures seems to be a result of an evolutionary worldview which discounts the historicity of Genesis.

A second strength is that the author has a more holistic view of the world than many environmentalists, showing legitimate concern for human wellbeing. O'Brien cites several examples of well meant environmental regulation impinging on cultural diversity and moves toward an argument for including environmental justice under the umbrella of social justice. He points out the high number of humans, particularly the poor, who have been negatively impacted by environmental regulation, mainly through displacement off newly protected land. Therefore when making decisions and creating regulation, both cultural diversity and biodiversity must be considered as competing concerns. O'Brien staunchly maintains a balanced position that Christians are called to care for all of the poor and oppressed including threatened species.

Another strength of this volume is that O'Brien argues for immediate action by Christians. He supports governmental action on a global scale, but tempers that by discussing the importance of a local focus of action. He asserts that Christians need to be concerned for the environment on both a local and a global level (92). In the end, O'Brien advocates a mediating view which allows concern at the regional level to impact both the global and local environment.

This book is an excellent example of the argumentation of many environmental ethicists for the importance of political and social activism from the church. It represents another voice in the chorus of Christians calling for more global regulation as well as local action. This book would be a valuable read for those examining the basis for the increasing trend in the Christian environmental movement, though it should be read with a critical eye.

Andrew Spencer

***The Letter to the Hebrews.* Peter T. O'Brien. The Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010. 596 pages. Hardcover, \$52.00.**

The book of Hebrews is both a masterpiece and an enigma. Serious readers of the letter have always recognized the powerful effect of its carefully crafted discourse. They have also grappled with the implications of its theologically complex message. With his contribution to the Pillar New Testament Commentary series on *The Letter to the Hebrews*, Peter O'Brien takes his place in this long line of interpreters. Research fellow at Moore Theological College in Sydney, Australia, O'Brien is a

well-established figure in the world of New Testament studies.

As with most commentaries, O'Brien begins with a brief overview of the introductory issues (1-43). O'Brien holds that the author of Hebrews was a prominent leader among the churches and a competent exegete exceedingly familiar with the Old Testament Scriptures. The letter was most likely written in the mid-first century to Jewish Christians located in Rome and in danger of returning to some form of Judaism. As a "word of exhortation," Hebrews takes the form of a written sermon meant to be "read aloud again and again" (22). The many sermonic qualities of the text such as the use of the first person, the language of speaking and hearing, and the intimacy of the discourse confirm this observation. Accordingly, the structure of the book reflects this "complex interplay between exposition and exhortation" that runs throughout, with "major turning points" at 4:14-16 and 10:19-25 and central theological exposition in chapters 5:1-10:18 (34). Theologically, Hebrews stands within the mainstream of early Christian tradition but also contributes its own distinctive developments. These elements undergird the author's purpose in writing which was to "hammer home repeatedly the importance of faithful endurance" to his readers so that they might "reach the eternal rest in the heavenly city" (35).

O'Brien's introductory survey is helpful and represents a snapshot of significant interpretive decisions he makes in his interpretation of the letter. One noticeable lacuna here is the omission of any type of theological survey, which turns out to be an intentional decision. O'Brien states that he will address the letter's "major theological themes" in a forthcoming volume on the theology of Hebrews (xiv). Though understandable, his decision is nonetheless disappointing for a reader of this commentary. Though his comments on the text certainly account for theological elements, at least a brief survey would have provided a useful orientation to a document brimming with overt theological discourse.

O'Brien's comments on the text itself are both substantive and concise. This characteristic keeps the flow of the commentary moving at a steady pace. O'Brien makes good use of the footnotes in order to interact with contrary arguments on various interpretive decisions. On most of the issues he addresses, O'Brien utilizes the recent and most relevant scholarship available (e.g., journal articles, scholarly monographs, and unpublished dissertations). He also consistently draws on a wide-range of lexical and text-critical data to support his exegetical decisions. This robust interaction complements his dependably incisive textual commentary. One missed opportunity in this regard involves the use of "notes" at the end of exposition sections. After his comments on 1:1-2, O'Brien interacts with competing interpretations of the notion of "Christ as divine wisdom" under the heading of "Note 1." However, this valuable tool is quite underused, occurring only once. This format could have been used in the text to outline the interpretive spectrum on a few pivotal issues (e.g., the warning passages).

The value of a new commentary is not necessarily found in its synthesis of all previous interpretive work done on a book. These commentaries are readily available to most scholars and informed students. Rather, the contribution is often in how an author brings new developments in disciplines of New Testament scholarship to bear on the text under scrutiny. For example, O'Brien utilizes discourse analysis, which examines meaning above the sentence level. This tool aids in determining the relationship that each paragraph has to its surrounding material and also in discerning the structure of the book as a whole. O'Brien follows George H. Guthrie's broad structure that traces the recurring shifts between the exposition and

exhortation sections. At the appropriate places in the commentary, O'Brien works out the details of his structural decisions. This emphasis is especially appropriate for a letter that doubles as a sermon.

O'Brien also makes use of verbal aspect theory, which holds that verb tense forms convey the viewpoint of the speaker rather than merely the time of the action. This discussion is typically theoretical, so O'Brien's application of its insights is helpful and sheds interpretive light on a number of texts. To give one example, the statement in Heb 1:4 that Jesus "inherited" a name greater than the angels is in the perfect tense form. O'Brien notes that the aspect of the perfect tense "powerfully draws attention to Jesus' prominence and the superiority of his present position, rather than indicating when he received the name" (61). Thus, in relevant cases, O'Brien highlights the function of a verb's aspect rather than only its temporal implications (see also 18, 99, 150, 421).

O'Brien is also keen on new research concerning the New Testament's use of the Old Testament. For instance, he integrates the recent strand of inquiry that detects a sustained allusion to the wilderness generation of Israel in key passages (e.g., 217-18). He also consistently examines the function of the Old Testament material. In this regard, he notes that the seven Old Testament quotations in 1:5-11 provide the exegetical support for the lofty Christological statements in the prologue (1:1-4). This type of analysis is also crucial in understanding a book that is rife with quotations, allusions, and echoes of Israel's Scriptures.

In sum, O'Brien has provided the church with a readable, rigorous analysis of an important New Testament document from a confessional standpoint. His volume certainly functions as a pillar in this commentary series and will represent a reliable account of the meaning and message of the book of Hebrews for years to come.

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*Jesus The Temple*. Nicholas Perrin. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010. 223 pages. Softcover, \$30.00.

In this thought-provoking monograph, Nicholas Perrin attempts to bridge the perceived gap between the historical Jesus and the teachings of Paul and the early church (1). To do so, he looks for the identification of Jesus as the new eschatological temple within the actions of Jesus himself (12). Although other scholars have made this identification, Perrin's approach is new in: (1) identifying Jesus within the counter-temple movements of his day, and (2) claiming "the imminence of the eschatological temple provided the basic rationale for his most characteristic actions" (15, see also 78-79).

Perrin is Franklin S. Dryness Associate Professor of New Testament at Wheaton College Graduate School. He deftly deals with the New Testament, Old Testament, and Second Temple writings in this interesting book. In chapter one, he compares Jesus' counter-temple claims with other first-century Jewish sects as well as John the Baptist. In chapter two, he compares Jesus' claims with the early church's teachings. Chapters three through five deal with specific actions and accompanying teachings of Jesus: cleansing the temple, actions dealing with the poor, and activities dealing with inaugurating the new temple/kingdom: healings, exorcisms, and meals with controversial friends.

There are a number of strengths in this volume. First, Perrin gives a careful,

thoughtful approach to the question of truthfulness of each of the primary biblical passages he interprets. Each time he carefully answers objections and affirms the event's historicity (e.g., 82-82, 121, 132, 157-58, 173-74). Second, he gives a consistent presentation of his hypothesis that Jesus presented himself and his followers as the new temple—both present and eschatological in nature (13-15, 180, 185-86). Third, he gives a good harmonistic explanation in that when the words and actions in a given text are hard to reconcile, it is likely that if the full message were available today the reconciliation would be much easier to perceive (84). Fourth, Perrin employs helpful descriptive imagery, such as, assigning causation in human decisions is not like single-line trajectories in billiard shots (81), sometimes two broad approaches need not be mutually exclusive since “it is possible for a trail to traverse two faces of a mountain on the way to the top” (89), the Jewish high priesthood was a mix between Columbian drug lords and overpaid boardroom executives (97), and instigating swine running off of the cliff was like throwing snowballs at a team's mascot (167). However, Perrin wrongly said Jesus drove the swine off of the cliff—the Gospels said the swine themselves caused this action, likely led by the demons (Mark 5:13). Fifth, Perrin retains a humility and tentativeness throughout the book, gently and effectively guiding the reader rather than zealously forcing one to certain conclusions (15, 183).

This reviewer believes Perrin overstates his case. With his tenacious determination and temple-shaped lens, Perrin views all of Jesus' actions as temple related. Although there are certainly some New Testament typological references as well as allusions to Jesus and his followers as being temple or temple-like, it is a stretch to claim that everything that Jesus did and everything that he asked his followers to do are temple practices (78-79). If Perrin's hypothesis is correct that Jesus the temple is the overarching New Testament theme, there would be more explicit references to the temple in Jesus' words and deeds throughout the Gospels; however, at times Perrin has to resort to hidden meanings or associations to make his case, such as in Jesus' comment about the always-present poor in Mark 14:7 (138-44) or in Jesus' exorcism at Gadara (164-70). Even if Perrin is correct in his interpretation, it would be helpful to provide the reader with application. Apart from a problematic liberation theology interpretation of Jesus' dealings with the poor (127, 129, 135-48), there is little for the reader to apply.

Perrin purposefully limits his study to the actions of Jesus, although from time to time he necessarily interprets what Jesus said at some of those events. He believes he can effectively make his case this way (15), and certainly this focus keeps the book shorter. Yet, this reviewer remains unconvinced and believes two purposeful omissions would have helped Perrin's argument: Jesus' discourses as well as his death and resurrection. Fortunately, Perrin will deal with these texts in two subsequent volumes. They will be welcome additions to help Perrin try to prove his interesting hypothesis.

Both students and scholars will benefit from a critical reading of *Jesus the Temple*. It is a good example of how to question a common interpretation of Scripture as well as how to examine and offer a consistent interpretive theme. It is good food for thought.

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*The Deuteronomistic History and the Book of Chronicles: Scribal Works in an Oral World.*  
By Raymond Person, Jr. Leiden: Brill, 2010. 205 pages. Hardcover, \$131.00.

In this book, Person argues that Deuteronomy through Kings, referred to as the Deuteronomistic History (DH), and Chronicles are both the result of a long process of editorial work that finishes in the Persian period. His argument goes against a strong tide of scholarship for the past century that has viewed DH as exilic and viewed Chronicles as a Persian (or later) work that used DH as its main source for the history of the pre-exilic monarchy.

According to his own admission, his argument is based on his assessment of the most probable historical reconstruction that can account for the complexities of DH and the existence of Chronicles. His reconstruction proceeds along the following lines. First, scribes active during the Judean monarchy were exiled into Babylon. These scribes brought with them texts from Judah and continued to preserve and edit them in exile. Some within this group of scribes returned to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel. This school of scribes is what Person identifies as the Deuteronomistic school. During this period the school finished editing DH. Another group of scribes remained in Babylon until Ezra returned to Jerusalem. They accompanied Ezra, established a competing scribal school, and eventually displaced the Deuteronomistic school. Their work did not start with DH, but began with the texts that were preserved and edited in exile. He argues that this reconstruction allows for diversity and unity in DH, accounts for the similarities between DH and Chronicles, and explains the differences between the two historical works.

Much of Person's book is heading off challenges to his reconstruction: 1) there are significant linguistic differences between DH and Chronicles, 2) Chronicles appears to omit important background because it is found in DH, 3) DH and Chronicles have represent differences in ideology that can be traced to their historical context, and 4) although Chronicles likely used a different form of Samuel than the Masoretic text, the same does not appear to be true for Kings.

First, the current consensus regarding linguistic differences is that they reflect the historical development of Classical Hebrew. DH exhibits Standard Biblical Hebrew; Chronicles exhibits Late Biblical Hebrew. Person builds on recent challenges to the consensus and suggests that his reconstruction which involves two different scribal schools with a common origin in Babylon could account for the linguistic differences. However, his suggestion does not deal adequately with the linguistic character of Ezekiel nor does it explain the preponderance of Standard Biblical Hebrew over Late Biblical Hebrew.

Second, Person argues the model of production for Chronicles should be shifted. Because the scribes who wrote Chronicles operated in an oral context, they did not view their work as a modern book. Instead, their role was to instantiate the larger tradition of their context. They drew on the larger tradition available to them within their oral context and accessed it, most often through memory and dialogue, and worked to record it so that it may be handed down to the next generation. Using this model, Person mollifies the challenge that Chronicles assumes information from DH. However, this model does not explain the existence of sophisticated literary artistry that spans a large amount of text (e.g., chiasmus), nor is one able to determine whether Chronicles is drawing from assumed tradition since the only evidence for the tradition is found in DH and Chronicles.

Third, because of the oral context in which these works were produced, the

scribes were comfortable with multiformity. By multiformity Person means that the scribes often understood what modern readers might call different texts as the same thing. He argues that the scribes responsible for DH and those responsible for Chronicles likely would not have noticed any real difference in their works. Therefore, they can both be works arising from the same general context.

Fourth, by examining the Hebrew and Greek textual witnesses, he argues that the material unique to DH or Chronicles is not original to DH because it is found in different locations among the textual witnesses. Therefore, Chronicles did not use DH, but an earlier version of it.

Person's work is a stimulating challenge to the consensus regarding the relationship between DH and Chronicles. Although I do not share many of his presuppositions nor agree with his thesis, his work highlights some current important questions in Old Testament studies. For one, it raises the question of what role orality played in the production and preservation of biblical books. For those interested in academic research on Samuel-Kings or Chronicles, the book is a good example of emerging trends in biblical research regarding linguistic dating, the relationship of orality and textuality, and the question of multiformity.

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***40 Questions about Interpreting the Bible.* By Robert Plummer. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2010. 347 pages. Softcover, \$17.99.**

Answering questions is a central task for any teacher. Robert L. Plummer sets out to ask and answer forty of them in *40 Questions about Interpreting the Bible*. Plummer is a New Testament professor at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and in this volume he has rendered his course on Biblical Hermeneutics into a series of "frequently asked questions." Plummer aims for his work to "serve as a textbook for an introductory Bible course," but wants it also to be "beneficial for any curious Christian." Consequently, he attempts to be "accessible without being simplistic" and "scholarly without being pedantic" (11).

Choosing the Q&A format makes the structure of the text readily accessible but also weakens the narrative flow of the book. The questions and answers are self-contained and not necessarily meant to be read in order or even in light of each other. To compensate for this disjunction, Plummer fashions the macrostructure of the "parts" and "sections" of the book in a way that eases the reader into the discussion.

Part one addresses preliminary questions on "text, canon, and translation" (chaps 1-7). Part two examines "approaching the Bible generally," with sections of questions related to interpretation (chaps 8-13) and questions related to meaning (chaps 14-20). Part three talks about "approaching specific texts" and deals with genres that are equally distributed in both Testaments (chaps 21-27), genres that primarily occur in the Old Testament (chaps 28-31), and those that occur primarily in the New Testament (chaps 32-35). Part four ends the volume with a survey of hermeneutical issues in recent scholarly discussions.

There is a movement here from very basic questions (e.g., "What is the Bible?") to more advanced matters (e.g., "What is Speech-Act Theory?"). Thus, in addition to using the book as a reference tool, beginning students would benefit from moving through these larger sections sequentially.

The content of most chapters is in the form of wide-angle lens overviews.



Some of the chapters are brief arguments for Plummer's position, like in chapter four where he quickly answers the question of whether the Bible contains error in the negative and lays out a positive case for biblical inerrancy. Other chapters outline the major options on an issue, and Plummer argues for the option he thinks is best. For instance, chapter fourteen answers the question, "Who determines the meaning of a text?" Plummer walks through the choices of the reader, the text, and the author (he argues for the author). Many of the chapters basically consist of bullet-points that provide a framework for thinking about an issue or a question. For instance, in chapter ten, Plummer lists five "general principles for interpreting the Bible" (95): Approach the Bible in prayer, read the Bible as a book that points to Jesus, let Scripture interpret Scripture, meditate on the Bible, and approach the Bible in faith and obedience.

As I made my way through these chapters, I occasionally thought to myself, "Who is this book for?" One of the challenges of writing for a broad audience involves maintaining a level of consistency in the terms used and the style of writing employed. Plummer attempts to write for both lay readers and beginning students of theology, and he does both in various places. However, at times this characteristic gives the flow of the book a feeling of unevenness. Plummer's writing style is deliberately informal and brings clarity to a number of complicated issues. To make the discussions accessible to a broad audience, Plummer sprinkles his chapter with illustrations, made-up conversations, personal anecdotes, and simplified definitions. He also makes use of humor. For instance, when explaining the importance of examining the literary context of a passage, Plummer recounts, "I tell my students to hold onto the biblical text like a rider in a rodeo holds onto a bull. And, I also warn them that the only persons in the rodeo ring not on bulls are clowns" (105).

Alongside this informal tone, though, there are a number of places where terms or concepts are introduced without definition or explanation (e.g., *lingua franca*, Codex Vaticanus, and diglot). Further, because of the subject matter, the content of some of the chapters is unavoidably technical (e.g., the discussion of figures of speech in chap 27). There is also a striking range of sources cited. Whereas on one page Plummer points readers to Wikipedia, on other pages he quotes from unpublished doctoral dissertations. Though this unevenness might simply be the byproduct of writing for students in a clear and easily understood manner, there still lingers the sensation that there are essentially two different types of books lurking within these chapters.

Any introductory textbook will need to make a myriad of exegetical and interpretive decisions in its presentation. Thus, professors looking to adopt this text for their hermeneutics courses will inevitably have a few questions of their own about Plummer's questions. To give only one example, Plummer at times seems to equate the Old Testament with the old covenant (17, 23, 161). Many will take issue with this presentation, arguing that it is imperative to distinguish clearly that the Old Testament is not coterminous with the Mosaic covenant. In fact, some would argue that the Pentateuch itself does not represent the old covenant, but rather intends to demonstrate the failure of the old covenant. Despite the presence of these types of debatable issues (something unavoidable), Plummer's format can be easily adjusted or modified in person by professors who see various issues in a different light. Many of the chapters would function well as the starting point for interactive classroom discussion.

One feature of Plummer's book that will edify believing Bible readers is his

consistent integration of comments regarding the spiritual components involved in the task of interpretation. Plummer writes from a confessional standpoint that seeks to take into account key theological realities. For instance, Plummer frequently emphasizes that the Holy Spirit inspired the biblical authors in the writing of their texts. The overarching message of these inspired texts is, in turn, all about Jesus. In other words, the Bible is “Christocentric” (15, chap 18, etc). Interpreters should also acknowledge their own sinfulness and their inability to grasp the fullness of this message without the illumination of the Spirit (145). Accordingly, Plummer holds up the practices of reading the text and praying for God’s guidance as necessary elements of a sound interpretive approach. To give one example, Plummer’s outline for reading the Psalms includes the exhortations to read, pray, memorize, and sing the Psalms. These elements will especially benefit readers attempting to foster a thoroughgoing hermeneutic of trust.

For what it is, this volume of hermeneutical catechesis achieves its purpose of providing helpful answers to a number of questions about interpreting the Bible. At its best, the book serves as a primer for those unfamiliar with the formal study of hermeneutics and as a refresher for advanced students on basic (and therefore sometimes neglected) theological concepts.

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*The Rise of Christian Beliefs: The Thought World of Early Christians.* By Heikki Räisänen. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010. 479 pages. Softcover, \$39.99.

Long-term research within the New Testament and early Christianity produced this work by Heikki Räisänen, the Emeritus Professor of the University of Finland. It consists of two parts, the first refers to the historical, cultural, philosophical, and religious background of the birth of Christianity. The second major division discusses various beliefs among early Christians. For those who have an introductory education in Biblical studies, Räisänen suggests that they might skip the first part and start reading the second part, carefully reminding them that his prepositions for later theological discussions occur in the first section.

Part I (chaps 1-3) shows how early Christianity was diverse in its beliefs. Caution concerning oversimplification of any early Christian element remains both necessary and recommendable. However, evangelical readers need to be aware that Räisänen considers Gnostic believers as genuine Christians whose views are simply different from so-called orthodox Christians and could possibly be closer to the original understanding of the gospel. Räisänen assumes that a first-century New Testament theology does not have the authority or the right to judge the orthodoxy of later Christians and to prescribe a solution for any theological problem. As a result of this presupposition, Räisänen adopts William Wrede’s thesis of “no New Testament writing was born with the predicate ‘canonical’ attached” and asks his readers to see that “the canon is a later construction that came gradually into existence in a complicated process during the second to fourth centuries” (4). Therefore, in order to capture a true picture of Christianity from the unfixed Christian world of thought, Räisänen does not mind moving beyond and reinterpreting New Testament theologies in light of non-canonical and even heretical writings of Nag Hammadi. Räisänen intentionally avoids a confessional reading of the development of early Christianity because there is no “prescriptive or normative” element in first-century

Christianity yet.

Räisänen repeats F. C. Baur's old but still popular hypothesis that first-century Christianity struggled with a rivalry between a Pauline (Gentile) Christianity and a Petrine (Jewish) Christianity. However, one must admit that such a theological conflict between two rival Christian communities in Galatians, in particular, argues from silence at best because the text itself does not describe how Paul's correction of Peter ended. Furthermore, the second-century writers seem to disagree with Baur and Räisänen. In his admonition to Corinth, Clement of Rome mentioned Peter and Paul as the "righteous pillars [of the Church]" and presented them as the examples of all Christians (*First Letters to the Corinthians*, 5). Clement's description of Peter and Paul does not show any rivalry or tension in the church of Rome and in the church of Corinth. Irenaeus (*Against Heresies*, 3.12), Origen (*Against Celsus*, 2.1.), and Tertullian (*Against Marcion*, 4.5.3.), who mentioned Paul's rebuke of Peter, never recognized the existence of a theological conflict between a Petrine community and a Pauline community in first-century Christianity.

Part II discusses several fundamental early Christian beliefs: eschatology (chaps 4-5); anthropology (chap 6); soteriology (chap 7); Christology (chap 8); pneumatology (chap 9); ecclesiology (chap 10); Christian relationship with pagans (chap 11); and the development of Christian orthodoxy (chap 12).

With regard to eschatology, the resurrection of deceased non-believers and eternal punishment for sinners include no room in Räisänen's understanding of the early Christian world. If any resurrection arrives for nonbelievers, it would only transpire for their judgment, and, then, annihilation would occur. Resurrection and eternal life belong to believers alone. Räisänen believes that Paul and the *Didache* (16.7) support his conclusion. One should not take Paul's relative lack of using the term "hell" or "eternal punishment" as evidence of the apostle's defense of annihilation or rejection of Jesus and John's clear teaching on eternal conscious suffering in hell as the second or eternal death. Paul continued the ministry of Jesus and worked with other apostles. Therefore, Paul would not have been hesitant to clarify his position if he was different from other Christians or so-called apostles on eternal punishment. Rather, Paul's relative silence about hell could mean that Paul accepted Jesus and John's lessons on that subject and might have felt no need to highlight the issue further. As a matter of fact, Paul spoke of ὀλεθρον αἰώνιον (eternal destruction, 2 Thess 1:9) as a rightful payment for the sinners. In contrast to Räisänen's appeal to 2 Thess 1:9, the word ὀλεθρον (destruction) itself does not favor annihilationism. 4 Macc has the same phrase ὀλεθρον αἰώνιον (10:15) and uses it as eternal torment of fire (9:9) by which sinners will suffer forever (12:12). In addition, the second-century writings, such as the *Didache* and *Hermas*, do not provide enough contents for their readers to judge whether those patristic works rejected eternal punishment or could be simply read in favor of annihilation. In contrast, other contemporary works such as *Second Clement* (17.7), *Letter to Diognetus* (1.29) and Justin Martyr (*I Apology*, 8; 28; 52) provide explicit references to eternal conscious suffering of sinners.

Nor does the Finnish scholar accept that the resurrected body of Christ could ascend into heaven because that body, if transformed, did not quite become spiritual and kept its fleshly constitution. Indeed, Paul taught that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor 15:50), and only the spiritual body could receive incorruptible things in heaven. Paul's teaching of the resurrection is not much different from the Greco-Roman view of "the immortal, but material, *soul*" (emphasis Räisänen's) or the "Jewish visions" of the "resurrection of the spirit from Sheol" (127).

In addition, the *Gospel of Thomas* presents a more Pauline ideology concerning the resurrection because Thomas spoke of the “rest of the soul” and the abolishment of “dichotomy” between sexes or the body and the soul, not “the idea of immediate postmortem retribution” in the Gospel of Luke 16 (129). The Platonic negation of the body strongly influenced Paul in spite of his Biblical emphasis on the corporeal nature of the resurrected body. For Räsänen, Origen’s denial of the actual physicality of the resurrected body is not heretical at all but is rather “a reasonable attempt to make sense of Paul’s [unclear] account in 1 Corinthians 15” (131). However, Räsänen misunderstands Paul’s notion of the *pneumatic sōma*. The resurrected body is not a simple improved body. The resurrected body is pneumatic not because it will be no longer corporeal but because it will be completely under the power of the Holy Spirit and will be no longer vulnerable to corruption, sin, and death.

On anthropology, Räsänen acknowledges the universality of sin as part of Hebraic biblical anthropology but rejects the concepts of original sin. No one is born with the inherent sinful nature. Every sin is “acquired” (140) later in one’s life. The Hebrew Bible and other Jewish literature, except *4 Ezra*, remain at odds with the Augustinian despair of human incapability to accomplish the requirements of the law. Pelagius, not Augustine, maintained the theological legacy of Hebraic Biblical anthropology. If any difference exists between Räsänen’s early Christian representatives and Pelagius, it appears in the possibility of a sinless life. The former did not believe it, whereas the latter defended it. Surprisingly, Räsänen argues, “Jesus himself went to be baptized by John, indubitably in order to repent and to receive forgiveness for his sins” (139). The predominant thought of early Christians on humanity is “much closer to Judaism (and Islam!) than to mainstream Protestantism [based on Augustine’s original sin] with regard to the issue of the human condition” (153).

Regarding soteriology, Jesus did not expect his disciples to understand his death as an exclusively salvific event in the Protestant sense. Penal substitution or bearing the guilt of others, even though some of the New Testament writings contain several references to the death of Jesus as a ransom, does not receive weight. Räsänen states, “It is even controversial whether Jesus anticipated his imminent death....this would be hard to understand if Jesus had spoken to his followers of its extraordinary saving significance” (159). If there is any value in the vicarious death of Jesus, it shows the exemplary death of one Jewish martyr. As E. P. Sanders already demonstrated, the Second Temple Judaism and the early Christianity described in the New Testament taught the necessity of good works not as the evidence of salvation but as one ingredient of salvation. Therefore, for early Christians, salvation comes not from Luther’s *sola fide* but from Pelagius’s synergism between divine grace implanted in nature and human effort by observing the law. Räsänen does not see any theological consistency within Paul himself and between Paul and other writers such as James.

The title of Räsänen’s section on Christology – True Man or True God? – shows a very close theological affinity with James Dunn’s adoptionist argument. Christ never taught his ontological equality with God the Father. If there is any equality between Christ and God, it is always to be functional, not ontological. What early Christians did in their worship of Jesus was not the adoration uniquely set aside for the true God but the veneration attributed to the angels and the servants of God who appeared with divine authority and power. High Christology in the Gospel of John is a completely rewritten story of Jesus by later Christians.

Even the Gospel of John presents a docetic Christology in order to promote the deity of Christ. Räisänen sees the later Christological confession of the councils as a theological evolution, not a theological clarification, from the New Testament. Like John Hick, Räisänen does not accept the genuine incarnation of God in Jesus Christ.

Chapter 11 on the Christian relationship with pagans in early Christianity might be the least controversial part of this book, although there are still debatable arguments. Räisänen is right in that the persecutions of Christians in the first and the second centuries were not universal but local in the Roman Empire and that the local citizens, not the government, were responsible for those persecutions. Christians' rejection of joining pagan social practices involving idol worship, and their refusal to offer honor to the cult of the Emperor, might be the immediate cause of the persecutions of Christians in the Roman Empire during the first two centuries. However, Räisänen desires to minimize the contribution of Christian martyrdom in the development of early Christianity and its growth. Therefore, he describes John's references to the persecutions of the seven Asia Minor churches in Revelation as his "expectation of a worldwide persecution" "due to the tremendous impact of his apocalyptic thought world," not as the actual threats to the churches (292).

The last chapter is the author's summary of his own arguments in this book. To read this last chapter even before reading the first chapter might be a good way for readers to grasp the author's theological presuppositions of the formation of early Christian beliefs.

This book may not be a good textbook for evangelical seminary students whose theological understandings of the Bible and Christian orthodoxy find foundation on their confessions. Nonetheless, Räisänen's detailed exegesis of various Gnostic views would undeniably deepen conservative evangelicals' understanding of Gnostic alternatives to the early orthodox Christian beliefs. An instructor or students of department of religion at a college that pursues more inter-faith dialogues might discover interesting thoughts for their concerns. Räisänen offers very provocative thoughts and perspectives on essential Christian themes. However, he presents them in a way that denies the commonly accepted assumptions and conclusions that historic orthodox Christianity has preserved since New Testament Christianity. Not only evangelicals but also many Catholic or Orthodox believers would not easily embrace the methodology and theological conclusions that Räisänen employs in this book.

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*The Messianic Hope: Is the Hebrew Bible Really Messianic?* By Michael Rydelnik. NAC Studies in Bible and Theology. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010. 206 pages. Hardcover, \$19.99.

Michael Rydelnik, professor of Jewish studies at Moody Bible Institute, asks whether Christ is predicted and to what extent he can be seen in the Hebrew Bible. His concern "that the Messiah is a central feature of Old Testament biblical theology" (xvi) embodies a twofold thesis. First, he desires to show that a shift began to take place in the early 18th century regarding the way the church has understood Old Testament messianic prophecies. Beginning with Anthony Collins, J. G. Von Herder, and J. G. Eichorn, he gives a brief historical analysis, concluding that the overwhelming majority of interpreters in the modern period (operating under the

influence of Rabbi Shlomo Yitzkhaki's non-messianic interpretations, 1040–1105) have at least undervalued Old Testament messianic prediction. Second, he wants to show that “reading the Old Testament according to its compositional strategies and canonical shape will yield a clear messianic intent, with far more direct messianic prediction than is commonly held” (33).

It is this second element that dominates the content of the work. Rydelnik understands Old Testament messianic prophecy primarily as strict predictions of Christ instead of forms of general promise. According to him, giving proper attention to compositional strategies of Biblical authors and innerbiblical connections results in interpreting the Old Testament as an eschatological, messianic text. Examining Gen 49:8–12 (in light of Eze 21:27); Num 24:14–19 (in light of Amos 9:11–12); and Deut 18:15–19 (in light of Num 12:6–8 and Deut 34:10–12), Rydelnik argues that textual criticism is necessary in order to see certain messianic prophecies since only variant texts such as the Septuagint reveal these meanings. He also asserts that each Old Testament book included in the Canon “had to have a messianic hope as part of its message” (69). Old Testament writers, he claims, knew that they were writing a messianic message. He offers as evidence Jesus' words (e.g., Luke 24:25–27, 44–46 and John 5:45–47) and the apostles' words (Acts 2:29–31; 1 Pet 1:10–12). By examining the four Old Testament quotations in Matthew 2, he argues that the New Testament uses the Old in one of four ways: direct, typical, applicational, and summary. In the final three chapters, Rydelnik, applying his thesis, surveys the various views of Gen 3:15, Isa 7:14, and Psalm 110 and argues that each passage should be seen as strict predictions of Jesus.

Rydelnik's aim is presented with clarity and force. His argumentation is easy to follow, although the reader may be initially confused as to Rydelnik's position regarding other types of fulfillment. His examination of the four categories of interpretation evidenced in Matthew 2 and his allowance for elements of historical fulfillment in, for example, explaining the Davidic kingship (74) are evidence that his view is not as restrictive as it may first seem. At least two questions seem to arise from the work. Would the evangelical theologians that he places in the camp of non-messianic interpretations accept the charge that they do not see the Old Testament as an eschatological and messianic text? Is understanding the Old Testament as promise of an ultimate Messiah, but including the prospect of partial, typical, or progressive historical fulfillment of messianic texts, a move away from interpreting the Hebrew Bible as a messianic book?

Rydelnik's area of specialization is neither in Old Testament or systematic theology, yet he has done well to enter into both disciplines and contribute to the scholarly discussion of Old Testament prophecy. While not everyone will agree with the trajectory of his canonical reading of the Hebrew Bible, one would find it difficult to deny that he is consciously seeking to be “consistent with the biblical data” (7). Some readers may be uncomfortable with Rydelnik's canonical redaction, or some of his conclusions which seem to be dependent solely upon a small variant from the MT. What should be appreciated in the work, however, is the intextual (the immediate context), innertextual (the context of the writing as a contained unit), and intertextual (the context of the canon as a whole) connections that Rydelnik alludes to when interpreting the messianic texts. Even if one does not come to the conclusion of direct messianic prediction on a particular text, he should benefit from the connections being made. Many readers may affirm more of a developmental understanding of Old Testament messianic prophecies, including multiple levels

of reading Old Testament prophecy and fulfillment. Nonetheless, the connections that Rydelnik affirms could enhance a developmental view and guard against a strictly historical reading that excludes Christological fulfillment of Old Testament messianic prophecy.

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***Galatians.* By Thomas Schreiner. Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010. 423 pages. Hardcover, \$34.99.**

Thomas Schreiner, a well-known Pauline scholar, has added the ninth volume to Zondervan's new exegetical commentary series. The series is still in progress and far from being complete, but it impressively lives up to its name. The series calls not only for an exegesis of the text, but each pericope is broken down into "literary context," "main idea," "translation," "structure," "exegetical outline," "explanation of the text," and "theology in application."

Some elements become repetitious since there is naturally some overlap between "literary context" and "explanation of the text," but the layout is beneficial for students and pastors, especially for those who wish to teach or preach the text. Those who are preparing to do so will benefit from the "main idea" section. They can immediately discover a brief explanation of the main idea of the pericope and study the text while keeping the main idea in mind.

The "translation" portion is more than just text. The translation is given in block diagram format, with the function of each clause given in the left margin (e.g., inference, result, apposition). Also helpful is the exegetical outline, which is repeated (in compressed form) before each "explanation of the text" so one may see visually where the passage fits into the epistle as a whole. Perhaps one of the best features of the commentary is that, for every verse, Schreiner's English translation is given, followed by the Greek text, followed by Schreiner's explanation. Thus, the commentary may be read by itself without the necessity of one or two Bibles sitting nearby.

Schreiner does nothing too surprising in the commentary. His conservative exegesis in the Reformed tradition is to be expected—but this does not mean it is poorly done. Throughout the commentary he shows both exegetical skill and abundant interaction with secondary sources. As expected, he also interacts with the New Perspective throughout the commentary, usually rejecting their conclusions. One regrettable aspect of this commentary series is that it seems Schreiner was limited in his ability to argue specific points, especially with advocates of the New Perspective or of anti-imperial readings. An occasional footnote reads, for example, "It is less likely that Paul has in mind Israel's political subjugation under Rome. Contra Hays, *Galatians*, 303-4" (302). The student or pastor may not worry about such an issue, but scholars and those interested in such critical issues will be better served by other commentaries than Schreiner's.

Schreiner follows the South Galatian theory, although tentatively (29), noting the difficulties of both the South and North Galatian positions. His position on "mirror-reading" to discover the opponents' arguments, theology, and origin is also quite conservative and helpful. He notes the evidence in the epistle that are explicit, then the evidence that may be "justly inferred," then what is "probable," then what is "less certain," and finally what is "conceivable and possible" (33-35). After critiquing

the history of research on the identity of the opponents in Galatia, he opts for the traditional Judaizer theory. The opponents were probably Pharisaic Jews as in Acts 15 who believed themselves to be Christians (48-49). They accused Paul of (1) deriving his gospel from the Jerusalem pillars, (2) distorting this gospel, and (3) doing so to please the Gentiles and win their approval (49).

Schreiner's treatment of difficult passages, such as 2:11-21 and 4:21-5:1, are both careful and helpful. While no one will agree with him on every point, his arguments hold weight. Again, however, more space would have allowed for more extensive argumentation and interaction with other views. While the sub-sections are nice, they do take up about a third of the commentary. The student and pastor will forgive Zondervan for this, especially since Schreiner's pastoral side shines forth in the "theology in application" section. Lastly, everyone can appreciate the last section of the commentary, where Schreiner explains twelve theological themes in Galatians. This commentary will not impact the scholarly community as the commentaries of Lightfoot and Burton, but for what it attempts to do for the student and pastor, it is probably the best commentary yet.

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***Jonathan Edwards as Contemporary: Essays in Honor of Sang Hyun Lee.* Edited by Don Schweitzer. New York: Peter Lang, 2010. 272 pages. Hardcover, \$94.95.**

This volume is an excellent resource for scholars and theological readers interested in Jonathan Edwards's theology and philosophy. The book is a festschrift honoring Sang Hyun Lee who spent his career teaching systematic theology at Princeton Theological Seminary. Lee's bold interpretation of Edwards's philosophical theology, known as dispositional ontology, has become the starting point for scholars who seek to grasp the incredibly intricate world of Edwards's doctrine of God. No one who examines Edwards's philosophical theology can fail to appreciate Lee's immense contribution to the field.

*Jonathan Edwards as Contemporary* seeks to demonstrate how Edwards's eighteenth-century reflections can address theological problems in our twenty-first-century world. "Though Edwards was a person of his time," Don Schweitzer writes in the preface, "his thought provides significant resources for addressing theological and philosophical issues in the present" (ix). The book contains fifteen essays written by scholars who are well-known in the field. Half of the essays address aspects related to Edwards's doctrine of God such as the Trinity (Paul Helm, Michael McClymond), divine infinity (Don Schweitzer), the Incarnation (Seng-Kong Tan), and philosophical issues such as Edwards's occasionalism (Stephen Daniel), dispositional ontology (Anri Morimoto), panentheism (Oliver Crisp), and philosophy of nature (Avihu Zakai). The remaining chapters treat a mixture of topics, including Edwards's theology of justification (Douglas Sweeney), ecclesiology (Amy Plantinga Pauw), revelation (Gerald McDermott), homiletics (Wilson Kinnach), and a delightful study of Edwards's relationship to Princeton (Stephen Crocco). Kenneth Minkema and Harry Stout provide an informative essay that reviews the secondary literature on Edwards in the last fifty years, and Robert Jenson rounds out the book with a personal reflection on "How I Stole from Jonathan Edwards." The extensive footnotes in the essays are a goldmine that any Edwards researcher will treasure.



An overview of each essay cannot be given here so comments will be confined to a few highlights. One issue that has divided scholars over the years has been the degree to which Edwards is to be categorized as a modern, progressive theologian. Was Edwards consciously a traditional, Reformed thinker, or do his views foreshadow theological elements of a later era? Those familiar with Edwards's writings realize how complex this question is, and some of the essays here weigh-in on this debate.

Michael McClymond's essay "Hearing the Symphony: A Critique of Some Critics of Sang Lee's and Amy Pauw's Accounts of Jonathan Edwards' View of God," defends a progressive reading of Edwards's trinitarianism and doctrine of God. In agreement with Pauw, he maintains that Edwards recast the doctrine of divine simplicity in a way that allows for a genuine intrapersonal community within the divine life. This recasting was integral to Edwards's trinitarianism which resonates with recent theological movements such as social trinitarianism. "Speaking generally," he writes, "the Lee-Pauw perspective sees Edwards's God as dynamic, relational, expansive, and pluralistic" (68). Critics of this interpretation, he notes, make the "hermeneutical mistake" of reading too much Reformed orthodoxy into Edwards and thereby miss how forward-thinking he really was (71-72). While there is much to commend in his essay—such as his symphony metaphor, and the call to interpret Edwards's theology holistically—this reviewer wonders whether a theological "presentism" has crept into his interpretation on these issues. In other words, by closely associating Edwards with today's theological discussions, one risks missing how deeply situated he was in his own context and indebted he was to his own tradition.

On the surface, Oliver Crisp's essay, "Jonathan Edwards's Pantheism," appears to be liable to the same problem of presentism, yet in the end avoids this pitfall. Pantheism has been a notoriously elastic term given to models of the God-world relationship that lie somewhere between traditional theism and pantheism. Red flags go up among evangelicals whenever the term surfaces since it is usually associated with process and open theism. Recent work, however, has identified Christian versions of pantheism which, though not without problems, appear to be just another name for Christian Neoplatonism. Crisp's essay includes a discussion of Edwards's Neoplatonism, and his summary of Edwards's "pantheism" contains points that are familiar to close readers of Edwards: Edwards's God creates out of an overflow of his creative disposition, creation is an ideal world "being a series of ideal momentary world-stages in the divine mind, [that] is continuously created by God who is, in fact, the sole causal agent of all that comes to pass" (115). These points are a fairly accurate reflection of Edwards's views. However, I am hesitant to label this nexus of ideas "pantheism" mainly because the term is so elastic and means so many different things to different people.

Douglas Sweeney's contribution, "Jonathan Edwards and Justification: the Rest of the Story," counters a recent trend that discerns "Catholic" themes in Edwards's doctrine of justification. Edwards's Catholic-sounding construal of the doctrine—his identification of faith with love, for instance—must be understood contextually. Personally, Edwards embraced the deep anti-Catholicism of Puritanism which viewed the Roman Catholic Church as antichrist. A robust sola-fideism shines through in his sermons. And his emphasis on acts of evangelical love and perseverance as necessary factors to final justification must be understood in the context of a backsliding culture which had just experienced an incredible season of awakening. Though Edwards's ideas may provide resources for ecumenical dialogue

between Catholics and Protestants, it is most certain that he never would have blessed such a project. He probably would have pointed out, as Sweeney does, that every point in his doctrine of justification which sounds “Catholic” to today’s ears finds precedent in Reformed tradition on justification. Edwards, in other words, was not saying anything innovative, ecumenical, or Catholic on the topic of justification; he was merely advancing his own Reformed interpretation of the doctrine.

My hope is that these snapshots provide a glimpse of the exciting world of Edwards scholarship. I recommend *Jonathan Edwards as Contemporary* to anyone who desires to keep up with the expanding universe of Edwards studies. The book is not without a few minor problems. Close readers will note misspellings throughout the work. The table of contents does not divide the essays in three parts (philosophy, theology, context) as specified on the back cover. And the steep price of the volume will prohibit a wide readership. But these minor issues should not detract interested Edwards readers from obtaining a copy.

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*The Filioque: History of a Doctrinal Controversy.* By A. Edward Sicienski. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. 355 pages. Hardcover, \$49.95.

This work is a result of Sicienski’s extended research based on his dissertation on “Maximus the Confessor’s theology of the procession and its use at the Council of Ferrara-Florence” (vii). The greatest value of this work is that we now have the first monograph that deals with the entire history of the filioque controversy from the second century to the present. Sicienski tries to give a fair presentation of the respective views of the Western and Eastern Churches, although his favor for the Eastern Church and Maximus the Confessor among other Eastern theologians is clearly visible concerning the filioque. Reading this work should assist both the Western and Eastern Churches in understanding why one counterpart Church cannot accept the other one’s traditional position.

The Eastern Church rejects the Western doctrine of the filioque (the process of the Spirit from the Father and from the Son) for the following reasons. First, the filioque destroys the monarchy of the Father by creating two causes (the Father and the Son) within the Trinity. Second, the filioque introduces a semi-Sabellianism by granting a unique personal property of the Father (i.e., generating power) to the Son. Third, the filioque was an illegitimate addition to the Nicene Creed that acknowledged the Spirit’s procession (ἐκπορεύεται) from the Father alone. In response to those critiques, the Western Church has argued, since Augustine, that the filioque does not create two causes in the process of the Spirit or destroy the monarchy of the Father because the Spirit proceeds principally from the Father and from the Son who is eternally with the Father. The Western Church has been very confident about the preservation of a personal distinction between the Father and the Son in the process of the Spirit because the Spirit proceeds from the Father as “origin not of origin” (*principium non de principio*) and from the Son as “the origin of origin” (*principium de principio*). Lastly, the filioque is not an arbitrary or illegitimate addition to the Nicene Creed but a more explicit clarification of the procession of the Spirit.

Concerning the eternal relationship between the Son and the Holy Spirit in the Trinity, the historic Eastern Church’s position is that the Holy Spirit eternally

proceeds (ἐκπορεύεται) from (ἐκ) the Father through (διὰ) the Son, not from (ἐκ) the Son. The idea “through the Son” acknowledges that the Son has a role in the procession of the Holy Spirit in the immanent Trinity. However, the Son’s involvement in the eternal being of the Spirit does not mean that the Spirit receives his hypostatic being from the Son. Therefore, the Eastern theologians have preserved a theological distinction between “to proceed” (ἐκπορεύεται) and “to come forth” (ἐξέρχομαι). The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father for his hypostatic being and comes from the Son for his manifestation in the intratrinitarian relationship. The procession of the Spirit belongs to the personal property of the Father alone. The personal property of the Spirit is caused by his procession from the Father but manifested through the Son because the Father is not merely the Father but always the Father of the Son. Sicienski describes Maximus the Confessor’s position as the most ideal one that could be acceptable to the Western and the Eastern Churches. Sicienski indicates his optimism for a theological reconciliation between the two Churches through Maximus’s view, according to which the Son really participates in the process of the Holy Spirit as the mediator, not as the cause of the procession. Sicienski asserts that Maximus developed what Gregory of Nyssa and Cyril of Alexandria taught, and Palamas’s distinction between the divine essence and the divine energy is a rightful implication of Maximus’s doctrine of the process.

However, Sicienski’s hope for the reunion of the two Churches based on Maximus’s affirmation of the Son’s meaningful role in the process of the Spirit would be neither easy nor soon achieved. The official website of the Vatican ([www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)) still shows that the Roman Catholic Church has no desire to compromise her historical position on the filioque or yield to the teaching of the Eastern Church. Despite recent ecumenical councils between the Eastern Church and Anglicans or the Old Catholics, the Vatican has three rationales for its firm belief in the filioque. First, the Vatican feels that Catholics have a Biblical foundation of the filioque. Like Augustine and Karl Barth, the Vatican sees the reflection of the immanent Trinity in the economic Trinity. In light of John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7, the Vatican depicts the Son as the subject, rather than an instrument, of the procession of the Spirit, whether in eternity or in time. Second, the Vatican reminds the Catholics and others of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), the Second Council of Lyons (1274), and the Council of Florence (1439) where both the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church accepted the procession of the Spirit from the Son, not merely through the Son. Third, the Vatican still sees Ephraim, Athanasius, Basil, Epiphanius, Cyril of Alexandria, Maximus, John Damascene from the East and Tertullian, Hilary, Ambrose, Augustine from the West as the supporters of the filioque.

Unlike the Vatican’s appeal to the Latin fathers, Sicienski acknowledges only Augustine as the Latin theologian who talked about the filioque in a real sense. However, this reviewer is somewhat confused about Sicienski’s final view on Augustine. Sicienski precisely recognizes that Augustine tried to protect the Father’s monarchy in the process of the Spirit in eternity with the adverb “principaliter” (principally). The Spirit proceeds principally from the Father and from the Son. However, Sicienski comes to a surprising conclusion: “Augustine was deliberately attempting to ward off any idea of a ‘double procession’ of the Holy Spirit” (84). The adverb principaliter, according to Sicienski, shows the North African bishop’s denial of the Son’s being the “hypostatic origination” of the Spirit (83). In other words, the bishop of Hippo did not want to teach that the Son is causative somehow in the process of the being of the Spirit from the Father.

This reviewer wants to point out two things. First, Siecienski's conclusion is self-contradictory, referring to his early evaluation of Augustine: "For Augustine . . . the Spirit, who is the mutual love of Father and Son . . . proceeds, from both. While there are literally dozens of passages, chiefly from *De Trinitate*, the *Tractates on the Gospel of John*, and the *Contra Maximinum*, there could be adduced to demonstrate Augustine's support for a double procession" (62). Second, Siecienski reads his Eastern theology of the filioque into Augustine's principaliter. For Augustine, the Son is equal with the Father in their being the source of the Spirit, but the Son is the second only in the hypostatic order of the Trinity. Since the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son simultaneously, there was no time when the Son existed without sending the Spirit from himself. For Augustine, the word "principally" preserves both the Son's equality with and distinction from the Father.

This book would be more beneficial to its readers if Siecienski could point out how Augustine's exegesis influenced his theological descendants like Anselm and Aquinas in formulating the classical position of the Western Church on the filioque. Sometimes, Siecienski presents the Latin medieval theologians' views as their unique contributions to the historical development of the doctrine of the filioque without realizing their exegetical and theological dependence upon Augustine.

In contrast to Siecienski, this reviewer would also argue that the filioque was primarily a Biblical and spiritual issue to Augustine and to the Western Christianity. Augustine taught the filioque not because it was predominantly effectual in defeating Arianism but because it would help Christians worship the triune God properly. Edmund Hill and other Augustinian scholars do not see *De Trinitate* as a polemic work. Rather, many regard it as Augustine's instruction for Christian spiritual formation. Like Rahner, Augustine saw the inevitable connection between the immanent Trinity and the economic Trinity. Unlike Rahner, Augustine rightly rejected the absolute identity of the two Trinities. More than a century before Maximus in the East, Augustine in the West already taught the epistemological priority of the economic Trinity and the ontological priority of the immanent Trinity when discussing a relationship between the two Trinities. In the economy the Son was sent by the Father, and the Father was never sent by the Son. The Father sending the Son in the economy displays the former generating the latter in eternity. Augustine finds parallelism between the Son's way of being and the Spirit's way of being both in the economic Trinity and in the immanent Trinity. Therefore, the Father and the Son's co-sending the Spirit in the economy also displays their co-generating the Spirit in eternity. Augustine could not ignore that the historical activities of the economic Trinity reveal the truth of the immanent Trinity.

Despite this reviewer's disagreements, this book must be commended for its careful presentation of the historical development of the filioque controversy between the Western and Eastern Churches in their political and social contexts. This book is not for a MDiv student or a pastor. However, a professional researcher or a professor would want to use this book as an invaluable source for his or her work on the filioque.

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*Ephesians*. By Frank Thielman. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010. 520 pages. Hardcover, \$44.99.

Frank Thielman, Professor of Divinity at Beeson Divinity School and author of numerous works on the law in the New Testament, has delivered an excellent addition to the Baker Exegetical series with his commentary on Ephesians. In his introductory section, Thielman argues: (1) that Ephesians is an authentic Pauline letter written after nearly all of his undisputed letters (5); (2) that certain “peculiarities” in the style of Ephesians may be attributed to specific circumstances being experienced by Paul (10); (3) that the phrase “in Ephesus” in 1:1 is genuine and identifies the letter’s recipients (14); and (4) that Paul writes at the end of his two-year imprisonment in Rome (19) to remind believers of the gospel’s power, of their role as a church, and of their ethical responsibilities (28).

The strengths of this commentary are numerous. As Thielman deals the text’s details, he avoids getting bogged down by keeping sight of the letter’s overall flow. By doing so, Thielman shows consideration for both the discourse as a whole and its individual parts. Furthermore, Thielman repeatedly allows the letter’s context to inform his treatment of difficulties within the text. So, for example, in dealing with Paul’s instruction about submitting “to one another” in 5:21, Thielman examines how the previous occurrences of “one another” (4:2, 25, 32) shed light on the verse (373). Similar examples occur elsewhere in the work (e.g., 397, 415). In this way, Thielman’s commentary exemplifies sound exegetical methodology for students and scholars.

Thielman exhibits remarkable thoroughness in his “Additional Notes” sections, especially in his treatment of text-critical matters. Unlike many commentators that seem overly dependent on Metzger or handle variants in a shallow and simplistic manner, Thielman models depth, breadth, and freshness in this area. He resists the temptation slavishly to follow  $\aleph$  and B (e.g., 403), and adequately considers the author’s style and the variant’s geographical distribution. For such consistently excellent treatments of text-critical matters, Thielman’s commentary will be beneficial for those who focus their research on this area of the NT.

Thielman meaningfully interacts with scholars of all ages in his exegesis. Throughout the commentary, he refers to both Jewish and Greco-Roman sources, to early church Fathers, to interpreters from the middle ages, and to more recent scholars of Ephesians. The result is that Thielman’s exegesis is neither narrow-sighted nor unformed, but marked by a rich balance of insights from modern research alongside the wisdom of the ancients.

Only a few minor weaknesses are found in Thielman’s work. Thielman consistently refers to the dative of sphere. While this is by all means an important aspect of Greek grammar, Thielman regularly refers to it without ever providing a definition. And when Thielman mentions the dative of sphere, he does so in very ambiguous language. So, for example, he explains that believers “live within the sphere of existence that Christ defines” (34), grow “in the sphere encompassed by Christ” (183), and at one point describes the “sphere of knowledge” of prayer (97). Similar language occurs in numerous places throughout the commentary (e.g., 79, 82, 84, 94, 102). It seems that such a consistently used term should have been clearly defined in order to remove the possibility of ambiguity.

One final aspect that may have been improved in this commentary relates to Thielman’s understanding of the oral nature of Ephesians. In numerous places,

Thielman views disjointed syntax (119), ambiguous structural details (49, 225), and disorderly compositional style (310) as evidence of the letter's oral nature. At one point, Thielman states that "Paul seems to have caught himself drifting away . . . [but] then he pulls his train of thought quickly back on track" (379). Such statements regarding the language of the epistle deserve a more focused treatment, perhaps even a section in the introduction, rather than merely appearing as scattered remarks throughout the commentary.

In the end, Thielman's Ephesians commentary is an invaluable resource that will serve a wide audience for many generations to come. The work's strengths far outshine its few minor weaknesses. To be sure, Thielman's work has accomplished the goal of the Baker series by appealing to a wide audience of students, pastors, and scholars, and by giving balanced attention to both the specific details and broader context of the text.

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*Histories and Fallacies: Problems Faced in the Writing of History.* By Carl R. Trueman. Wheaton: Crossway, 2010. 189 pages. Softcover, \$17.99.

In this introduction to historical method, Carl R. Trueman confesses his former leeriness toward books about the theories and techniques of the historian: "those who can write history, do write history; those who cannot, write books telling others how do it" (13). Fortunately, Trueman has written and taught history with excellence for nearly two decades, and his book on historical method is infused with a passion for practicing history.

Throughout his book, Trueman sets out to find a *via media* between two contemporary views on history. On the one hand, Trueman tries to correct the common view that history is merely "a collation of facts which can only be related together in one valid narrative" (17). On the other hand, he wants to counter relativists who deny the historian's ability to know the past and who see all historical narratives as equally valid (19). History, Trueman argues, cannot be boiled down to a single, inflexible pattern or narrative. Historians add their own biases, perspectives, and interpretations to the facts of history; furthermore, they can consider various facets of the historical drama—that is, for example, political, religious, or economic factors. On the other hand, historians can access the past and show the validity of some narratives over others through commonly used historical methods. Trueman's discussion of various historical methods and fallacies throughout his book are formed by, and give emphasis to, these primary claims.

Trueman's book, moreover, does not only present what students of history should avoid. As mentioned above, it is a book designed for those who desire to practice history, and its strength lies in the insight it provides for those who want to do history. Indeed, compared with the vast body of material on this subject, this book does not (nor does it try to) measure up to the relatively comprehensive nature of David Fischer's *Historians' Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought*, nor to the theoretical depth, for example, of David Bebbington's *Patterns in History: A Christian View*. This book is an invaluable tool, however, especially for the beginning student who desires to learn how, as the English poet George Herbert once wrote, "to copy fair, what time hath blurred."

Trueman achieves his goals, of showing students what to avoid as well as

how to practice history, by discussing his material through the use of specific and compelling case studies. Thus, the student, in a sense, is taken as an apprentice, not only reading what Trueman says about history, but also watching him do history. In chapter one, for example, he examines the notion of objectivity by interacting with the proponents of Holocaust Denial (HD). If relativists claim that all historical narratives are equally valid, they must face a question, both historical and ethical in nature: Is it good history when HD proponents call the Nazi's mass murder of the Jews a hoax? No, Trueman answers (25–68). Though historians will not be neutral (i.e., they will still have biases), they can practice history objectively by the constant “corroboration and verification” of the data (62–63).

In chapter two, Trueman takes up the case of Marxist history, as exemplified by Christopher Hill, a historian of seventeenth-century England. Positively, Trueman praises Marxist historians for reminding others of the importance of economic factors in past societies (69–107). The “grand schemes” of Marxist history, however, hold these historians captive, particularly when they inflexibly hold to their theories about the patterns of history (69). All historians, Trueman writes, are prone to this temptation when their philosophies become “less a means of penetrating history and more a prescriptive, Procrustean bed into which the evidence must fit or be twisted to fit” (107).

In chapter three, Trueman considers a problem characteristic especially of intellectual and theological historians, namely, anachronism. Historians, he explains, can easily “impose on the past ideas, categories, or values that were simply nonexistent or that did not have the same function or significance during the time being studied” (109). To illustrate this issue, Trueman presents two case studies.

In the first case, he compares John Calvin with the seventeenth-century reformed theologian, Francis Turretin. Some scholars have compared these two figures merely by examining the form and language of their major works—that is, Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* and Turretin's *The Institutes of Elenctic Theology*. Such practice leads to anachronistic results because each text is read outside of its own historical context. Only by examining context can historians discover the complex relationship between the two men and their two texts, finding their true similarities and differences (120–29). Trueman's appendix, “The Reception of Calvin: Historical Considerations,” provides a larger context for this discussion while adding more helpful methodological advice (183–89). In his second case study, Trueman considers the problem of Martin Luther's supposed racism. Again noting Luther's context, he argues, in short, that Luther was no racist, for sixteenth-century men thought in terms of religion rather than race (129–38).

Over the next two chapters, Trueman changes his approach. In chapter four, he examines the most common historical fallacies, such as reification, oversimplification, and generalization. He also discusses the importance of asking questions in the proper manner, as well as the relationship between providence and history (141–68). In his “Concluding Historical Postscript,” Trueman defends the helpfulness of history in a society characterized by “antihistorical tendencies” because of the “dominance of science” and the effect of constant technological advances (169–70). More valuable in this chapter, however, is Trueman's advice to the history student who wants to improve his craft: “Be aware of the various errors and fallacies noted in this book; read widely in the discipline; as you do so, ask not simply what is being said, but how the historian is going about the work of saying it; read widely in the culture of your chosen period; read eclectically across the disciplines, pillaging

anything from other fields of intellectual endeavor that might help you understand the complexity of human action; read the classics of history; know the history of your discipline; and read sane accounts, by proven historians, of how they themselves pursue their craft" (180).

*Histories and Fallacies* is itself a "sane" account by a "proven" historian that would benefit any student of history—or, as a matter of fact, any theologian, pastor or lay person casually interested in history. In it, Trueman provides lucid discussions of compelling subjects, from the history of the Holocaust, to the history of revolutionary England, to the background of Martin Luther's supposed racism. In the process, he clearly explains and illustrates good historical practice. His own passion for doing history permeates this book, and it would be difficult for any reader to put it down without a desire to read and practice history for himself.

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***English Grammar to Ace Biblical Hebrew.* By Miles V. Van Pelt. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010. 112 pages. Softcover, \$12.99.**

Miles V. Van Pelt is well aware of students' struggles with English grammar and syntax as they study beginning Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic. Van Pelt actually teaches all three languages at Reformed Theological Seminary (11). He sees that students are consistently learning just as much English as they are the Biblical languages. Many students may remember learning what an English participle is and how it functions—in Hebrew class. Van Pelt wrote this book to help students understand how their own language works to make studying Hebrew an easier and more enjoyable experience.

The book is laid out in fourteen brief chapters, explaining everything in English grammar from the alphabet to the verbal system. With each new concept of English grammar, Van Pelt subsequently explains how Hebrew is similar and dissimilar to English in that area. Each chapter is keyed to the relevant chapters in Van Pelt's *Basics of Biblical Hebrew Grammar*, but the format allows it to be used in tandem with any basic grammar. The book is user-friendly enough to be read in its entirety before opening a Hebrew grammar, but would probably be most effective if read alongside a Hebrew grammar as the student progresses through it.

Learning Hebrew can be a nightmare for some students, so Van Pelt writes in a light-hearted and jovial manner to make students feel comfortable and perhaps even evoke a smile. Personal anecdotes, such as his editorial work on a church bulletin (38), and random jokes ("So, a man stormed into his doctor's office . . .") (64) allow the reader's mind a rest for a moment after a section of grammatical information. The student will also be encouraged by Van Pelt's uplifting words in each chapter, often pointing out that he is not presenting new information, but only placing "categories and labels" on what they already know intuitively (22). Multiple metaphors also turn this would-be stuffy English grammar into a more enjoyable and digestible work. For example, "Pronouns are the substitute teachers, surrogate mothers, pinch hitters, union scabs, and stunt doubles of the grammatical world" (47). And again, "[verbs] are the movers and shakers of the grammatical world. They are the electricity that runs through the sentence, causing the lights to go on as actions and ideas come to life" (63).

Rarely is Van Pelt confusing, although his discussion on verbal voice is



somewhat so since he describes the active and passive voice as “actions that move away from the verbal subject” and “actions that move toward the verbal subject,” respectively (74). He neglects to mention intransitive verbs such as “to drift” and the student may be confused as he accidentally reverses the definitions on the next page (75). Nevertheless, the work as a whole is concise, clear, encouraging, and helpful. Since the book ends by explaining the verbal system, it prepares the student for all English grammatical concepts they will encounter in a Hebrew grammar. Professors would be wise to consider using this book for their first-semester Hebrew students. Not only will it prepare them by teaching them the English grammar they need to learn biblical Hebrew, but it will encourage them as they begin to study a difficult subject, one which is very daunting to many students.

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*Has the Church Replaced Israel? A Theological Evaluation.* By Michael J. Vlach. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010. 224 pages. Softcover, \$19.99.

Michael Vlach, professor of Theology at The Master’s Seminary in Sun Valley, California, seeks to answer the complex question regarding the relationship between the church and the nation of Israel. The book, the fruit of Vlach’s doctoral dissertation, includes changes/additions to the Peter Lang edition entitled *The Church as a Replacement of Israel: An Analysis of Supersessionism* (2009). The work has four parts: an introduction to supersessionism, supersessionism in church history, supersessionism and hermeneutics, and supersessionism and theological arguments. After setting the foundation in parts one and two, Vlach’s method seems to be, first, to present the case that the church is a complete replacement or fulfillment of the nationalistic promises to Israel, and, second, to evaluate this case based on hermeneutical principles and specific arguments from Scripture.

Vlach defines replacement theology or supersessionism as “the view that the NT Church is the new and/or true Israel that has forever superseded the nation Israel as the people of God” (12). He explains three types of supersessionism (punitive, economic, and structural) and distinguishes between strong and moderate forms. He classifies as moderate those who believe “that the church is the new Israel but still hold to a future for national Israel” (20). In part two, Vlach argues that “the doctrine of supersession has deep roots in church history” (75) by presenting the dominant views of major theologians within the patristic, medieval, reformation, and modern eras, respectively (35–76). Because arguments from church history are not decisive in theological matters, parts three and four of Vlach’s work seem to be the most important.

In part three, he presents and critiques the hermeneutics of supersessionism and offers an alternative nonsupersessionist hermeneutic. Within supersessionism, he notes the following interrelated beliefs: “(1) belief in the interpretive priority of the NT over the OT, (2) belief in nonliteral fulfillments of OT texts regarding Israel, and (3) belief that national Israel is a type of the NT church” (79). In analyzing the starting point of understanding Old Testament passages, the typology of Israel, and the multiple fulfillments of Old Testament prophecy and Christ, Vlach dismisses the supersessionist position and makes a case for a nonsupersessionist understanding. In the final part of the book, Vlach attempts to do at least three things. First, he presents the various Biblical texts used to argue for supersessionism. He categorizes

these texts into five primary arguments (chaps 11–12). Second, he evaluates these arguments by questioning the legitimacy of the supercessionist interpretation of the key texts (chap 13). Third, he proposes that God has a plan not only for the nation of Israel, but for nations in general (chap 14). This plan corresponds more closely to a new creation model of eschatology than it does to a spiritual vision model. In the final two chapters, Vlach presents a positive case for the restoration of Israel.

Vlach's work is a helpful contribution to a very important question in theology. His attempt to keep the argument focused on the Biblical text should be commended, and, if evaluated on these grounds, the attempt is a great success. Despite being wholly committed to the view that God remains true to his promises for Israel as a nation, Vlach writes with an irenic spirit. His writing is also accessible, making it beneficial for the student, pastor, and even layman. There are two recommendations that would seem to make the work even better. First, Vlach chose to present the case for supercessionism in a separate section from critiquing it. Granting that he may have had good reasons for doing so, it seems that the argument may have been clearer if the presentation and critique appeared together. Second, while Vlach does provide a selected bibliography at the end of the work, the work would be more helpful if a comprehensive bibliography of the sources used in the work were included. This would avoid the frustration of having to look for the full reference in the previous footnotes when only a short reference is given.

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*The Gospel and Letters of John*. 3 Volumes. By Urban C. von Wahlde. Eerdmans Critical Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010. 2075 pages. Softcover, \$180.

Urban C. von Wahlde is professor of New Testament at Loyola University in Chicago. He has written a number of works on the Gospel of John. One significant aspect of his work has involved looking for clues concerning the history of the composition of John's Gospel. He presents the culmination of his work along these lines in his three-volume commentary on the *Gospel and Letters of John* for the Eerdmans Critical Commentary Series. He contends that the Gospel of John went through three editions over a period of time from about AD 55-95 (50-55). He believes that an understanding of these three editions will allow for more precision in interpretation of the Gospel and will make it possible to trace the development of the theology of the Johannine community (2-5). In this review, I will focus upon volume one and describe briefly the three editions of the Gospel of John. Such a description will capture the central focus of von Wahlde's massive project.

The first edition of the Gospel of John is a narrative about Jesus and his miracles or signs (58). Its attention to geographical details suggests that it originated in Judea (51). The narrative shows a gradual increase in hostility toward Jesus on the part of the Jewish leaders. Along the way, they disagree with one another about the significance of Jesus and his signs (59). The Christology of the first edition is "low" Christology consistent with a Jewish setting. No claims to divinity occur in the first edition (98-101). The first edition gives shape to the narrative of the Gospel. In the course of editing, parts of the original first edition were cut out (62).

The second edition was produced after the Johannine community experienced sharp conflict with the Jews, probably in Judea (52). Conflict with, and opposition

from, the Jewish leaders is present from the start in the second edition. A “radical new theology” appears in the second edition (140). An important aspect of its theology is “high” Christology. “High” Christology manifests itself in claims to divinity that lead to conflicts with the Jewish leaders, known as “the Jews” (174-75). The second edition has a second author. It does not accurately represent the historical ministry of Jesus, but provides indications about the history of the Johannine community (143).

The third edition follows the “internal crisis” in the Johannine community that leads “the Elder” to write 1 John (52-54). The third edition of the Gospel of John incorporates the Elder’s insights from 1 John and addresses “new issues,” like the significance of the sacraments (54, 235). In terms of Christology, the third edition has the highest Christology. It “affirms the preexistence of Jesus” and “Jesus identifies himself as ‘I AM’” (309-10). The third edition also introduces elements “that would correlate the Johannine tradition with that of the Synoptics” (235). The third edition is the work of a third author.

In the second major part of volume one, von Wahlde traces the development of Johannine theology (395-560). Volumes two and three of the commentary proceed through the Gospel and Letters of John interpreting them in light of the three editions.

As the above summary shows, von Wahlde provides support for a common teaching of historical-critical scholarship, namely, that high Christology is a later development in the church’s teaching about Jesus. This is not a surprising finding for a critical commentary. It is an important finding, because von Wahlde’s work now provides detailed support for other theological treatments of John’s writings. Von Wahlde’s work supports a developmental view of New Testament theology. He adds more diversity to New Testament theology by showing that various theologies exist even in the editions of the writings of John. If Johannine theology was developing so radically, then what about the writings of other New Testament authors or communities? For anyone interested in New Testament theology, von Wahlde provides a thorough example of the challenges to the unity of New Testament theology that continue to arise from critical New Testament scholarship.

For someone, like me, who believes in high Christology that goes back to the teaching of Jesus himself and in the apostolic authorship of John’s writings, how is von Wahlde’s work helpful? Von Wahlde provides a helpful introduction to the view that the rough places (“aporias”) in the Gospel of John point to the stitching together of sources or to various editors (especially 10-55). He also provides a challenge to show that John’s aporias can be explained a different way. Andreas Köstenberger works at this in his recent work *A Theology of John’s Gospel and Letters* (145-50). Others have provided helpful explanations in the past. In light of von Wahlde’s substantial work, the discussion will continue.

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*We Have Seen His Glory: A Vision of Kingdom Worship.* By Ben Witherington III. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010. 166 pages. Softcover, \$18.00.

Prolific Methodist author Ben Witherington has ventured into the realm of worship in this addition to the Liturgical Studies Series from the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship. In *We Have Seen His Glory*, Witherington argues that the church

should focus on the future and not the past in worship. Inasmuch as he means the orient (the perfect worship of eternity over against the ritual of yesteryear) and not the content (the kingdom of priests over against the action of Christ in history), he presents an interesting model. Whether he has been able to walk that line effectively is an issue to consider.

Witherington has attempted to structure the book as a series of small group studies. He presents a thesis (or sermon), draws conclusions, then offers discussion questions. The primary points he argues are that salvation is a means to the end of worship, that a consumer mentality subverts the God-focus of worship (even though that worship is entirely man-driven), that Sunday worship reflects the eschatological order as opposed to Saturday and the created order, that worship is about edification as well as adoration, that we should study the epistles as rhetoric and not letters. Little of what he has to say is new; a number of authors have raised the points elsewhere. The last point is the major exception and points to the central concern about this book.

The book consists of eight chapters, each of fifteen to twenty pages, with one exception. The chapter in which Witherington presents his personal hermeneutic runs more than twice as long as any other. In fact, it would be nearly impossible to cover this chapter in one group study session. Furthermore, he attempts in no way to connect this chapter with his overall thesis of kingdom worship, choosing instead to discuss issues such as the meaning of Q and his understanding of Hebrews. Once this has been recognized, it becomes evident that Witherington has injected a number of hermeneutical assumptions throughout the book. For example, he returns to the argument that male leadership in the church is based on the Old Testament priesthood, he assumes that elder and overseer refers to two separate offices, and he assumes a number of liturgical uses of various passages.

While it is certainly true that church leaders need to prioritize the Biblical study of church worship and rescue it from the consumerism and secularism prevalent in many churches today—and to that end this book is well-intentioned and should be appreciated—it is also true that such a study must come without assumptions and preconceptions. Unless a reader is particularly interested in Witherington's personal opinions about worship, this book will not be of great use.

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