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Book Reviews

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A Brief History of Old Testament Criticism: From Benedict Spinoza to Brevard Childs. By Mark S. Gignilliat. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012. 186 pages. Paperback. \$16.99.

Many graduate and postgraduate students in biblical studies may empathize with Mark Gignilliat's experience leading to the writing of his most recent work, *A Brief History of Old Testament Criticism*. The impetus for the book comes from Gignilliat's entrance into postgraduate work in biblical studies, when he had a strong handle on exegetical issues but a loose grip of the history of interpretation within the discipline (11). It was the latter that tightened during Gignilliat's doctoral studies with Christopher Seitz and gave birth to his desire to help students better grasp the vast history of interpretation within Old Testament studies.

Gignilliat clearly states the intended audience for his book—students (12). He keeps this audience in mind as he limits both the length of the book and technical details that may distract. The book displays a unique format that focuses on a few specific scholars within the modern era of interpretation. Gignilliat hopes to connect the dots for students in the ever-expanding history of interpretation. This focus in such a broad and complex field, typically introduced by concepts rather than personalities, is perhaps open to criticism. He attempts to ward off this criticism by acknowledging potential deficiencies and providing reasons for his structure of the book. In short, Gignilliat filters out a lot of information, albeit important information, because he wants the book to be accessible. He believes that the representative scholars portray larger themes of critical methods and approaches to the Old Testament (13). According to him, people are more interesting than concepts (12).

Each chapter gives a personal history of the scholar while locating him in the cultural milieu of his day. Once the setting has been given, Gignilliat discusses the significant works and the subsequent impact within scholarship and in the life of the church. He moves chronologically through each chapter. Beginning with Benedict Spinoza, he traces scholarship through the lives of W. M. L. de Wette, Julius Wellhausen, Herman Gunkel, Gerhard von Rad, William Foxwell Albright, and concludes with Brevard Childs. Each chapter concludes with a concise bibliography.

A valuable part of his work is Gignilliat's postscript, which takes the place of a conclusion proper. In it, Gignilliat addresses the tension of faith and critical studies of the Bible, giving a sobering description of scholarship as an academician who has faith. While this tension is not resolved, Gignilliat raises some unique questions about the current state of scholarship and its future.

Gignilliat achieves his goal of giving students a framework to understand critical methodologies employed when studying the Old Testament. He acknowledges the shortcomings of focusing on personalities and thus anticipating criticism of his approach (13). In fact, the method of studying key figures may succeed in ways that comprehensive, descriptive, conceptually driven histories cannot. If students who are

early in their development of understanding of biblical studies read *A Brief History of Old Testament Criticism*, then they will be introduced to key figures in the field of Old Testament studies and have access to concise bibliography for further study.

Gignilliat's hermeneutical method is discernable as he writes each chapter, particularly the chapters on Benedict Spinoza and Brevard Childs. However, he acknowledges his position, which is perceptible even by the key figures about whom he writes (14). While some may disagree with his hermeneutic, Gignilliat's theology does not invalidate his discussion of the history of interpretation.

While many significant scholars are not mentioned in this work, it is the complete absence of approaches concurrent with and subsequent to Brevard Childs that is problematic. Gignilliat acknowledges this deficiency (169). Considering his intended audience, however, such a privation may prove detrimental because students must understand postmodern and postcolonial approaches in order to grasp the methods in current monographs and articles in Old Testament studies. Gignilliat certainly provides a great foundation for understanding scholarship, but any student who wants to be brought up to speed on current scholarship while dealing with the necessary swath of field will be left wanting.

Despite its shortcomings, *A Brief History of Old Testament Criticism* accomplishes the goal of providing an accessible entrance into the history of Old Testament scholarship. It will greatly benefit college and seminary classrooms as a reading supplement for introductory survey courses. Curious students or those who are deficient in the history of interpretation will profit from this book, as well. In such a concise work, Gignilliat should be commended for covering much scholarly ground that enriches and equips his reader.

Ethan Jones

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***A Theological Introduction to the Pentateuch: Interpreting the Torah as Christian Scripture.* By Richard S. Briggs and Joel N. Lohr. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012. 227 pages. Paperback \$22.99.**

Written by a group of authors and edited by Richard S. Briggs (Lecturer in Old Testament and Director of Biblical Studies at Cranmer Hall, St. John's College, Durham), and Joel N. Lohr (Wycliffe College, Toronto School of Theology Biblical Department, University of Toronto) this book attempts to expand upon the contributions of Walter Moberly by presenting a uniquely theological introduction to the Pentateuch. The aim of the book is not the sort of introduction that one might find in a standard introduction to the OT. Rather, the goal is to give an introduction to the theological themes present in the books, as well as a case-study on how to read each book theologically.

The book is structured according to the five books of the Pentateuch, and includes an introduction to what they mean by theological introduction and exegesis, as well as an appendix containing Walter Moberly's contributions. The introduction agrees with Moberly's definition of theological interpretation that "theological interpretation is reading the Bible with a concern for the enduring truth of its witness to the nature of God and humanity, with a view to enabling the transformation of humanity into the likeness of God" (5). All of the contributors claim to be influenced heavily by Walter Moberly.

Richard Briggs authored the first chapter, on Genesis. He summarizes

attempts at describing the structure of Genesis (such as the *toledot* formulations) and the Documentary Hypothesis. Next, he describes several theological themes: the family; blessing; Genesis as Torah—or the “old testament of the Old Testament”—and Genesis 1-11 as an introduction to Scripture. Next, Briggs gives a test-case for his theological interpretation in Genesis 11:1-9. He concludes that Gen 11:1-9 shows God scattering the people as both a correction and a blessing. The attempt to build a tower and settle down is in confrontation with the purpose given in 1:28 to fill the earth.

Jo Bailey Wells wrote the second chapter, on Exodus. She presents the following theological themes in the book: God as the central character; liberation; holiness; priesthood; and then the book's relationship to history (she concludes it is not the same as modern history writing). Then she gives a theological reading of Exodus 19:1-8. She concludes that when read in light of the previously mentioned theological themes, the point is that the covenant is wider than just those people and God.

Joel N. Lohr wrote chapter three, on Leviticus. Following the form of the book, he presents an outline of the book and gives a short introduction. Then he presents the theological themes as he understands them (he labels these “hermeneutical issues”): corporate responsibility; protestant biases against ritual and priests; anthropological readings of Leviticus; death and life in Leviticus; and Leviticus in the NT. Then he provides a theological exposition of Leviticus 16. He argues that this chapter gives understanding to a wide range of concepts in the NT.

Next, Nathan MacDonald authored chapter four, dealing with Numbers. He presents three theological themes: the people of Israel; the priests and the Levites; and the land. He focuses on Numbers 20-21, and concludes that its contribution is “to provide a subtle commentary upon the idea of punishment of a generation” (142).

The fifth chapter, by Rob Barrett, deals with Deuteronomy. He suggests that the theological themes are: Loyalty to YHWH; blessing and curse; and the nature of Deuteronomy's law. Barrett focuses on Deuteronomy 8, suggesting that “the community that lives with the sermon of Deuteronomy 9 must be willing to step outside its economic environment and live according to alternative rules...” (168). He also exegetes Deuteronomy 15:1-11. Here Barrett writes, “Modern communities reflecting on economic life under God must first struggle to recognize and critique reigning economic assumptions which elevate particular notions of fairness...” (173). The book ends with an appendix outlining Moberly's contributions to his pupils' understandings of the Pentateuch.

This book accomplishes its purpose of giving a theological introduction to the Pentateuch, by providing examples of theological exegesis in each book. One of the strengths of the book is that it dialogues with weighty scholarship (there is a lengthy bibliography containing well-known theologians). The book also does a good job of presenting different approaches to theological exegesis. After reading the chapters by different contributors, one doubts that Richard Briggs' type of theological exegesis on Genesis would yield the same results as the theological exegesis done by Rob Barrett on Deuteronomy (which yields several economic implications). Additionally, the format of each chapter is helpful in its organization.

Still, there are several weaknesses with this book. The diverse group of authors present a less than coherent picture of theological exegesis. A work like John Sailhamer's *The Meaning of the Pentateuch* deals with the theology of the Pentateuch with a much more unified voice due to its single author. Additionally,

while this book appears to be a sort of introductory work, it assumes a serious foundation in theological thinking. It does not appear to be a suitable introduction for undergraduates or first-year seminarians, because it assumes some knowledge of discussions of structure and history of interpretation on each book. Third year seminarians and serious researchers can benefit from this book. But, with its real shortcomings, the work does accomplish its goal of giving a theological introduction to the Pentateuch. In light of this, it can only be recommended as long as one is aware of its semi-complex nature.

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***The Kingdom of God as Liturgical Empire: A Theological Commentary on 1-2 Chronicles.* By Scott W. Hahn. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012. 224 + xi pages. Paperback. \$24.99.**

Among the books of the Bible, Chronicles may well receive the least amount of attention. Such is especially true when considering the role that Chronicles plays in Christian theology. The nature of the book as history, much of it already represented in Samuel and Kings, and its attention to lists, including the first nine chapters of genealogies, probably has something to do with the lack of attention. Can one even do theology with such a book as Chronicles?

Hahn has done so. This book is a look at Chronicles with an eye towards its theological message. Beyond the introduction, each of the seven chapters addresses a unit of Chronicles and consists of four sections: an outline of the unit, a synopsis of the unit, a commentary, and a section outlining a Christian interpretation of the unit.

Hahn characterizes Chronicles as “prophetic historiography characterized by the author’s profound assimilation and interpretation of the covenantal and liturgical worldview of the Hebrew Bible” (3). By “covenantal worldview” Hahn means the fundamental nature that covenant plays in God’s relation to humankind. For the Chronicler, the way that God interacts with the world is expressed through his covenants to creation, Adam, Abraham, Moses, and David. By “liturgical worldview” Hahn means that for the Chronicler, praise and worship of God, performed according to God’s instructions, is the purpose of all creation. Covenant and liturgy are the forces that move history forward and unify all of salvation history.

Chronicles is an attempt “at the recapitulation of the history of the people Israel” (3) although it “reflects a broadly internationalist, even cosmic outlook” (22). Fundamental to the Chronicler’s telling of this history is typology. The Chronicler connects the events that he is recounting to other events in the canonical history, such as the binding of Isaac (Akedah), the Exodus, and Sinai (particularly the golden calf). Again and again Hahn shows how the Chronicler uses the language and patterns of these events in describing the history of the Davidic dynasty in order to show unity in God’s work and to encourage his audience that God will continue to work in similar ways in the present and the future. As Hahn puts it, “What happened in the past is crucial for the Chronicler, but only because in the what of history he sees the patterns of divine intention and intervention revealed—the why of history” (7, emphasis his).

Hahn shows how the Chronicler presents David as a new Moses and Solomon a new Joshua. He shows David to be a new Melchizedek priestly king and how

the temple is a picture of creation portrayed in the Garden of Eden. Through each major section of Chronicles, Hahn points out these connections. The number of typological associations is numerous, but Hahn does more than simply assert them. He points out the verbal, structural, and thematic similarities upon which he bases these associations.

Several features of Hahn's commentary distinguish it as theological interpretation. Hahn knows well that he is interpreting the book within a particular faith tradition: Roman Catholicism. He is also aware of the fact that he is examining the biblical text through canonical rather than historical lenses (e.g. discussion of date on page 19). However, one comment particularly highlights his work as theological interpretation: "Unfortunately, in aspiring to a scientific reading of the text, scholars often refuse to accept at face value the Chronicler's faith as a legitimate guide to his authorial intentions; instead they seek to ascribe some ulterior motives for his work. This basic failure of scholarly sympathy is behind a number of persistent misunderstandings of Chronicles" (69).

As a commentary, this work is quite brief. Because of its size limitation much of the material in Chronicles is either ignored or treated in a summary fashion. This observation should not detract from the contribution of the book. It is filled with insightful textual observations. Furthermore, the book is a valuable resource for detecting the underlying unity of Chronicles and the theological and canonical framework that undergirds the work. It is also a valuable contribution to discerning the role that Chronicles may play in the Bible's theology.

Joshua E. Williams

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***Job.* By Tremper Longman III. Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012. 496 pages. Hardcover, \$44.99.**

With his usual attention to detail, expertise in the language, and skill in application, Tremper Longman has contributed another excellent volume to the Baker Commentary on the Old Testament. This is the final of seven volumes of the series covering the five books of Wisdom and Psalms. Longman concedes the oddity of his own authorship of two different works in a series that he has edited; nonetheless, there is much to commend in this volume.

Longman asserts that the work is intended for ministers and seminary students and retains the focus throughout. The book is logically arranged and carefully researched as evidenced by the detailed footnotes and comprehensive bibliography. After an initial introduction, the author begins each section of the commentary with his own translation supported by critical notes. This is followed by a section on interpretation and finally theological implications.

It is in vogue for commentators to side step questions of historicity by simply not taking a definitive stand on the issue. While that is ostensibly the position the author takes, citing a position "between the view that Job was a historical character ... and the view that Job is a purely literary figure" (33), throughout the work, Longman seems to lean more towards the fact that the events (if not the characters described) were not historically true (33-34, 51, 54-55, 77, 92, 441, 454). Though curiously his own historical overview in the Introduction seems to add more weight to the opposing view. Relatedly, Longman's views on the role of the accuser (52, 78,

82, 92), the heavenly council (92), the identity of the “sons of God” in Gen 6:1-8 (120), imprecatory prayers (320), the identity and role of Elihu (25, 62-63, 367), the affirmation of Job by God (458-59), and the mythological explanation of Behemoth and Leviathan (441, 454-55) will inspire spirited academic discussions.

Longman’s description of the views of the friends and the perspectives from which they argue is instructive. He explains how their different perspectives (experience, tradition, reason, and youth) all yield their conclusions related to the question of Job’s suffering (114, 155, 187, 380-81). However, in the end, all four friends (including Elihu) come up with the same basic conclusion which expresses truth that is fundamentally misapplied (445).

Perhaps the greatest strength of this work is the demonstration throughout the commentary of how the book of Job is relevant today. The author demonstrates the fallacy of easy answers and mechanical explanations (67) to explain the universal question of suffering (cf. 152). But, as Longman clearly states, the purpose of the book of Job is not to produce a theodicy, but rather a discussion of wisdom (31, 66-67, 462), which is occasioned by Job’s suffering. Moreover, he consistently demonstrates that wisdom belongs to and comes from the Lord. Indeed, Longman concludes the discussion of theodicy, and indeed the commentary itself, with the reality that the book of Job doesn’t really offer an explanation for Job’s suffering (462). Yet, this is often the point that Scripture reveals—that God does not owe mankind an explanation, nor are humans capable of understanding the wisdom of God. Thus, perhaps the contribution that the book of Job makes to theodicy may well be that wisdom is found in trusting in the Lord even in unexplained (or unexplainable) suffering.

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***The Gospel According to Isaiah 53: Encountering the Suffering Servant in Jewish and Christian Theology.* Edited by Darrell L. Bock and Mitch Glaser. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2012. 334 pages. Paperback, \$27.99.**

This work is a gem for all those interested in the exegesis of Isaiah 53, but more importantly in the use of Isaiah 53 for the evangelism of Jews. It is divided into three parts: (1) Christian and Jewish interpretations of Isaiah 53; (2) Isaiah 53 in biblical theology; (3) Isaiah 53 and practical theology.

In part one, R. Averbeck briefly surveys Christian interpretations of Isaiah 53 and then provides an extended discussion on the term “guilt offering” in 53:10. He helpfully suggests viewing the Servant songs as beginning with corporate Israel, being narrowed to a righteous remnant, and finally narrowed to an individual in Isaiah 53 (37). Michael Brown surveys Jewish interpretations, noting nine Jewish sources which interpret Isaiah 53 messianically, and this list is probably not exhaustive (62-63). He then shows that, despite these sources, the corporate interpretation of Isaiah 53 has been dominant in Jewish interpretations since Rabbis Rashi, Ibn Ezra, and Radak in the eleventh and twelfth centuries (64).

Part two is primarily exegetical work on Isaiah 53 itself, as well as hermeneutical discussions on the use of Isaiah 53 in the NT. W. Kaiser surveys the identity and mission of the Servant in the OT and the NT (ch. 3). M. Wilkins traces and briefly comments on the allusions and quotations of Isaiah 53 in the NT (ch. 4). D. Bock provides a penetrating analysis of Isaiah 53:7-8 in Acts 8:32-33 (ch. 5). C.

Evans looks at Isa 53 in Paul, Peter, Hebrews, and John (ch. 6). D. Allen examines the substitutionary and cultic terminology in Isaiah 53 (ch. 7). R. Chisholm looks at forgiveness and salvation language in Isaiah 53, especially for whom these are intended and what exactly they are (ch. 8).

The heart of the book is in part three. J. Feinberg first relates postmodern themes from Isaiah 53 in order to make the message more applicable to this large audience today. He argues that, from Isaiah 53, we can see a great narrative about God and his love, that God cares and is personal, that Christianity provides freedom within community, and that God enables concern for the marginalized. The best chapter, in this reviewer's opinion, came from M. Glaser on using Isaiah 53 in evangelism to Jews (ch. 10). He came to believe in Jesus as Messiah through Isaiah 53, although the same was not true for his parents, who shunned him. He has been using the passage to evangelize ever since his conversion. He notes that most Jews today are not religious and do not read the OT, nor do they believe in revelation. He then lays out twelve barriers that hinder communicating the truth of Isaiah 53 to modern Jews, as well as five practical ways to overcome these barriers. D. Sunukjian suggests a model for preparing to preach on Isaiah 53 (ch. 11) and provides two appendices of actual sermons, one expositional and one a dramatic-narrative sermon. D. Bock provides a conclusion, in which he summarizes at length the content of each article.

This book was executed well. It is intended not as a heavy scholarly contribution to the exegetical issues of Isaiah 53, although the issues were covered in detail. The book is intended for pastors, students, and laymen. The first two parts provide an extensive amount of information for the reader to become familiar with the meaning of Isaiah 53, both Christian and Jewish. The chapter by Glaser is especially helpful in understanding how practically to go about sharing Isaiah 53 with Jewish people today. His words are especially important that warn against sharing Isaiah 53 with a Jew with the assumption that they believe in revelation, sin, heaven and hell, or that they understand the nature of prophecy. As a concise resource for those interested in preaching and teaching Isaiah 53, this may be one of the best available. It should be highly recommended for laymen, students, pastors, and scholars alike.

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***The New Testament in Antiquity: A Survey of the New Testament within its Cultural Contexts.* By Gary M. Burge, Lynn H. Cohick, and Gene L. Green. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009. 479 pages. Hardcover, \$49.99.**

The New Testament in Antiquity: A Survey of the New Testament within its Cultural Contexts is a beautiful volume and a student favorite taking you on a visual journey through the world of the New Testament. The twenty-seven-chapter work covers the historical setting of the New Testament, the world of Jesus and world of Paul, each book of the New Testament (some books are grouped together), and the canon and text of the New Testament. In addition to written material, each chapter contains numerous color images, maps, charts, and sidebars which bring the world of the New Testament to life like no other book on the market today. The images, which are one of the strongest features of the volume, include archaeological sites, landscapes, statues, coins, pottery, mosaics, inscriptions, and manuscripts, to name only a few.

The authors name four goals for the work: academic rigor and thoroughness,

accessibility, a focus on the ancient context of the New Testament, and a confessional commitment to the evangelical tradition. In my estimation, they have accomplished the final three while only partially meeting the first. Although the work approaches 500 pages, each chapter is brief and full of images, providing only a sketch of some of the detailed information that one would expect in a New Testament survey or introduction. By eliminating the images, charts, and sidebars (which would certainly be a mistake), the volume would decrease by approximately 50%. As an example of the brevity, the discussion of the authorship of Ephesians spans a page and a half and that of 2 Peter half a page. While it may be appropriate to eliminate some of these items altogether in order to make a specific contribution, by discussing many of these items briefly, the goal of thoroughness has not been met. At the same time, the brevity of each chapter provides students a valuable and scenic overview of the landscape of New Testament studies. At the graduate level, the book is best used in tandem with other volumes that more thoroughly address introductory issues. At the undergraduate level, the volume could stand on its own depending upon the focus of the course.

In its first edition, the book is tainted slightly by a few too many editorial mistakes. While this may seem pedantic, such mistakes are perhaps more troublesome for a volume of this sort. As an example, one of the first images is mistakenly identified as papyrus manuscript 52. If an image is not what it is meant to be, it may do more harm than good. Furthermore, if there is one error of this sort, the possibility of others seems likely. Nonetheless, one can certainly forgive the editors inasmuch as the book contains hundreds of images of many different sorts, and only experts in each field could verify the legitimacy of each.

My strongest criticism of the work pertains to the lack of thorough documentation. Each chapter contains only a handful of endnotes, often leaving the reader with no clear place to go to substantiate the authors' claims. This too impacts the authors' goals of academic rigor and thoroughness.

These reservations notwithstanding, *The New Testament in Antiquity* makes a solid contribution to the field and will likely find its way into many classrooms in the coming years.

David Hutchison

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***Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament.* By G. K. Beale. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012. 173 pages. Paperback, \$17.99.**

G. K. Beale is well-known for his study on the NT use of the OT, having written on the subject for his entire academic career. This handbook is incredibly welcomed as a concise resource for students to lay the foundation of their knowledge on the subject. The purpose of this work is "to provide a short guide to the use of OT citations and allusions in the NT" (xvii). It is written for serious readers of the Bible "with the hope that even scholars might benefit" (xvii).

Chapter one discusses the history of the debate about whether the NT authors quoted and alluded to the OT contextually. This includes a discussion of testimony books and the definition of typology, the latter being a lengthy and insightful discussion. Beale defends C. H. Dodd's thesis in *According to the Scriptures* that the NT authors used the OT contextually, but acknowledges that those who disagree may still profitably use his suggested step-by-step methodology in chapter three (12f.).

Chapter two is a brief explanation of resources for studying OT references, with a necessary discussion of the definition of quotation, allusion, echo, and intertextuality. Beale places allusion and echo on a sliding scale of probability rather than distinguishing them (32) and prefers the term “inner-biblical exegesis” or “inner-biblical allusion” over “intertextuality” to avoid postmodern connotations (39f.).

Chapter three is the “core of the book,” in which Beale lays out a nine-step process for studying NT uses of the OT (41). Each step, as well as useful resources for each step, is explained. Chapter four presents the multitude of ways the NT authors use the OT, although it is not a comprehensive list. This ranges from fulfillment of direct prophecy (56f.) to using the OT as a substructure for a NT epistle or narrative (80-88), among many other uses and variations of each category of usage (Beale lists, for example, three variations of “prototypical” uses of the OT).

Chapter five contains a list and explanation of what Beale considers five presuppositions of the NT writers. These include (1) “corporate solidarity” (or “representation”), (2) that Jesus is the true Israel of the OT and the true church of the NT, (3) that history is unified so that correspondence between former and latter parts are designed, (4) the already-not yet eschatological schema, and (5) that later parts of Scripture are the key to interpreting earlier portions of the OT and its promises (96f.). He contends that each of these presuppositions is rooted in the OT (100).

Chapter six contains a helpful annotated bibliography of sources for post-biblical Judaism as it relates to the study of the NT use of the OT and a case study of how this could help the student. Chapter seven concludes the book with a case study illustrating Beale’s nine-step process laid out in chapter three.

As a work for students, this may be the best guide for beginning or improving study in the field of the NT use of the OT. Those who do not agree with Beale’s conclusions on some or on many matters can still benefit from the discussions on each topic, from the comprehensive methodology suggested, and from the sources provided and explained. His numerous examples, which are explained at length, are sufficient (if not persuasive) demonstrations of his positions. His case study in chapter seven was also a helpful inclusion, since the particular is more understandable for some students than the theoretical.

One improvement upon the handbook would be to include more examples from outside of John’s writings. While many examples are included from Paul and the Gospels, the majority are from John, particularly Revelation. This is understandable given Beale’s extensive published work in Revelation, but the book almost resembles a handbook on John’s use of the OT rather than that of the apostles, at least when it comes to illustrating the general principles asserted for apostolic interpretation. Yet this is a minor quibble and the work as a whole should be utilized by professors—both for themselves and for their students—and by teachers in the church. Thankfully the work is written at such an introductory level that it may be used profitably for teaching in the church—and should be. Our churches would be strengthened, discipleship would be bolstered, and Bibles would be read more if only congregants could understand what in the world the OT narratives and teachings have to do with the cross of Christ.

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***Reading the Gospels Wisely: A Narrative and Theological Introduction.* By Jonathan T. Pennington. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012. 268 + xiv pages. Paperback, \$24.99.**

Jonathan Pennington offers a much-needed corrective balance to many books on Gospel studies that concentrate mostly on hermeneutical methodology with very little on attitude or focus. His book rightly warns that there is a danger in getting so caught up with the tools of exegesis that one misses God's real message in the Gospels.

Pennington is Associate Professor of New Testament Interpretation at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. His expertise in the field of Gospel studies is apparent throughout this thought-provoking book. Instead of an introduction to the four canonical Gospels, this book is a careful description of *how* to read, engage, and apply the Gospels (xiii). He lays a careful foundation and framework and then describes how spiritually to read (158-62), interpret, and apply the Gospels by reading them as stories.

As one might expect, Pennington is an effective teacher and storyteller himself. He leads the reader through a well-defined study, deftly constructing his case, and continually reminding the reader of each step that has been completed (169, 213-14). One of his strengths is his lavish use of relevant illustrations. Whether it is a basketball game (175), golf (228), Kentucky derby (152), seed corn bagging table (209), orcs at Mordor (98), or a mother-in-law's refrigerator magnet diet Bible verse (157-58), Pennington expertly employs these stories aptly to illustrate a point and help guide his reader to the importance of understanding story in the Gospels, which is the heart of his message. He notes,

We are a story people. In the very fabric of our being we are spring-loaded for story. Story is how we make sense of the world and our own lives. Story powerfully creates life and hope, the lack of which is depression. Hope is imagination, and imagination is central for human flourishing and life (46).

The primary methodological tool Pennington promotes is a helpful version of narrative criticism (169-77, 214-15). Rather than a dry, clinical narrative evaluation such as one might use for studying Shakespeare's plays, Pennington exhorts the reader to find God's message in the stories. He suggests reading the Gospels within concentric circles of contextual meaning (such as the macro-plot in the Gospels and even in the entire canon (183-202) as well as making God-centered applications that lead to Christ-centered preaching (216-23).

Fortunately, Pennington does not just give a theoretical argument. Along the way he applies his suggested method of study to Luke 7:1-10 for a practical test case (169-71, 180-82, 203-208). However, he uses plenty of other Gospel texts for examples as well (187-88, 91).

Another needed corrective Pennington offers scholars is a return to the centrality of the Gospels, which seem to have taken a back seat to Pauline studies in both academic and church life. He sees them as the keystone in the archway of the biblical canon—holding together “the Old Testament Scriptures on the one side and the rest of the New Testament writings on the other (231).

This reviewer disagrees with Pennington's claim that meaning equals application—that the two are hopelessly intertwined (131-36). Instead, the

traditional distinction between determining the one meaning of a text and its various applications seems the wiser road. Pennington's blurring the lines between the two can lead to the logical extension that any given Bible text can mean anything. Pennington rightly argues against that disastrous claim, but it seems to be unavoidable with his methodology (135). It seems he is hedging too much on a text's true meaning in his attempt to avoid claiming to have "*the final and definitive correct reading*" (136, the italics are his).

Surprisingly, even though he teaches Greek and has published the Zondervan *New Testament Greek Vocabulary* CDs, Pennington says almost nothing of the value of studying the Gospels in the Greek language. An emphasis on understanding Koine Greek would help this book.

Yet, most of this book is right on target. For instance, he notes the waning influence of Historical Jesus studies and the crisis of modern historicism (89-93, 148-49). Recent studies have certainly led to many bankrupt conclusions that disparage the truth of the canonical Gospels. Instead, he affirms Richard Bauckham's excellent proposal to read the Gospels as accurate eyewitness testimonies (98-103).¹

Not only is this book helpful for pastors and teachers of the Gospels, it is also beneficial for any student of the Word of God. It is especially valuable for exegetically-trained students and scholars who may have lost sight of the powerful message of story in the Gospels as well as the need for responding to God's powerful message contained therein. Pennington's balance of narrative criticism with an emphasis on the spiritual message and the call for life change helps the Bible interpreter to stay on target in Gospel studies. His Gospel expertise has enabled him to make a fine contribution to kingdom work.

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***A Theology of Luke and Acts: God's Promised Program, Realized for All Nations. Biblical Theology of the New Testament.* By Darrell L. Bock. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012. 495 pages. Hardcover, \$39.99.**

Darrell Bock has published lengthy commentaries on both Luke and Acts in the BECNT commentary series. He is therefore well-suited for writing a biblical theology of Luke and Acts. This work includes three parts: (1) introductory matters; (2) major theological themes; and (3) Luke and the canon. Chapter 2 covers introductory matters summarized from Bock's commentaries and argues for traditional and conservative views on the Lucan materials. Chapter 3 argues for reading Luke-Acts as a unified work, in spite of recent arguments to the contrary. Chapter 4, concluding part one, is a lengthy summary of the entire work of Luke-Acts.

The second part covers fourteen theological themes. These include (1) God's plan, (2) Christology, (3) pneumatology, (4) salvation, (5) Israel, (6) the nations (7) the church, (8) discipleship and ethics, (9) the response to Jesus, (10) women and the poor, (11) the law, (12), ecclesiology, (13) eschatology, and (14) the Scriptures. In the first four themes, Bock has a chapter that surveys the theme in narrational order from Luke 1 to Acts 28, with a second chapter synthesizing the material in sub-themes. The organization of these chapters was disappointing since there was so much overlap and so little depth to the discussions. Bock attempts to mention every

¹Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006).

verse in Luke-Acts that refers to the chapter's respective theme, leaving little room for any exegetical discussion or debate with other scholars. The lack of footnotes in many of the chapters evidences the summary nature of the material. Rather than read Bock's narratival chapters, one would be better served by reading Luke-Acts for oneself. Theologically, Bock's progressive-dispensational viewpoint comes out in his discussion throughout the work, but especially in his treatment of Israel, the nations, and the church.

In the concluding chapter, Bock relates six "core themes of Luke-Acts," which he considers to be "the most central points around which Luke builds his theology" (450). First, Jesus' coming represents the inauguration of God's promised plan in the OT. Second, Israel's story is not anti-Semitic, as some recently have claimed; it is an in-house debate especially regarding the nations and their role in the church. Third, the Spirit is the sign of a new era. Fourth, salvation and identity is tied to Jesus' work rather than to explicit statements of what the cross accomplished as in Paul's letters. Fifth, Luke tells a trinitarian story. Sixth, Luke tells a story that is in direct continuity with the OT story.

The methodology of this work is something to consider. Bock's intent was to explicate major theological themes in Luke-Acts. But is this truly the task of someone writing a biblical theology of Luke-Acts? Obviously the question of methodology is subjective and vexing. But it seems insufficient anymore simply to lay out various themes within a biblical corpus and leave it at that. Moreover, the OT and its storyline is really only discussed as it arises with specific Lucan texts that refer to the OT. Allusions, such as those to Ps 2:7 and Ps 110:1, are explained briefly but this is only a piecemeal exposition of various portions of OT salvation-history. Without stating any specific ways to improve upon the methodology employed here, it seems that something other than an explication of major themes would have been more helpful.

Overall, the work is helpful as an introduction to students studying Luke-Acts. The narratival portions are helpful if one wanted to read them alongside one's own reading of Luke-Acts for brief commentary. Among other works produced on Lukan theology, it is longer and perhaps less methodologically satisfying. Yet, one would come away from reading this book with a decently solid base for beginning theological studies in Luke-Acts.

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***Opening Paul's Letters: A Reader's Guide to Genre and Interpretation.* By Patrick Gray. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012. 176 pages. Paperback, \$19.99.**

It is perhaps timely that Patrick Gray's book, *Opening Paul's Letters*, emerges as the modern letter is gradually declining. In a cultural setting where people now prefer email, text messaging and social networking as their primary means of communication, it is quite feasible that scholars, teachers and pastors will need to try even harder to connect Paul's letters to these present mediums of communication. Gray's work seeks to do just that by drawing connections between present-day methods of communicating and their first-century counterparts. In this, he guides contemporary readers to a diligent and careful reading of Paul's letters, enabling them to understand "what letters were and how they functioned in Paul's first-century setting" (vii).

Gray's investigation of Paul's letters takes an epistolary approach that focuses upon its unique literary type (genre), i.e., the ancient letter, and its corresponding conventions, strategies, and patterns for communicating its message. This approach in genre analysis reads the letters of Paul against the backdrop of a much larger epistolary landscape. Readers realize with Paul's letters, that the literary type is somewhat different than the Gospels or Acts, and thereby, requires a different set of principles and strategies for interpretation. Unlike other ancient literary forms, however, the "letter" is the one type (genre) that is most comparable to our present setting, and this can cause present-day readers actually to "read" Paul's letters without really *reading* them (1). By this Gray means that readers constantly make interpretive decisions, even if unconsciously, and can easily fail to account for the different structures of this ancient literary type. Consequentially, they fail to comprehend the intentions and message of the author. For this reason, it is necessary to account for the enormous complexity of historical, social and literary framework within which Paul's letters exist. *Opening Paul's Letters* attempts to make this framework accessible to both beginning and advanced readers of Paul's letters.

There are many books that aim to orient contemporary readers to Paul's letters, many of which approach this topic by focusing on the author-text dimension of the message, i.e., the factors that led to the author creating the letter. However, Gray's guidebook is genre-specific, focusing instead on the literary type itself, the structure and conventions used to shape its message and how the letter appears to its readers (their circumstances and expectations of receiving such a letter). This text-reader dimension of the message focuses upon the form, structure and conventions in a letter and investigates how it communicates meaning to the readers, both the intended readers of the first century and those readers who have received it as part of the Scriptures.

In guiding readers seriously to consider Paul's letters, Gray asserts that they must first come to Paul's letters and read them as *real* letters, not as part of a collection of other literary types within a single volume. To do so, contemporary readers need to "know something about the wider world in which . . . [Paul] lived and wrote" (22). The world of Paul's letters includes historical contexts, such as the influences of both Judaism and Hellenism, the historical conditions of Roman rule, Greco-Roman philosophy and the social construct of first-century life. Also, included here are the literary subtleties of the "letter" genre as well as the expansive use of letters in Greco-Roman society. To refuse to read Paul's letters against these contextual backdrops is to *misread* Paul at its core, but additionally, this background illuminates the context from which Paul's letters should be interpreted (62-3).

A further, necessary context for interpreting Paul's letters resides in our understanding of Paul's audiences. Often, letters themselves do not reveal everything necessary to reconstruct the recipients or their particular circumstances. The most difficult part of understanding Paul's letters is dealing with the reality that moderns are actually "eavesdropping" or listening to a "one-sided conversation" (9-13). For this reason, it is necessary for modern readers diligently to learn as much as possible about the communication setting to read accurately Paul's message in its intended manner and then to apply it correctly to modern contexts.

Gray also discusses several other issues typically discussed in interpreting Paul's letters, such as authorship (139-52), smaller literary types (sub-genres or registers; 45-52) and use of the Old Testament (119-38). Gray writes that Pauline authorship does matter in investigating literary genre, particularly in terms of audi-

ence expectation and assessment of a letter's meaning and function within its communication setting (140). He surveys the arguments against Pauline authorship of the disputed letters (Ephesians, Colosians, 2 Thessalonians and the Pastorals), the arguments of an inconsistent itinerary between the letters and Acts, arguments of style, and inconsistent theme or theology reflected in the letters, and then surveys the issue of pseudonymous authorship for these letters.

Opening Paul's Letters is appropriately entitled as a guide to the major issues in the diligent reading of Paul's letters. It is obvious that Gray writes as teacher who seeks to steer readers to important issues, which are articulately yet concisely stated, so that he or she may come to their own conclusions. Gray targets "new readers" of Paul's letters, those who are so immersed in the technologies of the twenty-first century, and successfully finds parallels between how these letters were read at inception and how they are now read within the twenty-first century. Furthermore, Gray keenly summarizes general principles of interpreting and then applies them to relevant Pauline texts. In this way, *Opening Paul's Letters* is less theoretical and technical; instead, it aims at equipping beginning readers of Paul's letters to see how these principles are applied to the letters themselves. This book is valuable to any student or reader seeking to situate Paul's letters within their historical and literary landscape while at the same time connecting with how modern readers may interpret Paul within their own setting.

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Theological Studies

***A Little Book for New Theologians: Why and How to Study Theology.* By Kelly M. Kopic. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012. 126 pages. Paperback, \$7.20.**

Seminaries are often mistakenly and purposefully called cemeteries. This is unfortunate, but real. One can blame institutions, professors and churches, but the heart of the problem is the problem of the human heart. A person pursuing theological training without pursuing the Triune God is a recipe for disease. Kelly Kopic has written this little book on why and how to study theology as a vaccine and as a reminder for young theologians to keep a God-centered perspective when doing theology. Kopic received his Ph.D from King's College, his M.Div from Reformed Theological Seminary, and his B.A. from Wheaton College. He is currently professor of theological studies at Covenant College in Lookout Mountain, Georgia, where he has served since 2001. This book is a stated attempt to update Helmut Thielicke's classic work, *A Little Exercise for Young Theologians* (10). Up to this point in his career, Dr. Kopic has spent the majority of his time and energy reflecting on the work of John Owen, that puritanical paragon of doing theology from one's knees with scopes sharply set on the exaltation of Christ and the transformation of the heart, all for God's glory. This background makes Kopic eminently capable of writing a book such as this.

This book is broken up into two parts and ten manageable chapters. Part one answers the question, "Why Study Theology?" and begins with a quote by Martin Luther affirming that just as we are called Christians, so we are also called theologians. All Christians have a theology. Our lives are surrounded by theological questions, so theology is inevitable and "it is not a conversation our souls can afford to avoid" (20). Theology is also inevitable in that God created us and desires to see us

reflect his glory and bask in his love (22). Knowledge of God and worship of God are interrelated and worship is tied to wisdom. The distinction between the wise person and the foolish person depends on how one responds to God. Kacic concludes part one with the helpful reminder that theology is a pilgrimage, always second order and always tentative. Our theology also has a two-fold limitation: our fallenness and our finitude. Our theology can be true, but ever remains incomplete. Theologians young and old are continually dependent on the Holy Spirit. As philosopher Paul Helm notes, we are on an “epistemological pilgrimage” (32), or as Puritan theologian John Owen put it, “we see but his back parts” (35). This is no excuse not to strive for theological faithfulness, but a reminder that “our call is to come, to gaze at Christ, to hear his word and to respond in faith and love” (37).

Part two examines the characteristics of faithful theology and faithful theologians. Chapter four introduces the second part with a reminder that theology must always be *lived* theology. The rest of the book unpacks faithful reason, prayer and study, humility and repentance, suffering, justice and knowing God, and the love of Scripture. Kacic’s chapter on reason is one of his longest. He argues that reason, for the Christian, works in the service of faith. Following the approach of Augustine, believers must always begin with revelation, not self-enlightenment. To use his words, “Unless you believe you will not understand” (53). Kacic prefers to speak of “faithful reason” since reason only works rightly when full of faith (55). As we reason from faith, the Holy Spirit works through our rational faculties. Gently brushing aside the myth of neutrality, Kacic shows that our faith will be determinative for what we deem reasonable.

In the next chapter, building on Thielicke’s warning to keep the second, rather than third, person in view when approaching theology, he writes, “Scripture is God’s voice to his people, and by his Spirit we encounter it as a living, rather than a dead, letter” (65). Therefore, theology and prayer are inextricably linked. In other words, theology is communing with God. Kacic refers not to a fifteen-minute morning devotion, important though that is, but a way of being, constantly communing with the Lord. Everything a theologian does is before the face of God. Following Warfield’s emphasis, ministers must be *both* learned and godly, just as a soldier needs both his right and left legs (68). “We cannot choose between prayer and study; faithful theology requires prayerful study” (70). Chapter seven is a much-needed chapter on humility in theology. He notes that how we treat others reveals a great deal about how we view ourselves before God. “Humility recognizes one’s dependence on the wisdom and insight of others” (72). Augustine is held up as a model of theological humility because he saw his theology as a work in progress and even published a book of retractions at the end of his career. The humble theologian keeps in mind the greatness of God and the finitude and fallenness of man. Our theology, therefore, is always incomplete.

Chapter eight begins with an exposition of Psalm 113 and God’s holy exaltation and stunning condescension. Kacic posits that true theology must account for the value God places on the marginalized and the vulnerable. To love God is to love what he loves. He writes, “Active concern for the poor and needy is a core concern of our theology” (86). Using Isaiah 1 and the first letter of John, the author shows that concern for truth necessarily brings with it a concern for one’s neighbor. The book then develops the idea that the best theology is done in community. Stemming from the Reformation tradition, the author adheres to *sola Scriptura*, but also recognizes that the Holy Spirit has a history and has been active in guiding previous theo-

gians (93). All of us wear culturally colored lenses and reading those saints who are dead yet speaking helps us identify our own particular presuppositions in order better to check cultural baggage at the door. He quotes the famous line by W.R. Inge: "He who marries the spirit of the age soon finds himself a widower" (96). Kacic also exhorts the budding theologian to dip into streams besides his own, asserting that one can learn something from most theological traditions. The book concludes with a chapter on the importance of Scripture. The inscripturated text is where God has self-identified. His word and his works go together. Kacic concludes his little book on doxological doctrine with a fitting definition of theology. It is "an active response to the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, whereby the believer, in the power of the Holy Spirit, subordinate to the testimonies of the prophets and apostles as recorded in the Scriptures and in communion with the saints, wrestles with and rests in the mysteries of God, his work and his world" (121).

My primary complaint about this book is that I did not receive it my first year of seminary. Containing short and well-written chapters, the book is full of mature exhortations. It is enriched by the inclusion of a host of quotations from a broad selection of theologians, past and present, showing that Dr. Kacic is not writing anything novel here. His is the historic way of doing theology. This reviewer found no significant disagreements, but resonated deeply with most of the content of the book. Dr. Kacic reminds young theologians of the sheer privilege and joy it should be to think God's thoughts after him. He also constantly connects theology and worship, thereby modeling what he is advocating. His treatment of the need for humility in theology is especially pertinent. The metaphor of theology as a pilgrimage is a helpful reminder. Kacic includes short expositions of Scripture from both Testaments throughout this little book. He clearly bows his intellect to the authority of God's Word, encouraging his students to lower their faces to the pages of Scripture to feel the warmth of God's breath (113). Finally, the book has a couple of nice indexes making it easy to refer back to it later.

As a Baptist, I may have added or minimally expanded on a few topics. For instance, there is not enough emphasis on the importance of the local church. Also, agreeing with Barth that theology exists to critique the preaching of the church, I would have liked to have seen a chapter on preaching. I would have liked to see his section on how the cross shapes theology expanded. The notion of mystery in theology received scant treatment. Since exegesis must be the life-blood of theology, I personally would have appreciated a call for young theologians to shut their mouths where God has not opened his. Agreeing that Augustine was Pauline on many things, this reviewer would have liked to have seen a more robust treatment of the jarringly predominant theme of love in the New Testament, especially when disagreeing with other blood-bought, Spirit-indwelt theologians. Given the space given to social justice in theology and the archetypal and ectypal knowledge of God, I was disappointed not to see these more important issues treated in a more thorough way.

While this book has yet to be received widely, one can hope that professors will assign this book to first-year seminary students. It is the perfect sort of book for the spiritual formation class that many of the SBC seminaries require, and yet even seasoned theologians will be refreshed by it. I am confident that it will be successful in awakening many from their spiritual dogmatic slumbers.

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***The Quest for the Trinity: The Doctrine of God in Scripture, History and Modernity.* By Stephen R. Holmes. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2012. 231 pages. Kindle edition. \$9.99.**

Holmes' thesis is that "the twentieth century renewal of Trinitarian theology" depends "in large part on concepts and ideas that cannot be found in patristic, medieval, or Reformation accounts of the doctrine of the Trinity. In some cases, indeed, they are points explicitly and energetically repudiated ... by the earlier tradition" (Kindle Locations 124-126). Holmes not only defends the thesis that the Trinitarian renewal has departed from the tradition, but he also contends for a revisionist historiography that reinterprets what he recognizes to be the "standard [historical] narrative of the Trinitarian revival" (2360-361).

Holmes prosecutes his case by introducing the reader to the proponents and claims of the Trinitarian revival in chapter one. According to the revival, "[b]y the end of the nineteenth century, the doctrine of the Trinity was perceived either as wrong or, at best, as useless orthodoxy" (129-30) so that in "the second half of the twentieth century," there was "a surprising revival of interest in the doctrine of the Trinity" (114-15). Holmes attributes the revival to Barth, Rahner, and Zizioulas (70). Earlier writers, including Zizioulas himself, listed Barth, Rahner, and Zizioulas' predecessor Lossky as the three founders of the revival (Bray, "Trinity" in *New Dictionary of Theology*, 694; Houston, "The Nature and Purpose of Spiritual Theology," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 16, no. 1 (1992): 132; Schwöbel, "Introduction" in *Trinitarian Theology Today*, 1995, 2; Zizioulas, "The Doctrine of God the Trinity Today" in *The Forgotten Trinity*, 1991, 20). Perhaps Zizioulas has become more influential or the passage of time has provided a more historical perspective on the founders' identities. In order to demonstrate that the claims of the revival authors differ from the tradition, Holmes presents the major figures of the tradition and their Trinitarian doctrine from the patristic period up to the time just before the twentieth-century revival (chapters 2-9).

It seems that through his historic narrative, Holmes has cogently made his case that the twentieth-century Trinitarian revival has departed from the tradition. His primary evidence includes the contrast of four revival themes with a summary of patristic doctrine: (1) scholars of the Trinitarian revival hold to a focus on the Gospels to the exclusion of the OT in deriving the Trinity from Scripture compared to the patristic derivation of the Trinity from both the OT and NT; (2) the revival maintains a "social Trinitarianism" involving three modern psychological persons with three centers of consciousness and will compared to the patristic belief in one will in God due to the doctrine of divine simplicity; (3) the revival affirms univocal language compared to the patristic affirmation of tropic or analogical language due to divine ineffability, and (4) the revival entangles God's life with the history of the world compared to the patristic doctrine of ontological dualism of creator and creature that preserved both divine transcendence and immanence (2374-388).

Holmes' work seems to be the first or at least one of the first monographs to present a complete revisionist historiography of the Trinitarian revival's "standard narrative." Many of the revisionist historical judgments that Holmes seems to take as established have been published for at least the last two decades, with some going as far back as at least 1964, and these revisions appear to be represented as settled scholarly opinion in a growing number of reference works (Emery, *The Oxford Handbook of the Trinity* [2011]; Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics* [2003];

Phan, *The Cambridge Companion to the Trinity* [2011]). However, Holmes' revised narrative may come as a surprise to some readers, because although Grenz (*Rediscovering the Triune God*, 2004) and Kärkkäinen (*The Trinity: Global Perspectives*, 2007) recognized these revisions, they seem to have retained the standard narrative.

Holmes' revisionist narrative, or that the history of the Trinity consists of one unbroken tradition that was never lost or eclipsed and in which the so called revival is really part of a continuing conversation with Schleiermacher, Hegel, and Dorner (2156-161), is based on at least five important revisions. First, Holmes rejects de Régnon's "thesis that Latin and Greek Trinitarianisms are fundamentally different traditions" (1959-960), primarily on the bases of his interpretation of "Augustine as the greatest interpreter of the Cappadocian theology" (1472-473) and Gregory Palamas' appropriation of Augustine's psychological analogy (1957). Second, Holmes rejects Rahner's interpretation of Aquinas (that in his *Summa*, Aquinas isolated the Trinity from personal piety by separating the Trinity from and subordinating it to the doctrine of God and by detaching the Trinity from salvation history) on the basis that the later editorial titles given by English translations to the two treatises, "On the One God" and "On the Trinity," have obscured the fact that both treatises are about the Trinity (191, 199, 1864ff.). Third, Holmes rejects the idea that the doctrine of the Trinity was lost or eclipsed "[b]y the end of the nineteenth century" (129-30), primarily on the basis of a reference to Muller's *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics* (2148ff.). Fourth, Holmes rehabilitates Schleiermacher's Trinitarianism from Barth and Brunner's critiques (i.e. the Trinity is marginalized by its placement at the end of *The Christian Faith*, etc.), in part by rehashing the *Schlußstein*, "coping-stone," argument that the Trinity "crowns" Schleiermacher's theology by its placement at the end (2237ff.). Finally, Holmes attributes the revival's deviation from the tradition, at least in part, to the legacy of Harnack's thesis of a "Hellenistic infestation" of the tradition (2352, 2373-374).

While the second through fourth revisions now appear to be somewhat standard, the first and fifth revisions require further supporting evidence beyond that provided. Additional documentation for which specific revisionist scholars were reinterpreting which specific original revival authors may strengthen Holmes' presentation.

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***The Evolution of Adam: What the Bible Does and Doesn't Say About Human Origins.* By Peter Enns. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2012. 172 pages. Paperback. 2012. \$17.99.**

In his intriguing work *The Evolution of Adam*, Peter Enns offers a contribution to the faith and science literature. In it, Enns is specifically interested in one particular question within that debate, namely, reconciling the biblical account of human origins with the scientific or evolutionary account of human origins. More accurately, he is not offering a reconciliatory treatment of the two views, but offering an alternative reading of the biblical account that he argues has greater support than a more *literal* reading of the Bible on origins.

Enns begins his treatment with a briefing on the subject of evolution and a literal reading of the Genesis creation narrative (Introduction). He argues that a literal reading gives us a picture that Adam and Eve are created instantaneously, which

is in contrast to the evolutionary picture given to us in modern science which states that humans gradually come into existence through adaptation and natural selection (xiv). In fact, in one place, he states, "If evolution is correction, one can no longer accept, in any true sense of the word "historical," the instantaneous and special creation of humanity described in Genesis, specifically 1:26-31 and 2:7, 22 (xiv)." The reality is that this does not follow from what he previously states and what he proceeds to argue. This claim may be too strong even if it does entail tensions. He proceeds on the view that a literal reading with modern science is incompatible unless one is willing to make serious adjustments to the biblical story. He offers that there are four ways to handle the problem. One can either accept evolution and reject Christianity, accept Paul and reject evolution and modern science, reconcile the two, or rethink Genesis and Paul (xvii-xviii). He proceeds to argue that given the creation narrative context, we ought not read it literally as offering an answer to the question of where humans came from and how they came, for this is the job of science, but it offers a "story" on where we came from in terms of social identity (chapters 2-4). In the second section of the book, Enns engages with Paul. He and others consider "Paul's view of Adam" a more serious problem, but he offers a solution whereby one should read Adam as a metaphor in Paul and see the Adam-story as part and parcel of the real Christ. Enns argues against the notion that Paul communicates the reality that Adam was a real and literal historical figure. Adam, for Enns, should be read as a metaphor or a representation for a "people" not necessarily a single person.

The highlights of Enns treatment on the subject are clear. First, there is no other serious evangelical treatment of the issue. Second, he offers some interesting constructive readings of both Genesis and Paul that comprise what he considers essential theological matters. Three, he offers an interesting proposal as to why the motivation exists behind the affirmation of a literal historical Adam and Eve. He argues that it is based upon the desire to maintain our social or group identity (145). Having said this, there are several criticisms of the book.

Enns lacks a metaphysical ground and mechanism for explaining the foundations for Christian redemption. It would have been nice if Enns put forward a brief explanation on how humans are related theologically and how his view of origins accounts for the nature of original sin. While he does seek to exalt Christ and redemption, he lacks the foundation for understanding this redemption (i.e. *What are we being redeemed from and to? Why?*). A literal or natural reading of Scripture on Adam is reflected in ecclesiastical tradition (or so it seems) and that is that a first pair actually transmits sin in some form or fashion. Furthermore, it is unclear that direct creation of man is not compatible with evolution. If humans are souls, then it is not incompatible to say that God creates humans directly and immediately at some point in evolution. Enns raises this possibility but dismisses it rather quickly (xv).

All in all, this book will serve the evangelical community and offers a novel contribution to the evangelical literature on the science and faith debate. Enns offers a *way* of reading the Bible that is commensurate with what he considers the entailments of evolutionary thought given to us in modern science. While many evangelicals will not be convinced by his constructive proposal, it will serve individuals by way of raising the sorts of questions that need to be raised. Many who affirm a stronger form of biblical authority and inerrancy will not be satisfied with the conclusions. Yet, the debate on Adam continues.

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***Reflections of a Disenchanted Calvinist.* By Ronnie W. Rogers. Bloomington, IN: CrossBooks, 2012. 208 pages. Paperback. \$14.99.**

Across the years, Pastor Ronnie W. Rogers of the Trinity Baptist Church in Norman, Oklahoma, has developed the art and spiritual attainment of pastoral ministry to a level that few can imitate. He has served his denomination in many positions, such as the chairmanship of the Board at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary; but at the same time, he has given his focus overwhelmingly to the local church. One result of this commitment is a steady stream of young people going out from the churches he has served to enter church-related vocations around the world. In the midst of all this he has been a pastoral theologian, studying long hours and collating the results of that study not only in his preaching but also in all his pastoral ministries.

Consequently, I should not have been surprised when *Reflections of a Disenchanted Calvinist* came to my desk. But, I was surprised. First, I was aware of the fact that Pastor Rogers had inclinations toward Calvinism. He was never obnoxious with the matter, as sometimes happens, but I knew that his sympathies lay there. So, my first astonishment was to discover that his studies and observations in pastoral ministries had led him to abandon the Calvinistic position. Second, having known of his prowess as pastor theologian, I was, nevertheless, astonished at the thoroughness of his presentation bringing together the finest in thinking with a masterful grasp of Holy Scripture. *Reflections of a Disenchanted Calvinist* is a remarkable book, especially since it was penned by a man who had to churn out the manuscript amidst the daily grind of pastoral duty.

In the third place, the book is an answer to prayer. For some time I had prayed that someone would write from a non-Calvinist or Baptist position a relatively brief, yet thorough, exposition, which for all of its succinctness would be thorough and clearly demonstrate why Calvinism is not an option. This should not have surprised me either, for this is exactly what Pastor Rogers has done in this superb volume. Citing the best-known Calvinists of the present era as well as from Christian history, Pastor Rogers is able to present the objectionable nature of what this Reformed viewpoint does to one's concept of God, to say nothing of the damage done by imposing the Calvinist grid on Scripture, therefore, failing to account for much of what the Bible clearly says.

The book may seem redundant to some. A fair amount of repetition occurs in the book, but a careful reading shows why the author did this. The entire argument that he presents is dependent upon understanding not only the parts but the whole of the biblical position. Consequently Rogers weaves the threads of earlier conclusions into later arguments to show the cohesiveness of the biblical position.

Understandably, Calvinists will not appreciate the book, and they will provide their usual criticisms of the book, together with a restatement of the structure of Calvinism. There is, after all, little that is new under the sun. The explanations of the Calvinists will satisfy them, but those who have not yet made up their minds will be profoundly impacted by the sane and balanced assessment and by the determined obedience to Scripture found in *Reflections of a Disenchanted Calvinist*.

Of course, what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. Just as there are really no new ground-breaking arguments in favor of Calvinism, so there are no new turf-turning arguments against it. Ronnie Rogers has put things together in a refreshing way, but he would be the first to say there is nothing "newly discovered" in

this book. He has not slashed through the Gordian knot. The debate that has centuries of history will also continue into the future; so why my accolades for this book? At first this view is germinated in the pastor's garden rather than in the academic nursery. Therefore, it is written with a pastor's heart, not an academic mind. Second, this book is long enough to treat the subject but brief enough to be consumed by busy people, whether in the pastorate or among the laity. Third, I find the logic and the scriptural interpretation of the book compelling. For those who find Calvinism an issue and its view of election "disquieting," this book is invaluable. My prayer to God is that not a single pastor who cares about the things of God will fail to read this book and, whenever there is trouble in churches, pass it on to lay people who will find themselves identifying with the over-all love for Christ and passion that Pastor Ronnie Rogers has so profoundly presented.

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***The Church: The Gospel Made Visible.* By Mark Dever. Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2012. 177 pages. Paperback. \$12.99.**

For decades, theologians and prognosticators have declared that Americans are now living in a post-Christian era. Signs of the fading influence of a Judeo-Christian worldview can be easily verified in entertainment, polls, legislation, and personal conversations. However, more insidiously, American Christians also find themselves living in a post-church era, though this does not receive as much attention. While they may not realize or admit it, many Christians today functionally love Christ but hate his bride. In an over-realized Christian individualism, the church is simply viewed as one optional component among many to benefit a Christian's personal (and often private) relationship with the Lord. As Mark Dever, senior pastor of Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Washington, D.C., states in his book *The Church: The Gospel Made Visible*, "For too many Christians today, the doctrine of the church is like a decoration on the front of a building. Maybe it's pretty, maybe it's not, but finally it's unimportant because it bears no weight" (ix).

For this reason, Dever seeks to provide a "popular primer on the doctrine of the church" (xii). He argues that the church is critically important to God and thus should be important to believers. As the title suggests, the church is the way God makes the gospel visible to the world. Added to that, Dever says, the doctrine of the church, or ecclesiology, "is the most visible part of the Christian theology, and it is vitally connected with every other part" (ix). He writes against the prevailing atmosphere of pragmatism in modern churches, asserting that good ecclesiology is a matter of gospel clarity.

In the preface, Dever explains that this book is an updated adaptation of a chapter he wrote in the 2007 publication *A Theology for the Church*.² In comparing the two, it is obvious that *The Church* is nearly an exact replica of the chapter in Akin, Nelson, and Schemm's book both in content and structure. However, since this book is intended as a more popular level work, there are places where the language has been modified for a broader audience. The structure is subdivided under three questions about the doctrine of the church. "What Does the Bible Say?" examines Scripture's statements on the nature of the church and topics such as the marks of

²Mark Dever, "The Doctrine of the Church," in *A Theology for the Church*, ed. Daniel L. Akin, David P. Nelson, and Peter R. Schemm (Nashville: B&H 2007).

the church, ordinances, church membership, polity, discipline, purpose, and mission. “What Has the Church Believed?” provides a historical look at the marks of the church, ordinances, and organization. Finally, “How Does It All Fit Together?” builds off the first two questions and concludes that a biblically faithful church is Protestant, gathered, congregational, and baptistic (127).

One area of contrast between Dever’s chapter in Akin, Nelson, and Schemm’s book and this volume is the addition of a section titled “An Informal Introduction: The Sufficiency of the Bible for the Local Church,” which comes between the preface and the first chapter. This introduction serves as a summary of the book as well as an argument against those who say the Bible does not give instruction on church matters. Dever says Christians are not left to wonder what they are supposed to do in the church. “My hope,” Dever says, “is that the reader sees how Scripture’s beautiful sufficiency frees us from the tyranny of mere human opinion” (xxviii).

Dever can be applauded for his strong scriptural and historical defenses of both the essence and practices of local churches. His views remain consistent with his earlier works such as *A Display of God’s Glory, Nine Marks of a Healthy Church, By Whose Authority?* and *The Deliberate Church*.³ The Word of God (i.e., the Bible) is the sole authority on all matters of the church, including its nature, doctrine, and organization. Notably, Dever spends a few pages in chapter 7 explaining that he holds to the regulative principle, the view that only elements that can be clearly seen in Scripture are permissible in the worship of the church. Dever says, “In short, recognizing the regulative principle amounts to recognizing the sufficiency of Scripture applied to assembled worship. In the language of the Reformation, it amounts to *sola scriptura*” (72). With this in mind, however, he obviously does not hold to a hyper-regulative-principlism that disallows modern applications of basic scriptural principles.

With a high view of Scripture, it comes as no surprise that expository preaching plays a central role in Dever’s understanding of the church and the primary responsibility of elders/pastors. Holding to the Reformation’s view of the two marks of the church—the Word rightly preached and the ordinances rightly administered—Dever says preaching is central over the sacraments. “The Word being rightly taught should lead the church to rightly administer the ordinances of Christ,” Dever says (95). Dever also builds strong arguments from Scripture for regenerate church membership coupled with loving, grace-filled church discipline.

As for church government, Dever calls for a nuanced congregational polity led by a plurality of elders, with one elder serving as the senior pastor. He laments that many pit congregationalism against elder leadership but points out that “all three aspects of authority seen in the New Testament (individual, plural eldership, and congregational) should be enjoyed in every congregation” (142). He promotes an elder-led model against that of elder rule and explains that a biblical form of congregationalism does not necessitate competition between congregation and elders. The congregation, Dever says, has final authority over doctrine, teaching, and membership. But, he says, “The congregation’s authority is more like an emergency brake than a steering wheel. The congregation more normally recognizes than

³Mark Dever, *A Display of God’s Glory: Basics of Church Structure* (Washington, D.C.: 9Marks, 2001); Mark Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*, New Expanded ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004); Mark Dever, *By Whose Authority?: Elders in Baptist Life* (Washington, D.C.: 9Marks, 2006); Mark Dever and Paul Alexander, *The Deliberate Church: Building Your Ministry on the Gospel* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2005).

creates, responds rather than initiates, confirms rather than proposes”(143).

Other than a few stylistic and grammatical changes, very few weaknesses emerge in this work by Dever. Certainly, some who disagree with his approach to polity might blame his Reformed views on soteriology with clouding his understanding of church government, but this could not be farther from the truth. Given his Reformed theology, one would expect him to espouse a Presbyterian, elder-rule model of church government rather than elder-led congregationalism. No, Dever seeks only to be faithful to Scripture, which is to be commended.

The Church represents two decades of pastoral ministry and sincere study of the Bible in the life of Mark Dever. Anyone familiar with Dever’s ministry quickly realizes that he not only espouses this grand ecclesiology, but he has also experienced its outworking in the local church replete with all the successes and failures therein. Thus, *The Church* provides pastors with a well-structured model for healthy churches that reflect God’s glory to the world. Additionally, the book could also serve well as a teaching tool within local churches both for leaders and members. In the end, this book deals a blow to nominal Christianity and provides a wake-up call to lackadaisical churches around the world.

Keith Collier

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Historical Studies

***A Cultural Handbook to the Bible.* By John J. Pilch. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012. 307 pages. Paperback. \$26.00**

This is a unique book and difficult to place within a genre or type. The core of the book is a collection of bimonthly articles the author wrote in *The Bible Today*. This book is also a sequel to an earlier book, *The Cultural Dictionary of the Bible* (Liturgical Press, 1999). In the first book, Pilch collated articles written from 1993 to 1997. That book was well received and translated into other languages. Hence this new book is the collected articles published from 1998 to 2006.

The aim of the articles is to illustrate the biblical texts within their proper cultural and historical context. The author has focused on Middle Eastern culture and social scientific approaches used to interpret the biblical text. This book is different from the first, in that it is a narrative versus a list of dictionary entries. The book is grouped by various subjects into eight major sections: The Cosmos, Earth, Persons, Family, Language, Human Consciousness, God and the Spirit World, and Entertainment. Within each of these sections there are from five to nine topics. For example, in the section about Earth, there are six topics: Desert and Wilderness, Caves, Swamps, Snakes, Dragons, and Mirrors and Glass. It is clear that each of the topics was originally an individual article written for the journal (*The Bible Today*). The author grouped these topics into sections, whether or not the topics belonged together, or introduced the reader to a specific topic.

The section on Earth implies that it is going to be about the ancient Israelite views of the natural world or an introduction of historical geography. The first topic discusses the regions of the wilderness. The next topic is about caves. The introduction mentions the cave where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found, then it mentions geological aspects of Syro-Palestine as well as prehistoric caves and some mentions of people in caves from the biblical text (e.g. Lot and his daughters, imagery of clefts

of the rock in the Song of Solomon). It concludes with Eusebius' connection with three special caves in the life of Jesus (cave of his birth, his tomb, Ascension cave). This topic is a scattering of data about caves and discusses Byzantine pilgrimage and church sites and their connection to early church fathers and pilgrims mystical experiences. The next topic is about swamps from Moses in the Delta to Jesus' baptism in the Jordan.

Pilch next discusses snakes and then dragons (although he notes the term for dragon in the Old Testament is snake; which, in some translations, particularly in Exodus, are probably crocodiles). The last topic is mirrors and glass. This section mentions Pauline metaphors of mirrors (e.g. 1 Cor. 13:12) and ancient Roman glass.

The reader does not learn about the various regions of Palestine, nor an overview of the animal and material world. We know that there were deserts, snakes, caves, swamps, and glass. Surely this section does not accurately reflect the topic—Earth. This example is representative of the other sections of the book. Pilch moves freely in his discussions between Old Testament and New Testament interspersing with the modern period. The author notes in his preface that the book should not be read from beginning to end, but by choosing topics from the Table of Contents that interest the reader. This is not a reference book, nor can it be used as a textbook. It is written for a Catholic lay audience and the topics individually would have been informative and insightful in their original presentation of a popular journal. Pilch is at his best when he is discussing New Testament background, especially the life and times of Jesus. It is unfortunate that the author did not rewrite his original essays into a synthetic work, as he is an excellent communicator and is a scholar who is comfortable with social scientific approaches to the Bible. His expertise in Middle Eastern culture provides much needed insight to the cultural context of the sayings of Jesus and the context of the world of the Bible. For those who have followed his bimonthly contributions, this is an excellent collection of his insights into the biblical world.

Steven M. Ortiz

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***Rediscovering the Church Fathers: Who They Were and How They Shaped the Church.* By Michael A. G. Haykin. Wheaton: Crossway, 2011. 172 pages. Paperback. \$16.99.**

Echoing a call by Thomas Oden and Andrew Purves, Michael Haykin is advocating a rediscovery of the church fathers; a process he describes as a vital need for Evangelicals. Haykin defines “church fathers” as those patristic writers who composed their works between the first and eighth centuries (16). He contends that a careful study of these early church leaders frees us from the myopia of our own age, establishes the historical foundations (“map”) for the Christian life, informs our understanding of Scripture, corrects mistaken views of what the Fathers actually believed, helps us understand church heresies, and establishes humility in light of the testimonies of these who modeled faith often in hostile times.

Haykin refers to the Fathers whom he has included in this work as “case studies.” His criteria for selecting them is somewhat arbitrary, referring to them as “men that I have listened to and walked with” (29), but he adds that part of the reason for their selection are the issues with which they dealt.

The Fathers that Haykin has chosen to accentuate in this volume are: Ignatius of Antioch, the author of the letter to Diognetus, Origen, Cyprian, Ambrose, Basil

of Caesarea, and Patrick. One notes the irony of a statement made by the author in an Appendix with reference to the writing of Pelikan, “[his] omissions are matched by some odd inclusions” (163). Indeed, one may have that same sentiment when considering Haykin’s inclusion of Patrick and omission of others. However, in light of the author’s autobiographical chapter indicating his Irish roots, the presence of Patrick makes sense.

Each chapter focuses on the context of the church father under discussion, noting the unique issues with which they dealt. Thus, the studies focus on the martyrdom of Ignatius, the apologetic focus of the author of the letter to Diognetus, the faithfulness of Origen (despite the obvious concerns in his theology) as a confessor of the Christian faith, the emphases on the Lord’s Supper in Cyprian and Ambrose, Basil’s steadfast insistence of the full deity of the Holy Spirit, and the humble faithfulness of Patrick.

The book concludes with an autobiographical explanation of Haykin’s journey in studying the church fathers and two appendices. The first appendix is a brief guide for reading the church fathers, which—though informative—would have been more helpful if expanded. In essence, Haykin gives the reader a “where to begin” strategy. The final appendix is a brief study of Jaroslav Pelikan’s contribution to the study of the patristics.

The author is clear that the writings of the church fathers are not Scripture and that we have license to disagree with them, but we listen to them respectfully as “senior conversation partners about Scripture and meaning” (29). He faithfully identifies how contemporary issues impacted the lives and writing of the Fathers and how their ministries impacted the world around them.

In the end, Haykin’s work is interesting and enjoyable to read. His chapters on Origen and Basil stand out as capstones of the work. They are both insightful to read and relevant in current theological discussions. More interaction with contemporary research on the Fathers and a more clear explanation of the organization of the book and the inclusion of the Fathers would have added depth and clarity. Moreover, a summary chapter addressing how the church today could apply the lessons that the Fathers taught would have been helpful.

Haykin’s work adds a needed voice to an often overlooked heritage of our faith and theology. One hopes his call to rediscovery will be heeded.

Deron J. Biles
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***James Robinson Graves: Staking the Boundaries of Baptist Identity.* By James A. Patterson. Studies in Baptist Life and Thought. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2012. 238 pages. Paperback. \$19.99.**

In the Studies of Baptist Life and Thought series (edited by Michael A. G. Haykin), B&H Academic seeks to reintroduce great, historical Baptist figures to a new generation. The series consists of works penned on John A. Broadus, Andrew Fuller, Adoniram Judson, and James Robinson Graves. This volume, written by James A. Patterson, professor of Christian Thought and Tradition and associate dean of the School of Theology and Missions at Union University, “seeks to blend biographical insight with a more thematic approach that focuses principally on [Graves] controversial beliefs about ecclesiology, Baptist history, and eschatology” (xv).

Graves’ life spanned most of the nineteenth century, in which he was an edu-

cator, a pastor, a journalist, an author, and a Confederate soldier. He was born in 1820 to Lois Schnell and Zuinglius Calvin Graves in Chester, Vermont where he grew in the shadow of Separate Baptist stalwarts such as Isaac Backus, John Leland, and J. Newton Brown—each contributing to a unique aspect of the young Graves' ecclesiological development. He was licensed in 1842, albeit “without his knowledge,” and ordained shortly thereafter (23). The bulk of Graves' ministry took place in Nashville, and later, Memphis, where he would leave an indelible mark upon middle Tennessee and upon Southern Baptists as a whole.

Graves' increasing interest in Baptist life and thought developed alongside the rise of Campbellism, which, while similar to much of Baptist doctrine, held to the doctrine of baptismal regeneration and “opposed any practices that could not be squared with the letter of the New Testament” (24). As such, Graves was uniquely poised to grow into the great defender of Baptist beliefs. This Baptist warrior—a term applied to him by Baptist historian, W.W. Barnes—became embattled throughout his life and ministry against the Campbellites, Methodists, Pedobaptists, and, ultimately, against other Southern Baptists who dared to challenge Graves' historical or theological convictions.

He taught that one could trace the true church (Baptists) back to the New Testament period; however, “Graves... came close to identifying Baptists through history not so much by their doctrines but rather by the blood that they spilled because they bucked the established church” (111). In doing so, “the identity that he popularized as ‘Baptist’ intermingled Baptists with a potpourri of heretics, ecclesiastical misfits, and valiant reformers who challenged the established church but did not necessarily articulate Baptist doctrines” (121). His defense of Baptist succession provided the foundation from which he argued that Baptist churches alone were independent of ties to the Roman Catholic Church; thus, Baptists were neither Catholic nor Protestant. Pedobaptists and Methodists, then, fail the test of ecclesiastical order, for they all stem from the same Roman Catholic source, and “no one is amenable to church membership who has not been immersed by an administrator, *who is himself an immersed believer*” (45).

Patterson demonstrates several shifts in Graves' thought, especially after the Civil War. During this time, it appears that Graves shifts from a position of close communion, “which allowed for intercommunion between Baptist churches,” to that of closed communion, which insists that “the Lord's Supper was a local church ordinance exclusively for its members and no one else” (171). Further, Graves' eschatology shifts from what might be classified as historic premillennialism to a form of dispensationalism. Interestingly, Patterson notes that this eschatological shift near the end of Graves' life led him to participate with members of other denominations (or societies, as Graves averred), which demonstrated a subtle shift in the manner in which Graves interacted with non-Baptists.

Patterson's work cannot be easily classified as biography. Despite Graves' copious denominational, historical, and theological writings, diaries and intimate details of his life are scarce. Most of that which we know of Graves' personal life has been collected and sifted from the diaries of others (often his opponents), church records, and a biography written by Graves' son-in-law, which Patterson describes as “waxing to the extreme limits of hagiography” (166). Due to these constraints, Patterson emphasizes the thought and doctrinal development of Graves, rather than the actual details of Graves' life. This thought and development, however, is that which makes Graves such a fascinating historical figure. Though readers may differ with Graves

on any number of ecclesiological, historical, or eschatological points, they must acknowledge with the author that “J.R. Graves was easily one of the most dominant, energetic, and polemical personalities in nineteenth-century Baptist life” (xiv).

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Studies in Ethics and Philosophy

***Imaginative Apologetics*. Edited by Andrew Davison. Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 2011. 167 pages. Paperback. \$22.50.**

The Enlightenment project of reducing knowledge to deductive reason and certain proofs has long been acknowledged to be a failure. It simply cannot achieve its aims. Still, there are those who continue to cling to its ways of thinking. The authors of *Imaginative Apologetics* contend that one of those adherents is the church both in its theology and its apologetics (3-8). They argue that the church needs to be freed from this false worldview and immersed in a new world view that utilizes a fuller account of reason.

This fuller account of reason involves the use of imagination as connected to reason, and as a means of arguing for God and theological truths. Reason, the authors contend, both knows and desires leading us to seek truth in many ways (xxv). As a result, the church should embrace the whole of reason and give an expansive view of what it means to be a human being (xxvii-xxviii). It must return to a more humble position of reaching out to the needs and desires of people. Apologetics should be both rational and attractive because human beings are more than cold intellect and we cannot convince others on purely rational grounds, only by being attractive and more persuasive (9-11).

Rationality begins within a community of people with presumptions/axioms in which people choose to have faith since all thought is done through prior commitments. These axioms not only guide how we think, but also are tested and changed. Since no way of thought has pride of place, the church invites people to see what its worldview and community is like and how it is better than other worldviews (13-17, 26-28). This is the point where imagination becomes important. Imagination helps to awaken people to their desire for absolute truth. By stoking the fires of imagination, the church can get people to reflect on their experiences of reality and the mysteries that it contains. People are stoked to think, make parallels, and establish meaning concerning reality that takes on a theological nature and gives them a sense of the divine because people desire to go beyond just the bare facts (31-45).

According to the authors, people would not have the necessary ingredients by which they can reason without imagination. Perception gives us data, imagination meaning, and reason truth to which people willfully assent (73-78). This imaginative apologetic, however, involves more than just argumentation. The church needs a healthy spiritual life that points to God and will cause people to take the gospel seriously (96). This apologetic should also be aware of the culture and speak to it using the culture’s hermeneutic. As a result, the culture will understand the gospel and see ways in which it truly yearns for God (112-25).

However, this approach to theology and apologetics has some serious issues. Though the authors reject the Enlightenment project, they take their view—the mechanics of rationality—as rationally foundational. All people reason in the

manner they claim. As a result, their position on the mechanisms of epistemology takes pride of place, which is exactly opposite to what their argument asserts. If it does not take pride of place, then one can only judge it as being better than the alternatives, and how can he do that if all judgment takes place within the biased presuppositional confines of a worldview? One can only have an opinion as to what is the best explanation, not knowledge.

This view of apologetics also appears to be based in a phenomenological philosophy. Knowledge is more of a personal and/or communal enterprise than a grasping of reality as it is making imagination so important to rationality. Knowledge is not discovery of reality, but a construction of concepts that are cast onto reality in order to understand it. Such a philosophy raises a fundamental problem. If knowledge of reality is based on imaginative constructs filtered through the presuppositions of the community in which one lives, does he or any community really have true knowledge of reality? It does not appear so. No one has access to the way reality really is, only to their biased, communal conception. Such a philosophy inspires doubt and skepticism, not knowledge.

Further, why believe that rational thought requires imagination? What does one imagine when he deduces that $2+2=4$ or infers that *A* causes *B* or judges that one explanation is better than another? It seems perfectly possible that a person can make rational deductive, inductive, and abductive inferences without imagining anything, and simply because a person(s) develops a word, concept, or model to explain his perception of reality does not indicate that imagination is involved. It is not obvious what place imagination has in reasoning if it has a place at all.

Lastly, this view of apologetics also fails to take seriously the problems that sin throws into the epistemological mix. If all human beings are sinners, then we should not expect either our imaginations or our cultural hermeneutics to be reliable guides to the truth. We also cannot expect to utilize other cultural hermeneutics to present theological truths since some hermeneutics will not be compatible with those truths. As a result, it is not evident how an imaginative apologetic is useful in a fallen world.

Graham Floyd

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Studies in Preaching and Pastoral Ministry

***Prophetic Preaching.* By Craig Brian Larson. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2012. 150 Pages. Paperback. \$12.27.**

Many religious men and women have attempted to prophesy about the world's end. Others have attempted more daring predictions, such as identifying himself or herself as the coming Messiah or have predicted themselves ushers of a "New Kingdom." Prophecy fails when those who attempt it forget the primary guideline needed: the Word of God. *Prophetic Preaching*, part of The Preacher's Toolbox series, was written to provide a guide for those who preach prophetically detailing the need for sound expository analysis and good character. Craig Larson—using an interview, question-and-answer format—selected leading voices in today's churches and seminaries to provide such a framework. The book serves valiantly as a necessary marker for prophetic preachers. This review will address several contributions, as well as one area this reviewer felt needed more specificity.

"Chan bases prophetic preaching on God's Word—not the preacher's person-

ality, brilliance, or effort” (11). His emphasis on a text-primary approach is assuring and strong. The standard upon which preaching is drawn upon must be Scripture. Prophetic preaching is no different. Chan further emphasizes that although there are good preachers, there are also false prophets, for “when you look at the biblical warnings about false prophets, much of it has to do with their character: their greed, lack of love, self-centeredness, and pride” (13). Preachers must govern their lives with a watchful eye.

James MacDonald emphasizes the role of biblical authority in prophetic preaching. He writes, “I preach the authority of God’s Word without apology” (29). Biblical authority holds true to God’s words, and as such, wields the absolute truth and standard for our lives. Further, he adds that there are no excuses for a preacher not to engage the word, for “Christ also preached the Word without apology” (30).

John Koessler further develops the task of prophetic preaching. “Preaching,” he writes, “is the proclamation of God’s Word, but it’s also a form of two-way communication. It’s not just what you say; it’s how people hear what you say” (89). In order for the preacher to be effective, he must preach the whole counsel of God and be heard. He follows with two effective ways that test the authority of the audience today: “(1) Is the preacher saying anything that applies to where I am? (2) Did I experience God while the preacher was speaking?” (96).

Andrew Thompson’s chapter was especially enlightening; for it not only addressed the power of God’s word, but provided a systematic and structural approach to the Old Testament prophets. Thompson argues that tracing prophetic Scripture and its fulfillment in history leads the preacher to speculation, and suggests that “by focusing on the *covenant context* of a prophetic speech, preachers can apply such a passage to their own churches in richly textured ways that are faithful to the biblical authority’s intent while being helpful for building community” (121). Maintaining this focus leads the preacher to avoid speculation, and emphasize the character and plan of God. This recognizes the person and work of Christ as the primary thrust of prophecy.

In Buchanan’s chapter—“Preaching in the City of Man”—the contributor fell into a common vice that plagues many who preach the Old Testament Scriptures: moralizing the text. He glosses over the distinguishing items in the text and focuses on several major themes, such as love, purity, and morality. While none of the above themes are inconsistent with the Scriptures, proper hermeneutics demand that the preacher focus on the Word and words of God rather than merely the themes of God. Buchanan insists that preachers learn to develop a “Daniel spirit” in preaching, allowing for firmness and civility (26). According to Buchanan, maintaining a civil tone is crucial to the preaching task, for “if we don’t ‘get the tone right,’ we won’t lead anyone to Christ” (19). His point that the manner in which one preaches prophetically plays a major role in the manner in which he will be heard is well-taken, even if overstated. The power of preaching—prophetic or otherwise—lies neither in the preacher or his tone, but in the very Word of God.

Prophetic preaching appears to be missing in today’s culture and society. Often it is not well received because so many have focused on speculation and assumptions, rather than the truth of God’s Word. The contributions in *Prophetic Preaching* emphasize the vast importance of the inerrancy and efficacy of the Scriptures as foundational to the prophetic preaching task.

Philip Koo
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***Building Below the Waterline: Strengthening the Life of a Leader.* By Gordon MacDonald. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2011. 250 pages. Paperback. \$10.48.**

The title of this work conveys the image of building a foundation that will support a life amidst the storms of ministry. With the wisdom of experience and the honesty of lessons learned through failure, Gordon MacDonald has written a timely work on timeless principles necessary for success in ministry.

With his normal ease-of-reading style and compelling illustrations, MacDonald brings the readers into his life and we look over his shoulder as he journals life-lessons. Some of the material, especially the chapter on the Root of Leadership, comes from some earlier writings by MacDonald, but fit within the scope of this work.

In one sense, this work can only have been written after a lifetime of ministry credentials. Knowledge learned from study is not the same as understanding gleaned from experience. In another sense, one imagines that this book was both a joy and struggle to write. MacDonald has chronicled many of the keys that have guided his ministry; but, he has also recounted some of the painful failures of his life.

The book is very generally comprised of two sections: the inner life of a leader and the outer life of a leader; though the sections tend to overlap much like these two aspects converge in the life of the minister. Each of the twenty-four chapters contains insights related to issues important for every servant of the Lord. The author deals with character issues, such as calling, character, motivation for ministry, integrity, compassion, prayer, temptation, and forgiveness; details of ministry, including late-night phone calls, dealing with difficult people, church growth, and church conflict; and leadership lessons on building trust, dealing with difficult issues, how to finish well, and how to leave effectively.

The two most compelling chapters in the book (“DNF: Did Not Finish,” and “Pastor’s Progress”) address the darkest moments of the author’s life and what God taught him through them. MacDonald is transparent about his own failures, expresses appropriate safeguards necessary for ministers, and is a testimony of the grace of the Lord. A follow-up section or chapter on how to help ministers who have failed to recover might have accentuated the value of these chapters.

This is not a book to be read through quickly. It needs to be digested slowly. These are safeguards. They are words to the wise; to those who have ears to hear. The goal is to allow others to learn from his experiences. The lessons are well-taught. I hope they are well-received.

Deron J. Biles

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Studies in Christian Education

***Renewing Minds: Serving Church and Society through Christian Higher Education, Revised and Expanded.* By David Dockery. Forward by Robert P. George. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2008. xxii + 152 pages. Paperback, \$19.99.**

As the President of Union University, perhaps the most significant university closely aligned with the sizable and influential Southern Baptist Convention, David Dockery stands in a unique position to offer a way forward for Christian higher education, which he also might call a way backward. Dockery observed, “The

integration of faith and knowledge is the most distinctive task of Christian higher education—always was, is now, and always will be” (84) and noted the debilitating effects of “the separation of faith from learning and teaching . . . even in church-related institutions” (4).

At the heart of the book is a call to Christian colleges and universities to re-focus their energies upon the integration of faith and knowledge, learning, and teaching and upon the resulting unity of knowledge across fields of study. According to Dockery,

This means that Christ-centered higher education cannot be content to display its Christian foundations merely with chapel services and required Bible classes. We must bring students to a mature reflection of what the Christian faith means for every field of study. (21)

The edition under review is the second revised and expanded edition, published in 2008, only one year after the original version. Dockery noted in his preface that he attempted to reformat the book for presentation to an academic audience (xviii). The inclusion of endnotes must have been part of that effort.

While Dockery called the work “an introduction to the field of Christian higher education,” the book gives the impression of a manifesto for what he calls the integration of faith and knowledge toward the unity of knowledge and learning. He described this unity, or universe of knowledge, which is an old idea at the very root of the concept of the *university*. “Thus specific bodies of knowledge relate to one another not just because scholars work together in community, not just because interdisciplinary work broadens our knowledge, but because all truth has its source in God, composing a single universe of knowledge” (12).

In *Renewing Minds*, Dockery describes the sorts of emphases and organization necessary to implement and to maintain such an integration. The book follows along those lines, beginning with the foundational issues of integration, working through the organizational structures of a shared community a college or university might require in the development of a consistent model of integration, developing a framework for a theology for Christian higher education, and concluding with the global mission of Christian higher education.

The book rightly has garnered great praise from leadership in the Evangelical and Christian higher education communities. It is a monumental work that required years to develop and to produce, and it is worth the time of every Christian to read.

Critics of the effort, most of whom seem to believe that the book offers nothing truly new, might not grasp fully the Bible’s declaration, “So there is nothing new under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 1:9c). Leaders understand that often the most important work is the reorganization and presentation of old ideas in new ways that challenge the *status quo*. Dockery has achieved that, offering the challenge of a virtual remake of the Christian university as we know it today.

The most impressive aspect of the book is its brevity, given the landscape it covers. Its concision reflects its nature as an “introduction” and leaves several matters largely undone and others wanting. While beginning and concluding with biblical and theological groundings, the book makes no real effort to present, or even to develop, more than an appeal for a theology for Christian higher education. Dockery started in right directions, such as when he declared, “The essence of the Christian faith is that God is Savior, but we fail to understand the comprehensiveness of the Christian faith unless we also see God as Creator, Sustainer, Ruler, Father, and

Judge” (82). What a great beginning that was followed by less than two pages to the end of that chapter.

Included in that theology would be an epistemology, a biblical, Christian understanding of knowledge and truth. Perhaps the most urgent need left underdeveloped, the epistemological foundations for the integration of faith and knowledge, requires a clear understanding of just what knowledge and truth are. Dockery did not ignore the matter. In what might be called his thesis statement, he tied truth and knowledge together directly: “I would suggest that the starting point of loving God with our minds, thinking Christianly, points us to a unity of knowledge, a seamless whole, because all true knowledge flows from the one Creator to His one creation” (12). At the same time, one might ask just what “true knowledge” is.

Again, given that the book is an introduction, the omission of a fully orbed epistemology of Christian higher education was necessary. However, much is left open to the imagination by this particular deficit. For only one example, Dockery built much upon the familiar statement, “All truth is God’s truth,” credited in idea to Augustine and granted book title status by Arthur Holmes. Dockery plainly implied that it means that every field of study is open to Christian investigation. However, in a scientific age, would the statement mean that anything that “science” claims to be truth actually is God’s truth?

In the scope of this opus, these are small matters that call for further work by all of us engaged in this field. An important work, *Renewing Minds* demands both a reading and a response.

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