

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible*. By Karel van der Toorn. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007, x + 401 pp., \$35.00.

In September 2006 Karel van der Toorn became the president of the Universiteit van Amsterdam and the Hogeschool van Amsterdam. Thorough understanding and insight into the languages and cultures of Mesopotamia and ancient Israel mark van der Toorn's past writings, and *Scribal Culture* is no exception. In many ways this volume is a culmination of his research into both of these areas.

Van der Toorn covers considerable ground in this volume. He surveys literacy and authorship in the ancient world, the culture and vocation of scribes, production of the Moses and prophetic traditions, and the issues of revelation and canon. Van der Toorn believes that literacy in ancient Israel was fairly unaffected by the innovation of the alphabetic script and comparable to literacy within Mesopotamia, which employed a far more complex writing system (p. 11). While robust literacy was probably fairly low, there are hints that functional literacy, especially in the upper echelons of society, was not as scarce as some scholars assert. Van der Toorn highlights evidence for literacy in ancient Israel (pp. 178–82), although he does not discuss the fact that Jdg 8:14 can be interpreted as an instance of comic relief instead of evidence for the ability of young men to write down names. Furthermore, he states that ancient writings had many functions such as memory aids for messengers; archival purposes; support for oral performances; and monuments. However, he contends that the concept of books is anachronistic; the documents that compose the Bible should be thought of as discrete works instead that received the appearance of cohesion through later redactors (p. 16).

In a break from his typically careful treatments, van der Toorn presents a rather quirky reconstruction of the text history of Deuteronomy. He states that starting with Josiah, there was only one copy of the book in existence (aside from perhaps the king's copy). The temple scribes did not permit copies in order to prevent the proliferation of variant texts: "If no copies existed but the master copy, the priests were in full control of the text, its transmission, and its editions—including the scribes who worked under priestly patronage" (pp. 147–48). However, with use scrolls eventually wear out and van der Toorn estimates that a scroll could last around forty years. Analogous to subsequent recessions of the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, van der Toorn proposes that each time the scribes replaced the scroll they made additions and engaged in other editorial/authorial activity to produce a new edition of Deuteronomy. Van der Toorn combines this mechanism with Robert Pfeiffer's model of four editions of Deuteronomy. He proposes that the original Deuteronomy scroll of 620 BC was replaced at these intervals: 580, 540, and 520 BC (p. 149). These replacements produced new editions of the scroll that van der Toorn labels as Covenant; Torah; History; and Wisdom Editions, respectively (p. 151).

At this point van der Toorn's methodological approach does not cohere. Why would a group of temple scribes who jealously guarded the master copy of the scroll in order to prevent any variant copies feel so free to engage in editorial activity that substantially changed subsequent editions of Deuteronomy? A possible response to this could be that the scribes did not mind if the scroll was changed, it was just a matter of who did the

changing—in other words, the temple scribes reserved this right for themselves. While this is a possibility, to my mind it is not likely.

Van der Toorn's notion that the scribes allowed only one master copy stems from an overly zealous interpretation of Deut 17:8. This passage merely states that each new king should have his own personal copy of the Torah prepared in the presence of the Levitical priests; it makes no mention of any textual restriction. (The NIV obscures the notion that this passage reflects a ritual that coincides with royal ascension by adding the definite article to "king" in Deut 17:15 and inserting "the king" in 17:16.) Furthermore, if the scribal priests were the only ones with power over the "Deuteronomic" texts, why would they have stood for the devastating portrayal of Micayhu/Micah in Judges or the story in Samuel of how *laissez-faire* Eli and his deadbeat sons, all priests no less, lost the ark? If the Mesopotamian scribes were free to insert the flood account into the *Gilgamesh Epic*, would not the Second Temple priests, the guardians of the one-and-only master copy of "Deuteronomic" writings, have exerted their power to edit away the ridicule and satire of their profession within these texts?

Van der Toorn discusses "Manufacturing the Prophets" in a chapter that uses the book of Jeremiah as a paradigmatic example of the construction of prophetic texts. He states that scribes used past recollections and written sources and edited them into new, creative products (p. 203). However, he says, "While there may have been oracle records on file in the temple archive, it is unlikely that they played a decisive role in the composition of the prophetic books of the Bible" (p. 184). The scribalization of the prophets not only produced new writings, but it also transferred revelatory authority from the spoken word to written texts (pp. 231–32).

The most helpful facet of *Scribal Culture* is the analogy drawn between the stream of tradition within Mesopotamia and the formation of the Bible in ancient Israel. While almost no "precursor" texts exist for the Bible, there are "forerunner" editions for many Mesopotamian texts. This provides scholars with a valuable window into the process of scribal transmission within the ancient Near East. Even though van der Toorn integrates this analogue with biblical studies, he focuses almost exclusively upon the idea that scribal culture only functioned under the auspices of formal governmental structures, particularly the temple (p. 82). This leads him to focus his attention upon the Achaemenid and early Hellenistic period for the origin of the Bible as well as the Second Temple in Jerusalem as the official patron (pp. 98, 102). However, before the Ur III dynasty (H. J. Nissen, "The Education and Profession of the Scribe," in *Archaic Book-keeping*, p. 8) and after its fall (A. R. George, "In Search of the É.DUB.BA.A," in *An Experienced Scribe*, pp. 132–35) as well as during periods of the first millennium (J. A. Brinkman, "The Babylonian Chronicle Revisited," in *Lingering Over Words*, p. 75, n. 13) scribal schools functioned as private entities. While some sections of the Bible were written during the Achaemenid period, we should not rule out the possibility that many texts were composed earlier and preserved in scribal curriculum within the private sector.

Furthermore, scribal contribution to the formation and transmission of the Bible was not a monolithic process. Many tributaries fed into the stream of tradition ranging from various textual sources, private, royal, and temple scribes, as well as independent prophets. The Second Temple scribal priests did not have a monopoly upon the biblical text.

In spite of these critiques, this volume is extremely valuable. *Scribal Culture* is a must-read for anyone interested in the issues of the formation, transmission, and standardization of the Hebrew Bible.

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*The Majesty of God in the Old Testament: A Guide for Preaching and Teaching.* By Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007, 174 pp., \$16.99.

While writing this review, I felt like the proverbial dwarf on the shoulders of a giant in OT studies. Kaiser is no stranger to OT studies, having written extensively on the topics of OT exegesis and theology starting with what would become standards, his *The Old Testament in Contemporary Preaching* in 1973 and continuing with his *Toward an Old Testament Theology* in 1978 (just to mention two examples). Kaiser's expertise in the field is now showcased in *The Majesty of God* (2007), filling a void in the presentation of the OT.

In the introduction, Kaiser precisely states his thesis and lays out his methodology. He succinctly states that "in this book, I wish to give God's people new insight into this avenue of thinking and believing by reviewing ten outstanding Old Testament texts that set forth the majesty of our Lord" (p. 9). He accomplishes this in such a way as to provide a guide for preaching and teaching the OT (per subtitle). The methodology he follows throughout consists of (1) presenting an aspect of study that delineates the general appeal of the biblical text under consideration; (2) identifying the topic/focal point of the text; (3) applying the "famous six interrogatives" to the passage; and (4) determining a homiletical key word that yields the sermon proposition. While he gives a negative example of a homiletical key word, it would also be helpful at this point to include a positive example. A couple more items are also missing at this early stage, namely the sermon proposition *per se* and the sermon/lesson outline. This is such a carefully crafted guide overall; it is surprising that Kaiser does not discuss these. At any rate, some general guidelines would certainly be helpful here.

Following the preview of his methodology, Kaiser anticipates, in good OT numerical fashion, three possible objections to teaching/preaching from the OT. While the approximately six pages are in no way proportional to the debate surrounding the relationship between the OT and NT, Kaiser does offer a forthright conclusion/solution.

The meat of the book consists of ten chapters in which Kaiser explicates ten OT passages that emphasize some aspect of God's majesty. These include Isa 40:9–31; Dan 4:1–37; Num 20:1–13; Jer 32:1–44; Mic 7:11–20; Zech 4:1–14; Ps 139:1–18; Ezek 1:1–28; 1 Chron 29:6–19; and Isa 6:1–13. Kaiser is faithful to his stated methodology in that for each passage he discusses a special subject that presents the general appeal of the passage. He accomplishes this in a variety of ways, including key word studies; archaeological studies; historical and cultural background studies; and systematic theological studies. In each case he demonstrates a wide range of expertise. For each passage, Kaiser identifies the topic; applies the six interrogatives; discovers the homiletical key word; and crafts a concisely stated sermon/lesson proposition.

In his *Guide for Preaching and Teaching*, Kaiser epitomizes biblical exegesis in the following ways: he directs attention to the particular genre of a passage; he gives attention to key words and phrases; he pays attention to technical details of a passage; he uses humor throughout; he deals with problematic texts (e.g. *peruq* vs. *padah* in Dan 4:27 [Aram. 24]); he tackles controversial subjects and offers biblically based solutions; he explicates a given passage within the framework of salvation-history; he anchors the biblical text in its historical and cultural setting while making appropriate contemporary application; he exemplifies the necessary attempt to achieve a balanced approach to key theological issues; he writes in such a way as to bring the text to life; and he ends each chapter with a set of contemplative questions/statements that are directly related to the subject matter of the chapter and focuses the reader's attention to God's majesty.

Kaiser's *Majesty of God in the Old Testament* serves as an excellent guide/model for exegeting OT texts and drawing appropriate contemporary applications. I highly

recommend Kaiser's work to every preacher and teacher who wishes to take the word of God seriously and who is willing to do the spadework of laborious exegesis. Not only is *The Majesty of God* an excellent model for doing exegesis, it is highly devotional in its content, constantly directing the reader's attention to God's wonder, awesomeness, and majesty.

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*Scripture as Communication: Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics.* By Jeannine Brown. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007, vii + 315 pp., \$21.99 paper.

With *Scripture as Communication: Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics*, Jeannine Brown joins the ranks of introductory hermeneutic textbooks. Defining Scripture as a communicative act, Brown's model fosters a dialogue between Scripture and the exegete, guiding contextualization while guarding against common historical mistakes of focusing upon author, text, or reader to the detriment of the others.

While many introductions to biblical hermeneutics may be characterized as pedantic or idiosyncratic, Brown offers a clear and concise hybrid of recent scholarship and traditional introductory topics, thus bridging the gap between basic Bible study methodology and technical discussions of hermeneutical theory. Scholarly yet practical, *Scripture as Communication* surveys the historical and theoretical foundations of the modern hermeneutic debate, while never losing sight of helping readers in their ability to interpret and contextualize the Bible.

The text is divided into two sections. The first section offers a theoretical foundation for Brown's approach, while the second section addresses traditional introductory topics from this perspective. Well supported with ample footnotes, each chapter concludes with a brief summary and most chapters include a short bibliography of suggested texts for further research. Following the main body of the text are five appendices specifically aimed toward the novice reader and a lengthy bibliography of key works in the hermeneutical debate.

In keeping with a style that strives for clarity, chapter 1 reviews seven concepts pertinent to Brown's approach. Each concept is defined so as to introduce the reader to the concept and its particular role in the field of hermeneutics. In addition, Brown subtly introduces the reader to key hermeneutical discussions traditionally plagued by debate.

In chapter 2, Brown begins to explain her hermeneutical approach. Drawing from linguistic and literary theory, she describes her model of interpretation as eclectic, self-critical, and consistent with the manner in which Scripture defines itself. Arguably the most conceptually difficult chapter in the book for the novice, the scholar will recognize the introductory fashion in which the various theories are described.

Chapter 3 offers an historical survey of the development of modern hermeneutical theory. Organized around the roles of author, text, and reader, the chapter discusses the most commonly accepted figures in these debates. A well-written chapter that stands as an excellent introduction to the history and development of biblical hermeneutical theory, its footnotes and suggested readings offer easy access to more substantial treatments of hermeneutical debate and development.

Recognizing that the previous two chapters may cause meaning to appear as too difficult a thing to be grasped, Brown uses chapters 4 and 5 to argue how her approach

aids in the discovery of meaning. In chapter 4, meaning is affirmed as complex, elaborate, connected to author, text, and reader, and, most importantly, within one's grasp. A necessary chapter, it offers insight to Brown's nuanced model, allowing readers to recognize her contribution to biblical hermeneutics through a communicative model.

Elaborating upon these affirmations, chapter 5 discusses the complexity with which meaning may be expressed. Again drawing upon linguistic theory, Brown illustrates how such concepts as "implications," "echoes," "allusions," and "perlocution" create depth of meaning and a need for a careful and holistic interaction with the text.

Chapter 6, "An Invitation to Active Engagement," is a preemptive answer to the potential danger of reading a text as communication. Through a series of gracious warnings and cautions, Brown invites the reader to use her hermeneutical model, while transitioning from her unique approach to the more traditional topics found in discussions of Bible study methodology.

Chapters 7–9 turn to the roles of genre, biblical languages, and historical context in the interpretation of the Bible. Although engaging traditional topics, Brown consistently connects these ideas to her interpretive model, thus linking the theoretical and traditional halves of her book.

Recognizing that most readers seek more than an academic understanding of the Bible, Brown returns to the concept of contextualization in chapters 11 and 12. Discussing what it means to "talk at the intersection of the text and my world," the reader is guided away from an analysis of the text that obscures its contemporary significance. Avoiding a simplistic treatment of contextualization, Brown highlights the incarnational qualities of Scripture to illustrate the distance between the reader and the text and at the same time, the nearness of the text as found in a communicational reading of the Bible.

*Scripture as Communication* is an innovative and useful bridge between traditional undergraduate discussions of Bible study methodology and graduate study of hermeneutical history and theory. Intentionally written as an introduction to hermeneutical theory supporting her approach, Brown surpasses expectations by introducing the reader to key issues traditionally plaguing hermeneutic discussion. Despite devoting half the book to theoretical discussions, Brown never loses sight of the practical application of her method to Bible study.

Despite the high quality of this work, there are a few areas of weakness. One weakness is the absence of a comprehensive glossary. Despite Brown's admission of the need for conceptual clarity in chapter 1, novice readers fail to receive this simple tool that would aid their struggle to organize and quickly reference the many figures and concepts discussed in her work.

A second weakness is a lack of substantial examples of Brown's model of interpretation applied to biblical passages. The text abounds with brief illustrations of practically all concepts introduced; however, the only substantial illustration of Brown's approach applied to a biblical text is 1 Cor 8:1–13 in chapter 2, which is far too early in the defense of this approach to be most helpful. Unfortunately, this weakness is at the expense of the text's intended audience—the novice exegete or student transitioning from a traditional hermeneutical methodology.

The final weakness is found in the appendices. Several discussions are appended to the text, each focused on foundational concepts and method. Appendices A, D, and E are useful summaries and guidelines offering guidance against common mistakes in particular areas of exegesis. Appendices B and C, however, are far less useful and require substantially more information than what is offered. Appendix B is little more than a mediocre glossary of historical criticism; source criticism; form criticism; and redaction criticism. The question left in the mind of the reader is to the purpose of this

appendix, for the concepts therein play little role in the overall discussion of the text. This appendix would be better if it were expanded to include a longer list of terms discussed in the text. Appendix C contains a brief definition of synonymous, antithetical, and synthetic parallelism, yet as with appendix B this is little more than a short glossary and would be better suited to be included in longer treatment of hermeneutical terms.

These minor weaknesses notwithstanding, Brown offers a useful, clear, and engaging introduction to a hermeneutical approach that is in step with recent hermeneutical research. A useful textbook for upper-level undergraduate courses in hermeneutics or as a bridge into the hermeneutics debate of a graduate course, *Scripture as Communication: Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics* will undoubtedly find an appreciative and wide audience in colleges and seminaries.

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*While I Was Praying: Finding Insights about God in Old Testament Prayers.* By Ralph K. Hawkins. Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2006, x + 196 pp., \$17.00 paper.

In *While I Was Praying*, Ralph Hawkins has provided us not with a how-to book on prayer but a theologically and archaeologically grounded study of who God is as revealed in OT prayers. Hawkins does not provide readers with specific guidelines for prayer or even a theology of prayer. Readers instead find themselves immersed in the religious, cultural, and political situations in which real OT figures lived and struggled to know their God. In turn, the bold, yet at times simple, prayers of these men (and one woman) show us the progressive revelation by God of himself to his people.

Hawkins finds value in the study of OT prayers because it is in these that the Israelites began to wrap their minds around the nature of God (see Hawkins's Introduction). In contrast to their ANE counterparts—and contrary to the propositions made by modern scholars since the 1800s—the Israelites were predominantly monotheistic apart from the syncretism practiced at some points of Israelite history. The Israelites knew their religion to be different from the beliefs of other nations and they increasingly understood this through their personal experiences with God.

The book consists of twelve chapters, each chapter dealing with a different OT figure (excluding chap. 12) and prayer offered to God. Beginning with Abraham's intercession on behalf of Sodom and Gomorrah and ending with the Lord's Prayer, *While I Was Praying* spans much of biblical history. Especially noteworthy themes include "bargaining" with God (chap. 1); a God who withholds judgment (chap. 3); God's concern for the downcast (chap. 4); the forgiveness of God (chap. 5); and God's OT missionary zeal (chap. 10). Chapter 7, covering Elijah's encounter with the prophets of Baal, contains some of the book's best discussion of the contrast between the prayers of the Israelites versus the prayers of other ANE peoples. The inclusion of the Lord's Prayer in chapter 12, while seemingly out of place, may in fact serve to link the more distant OT people of prayer with those who have called upon Jesus Christ for two millennia.

Although not a glaring weakness, an area over which one could quibble is that some readers will remain dissatisfied with Hawkins's treatment of 1 Chr 4:9–10 (chap. 8). Hawkins rightly places the passage in the larger context of the nation of Israel (pp. 102–4), and he properly confronts popular notions of the Jabez story, namely that God will mechanically answer prayers for material blessings. He affirms that a primary blessing in the life of God's people is sanctification (p. 100), but he unfortunately omits

this point when summarizing the topic (pp. 105–6). Rather than completely dispelling the popular approach to this passage, Hawkins allows the reader to assume that application of the Jabez prayer can remain focused on some sort of external blessing (even a “ministry” blessing), not the internal blessing of undergoing the sometimes messy process of sanctification.

*While I Was Praying* should be considered for use by professors of undergraduate, introductory courses in spiritual formation or as recommended reading for OT survey courses. As the preface states, the book is intended “for a general readership,” and Ralph Hawkins has the church in mind, too. Endnotes keep readers engaged in the text rather than tied up in details of scholarship but they also provide additional direction for readers willing to probe subjects more closely. In addition, the book can be used for small group discussion because each chapter concludes with summary and application questions. Thus Hawkins has helped to bridge the gap between current evangelical OT scholarship and a church that often regards the volume of the OT unapproachable and its contents irrelevant. Would that more scholars would descend from the tower to reach the church!

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*Bridging the Gap: Ritual and Ritual Texts in the Bible.* By Gerald A. Klingbeil. BBRSup 1. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2007, xiv + 304 pp., \$39.50.

This monograph—the first to appear in the *Bulletin for Biblical Research Supplements* edited by Richard Hess—seeks to “introduce university and seminary students to the neglected field of ritual studies within the larger context of biblical and theological studies” (p. 1). Klingbeil, a professor of Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Studies at the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies in the Philippines, offers for the most part an objective (non-confessional) report of the current state of ritual research and the biblical scholarship, drawing from a wide range of scholars with various critical assumptions. Only his concluding chapters on theology and ritual and the chapter entitled “Some Type of Conclusion for Christian Theology” are clearly written for a specifically Christian audience.

Chapter 2 surveys the definitions of other scholars (Parkin, Schechner, Zeusse, Grimes, Jonathan Smith, Gruenwald, and Bergen), before Klingbeil offers his own definition of ritual that is indebted to Jan Platvoet. Chapter 3 proceeds to survey what anthropologists and sociologists have to say about studying rituals: the “myth and ritual school” of James Frazer (1854–1941); the social-function-of-religion school associated with Émile Durkheim (1858–1917); the psychoanalytical school of Sigmund Freud (1858–1939); the phenomenology-of-religion school of Rudolf Otto (1869–1937); and more recent developments since 1960.

In chapter 4 Klingbeil is pleased to find scholars such as Milgrom, Levine, Haran, Olyan, Gruenwald, and Bergen incorporating the fruit of ritual studies into their analyses of the Bible. He notes that the “text-layer approach” of European scholarship (namely, source criticism) has tended to devalue the place of ritual in its study of the Bible. This is a reflection of Protestant and rationalistic biases against ritual. However, the recent shift in interest from text-oriented to meaning-oriented interpretation, along with the plethora of approaches tolerated in the postmodern age, has produced a climate more open to the study of biblical rituals. At the same time, Klingbeil notes

the difficulty of dating biblical ritual texts, the abbreviated nature of biblical descriptions of rituals, and the polyvalence of ritual elements where similar subrites under different circumstances appear to mean different things, all of which hinder the study of biblical rituals.

In chapter 5, Klingbeil surveys the history of interpretation of biblical ritual texts. He starts with the prophets of ancient Israel (Samuel, Hosea, Amos, Jeremiah), then moves on to intertestamental Judaism; Philo; Qumran; the first seven centuries of Christianity; medieval Christianity; the Protestant Reformation; the period after the French Revolution; and modern evangelicalism. Though this is the longest chapter in the book (57 pages), it is inevitably anecdotal and superficial. Nonetheless, the author makes some illuminating observations. He argues that “the prophetic critique of religious realities in ancient Israel is not aimed at ritual per se” (p. 77). He notes that neither Philo (p. 82) nor the early church (p. 103) showed much interest in Leviticus and its rituals. As time goes along Christian commentators who do address biblical rituals interpret them primarily allegorically to illustrate Christian teachings (p. 109). Klingbeil criticizes evangelicalism for the paucity of scholarly articles that address matters of ritual. Klingbeil calculates that in the decade of the 1990s only 13 articles (1.24%) in six evangelical scholarly journals (including *JETS*) contain important references to ritual (pp. 119–20). While it is no doubt true that evangelicals have not emphasized ritual, this number would be more meaningful if a similar number were calculated from non-evangelical biblical/theological journals to judge the degree of disparity. Klingbeil suggests that evangelicals have neglected this subject because of their emphasis on grace at the expense of law, the antiquarian nature of OT rituals as opposed to the modern desire to make worship “relevant,” and the imbibing of modernism’s emphasis on “the concrete, countable and visible” as opposed to the emphasis in rituals on “community, hierarchy, faith, order, tradition, and so on” (pp. 123–24).

Chapter 6 gives Klingbeil’s own comprehensive reading strategy for dissecting biblical texts about rituals. He categorizes rituals as rites of passage (e.g. circumcision); life-cycle markers (e.g. feasts and fasting); rituals to resolve certain problems (e.g. offerings for sin and uncleanness); and rituals with no apparent triggering situation (e.g. Christian celebration of the Lord’s Supper). Chapters 7 and 8 review important elements in a comprehensive analysis of biblical ritual. These include things such as discerning chiasmic macrostructures; noticing microstructure patterns such as a switch from  $\text{וַאֲזַיְקֶטְל}$  (vav consecutive + imperfect) forms to  $\text{קָטַל}$  (perfect) forms; observing how movement in space and time functions in the ritual; the use of objects and actions in rituals; the persons involved in the rituals; and the sounds or words that would be heard during the ritual.

The last three chapters deal with the questions of meaning and significance. Following Platvoet, Klingbeil sees rituals as teaching through many dimensions. He argues that ritual study can be a rich source of data for other areas of biblical and theological research and provide a means of conveying theological truths in a memorable way. He contrasts biblical ritual with contemporary worship trends involving video screens and PowerPoint in that with ritual the audience (in principle) participates actively rather than passively—though I wonder why he thinks PowerPoint and video cannot also be incorporated into modern “rituals.” Klingbeil also sees a missiological application: Since the developing world relates to rituals much more than do Americans and Western Europeans, missionaries should incorporate rituals into their ministries to such people. Klingbeil even dreams of seminaries incorporating ritual studies into the curriculum for preparing pastors.

Klingbeil succeeds in providing an up-to-date, thorough introduction to ritual studies and the Bible. However, his erudite presentation will limit the readership of this book



primarily to graduate students and professors interested in biblical ritual studies. The work is mostly methodological. Pastors, missionaries, and even many Bible professors would prefer less methodology and more of the fruit of this method than Klingbeil provides. Perhaps Klingbeil can provide that kind of work at some future date.

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*Interpreting the Historical Books: An Exegetical Handbook.* By Robert B. Chisholm Jr. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2006, 231 pp., \$19.99 paper.

*Interpreting the Historical Books* is the first volume published in the projected Handbooks for Old Testament Exegesis (HOTE) series edited by David M. Howard Jr. According to the series preface, each volume will focus on one of the six major genres of the OT: narrative; law; poetry; wisdom; prophecy; and apocalyptic. The twofold stated purpose of the series is "to present the reader with a better understanding of the different Old Testament genres (principles) and provide strategies for preaching and teaching these genres (methods)" (p. 17). The stated goal is to have these volumes used as textbooks in graduate-level Hebrew exegesis courses, but seminary-trained pastors and upper-level college students might also find them useful (p. 18).

Each of the volumes in the series will employ the same six-chapter template (see p. 18). In the book under review, these chapters are entitled as follows: "What is Narrative Literature?"; "Primary Themes of the Historical Books"; "Preparing for Interpretation"; "Interpreting Narrative Texts"; "Proclaiming Narrative Texts"; and "From Text to Application: Two Samples."

As noted, the stated purpose of the series is to treat the major genres, and the assignment for this book was to deal with narrative. Herein lies the problem both with the title and contents of the volume: the historical books contain genres other than narrative, and narrative is found in other parts of the OT. The dilemma the reviewer faces is: Should the book be evaluated from the stated purpose or the end product? One would hope that when the volume on law is written that the author not confuse it with the Pentateuch. But if the template noted above is employed, what will chapters 2 and 3 of the volume on law be except all or portions of the Pentateuch?

In chapter 1, Chisholm surveys the hermeneutical principles pertaining to how narratives function. He is familiar with the writings of many of the "major players" in narrative research and frequently cites their works. He discusses various concepts (e.g. characterization) and then illustrates them (pp. 28–32). Here he is closest to the stated purpose of the series. However, this chapter occupies one third of the book (63 of the 200 pages of text). The disconnect between the purpose and the outcome becomes obvious in these first two chapters.

In chapter 2, Chisholm discusses the primary themes of each of the historical books. Whereas he acknowledges that scholars recognize Joshua–2 Kings to be a single history, he does little to help the reader understand how that makes a difference in the interpretation of the themes in the individual books in the Deuteronomistic History (see pp. 128–29 for his very brief treatment of the Deuteronomistic History).

In chapter 3 on "Preparing for Interpretation," Chisholm begins with a section called "Setting the Stage for the Historical Books." He points out that "it is important to understand the historical setting of the historical books." He immediately follows that sentence with, "To that end we provide here a survey of the period encompassed

by these books" (p. 132). While it is important to know the events of the historical books, the larger quest is to discover when the material was written down, the purpose for the writing, and the intended audience.

Chisholm returns to the task of narrative in the last three—short—chapters. For example, chapter 5 is eleven pages in length and has only one citation—from one of his own articles. Instead of discussing the material, the form used is four series of numbered points—almost in outline form.

On occasion, Chisholm misquotes the biblical text or lacks precision as he discusses what happened in the biblical stories. The following are examples. In his summary of the Ark Narrative, Chisholm notes that the ark remained in Beth Shemesh until David brought it to Jerusalem (p. 103). The biblical text, however, makes the point that the ark was moved from Beth Shemesh to Kiriath-jearim, where it resided for twenty years in the house of Abinadab (1 Sam 7:1–2), and from there, David brought it to Jerusalem. He cites Ezra the priest as one of the instruments the Lord used to rebuild the temple (p. 123), but the second temple was over a half-century old before Ezra appeared on the scene. Finally, he labels Jews living in Mesopotamia as "exiles," even when the Babylonian captivity had long been reversed by Cyrus (see p. 145 for several examples).

The overall concept for the series is good. In many older textbooks, hermeneutical principles or methods of interpretation were applied without due regard for the genre. One wonders, however, if a single volume treating the various genres would be superior to six separate books using the same template.

Although there are some good insights in *Interpreting the Historical Books*, especially in the first chapter, the book hardly measures up to a "textbook," especially for graduate students. An instructor using it would need to expand the content of most of the chapters.

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*1 & 2 Kings*. By Peter J. Leithart. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2006, 304 pp., \$29.99.

Commentaries written by theologians, though plentiful in the history of Christianity, are at present rare, making Peter Leithart's recent work on 1–2 Kings distinctively refreshing. This second volume in the new Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible is written "out of the conviction that dogma clarifies rather than obscures" (Rusty Reno, Series Preface, p. 9). Leithart brings his training in the Christian doctrinal tradition to bear on the interpretation of 1–2 Kings, producing a work that differs markedly from typical exegetical treatments. Standard issues of dating, authorship, historical setting, textual criticism, and redaction criticism, are left to the side. Instead, identification of literary devices (e.g. chiasms; leitmotifs; figuration of characters; repetition of themes; plays on words; structural parallels; and ironies) and careful attention to the "plain sense" deliver up the theological significance of the narrative. In an easily-accessible style, Leithart interweaves an entertaining rehearsal of the biblical story while expanding on themes that relate to Christian theology and practice. Passages are dealt with sequentially and each section is cohesive and self-contained. Both content and structure contribute to the value of the commentary for sermon-preparation and lay use. Chief among the distinguishing features of Leithart's work is the way he travels from the text to multiple disciplines that benefit from the narrative theology described therein. The breadth of his expertise is displayed in his interaction with political theory; metaphysics; historical theology; anthropology; sociology; literary criticism; and philosophy from ancient to postmodern times.

A brief summary of the Elijah narrative illustrates this movement from the world of the text to the world of ideas. Leithart highlights that the story of Elijah is set within the context of the thrice-repeated cycle of sinful kings, prophetic confrontations, delayed judgment, and eventual punishment. In the case of Elijah, the king is Ahab, and the concluding judgment is the downfall of the Omride dynasty. Elijah's prophetic intervention sheds a ray of hope over Israel's otherwise dark course; Leithart describes it as a "renewal movement." Here Leithart draws an analogy with contemporary attempts at religious reform and cautions that free-church ecclesiologies that separate themselves from the mainline misunderstand the biblical model of prophetic reform, which seeks transformation from within rather than creating an alternative counter-community. To conservative evangelicals he addresses these challenging remarks: "Those outside the mainline do not have the luxury of considering mainline confusions and apostasies 'their problem' as opposed to 'our problem'" (p. 125).

From here, Leithart addresses the thorny "problem of evil" that arises from texts such as this that emphasize God's judgment. Aquinas argued that a higher good (e.g. the punishment of evil) at times replaces a particular good. Leithart combines this with Augustine's notion of prevenient grace (grace always precedes human response), which is illustrated in OT prophetic warnings and delayed judgment. He concludes, "From this angle, what looks like a 'problem of evil' is really the question of why God shows mercy to people who have shown no inclination to repent" (p. 135), thus turning theodicy on its head.

Next, Leithart turns to modern political and social theories that evade the reality of hostility in the world and reinterpret the enemy as "the stranger" or "the other." But this abstraction is not true to the biblical portrayal in which sin stems from the inability to recognize and resist the enemy. Christians mitigate the antagonism of the world to their own peril: "The Bible teaches an enmity that goes to the bone. For the Christian there can be no compromise with the enemy, but only battle until victory" (p. 151).

Finally, and more importantly, Leithart demonstrates how the Elijah narrative points forward to the gospel. Just as all other sources of renewal are incapable of ultimate salvation for Israel, the positive effects of Elijah's revival are short-lived. "Prophets provide life for those who hear and believe their words, but ultimately not even the prophetic movement prevents Israel's destruction" (p. 127). A point made several times throughout the commentary functions as the keystone of Leithart's interpretation of 1–2 Kings: each potential source of salvation—king, Torah, temple, wisdom, even prophecy—cannot provide what Christ eventually fulfills.

I suspect that the very feature that sets Leithart's treatment apart from other commentaries—its theological emphasis—will be the source of both praise and criticism. Connections made between the text and theological subjects are always provocative even if at times overdrawn. Lack of interaction with historical-critical scholarship is consistent with the purpose of the project and is replaced by extensive interdisciplinary integration. At its core, the commentary illustrates how dogmatic convictions influence one's reading of the biblical text; therefore, it is the author's theological and hermeneutical presuppositions that I wish to query.

In Leithart's reading, the gospel is essentially retrojected back into the OT witness, such that the OT becomes a foreshadowing of what is to come. OT figures are types of Christ, and the church is analogically related to Israel. Besides the obvious anachronism of describing the author of 1–2 Kings as "deeply Pauline" (p. 23), does such a reading do justice to Israel's written tradition on its own terms? Is 1–2 Kings essentially a literature of longing? Dare we presume to identify ourselves on analogy with the OT characters—to say nothing of Israel's elect status and special function in YHWH's ultimate plan? The root of the issue is how one understands the OT to function as Christian Scripture, which has no simple answer.

In spite of hesitations to fully embrace Leithart's Christological interpretation, his aspiration of bringing the OT to the church as an ongoing source of revelation is refreshing. In a discipline felt by many to have become increasingly distant from the church, theology, and even exegesis, biblical studies is in need of "reform." Like Elijah, Leithart is attempting to address the problem from within, rather than casting aspersions from a distance. For this, as well as for his engaging style and challenging observations, his contribution is welcome.

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*Job*. By Gerald Henry Wilson. New International Biblical Commentary 10. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007, xiv + 494 pp., \$16.95 paper.

Gerald Wilson (1945–2005) earned degrees from Baylor University (B.A.), Fuller Theological Seminary (M.Div., M.A.), where he studied under William S. LaSor, and Yale University (M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.), where he studied under Robert R. Wilson and Brevard S. Childs. Well known for his work on Psalms, Wilson served as a professor at the University of Georgia, George Fox University, the University of Portland, Western Evangelical Seminary, and finally at Azusa Pacific University. Unfortunately, he passed away after a heart attack on November 11, 2005, shortly after completing this NIBC volume on Job.

The approach of the NIBC, which is based on the New International Version, is neither "precritical," "anticritical," nor "critical," but rather that of "believing criticism" (pp. xi–xii). Wilson's introduction (pp. 1–16) is a bit less conservative than Gleason Archer's *Survey of Old Testament Introduction* (rev. ed. [Chicago: Moody, 1994] 503–15). "The core message of the book" is the necessity "to endure faithfully in the face of extreme loss and suffering" (p. 2). This theme, Wilson argues, "is particularly apt to address the questions of the dislocated Diaspora community," and he thus suggests a late date for the book's "final form" (p. 2). Wilson repeatedly raises the question of the book's integrity and entertains various possibilities as to when particular segments may have been composed independently (e.g. pp. 5–11), but in the end concedes that "there is an intentional editorial unity with a cohesive purpose and message in the canonical form of the book" (p. 11).

He contrasts two forms of wisdom literature that "stand in continuing tension": "retributive wisdom" and "pessimistic, questioning wisdom" (pp. 3–5). The former sub-genre includes Proverbs and can be "almost naïvely positive." The latter includes Job and Ecclesiastes, which "counsels readers that the only way forward is to remain in a deep relationship of absolute dependence on God (what Israel calls 'fear of God'), acknowledging his sovereign freedom and admitting, along with Job, that knowing this God transcends (but does not remove!) the questions and doubts that diligent sages uncover in their searching" (p. 4). Pessimistic, questioning wisdom "cautions us against assuming a simple cause-and-effect relationship between our righteousness and the experience of prosperity" (p. 4). Job's "ultimate purpose," however, is not to reject retributive wisdom, but to counsel "that maintaining a faithful relationship with God is the only adequate refuge in a world where suffering and injustice remain unavoidable realities" (p. 5).

The exposition is profitable, readable, and unimposing. It is divided into 167 sections that systematically work through the text verse by verse, averaging 2.3 verses per page. Unfortunately, the 167 sections are artificially parallel with each other and exclude

natural divisions for major and minor sections. Each section usually includes an introductory summary, condensed exposition, and brief "Additional Notes" on technical issues such as textual criticism. Apart from the introduction, the volume includes neither footnotes nor endnotes. Wilson rarely interacts with secondary literature and only sparingly references Hebrew words, which are always transliterated. The work closes with a one-page bibliography and fourteen pages of subject and Scripture indexes.

Dipping into the commentary may help demonstrate its flavor. (1) Job's declaration "in my flesh I will see God" (19:26b) is not "an eschatological reference" to his bodily resurrection, but instead a yearning to see God before he dies so that God will vindicate him (p. 209). (2) Job's assertion, "When he has tested me, I will come forth as gold" (23:10b), does not refer to God's purifying him during a trial. Rather, Wilson rightly argues, it expresses Job's confidence "that such testing will prove him faithful" (p. 260). (3) The prologue proves that "Elihu is wrong about Job's guilt," and God's speech proves that "he is also wrong about God's judgment on Job" (p. 13; cf. 357–420). Wilson's strong negative opinion of Elihu is debatable, but relatively little space is devoted to alternative views. (4) God "essentially ignores Job's questions and demands" so that Job is forced "to continue (as are we!) with mystery. Neither does God seek to justify his actions or clarify his purposes" (p. 14). (5) Wilson's depiction of God's speeches as "bombastic" is somewhat offensive (pp. 8, 13, 359, 421). (6) God's overwhelming appearance is traditionally understood to be "a rebuke of Job's inappropriate stance over against God," so "God's questions ridicule Job's lack of understanding and power and *force* him to recant" (p. 420). Wilson disagrees since the prologue, God's speech, and the epilogue affirm Job's blamelessness (pp. 420–21). Job's repentance in 42:6 refers to his changed "opinion about God, his understanding of the deity, rather than repenting of a named sin" (p. 15; cf. 468). This line of argumentation is unpersuasive on many fronts. For example, God specifically rebukes Job's spirit and words (40:2, 8). (7) Wilson gives a memorable personal illustration about Job's response to God's first speech, comparing it to the eye of the storm during a hurricane (p. 449).

A spate of commentaries on Job is becoming available, and Wilson's contribution, which is neither devotional nor technical, does not seem to fill a niche. Layton Talbert's *Beyond Suffering: Discovering the Message of Job* (Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 2007) is a more practical, penetrating exposition, and forthcoming Job commentaries include the following: Michael Coogan (Hermeneia); Michael Fox (Old Testament Library); Richard Hess (Historical Commentary on the Old Testament); Tremper Longman III (Baker Commentary on the Old Testament: Wisdom and Psalms); Dennis Magary (NIV Application Commentary); and Choon-Leong Seow (Eerdmans Critical Commentary). Although not a top-tier exegetical commentary, Wilson's volume is an accessible and thought-provoking evangelical reference work.

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*Women's Evangelical Commentary: New Testament.* Edited by Dorothy Kelley Patterson and Rhonda Harrington Kelly. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006, xxxvii + 993 pp., \$34.99.

Written "by women for women," the *Women's Evangelical Commentary* is a one-volume guide through the NT purposed to mobilize women against the societal pressures of feminism and equip them to study and teach the Bible expositionally. Co-editors

Dorothy Kelley Patterson, professor of theology at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Rhonda H. Kelley, professor of women's ministry and director of women's programs at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, have gathered a team of 17 seminary-educated women to produce a "tool to walk a woman through the Bible in woman-to-woman exposition of God's Word" (p. vii). The roster of commentary contributors includes seminary and college professors/instructors, writers, speakers, and local church servants, all of whom have completed seminary training in biblical and/or women's studies.

Similar in style and intention to *The Woman's Study Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), the commentary opens with background information on each book and is followed by methodical exposition of the text. Readers benefit from the commentary's linguistic investigations and contextual word studies. While many of the resources of *The Woman's Study Bible* have been tapped for the commentary, such as charts, maps, and study notes, the commentary is set apart from contemporary sources in a number of ways. Where passages refer directly to women or issues of femininity, deeper analysis is given. Where interpretation of controversial passages regarding women is varied, exposition of the text is paired with extended excursions on topics such as the context of Gal 3:28, gender-inclusive language, and liberation theology.

As expected, the commentary employs a historical-grammatical hermeneutic. In an introductory chapter titled "Cutting It Straight," contributor Mary Kassian, distinguished professor of women's studies at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, outlines the commentary's prerequisite commitment to the inerrancy, authority, clarity, and unity of Scripture. The commentary's resonance, however, is found in its overarching adherence to the complementarian position. As such, it functions as a rebuttal to the feminist movement (and its associated interpretative approaches) and its influence on evangelical biblical scholarship. Introductory material positions the biblical exposition against the abuse of Christian liberties, emphasizing God-created femininity and God-ordained order of church and home. Answers to the charges of feminist scholarship are found throughout the commentary: in exposition, charts, and devotional sections titled "Heart to Heart," intended for application of scriptural truth. A noteworthy example is found in the treatment of Col 2:4–8, which outlines the basic tenets of feminist theology as opposite to biblical principles. The commentator adds that "women would do well to examine the tenets of modern feminism in light of Scripture. The only way for a Christian to avoid being kidnapped by false teaching is by knowing the Word of God and understanding the doctrines of the faith" (p. 608).

Although not the first commentary prepared by women, the *Women's Evangelical Commentary* is perhaps the first NT expositional tool authored solely by female scholars devoted to a complementarian understanding of Scripture. Two similar commentaries, *The Women's Bible Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998) and *The IVP Women's Bible Commentary* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2002) are two primary examples of resources in the exploding field of feminist scholarship. The *Women's Evangelical Commentary* seeks to harmonize a natural and plain understanding of the biblical text with the unique contributions of feminine scholarship within a complementarian perspective.

Although the commentary's strengths are numerous, it is perhaps best utilized as a tool for corporate Bible study preparation. Teachers benefit from the provision of textual outlines, points of application, and pronunciation guides for each book. The practical nature of the exposition explains rules of interpretation for each genre, being especially helpful in its guide to understanding parables (p. 53) and its clear summary of approaches to interpreting the book of Revelation (p. 898). Teachers of women's Bible studies will discover the commentary offers a wealth of resources particularly regarding issues with feminine significance. For example, the exposition of Eph 5:22–32 presents

a meticulous analysis of marital relationships followed by a discussion on Paul's view of women (pp. 561–66).

However helpful in its understanding and application of Scripture, certain weaknesses of a one-volume commentary do exist. First, full treatments of each text are constrained by space. Second, and perhaps most unfortunate, editors are often compelled to emphasize passages that are applicable to a targeted audience over other texts. The *Women's Evangelical Commentary* does not escape either of these limitations. In reviewing 1 Corinthians, nearly eight pages are devoted to the nature of head coverings (pp. 440–47), while Synoptic Gospel parables averaged one or two paragraphs each (although the exposition of three parables in Luke fared better; pp. 174–77).

If the *Women's Evangelical Commentary* has a weakness, it is perhaps found in the occasional usage of complementarian applications drawn from passages that do not speak directly to gender issues. A primary example is found in an excursus titled "The Women Associated with Jesus' Birth" paired with the exposition of Luke 1 (pp. 145–47). The commentator identifies Elizabeth as upholding the model of male headship due to her insistence to name her son "John" (Luke 1:59–66). The commentator states: "Elizabeth did not usurp the role of her husband Zechariah. Rather she faithfully affirmed what God had revealed to her. . . . Even without speech, Zechariah remained the head of his home" (pp. 145–46). While few would quibble with upholding Elizabeth as a model of godly demeanor, a truer reading of the text understands Elizabeth's role in the birth narratives as showcasing the gracious quality of God's plan for redemptive history. On a personal level, Elizabeth herself acknowledged God's graciousness to remove the reproach of infertility (Luke 1:25), leading her community to echo a corporate sentiment in Luke 1:58. It would have been no surprise, then, for Elizabeth to insist on the divinely-given name "John," which from its Hebrew counterpart references both God's covenant identity and his gracious nature. In general, the dual birth accounts of Luke's Gospel occur in the context of heralding God's forthcoming act of graciousness toward mankind, rather than giving illustration to the marital fulfillment of gender roles.

Despite this observation, the commentary's steady research, effectual teaching format, and timely exposition make it a valuable tool for women who desire to bypass shelves of pre-packaged Bible studies and dig into the truths of Scriptures on their own. The *Women's Evangelical Commentary* earns the designation "to women by women," by equipping women to face cultural issues regarding femininity and gender, while its committed scholarship affords it a place among similar resources for evangelical biblical studies.

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*Women's Evangelical Commentary: New Testament.* Edited by Dorothy Kelley Patterson and Rhonda Harrington Kelley. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006, xxxvii + 993 pp., \$34.99.

This one-volume commentary is written by women and clearly focused to serve women who lead or participate in Bible studies as laity in the church. Of the seventeen contributors, including two editors, fourteen are identified as Baptist and from southern states. The three writers not identified as Baptist are from southern California. At the time of publication only four writers had completed doctoral degrees, one noted as a Ph.D., and four others were noted as "planning to complete" some sort of doctoral program at either Southeastern or Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. All the

writers are in women's congregational ministry, and eleven are mentioned as married to husbands who, for the most part, are in pastoral or academic ministry. This team of writers is the source for the commentary's strength and for its clear focus on encouraging and informing evangelical Bible study by women robustly committed to conservative complementarian gender roles in both church and home.

For this intended audience, the book is well organized with features that are consistent, helpful, and attractive in format. The commentary proper starts with an introduction to the Gospels that gives a social, historical, cultural, and religious overview with maps and illustrations that are sharply done and well presented. This attention to publishing aesthetics continues throughout the volume. The introductory sections, like the commentary itself, highlight stories, ideas, characters, and issues that are of particular interest to women, but this effort does not inappropriately dominate the volume. Sidebars, summary tables, and the like are well structured, informative, and visually helpful as aides to biblical study.

The sections devoted to each NT book begin with a contextualizing introduction, followed by a pronunciation guide for particular vocabulary for that book, a cursory outline, and then what is subtitled as "the exposition of the text." I think the pronunciation guide was a useful inclusion to help women who are new to Scripture feel more confident in reading aloud and participating in the discussion of texts in small group settings.

Each expository section is clearly marked, and the translation used is the *Holman Christian Standard Bible*. The NASB and NKJV are used for particular exegetical comments and are clearly designated. An elementary explanation of Greek words is generously sprinkled throughout. This is usually helpful in broadening a student's general appreciation for particular word use and the importance of primary language understanding, but lacks syntactical nuance, of course.

One feature of the commentary that is helpful in drawing attention to particular words, historical background, or significant contextual ideas is a "spyglass" that shadows a particular section that also includes a graying of the black font. These usually helpful explanations have the value of being kept in the flow of the exposition but also serve the reader like short parenthetical comments, yet in a more integrated manner. Although frequent, they do not dominate or distract from the main idea of the passage or its overall context. The hermeneutics of the commentary conform to a predictable conservative evangelicalism.

Disputes concerning the authorship of some NT books are largely ignored in the introductory summaries. However, the issues commonly disputed concerning 2 Peter were addressed in a responsible way and ended with a good affirmation of Petrine authorship. I tend to be very conservative on authorial, theological, and canonical issues; so this strategy within the text seemed to my mind appropriate for the intended readers, but this habitual omission may be bothersome to less conservative evangelicals. The suggestions for who wrote Hebrews were limited to the usual male candidates, but the anonymity of the author was affirmed.

For handling passages that are of particular concern to women, the writers were consistent in adopting a conservative complementarian pattern. The use of κεφαλή in Pauline passages was strongly affirmed as authoritative and superior headship. The understanding of κεφαλή as source (or any word or idea that deviated from a conservative complementarian viewpoint) was relegated to "feminist/egalitarian interpreters" throughout the text.

The absolute linking of "feminist/egalitarian" was more than troublesome to me, not just because I may understand some texts differently but because it ends up doing what complementarians often accuse "feminist/egalitarians" of doing: imposing an eisegetical agenda onto the text to prove a certain point. The result is the unfortunate caricaturing of fine scholars into small boxes that are unmerited. For instance, in



an excursus concerning the context of Gal 3:28, the writer applauds the opinion of Alexander Strauch, who points out that this text is “not intended to address the social evils that can exist” between the pairings of the verse. This comment is negatively contrasted with a quote from “egalitarian” F. F. Bruce, who maintains that Paul is “concerned with practical church life in which [the tri-fold pairings] are here and now fellow-members. It is not their distinctiveness, but their inequality of religious role, that is abolished.” The above is an illustration of how, in fact, a certain agenda has guided the content of this volume. The two quotes above are not contrasts at all. The opposition is being created by the writers of the commentary. To juxtapose Strauch, a Colorado writer who focuses on issues of gender, elders, and deacons, to the scholarship of F. F. Bruce is questionable to begin with, but the commentary seems blinded to the point, because Bruce’s word choice was not recognized as friendly to the writer’s agenda. Bruce’s point that men and women are distinctive but equal in Christ is, in fact, something many complementarians can affirm and, in fact, do affirm in the commentary. Paul’s οὐδέ, οὐδέ, καί conjunction sequence is the source for Bruce’s hermeneutic, but is unrecognized and not addressed in the commentary.

The commentary’s bias is evident when subordination in the Trinity is used as a model of order and organization for humanity without any distinction made between the economic and immanent Trinity. The Godhead is a model of organization for human relationships in church and home, and this God-modeled “pecking order” is the “order and authority [that] are part of every area of life, including life in the Godhead.”

Other passages concerning women are handled in a predictable pattern friendly to conservative complementarians, although evangelical egalitarians would find little to criticize in many of these interpretations. Ephesians 5:21 is severed from 5:22 both visually and in the exposition, but the use of ἡσύχιος/ἡσυχία in 1 Tim 2:2 and 11 is translated with the idea of “quietness” in both verses. Egalitarians and complementarians may differ over the division of the sentence in Ephesians, but there is common ground in the affirmation by both that Paul is a friend to women and opened doors, like Jesus, for women to learn. This commentary is trying to do that, and in this I rejoice.

I appreciate the commitment these women have to the authority of Scripture, their passion for being women of God, and their willingness to serve the church of Jesus Christ. I just wish they nurtured connections to a larger family of faith. They might find that egalitarians are not the enemy, and there is much common ground that can be found in evangelical sisterhood.

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*Prayers of Jewish Women.* By Markus McDowell. WUNT 2/211. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006, xiv + 277 pp., €50.00 paper.

Markus McDowell, Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at Westmont College, Santa Barbara, California, has expanded and edited his Fuller Theological Seminary Ph.D. dissertation for the monograph *Prayers of Jewish Women*. This is a comprehensive overview of a massive amount of literature. McDowell has analyzed over 600 prayers. He has studied in depth 69 prayers by women alone, 58 prayers of women with men, and 379 prayers by men alone in the literature of the Second Temple period (second century BC to second century AD). His focus is on an exploration of how the primary Jewish literature of this period “portrays women at prayer through an examination of the literary context and character of those prayers” (p. 17). The women’s prayers are compared and contrasted with the men’s prayers in the same texts. This

literature is organized by rough chronological order and Palestinian or Diaspora origin. Thus chapter 2 includes a study of second-century BC to first-century AD apocryphal and pseudepigraphical writings (Additions to Esther, Judith, *Jubilees*, 2 Maccabees, Susanna, and Tobit). Chapter 3 includes a study of Philo's works and first-century BC to first-century AD pseudepigraphical writings (*Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* or Pseudo-Philo, *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, *Testament of Job*, *Joseph and Asenath*, and 3 and 4 Maccabees). Chapter 4 includes a study of Josephus's works and first-century and second-century AD pseudepigrapha (2 *Baruch*, 4 Ezra, and the *Sibylline Oracles*). Rabbinic writings and the Dead Sea Scrolls were not included because of the later date or repetition of material. Each document is described by source (date, place of composition, genre and literary characteristics, summary of contents, purpose, and setting). David de Silva's *Introducing the Apocrypha* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002) is an important resource for historical context questions. All the prayers in the document are surveyed. Documents that have no prayers by women are not included in the study.

Then, each passage that includes women praying is examined in more detail using five categories of analysis: (1) social location (Is it a public, private, or semiprivate prayer?); (2) content (Is the primary function of the prayer personal, communal, or national; praise or worship, or unspecified?); (3) form (Is the prayer praise and thanksgiving; petition, intercession or lament; confession and penitence; benediction and curse?); (4) occasion (Is the prayer a community crisis, personal crisis, or everyday life occurrence?); and (5) perspective (Does the prayer include a gynocentric perspective or feminine imagery and vocabulary or gender-specific language or a masculine perspective as the ancient authors portrayed them?). He defines prayer as "speech (interior or spoken aloud) that is addressed to God, usually in the second person, but sometimes in the third person" (p. 29). A summary follows each chapter, as well as the entire study. The book concludes with 62 pages of appendixes, an extended bibliography, and indexes of ancient sources, modern authors, and subjects.

After all this extensive work McDowell has concluded the following: (1) For the most part women are depicted in much the same manner as men when they are at prayer in terms of location, content, form, and occasion (p. 198). In general, the character of prayer remains relatively consistent across gender, theology, geography, and chronological differences. (2) There is some variation in the context of the prayers. Women are rarely found praying in the capacity of any official role, but they are portrayed as acting and leading in ways (roles and status) similar to male leaders (p. 198). (3) The majority of women's prayers include feminine vocabulary and imagery, gender-specific terminology, and a gynocentric perspective (pp. 199, 207). (4) The extrabiblical prayers are similar to Hebrew Bible prayers in status or title of offerer, gestures and acts associated with prayer, places and times of prayer, and form. Form is the most similar of all categories, except for the blessing form. Women pray more often than men for personal reasons when they pray alone. Women pray more in private than men in documents from Palestine than in the Diaspora (p. 202). Also, women pray more often during community crises in documents from Palestine than they do in documents from the Diaspora (p. 205). McDowell discovered that "more women's prayers are private" than men's prayers, but "more women's prayers are also public" than men's prayers (p. 208). (More of men's prayers are semi-private or of an unknown location.)

Surprising to some may be the perspectives of Philo and Josephus. McDowell found that Philo's writings have more negative portrayals of women than those of other writers (p. 155). Josephus appears intentionally to deemphasize the role and importance of women (pp. 160, 193–94). The writings of Josephus and Philo "tend to downplay or ignore women and their prayers more often than the other writings of the period" (p. 200). Josephus's writings have a low ratio of women's prayers to men's prayers (11 of 190), rarely including the words of women's prayers, frequently deleting women's

prayers that are in the Hebrew Bible (pp. 181–85). He places women's prayers more often in private settings for personal issues than men's (p. 192). He minimizes the roles of Hannah and Deborah (pp. 187, 190). Josephus "views the roles of women, on their own, as less critical than the roles of men" in prayer (p. 192). Philo also includes a low ratio of women's prayers to men's prayers. He has a more restrictive portrayal of women at prayer and portrays women as subordinate to men and as less reasonable and intelligent. Yet, otherwise, the prayer patterns he records are similar to other documents of the period (p. 152). Twenty-five percent of all prayers in this literature include women, but if Philo's and Josephus's are excluded, fifty-eight percent of all prayers in this literature include women. That is quite a difference. These findings certainly are a warning to us when we use Philo's and Josephus's works that their writings may be slanted against women. Intriguing also is the possibility that the pagan religions had less examples of women praying publicly than did the Jewish religion (p. 210).

This is a very carefully-worded study of the literary portrayal of prayers. It is exhaustive and appears to be well balanced. McDowell's findings differ at times with those of Tal Ilan (*Jewish Women in Greco-Roman Palestine* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996]) and every once in a while (e.g. p. 201) with Meir Bar-Ilan's (*Some Jewish Women in Antiquity* [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998]). I would recommend *Prayers of Jewish Women* to anyone interested in a broad sweep of this topic or to anyone interested in a helpful dialogue with other scholars on this topic.

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*The Earliest Christian Artifacts: Manuscripts and Christian Origins.* By Larry W. Hurtado. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006, xiv + 248 pp., \$20.00 paper.

This interesting—indeed, intriguing—study by a well-known NT textual critic and biblical theologian offers an analysis of the scores of Christian documents, especially biblical manuscripts, from the second and third Christian centuries. Yet in this case the search is not for the "original" NT text *per se*, but for what these documents, as historical artifacts in their own right, might tell us about the emergence and nature of Christianity in the second and third Christian centuries.

In an introductory chapter Hurtado lays out both the nature and considerable quantity of biblical documents from these earliest centuries, which are mostly fragmentary, to be sure, but all significant for the purposes of this study. In the next three chapters he explores, in turn, three well-known features of these texts as to their significance beyond the textual data themselves: the early use of the codex by Christians; the possible origin and the significance of their early use of the *nomina sacra* (= choosing to "abbreviate" the "divine names"); and, related to this, the origin and use of the Christogram/staurogram when writing certain words ("Christ," "the cross"). A final chapter deals with a variety of features that went into the actual production of biblical manuscripts: codex size, columns, margins, lines per page/column, various "readers' aids," and "corrections" to the text—all of this with the goal of analyzing Christian "book" production in the pre-Constantine period of the church. In each chapter, Hurtado exhibits careful, judicious handling of the data and sane, if not certain, conclusions in terms of what we can know and say regarding these various matters.

Thus, in chapter 2, for example, he concludes his first section—about the early Christian use of the codex—that "there was a marked Christian preference for the codex format from the first, far earlier than in general book preferences of the same time" (p. 48). After a comparison of this phenomenon with book production in general during

the same period (pp. 53–61), the rest of the chapter is then devoted to the question, “Why did Christians prefer the codex?” wherein he interacts with a variety of scholarly attempts to answer this question: supposed practical advantages, socioeconomic explanations, and whether or not it was a deliberate preference, so as to distinguish their sacred texts from all other texts. The chapter then concludes with a section on what can be known about the actual production of codices, which in turn affected other matters such as size and whether the scribe used single or double columns.

Chapter 3 then takes up the fascinating question of the (very early) Christian use of abbreviating the “divine names” (at the beginning, only God, Lord, Christ, and Jesus, but later several other titles and designations as well). Since this is a uniquely Christian phenomenon in antiquity, at issue are the questions of origins and purpose. In a careful analysis of both the historical data themselves and various proposals by others as to origins, Hurtado argues that its ultimate origins go back to the Jewish handling of the divine name itself (YHWH). At the same time he argues, again convincingly to my mind, that the very fact of such early abbreviations deliberately calls attention to God and Christ—and assumes Christ to be on the same level as God. The rest of the chapter interacts with various scholars (esp. C. Tuckett) who would downplay both the fact of the phenomenon and its Christological significance.

The next chapter, which is considerably shorter than the two that precede it, is basically a more popularized version of an article by Hurtado in which he examined the phenomenon of the “staurogram,” the combining of the first letters in the name of Christ (*chi* and *rho*) and turning them into the shape of a cross, with the top of the *rho* representing Christ’s head, a phenomenon that occurs in several of these early manuscripts. Also, in some manuscripts the *tau* and *rho* in the words for the cross are shaped in this way. Although the origins of this phenomenon are another matter of debate, which is taken up in some detail in this chapter, at issue for Hurtado are again the questions of “origins” and “function and meaning.” He concludes that ultimately they function as a kind of pictogram in the middle of the sacred text, reminding the reader both of the fact of the crucifixion (as written in the text) and picturing it so as to make the fact a greater reality.

The final chapter, although probably less significant overall in terms of what it tells us about these early Christians, is nonetheless filled with a variety of interesting data, which thus lead to a variety of conclusions, including, for example, that “the varying sizes of early Christian codices reflect both the private and public/liturgical uses of them” (p. 189).

All in all, this is both an informative and delightful read; and while Hurtado’s first purpose is to inform the reader of the rich treasure of historical data available to us in these early Christian copies of Scripture—and this is done in readable fashion at a very high level of expertise—at the same time he regularly engages in scholarly discussion, sometimes debate, with various historical explanations of these several data. The end result is both informative and stimulating, and at the end of the day also edifying. By this approach to the earliest physical evidence to our faith, one is led to appreciate anew what Scripture itself meant for these second- and third-century believers as they lived through vicissitudes of various kinds. Granted, they did not intend to supply us with such a rich treasure trove of resources; but they did so nonetheless, and in the end one has a sense of being connected not only to the first-century believers who originally produced these texts, but to those who lived as Christians through times of both peace and turmoil and maintained the faith that had been delivered to us through Christ and the apostles.

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*Herod Antipas in Galilee: The Literary and Archaeological Sources on the Reign of Herod Antipas and Its Socio-Economic Impact on Galilee.* By Morten Hørning Jensen. WUNT 2/215. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006, xvi + 316 pp., €59.00 paper.

This work is of great interest to me since it deals with the subject of my dissertation at Cambridge, completed in 1968 and published by Cambridge University Press in 1972. Originally, the present work was submitted as a Ph.D. dissertation under the direction of Per Bilde at the University of Aarhus, Denmark in 2005 and now is published with minor revisions in the prestigious WUNT series. It is divided into three parts: Settings (chaps. 1–2), Sources (chaps. 3–6), and Assessment (chaps. 7–8).

In part 1, the first chapter, Jensen notes that in the last three decades there has been increasing interest in Roman Galilee, its history, culture, politics, economics, and religion. There has also been a great deal of archaeological activity in Galilee, particularly at the cities of Tiberias and Sepphoris. In addition, the Third Quest for the historical Jesus has spurred renewed interest in Galilee as the historical context of Jesus' ministry. Finally, there is an ongoing discussion on the relationship between urban and rural Galilee. Jensen proposes that the current debate of the sociological models tends to be rooted more in the presuppositions of modern social-scientific models than in the data of the first century. He then proceeds to discuss the research on Herod Antipas both in the popular and the scholarly arena beginning with Brann in 1873 and ending with Kokkinos in 1998.

In chapter 2 Jensen notes that more recent research indicates that "Antipas has emerged as *the* decisive factor of explanation of the socio-economic realities of early-first century Galilee" (p. 46), and, although there is an impasse on the urban-rural relationship within Galilee, it "was *not* as Hellenized as anywhere else in the Roman world" (p. 45). Jensen argues for the need to consider the archaeological data equally with textual sources. The central problem to be resolved is: "what was the relation between the reign of Herod Antipas and the socio-economic conditions of early-first-century Galilee" (p. 46)? The method used to solve this problem is to examine the archaeological data and the written sources of Josephus, ancient historians, and the NT.

In part 2, the third chapter is concerned with the sources regarding the reign of Herod Antipas, of which Josephus is primary. In the last thirty years much research has been done on Josephus (of which Jensen's mentor Per Bilde has been a major contributor). Jensen concludes that, even with Josephus's biases, he must be considered an important historical source. Subsequently, he surveys Josephus's assessment of the various members of the Herodian house (from Antipater to Agrippa I) and Pilate, and offers a fairly lengthy assessment of Josephus's description of Antipas. He argues "that though the narrative on Antipas is comparatively short, it is precise and significant in the light of Josephus' general editorial intentions with his description of the Herodian house" (p. 90). Josephus notes that on the one hand, Antipas had close connections with Tiberius, and on the other hand, was insensitive to the Jewish religion. Josephus "wants to present Antipas as another example of a bad Herodian ruler who was not able to safeguard the ancient and stable Jewish way of life" (p. 99) and thus "*Antipas was by no means remarkable either in deeds or misdeeds*" (p. 100).

In chapter 4 Jensen examines Antipas in other written sources, namely, Nicolaos of Damascus (historian in Herod the Great's court), Strabo (Greek geographer), Philo (Jewish philosopher), Tacitus and Dio Cassius (Roman historians), Justin Martyr (Christian apologist), and the NT. Very little help is obtained from Greek and Roman sources, although Philo does give some insight into Antipas's character. Although the NT portrays Antipas as an enemy of Jesus, it, along with Josephus, depicts him as ambivalent and indecisive in stressful situations.

Chapter 5, the longest chapter, deals with the archaeology of Galilee in connection with Herod Antipas. First, Jensen discusses archaeological method and theory, where

he recognizes that archaeology cannot be equated with natural science (p. 131) because one's presuppositional bias embraces a subjective element (pp. 134–35, 151–52), which must be acknowledged. Following is an extensive discussion on Tiberias and Sepphoris, where he attempts to make a distinction between the rather limited early-first-century archaeological finds from that of previous and subsequent periods of history. Beyond these two cities he examines selected villages of lower Galilee (Yodefath, Cana, and Capernaum; Gamala in Philip's territory) and then looks at some nearby cities to Antipas's Galilee (Hippos, Gadara, Scythopolis, Caesarea Maritima, Sebaste, and Bethsaida) to determine the extent of Antipas's urbanization program in Galilee. He concludes that, while it did thrive, it was modest in comparison to the building activities of Herod the Great.

Chapter 6 is concerned with the coins of Antipas, examining their message (by images) and circulation. Examined is the coinage of the Hasmoneans, Herod the Great, Archelaos, Philip, Agrippa I, and the Roman administration. A wide variety was found, some introducing images that were hostile to the sentiments of the Jewish religious practices. Herod Antipas himself minted few coins and they were aniconic with the inscription of Tiberius and/or Herod the Tetrarch and a floral image (a palm tree or branch), thus inoffensive to Jewish sentiments.

Part 3 is the assessment of Herod Antipas and his reign. In chapter 7 Jensen synthesizes his research. First, there is a discussion of Antipas's relationship to the Roman emperors. He concludes that the Romans looked at him as a "minor client ruler" who was more competent than his brother, Archelaos, but although reigning peacefully for forty-three years was never promoted to be "king." However, I propose that, although Antipas was not given the title "king" after Archelaos's fall, he did receive the dynastic title of "Herod." Second, Jensen concludes that the relationship between Antipas and his Jewish subjects was harmonious, in that during his long reign he refrained from using "provocative imagery on his coins or Greco-Roman cultic buildings in his cities" (p. 240). He did tend to be indecisive when confronted with John the Baptist and Jesus and when Herodias urged him to go to Rome to ask for the title of king. Third, in regard to Antipas's urbanization program, he concludes that Antipas was moderate in his building of the cities of Sepphoris and Tiberias and, as stated above, in the issuance of inoffensive coins. He did not exploit the rural villages in Galilee by attempting to make Galilee like a "little Italy" but in allowing it to thrive "he was raising it to the standard already present nearby" (p. 251). Overall, however, Antipas's reign was one of minimal impact.

The final chapter marks Jensen's conclusion. He reaffirms what he has tentatively concluded in his earlier assessments, namely, that "Herod Antipas was a minor ruler with a moderate impact" (p. 254). Nevertheless, I feel it necessary to point out that, as far as Rome was concerned, Antipas brought stability to the area. There were not the upheavals in his territories of Galilee and Perea that there were in Judea, much of which must be attributed to the bad leadership of various prefects such as Pilate. On more than one occasion Jensen notes that, after the deposition of Archelaos, the Romans controlled the right to appoint high priests, which was finally transferred to Agrippa II. Yet Herod Antipas never had that control. However, it is necessary to remember that Herod Antipas did not rule over the jurisdiction of Jerusalem and Judea, the place where the high priests lived and ministered. This chapter is followed by an extensive bibliography, twenty-nine figures, indexes of ancient sources, modern authors, and subjects and key terms.

This is a commendable work introducing up-to-date research on the life and reign of Herod Antipas. Jensen brings to bear present-day sociological studies and recent archaeological excavations in Galilee, particularly as they relate to Tiberias and Sepphoris and the surrounding villages. Although such excavations are always helpful, they are

not entirely conclusive. This is partly due to the built-in limitation of subjectivity in the discipline and also because of the scarcity of the remains discovered thus far in Antipas's era. Jensen also brings up to date the numismatic discussion, much of which is based on the work of Danny Syon. This is really beneficial. I would have liked to see more work with the text of the NT and Josephus, but Jensen repeatedly states that this is beyond the scope of his work, especially when much of this has already been done in earlier works.

This work is a major up-to-date contribution on the life and reign of Herod Antipas. Jensen is to be commended for his research and insight. Although he deals with complex and detailed issues, the book is easy to read and follow because it is so well organized and well written. For anyone who wants to learn about Herod Antipas and first-century Galilee, this book is a must.

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*Jesus and Archaeology*. Edited by James H. Charlesworth. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006, xxv + 740 pp., \$50.00 paper.

The volume begins with a preface by James H. Charlesworth entitled "The Historical Jesus and Biblical Archaeology: Questions" (pp. xxii–xxv), followed by an introduction by Avraham Biran entitled "What Is Biblical Archaeology?" (pp. 1–8). The book is thereafter divided into two parts. Part 1, "Studies in Archaeology," is comprised of the following essays: James Charlesworth, "Jesus Research and Archaeology: A New Perspective" (pp. 11–63); Sean Freyne, "Archaeology and the Historical Jesus" (pp. 64–83); Bruce Chilton, "Recovering Jesus' Mamzerut" (pp. 84–110); Richard A. Batey, "Did Antipas Build the Sepphoris Theatre?" (pp. 111–19); Peter Richardson, "Khirbet Qana (and Other Villages) as a Context for Jesus" (pp. 120–44); Rami Arav, "Bethsaida" (pp. 145–66); Frederic Manns, "Mount Tabor" (pp. 167–77); Esther Eschel, "Jesus the Exorcist in Light of Epigraphic Sources" (pp. 178–85); Henry W. M. Reitz, "Reflections on Jesus' Eschatology in Light of Qumran" (pp. 186–205); James D. G. Dunn, "Did Jesus Attend the Synagogue?" (pp. 206–22); Benedict Viviano, "Synagogues and Spirituality: The Case of Beth Alfa" (pp. 223–35); John S. Kloppenborg, "The Theodotos Synagogue Inscription and the Problem of First Century Synagogue Buildings" (pp. 236–82); Achim Lichtenberger, "Jesus and the Theatre in Jerusalem" (pp. 283–99); Dan Bahat, "Jesus and the Herodian Temple Mount" (pp. 300–308); Bargil Pixner, "Mount Zion, Jesus, and Archaeology" (pp. 309–22); Craig A. Evans, "Excavating Caiaphas, Pilate, and Simon of Cyrene: Assessing the Literary and Archaeological Evidence" (pp. 323–40); Daniel R. Schwartz, "'Stone House,' *Birah*, and Antonia during the Time of Jesus" (pp. 341–48); John W. Welch, "Miracles, *Maleficium*, and *Maiestas* in the Trial of Jesus" (pp. 349–83); Yizhar Hirschfeld, "Ramat Hanadiv and Ein Gedi: Property in Judea before 70" (pp. 384–92); Jürgen Zangenberg, "Between Jerusalem and the Galilee: Samaria in the Time of Jesus" (pp. 393–432); Michele Piccirillo, "The Sanctuaries of the Baptism on the East Bank" (pp. 433–43); Joseph E. Zias, "The Cemeteries of Qumran and Celibacy: Confusion Laid to Rest?" (pp. 444–71); Brian J. Capper, "Essene Community Houses and Jesus' Early Community" (pp. 472–502); William Klassen, "Judas and Jesus: A Message on a Drinking Vessel of the Second Temple" (pp. 503–20).

Part 2 is entitled, "Archaeology and Theology," and includes Urban C. von Wahlde, "Archaeology and John's Gospel" (pp. 523–86); Paul N. Anderson, "Aspects of Historicity in the Gospel of John: Implications for Investigations of Jesus and Archaeology"

(pp. 587–618); John Painter, “Bultmann, Archaeology, and the Historical Jesus” (pp. 619–38); Émile Puech, “Jesus and Resurrection Faith in Light of Jewish Texts” (pp. 639–59); John Reumann, “Archaeology and Early Christology” (pp. 660–82); J. K. Elliott, “The Christian Apocrypha and Archaeology” (pp. 683–91); James H. Charlesworth, “The Historical Jesus and Biblical Archaeology: Reflections on New Methodologies and Perspectives” (pp. 692–95).

A number of the essays deserve special comment. Charlesworth uses the seven primary discoveries for Jesus research from his book, *Jesus within Judaism: New Light from Exciting Archaeological Discoveries* (ABRL 1; Garden City: Doubleday, 1988), as a springboard for reviewing discoveries that have been made since its initial publication. He examines problematic points in scholarly discussions and thereby frames the direction to be taken in the volume as a whole. Chilton explores the implicit accusation of John 8:41 and Mark 6:3 that Jesus is a *mamzerut* (Deut 23:2) as well as various possibilities for how his parentage might be understood.

Three articles deal with the synagogue. Dunn approaches the question of whether Jesus would have actually attended the synagogue by looking at the issue of the Jewishness of Galilee, the extent of Hellenization in Galilee, and whether or not synagogues existed there in the first-century. The chapter by Viviano on the Beth Alfa synagogue deals with a floor mosaic that seems to express a Christian analysis of the spiritual life using Jewish religious symbols, which, while it does seem to demonstrate that religious cross-fertilization did occur, it does not appear to contribute to the overall purpose of the volume. Kloppenborg makes an important response to Howard Clark Kee, who has argued that no structure prior to AD 200 can be identified as a synagogue in the land of Israel, and none before the late third century AD in the Diaspora, and that NT usage of the term “synagogue” should be translated as “assembly” or “gathering.” Kloppenborg shows that the term did refer to buildings during and even before the time of Jesus. Kloppenborg’s article also includes the first thorough review of the epigraphy of the Theodotus synagogue inscription, the single extant piece of epigraphical evidence that uses the term “synagogue” with reference to a building, which also bears on discussions of the nomenclature, leadership, and function of ancient synagogues.

Bahat reviews discoveries made in excavations on the Temple Mount since 1967, showing what might have been visible there in the time of Jesus. Pixner examines the Essene Gate and other materials and concludes that, from about the time of Herod the Great until AD 70, about a quarter of the city was comprised of Essenes. Drawing on these materials, Pixner makes some interesting suggestions about the influence of Essenism on Jesus. Welch argues that accusations of magical practice rather than political issues led to Jesus’ crucifixion.

For those interested in Qumran studies, the chapter by Joseph Zias will be of special interest. The burials of several women and children in extensions of the main cemetery have been one of the chief arguments against the identification of Qumran as an Essene monastic community of adult males. Through an examination of Islamic burial practices, along with osteo-archaeological, chronological, and dental information garnered from the anomalous burials, Zias concludes that they are “simply Bedouin burials from recent periods (post-AD 1450) and thus chronologically intrusive” (p. 456). If Zias is correct and the anomalous burials are removed from consideration, then the demographic picture in the Qumran cemetery conforms completely with the accounts of Pliny and Philo of a site between Jericho and Ein Gedi occupied by a monastic community of Essenes.

Capper’s chapter discusses the existence of a network of Essene poor-care houses in Judea and argues that patrons of this movement “wanted to see Jesus installed as the Messiah and leader of the covenanted organization of the Poor” (p. 472). Capper argues that the anointing of Jesus by Mary occurred at a poor-care house in Bethany



in the context of a feast for the purpose of openly declaring Jesus as Messiah (p. 499). Klassen seeks to justify Judas' betrayal of Jesus through a comparison of the dialogue between Judas and Jesus in Matt 26:49–50 with an inscription on a drinking beaker from the first half of the first century. Both von Wahlde and Anderson review substantial archaeological evidence that establishes that the author(s) of the Gospel of John was intimately acquainted with the customs and places of Palestine in the period prior to the destruction of the Temple. Puech explores parallels between Jesus and Jewish texts, especially those from Qumran, on the subjects of life after death and the resurrection.

In his concluding remarks, Charlesworth notes the wealth of archaeological data now available that illuminates life in ancient Palestine between the time of Herod the Great and the destruction of the Temple. He concludes that, because of the preponderance of information, "biblical scholars ultimately no longer have the presumed luxury of avoiding data from the times and places in which the biblical records took shape and were edited. For a New Testament scholar to disavow the importance of archaeology for New Testament studies, including Jesus Research, is a form of myopia. It leaves the Gospels as mere stories or relics of ancient rhetoric" (p. 694). The importance of *Jesus and Archaeology* is that it makes much of this data available in a volume that is accessible to scholars and students alike.

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*Jesus: Uncovering the Life, Teachings, and Relevance of a Religious Revolutionary.* By Marcus J. Borg. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 2006, viii + 343 pp., \$24.95.

Borg begins by contrasting Jesus as envisioned in two paradigms. The "earlier paradigm" is the traditional, biblical Jesus of conservative evangelical Christianity. The "emerging paradigm" is a more developed and documented version of the "five stroke sketch" of Jesus that Borg presented in his earlier book *Jesus a New Vision*. In both books, Jesus is presented as a Jewish mystic, healer, exorcist, wisdom teacher, prophet, and movement initiator. Borg is clear that he intends his new book to be "a contribution to emerging (and emergent) Christianity."

One of the "pillars" of Borg's "emerging paradigm" is the idea that much of the Gospels contains a developing tradition of testimony, often expressed in metaphor, to what Jesus meant to early Christian communities. Some of this testimony is "memory metaphorized," that is, stories based on actual events but told with "more than historical-factual meaning." Other testimony is pure metaphor with little or no basis in fact. Another pillar of Borg's "emerging paradigm" is the distinction between a pre-Easter and post-Easter Jesus. The post-Easter Jesus is the risen, living Christ who was "a divine reality." By contrast, the pre-Easter Jesus was an entirely human Jewish mystic whose life was changed by his vivid experience of God.

Borg insists, however, that the God Jesus experienced was not the "personlike" God of supernatural theism but rather the god envisioned in panentheism, a god that is within the universe rather than separate from the universe. Like the Buddha, Jesus' wisdom flowed out of his enlightened experience with "the sacred."

Jesus was, therefore, a teacher of wisdom. His wisdom, however, was not about information or commandments but about undermining the conventional wisdom and domination system of his day. It was about compassion and following "the way"—a "path of transformation" to a different way of being; like "The Way of Lao Tzu" or the four noble truths of Buddhism.

The focus of Jesus' mission was the kingdom of God, which was political as well as religious and would involve justice for those oppressed by the domination system of this world. Jesus practiced non-violent resistance to this domination system and called people to participate in the coming kingdom by following "the way of the cross," which is the way of personal transformation.

Jesus was killed for his passion in confronting a brutal domination system, but Borg insists that the substitutionary sacrifice conception of Jesus' death is both bad history and bad theology. To the earliest followers of Jesus, Easter meant that they continued to experience him after his death and that God had vindicated him. Borg says it does not matter to him whether the tomb was empty.

Since it would take an entire book to critique all the flaws in Borg's arguments, I will confine myself to a five-stroke sketch. First, everyone agrees that the Gospels contain metaphorical language, but Borg goes beyond this in arguing that the Gospel narratives are largely metaphorical. One of the central affirmations upon which Borg's entire book is based (i.e. that the Gospel stories are largely metaphor) seems to fly in the face of studies affirming the Gospel genre as related to ancient *bios*, not myth (or metaphor), and other studies seriously challenging previous views on the extent to which the Gospel narratives have been "developed."

Second, Borg's contention that the Gospel narratives are largely metaphorical is also undermined by the apparently arbitrary way in which he applies his historical criteria. For example, Borg's two primary criteria for distinguishing "pure metaphor" from "memory metaphorized" are multiple independent attestation and coherence. Borg acknowledges, however, that although some miracle stories are attested in multiple sources, they must still be judged as metaphor if they contain symbolic language and developing tradition (like Christological language) or if they challenge our sense of what is possible.

It is hard to take Borg too seriously when the phrases "on the third day" and "there was a wedding" are seen as "evocative" and are among the reasons the wedding in Cana is dismissed as pure metaphor. The healing of the demoniac in Mark 5:1–20, however, is judged to be "memory metaphorized," even though Borg himself acknowledges that it also contains evocative language. Why does Borg regard the marriage story as pure metaphor while the demon story is seen as "memory metaphorized"? In all likelihood it is because turning water into wine does not easily lend itself to a natural explanation while exorcism does. Borg says that within a modern worldview demon possession is a "prescientific diagnosis of a condition that must have another explanation."

In other words, a preconceived notion of Jesus' abilities and self-understanding supersedes historical criteria. Ultimately, the distinction between "memory metaphorized" and pure metaphor does not appear to be about objective historical criteria at all, but about using "metaphor" as a convenient method to eliminate anything that challenges Borg's view of what Jesus thought of himself or opposes a modern worldview by stretching our sense of what is possible—and then justifying those decisions behind the façade of supposed objective criteria.

Third, Borg argues that since Jesus told his stories many times, they would have had many contexts other than the contexts given by the Gospel writers. This allows Borg to remove stories from their Gospel context and to reinterpret the stories in entirely new ways. For example, according to Borg, the Gospel of John teaches that "the way" of Jesus is a life radically centered in God. In context, however, the Gospel of John teaches that Jesus himself is "the way" and that no one comes to God except through Jesus. The fact is that the only context we have is the Gospel context. To interpret the stories in opposition to that context is not history or theology but sheer imaginative speculation.

Fourth, Borg ends the book with a discussion of the division between his "emerging paradigm" and the "earlier paradigm," specifically focusing on the Christian Right. He

condemns the “civic Christianity” of the Christian Right with its support for American “imperial policy” and its opposition to evolution, abortion, and homosexuality. Earlier in the book, however, Borg had argued that Jesus’ message was political and that Jesus’ followers should confront the “domination system” of this world. It is not entirely clear, therefore, why it is important to confront the “domination system” on issues like global warming (to use one of Borg’s examples), but improper to confront the system when it destroys unborn children, censors public school teachers by violating their first amendment right to teach that God created, or encourages sexual behaviors that may endanger people’s health and lives.

Fifth, Borg seems to think his “Jesus the Jewish mystic” is an intelligent option for those who have become atheists when they could no longer believe the biblical view of Jesus. However, if Borg’s *pre*-Easter Jesus was nothing more than one in a long line of mystics, why should intelligent people believe in or commit themselves to some mythical (metaphorical) *post*-Easter Jesus as a “divine reality” any more than they would commit themselves to Santa Claus? Why not just call nonsense by its name?

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*What Have They Done with Jesus? Beyond Strange Theories and Bad History—Why We Can Trust the Bible.* By Ben Witherington III. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 2006, xxii + 326 pp., \$24.95.

Revisionist views of Jesus are common today, both at the popular and scholarly levels. At the popular level, Dan Brown’s *The Da Vinci Code: A Novel* (New York: Doubleday, 2003) has done much to popularize the earlier, ill-supported theories of Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh, and Henry Lincoln, *Holy Blood, Holy Grail* (New York: Bantam Dell, 1983). Ben Witherington’s present volume, *What Have They Done with Jesus?*, joins a growing list of works (e.g. J. Ed Komoszewski, M. James Sawyer, and Daniel B. Wallace, *Reinventing Jesus* [Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2006] and Craig A. Evans, *Fabricating Jesus: How Modern Scholars Distort the Gospels* [Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2006]) that confront the imaginative speculations too often passed off as learning to the general public.

Witherington, professor of NT at Asbury Theological Seminary and indefatigable writer, brings to this volume the professional skills and pastoral concern necessary not only to expose the voguish “strange theories and bad history” (to borrow part of his subtitle) but also to help set the record straight, as it were, for general readers. As far as contents, the book contains an introduction followed by seven parts (described below). In a lone appendix, Witherington provides a summary critique of James Tabor’s recent book, *The Jesus Dynasty* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006), in which he exposes some of the more glaring presuppositional, archaeological, historical, and exegetical problems with the volume. Witherington employs endnotes of varying length rather than footnotes (pp. 313–30), and there are two indices: Subject and Scripture.

Witherington begins *What Have They Done with Jesus?* with a brief introductory chapter entitled, “The Origins of the Specious.” Here he surveys the current religious-cultural landscape that has made the public more susceptible to poorly-supported, revisionist theories about Jesus. Among the influences he identifies are gullibility, skepticism, biblical illiteracy, deconstruction, and anti-supernaturalism. In response to these alternative theories, Witherington proposes to look at Jesus’ impact on his followers through the lens of his earliest inner circle. He reduces this to a reasonably short list, drawn from Jesus’ own family circle—Mary, James, and Jude—and key figures

outside his family: Peter, the Beloved Disciple, Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Paul. These figures provide the framework for the first six of the remaining seven parts of the book. Each part encompasses typically two chapters, except for part 5, which contains three chapters. Part 7 is the conclusion.

In part 1 Witherington looks at women in Jesus' life. He looks initially at Joanna (whom he identifies with Junia in Romans 16) and then Mary Magdalene, whom he describes as a recovering spiritualist (chap. 1). In a subsequent chapter (chap. 2) he examines the post-NT traditions about Mary Magdalene, the material of myth and legend, drawn principally from Nag Hammadi sources. Part 2 is devoted to Peter. Witherington looks first at Peter in the Gospels (chap. 3) and then at Peter in Acts and the Petrine letters (chap. 4). He considers 1 Peter authentic, but views 2 Peter as a composite work, which preserves a Petrine fragment (2 Pet 1:12–21). In part 3 Witherington turns his attention to Mary the mother of Jesus. He focuses first on the birth narrative (chap. 5) before turning (in chap. 6) to other material in the Gospels and outside the Gospels: Acts 1:14; Rev 12:1–6; and 1 Tim 2:13–15. The Beloved Disciple is the subject of part 4 (chaps. 7 and 8). Chapter 7 focuses on the identity of the Beloved Disciple against the backdrop of John 11:1–44; 12:1–11 and chapters 13–21. Witherington suggests the most likely candidate is Lazarus. In a subsequent chapter Witherington traces the Beloved Disciple's legacy in the community he founded in the vicinity of Ephesus. In part 5 Witherington concentrates on the brothers of the Lord. Witherington looks first at James's rise to leadership in the Jerusalem church and ministry (chaps. 9 and 10). In the remaining chapter of this section (chap. 11) he examines James's death and burial, followed by a brief look at the ministry of James's (and Jesus's) brother Jude. Part 6 focuses on Paul, the Jewish apostle to the Gentiles. Witherington looks initially at Paul's background (chap. 12) before turning to the subjects of his conversion and subsequent ministry (chap. 13).

Witherington spells out his findings in part 7. He observes that almost all the NT documents can be traced back either directly or indirectly to the inner circle of Jesus. These documents, whether written for Gentile or Jewish Christians, bear witness to the same high Christology. Witherington notes that there is neither an evolutionary spiral of ideas about Jesus (from low to high Christology) nor a gap between the historical Jesus and the Christ of faith. The reason for this is that "many of the members of the inner circle had known and certainly remembered what the historical Jesus was like, and they themselves found the worship of Jesus as risen Lord, the praying to him as divine, the naming of him as God or Christ or Logos, to be perfectly natural" (pp. 288–89).

There is much in this interesting volume that is sane and instructive. While it is written for a general audience, Witherington covers a wide sampling of issues related to Christian origins. He demonstrates that genuine historical study can be both informative and interesting. As with any work in historical reconstruction, however, one must guard against the temptation to allow creative imagination to outstrip historical evidence. At points, it appears that Witherington has not avoided this temptation. One example is Witherington's treatment of Joanna. He introduces her as "Johanna/Junia: Follower of Jesus/Apostle of Christ" (p. 16), based on the identification of Joanna of the Gospel of Luke (8:3; 24:10) with Junia of Rom 16:7 (cf. Richard J. Bauckham's *Gospel Women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002] 109–202). What then became of Chuza (Luke 8:3)? Witherington "suspect[s]" that he divorced Joanna and that she subsequently remarried a Christian named Andronicus, with whom she engaged in missionary work that took her to Rome (p. 20). A second example is Witherington's identification of the Beloved Disciple as Lazarus (see p. 147). Fortunately, this kind of speculation is the exception rather than the rule in this work. In this regard, Witherington's *What Have They Done with Jesus?* clearly distinguishes itself from many of the sensational works he has written to offset.

The key question, however, is whether the general audience toward whom this book is directed will take the time to read the three hundred plus pages of small print it contains. For as Witherington astutely observes with regard to popular American culture, while “skeptical folks won’t listen patiently to old answers they’ve heard before (maybe even heard in church), they will gladly listen to new theories, even when there is little or no solid evidence to support them” (p. 3). Since this volume offers little by way of new theories and further bears the partially apologetic subtitle, *Why We Can Trust the Bible*, one wonders if such persons might unfairly dismiss it prematurely as being too “old answer” in orientation. Should such persons (or anyone else, for that matter) take the time to read and ponder this work, however, they will become much better informed about both Jesus and Christian origins.

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*The Gospel of Matthew*. By David L. Turner. *The Gospel of Mark*. By Darrell L. Bock. Cornerstone Biblical Commentary 11. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2005, xiv + 560 pp., \$34.99.

Combining two commentaries in one book, this intermediate-level commentary on Matthew and Mark by two fine NT scholars uses the New Living Translation as the base English text for the discussion. The commentary uses an easy-to-follow format. Introductions to each book include an evaluation of authorship, date, occasion, audience, literary and critical issues, themes, and outline. Extended study Bible type notes are included following a printing of the NLT section by section. After notes are given, the commentary provides exposition on key issues the section raises.

Regarding authorship Turner well summarizes the external evidence favoring the apostle Matthew. However, he states that most scholars hold to a less specific conclusion that the Gospel of Matthew was written by a “Jewish Christian” due to the book’s Jewish orientation. Turner never states his view outright, though the impression is left that he concurs with these scholars but would prefer to say the author was a “Christian Jew” (p. 4). One might wish that a few more of the internal arguments sometimes used for Matthean authorship could have been examined such as the more extensive terminology for coinage in the Gospel. Bock gives a good summary of the external evidence favoring the traditional authorship of John Mark, noting Mark’s connection with Peter attested in church history, and concludes that no other good alternatives exist (p. 395).

One refreshing element in Turner’s commentary is his overall approach in treating the book primarily through a narrative-critical study as opposed to a source/redaction-critical study that assumes Markan priority and literary dependence, seeking to explain why Matthew changed Mark to this or that. According to Turner, what really matters to the church is “the meaning of the Gospels as literary and theological wholes.” He provides further justification for his approach by arguing that narrative criticism is needed due to the “ultimate futility” of having certainty in solving the Synoptic problem as well as the “atomizing tendencies” of source analysis (pp. 9–10). Turner favors a date before AD 70 for Matthew (p. 5). While acknowledging that early church testimony favors Matthean priority, not inconsistent with many NT scholars, Bock makes an internal case for Markan priority and dates the book anywhere from the late AD 50s to the late 60s (pp. 393–95).

Both commentaries give helpful outlines showing the flow and structure of the books. Turner rightly notes the five Matthean discourses as signaled by the concluding

phrase “when Jesus had finished” (Matt 7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1). After looking at a few alternate approaches, he proposes a general outline that seeks to integrate the narrative material with these discourses and is worth looking at. My only quibble with it is including the passion and resurrection of Jesus (Matt 26:3–28:20) under the heading “Epilogue/Conclusion,” when these passages might be better considered as the “climax” of Jesus’ first advent ministry (pp. 10–12). After descriptions of Jesus’ public ministry including repeated comments on rejection, Bock understands the turning point of Mark to be Peter’s confession about Jesus (Mark 8:27–31). Teaching on suffering and focus toward and in the last week of Jesus’ life consume the remaining half of Mark (p. 399). He also notes that Mark has two major teaching blocks: Mark 4 (kingdom parables) and Mark 13 (the Olivet discourse).

Turner sees the major themes of Matthew as: OT fulfillment, Christology, kingdom of heaven, conflict, as well as church and Gentile world missions. He makes the important point that fulfillment is broader in Matthew than OT direct prophetic prediction but also includes “ethical and historical matters.” Part of what he describes, though not terming it as such, could be labeled typological fulfillment in which, as he states, “an Old Testament historical event served as a pattern for a New Testament event that it anticipated” (p. 14). Describing Mark’s emphasis as a book of action, Bock sees some similar themes including Christology, kingdom of God, and rejection/suffering (pp. 397–99). Both Turner and Bock understand presentation of “the kingdom” to include present and future events, depending on the particular context. For Matthew, Turner sees an inaugural nearness or presence of the kingdom in conjunction with Jesus’ earthly ministry but also clear descriptions of a future reign of Jesus on the earth (p. 22). For Mark, Bock notes the presentation of kingdom is mostly a future emphasis with some elements of initial presence (p. 397). Turner specifically rejects a classical dispensational model on the kingdom parables that sees them as the future millennial kingdom or the “mystery” of the offered, rejected, and *postponed* kingdom (p. 182). Rather, as Turner states, “Jesus’ parables describe the present response of Israel to his kingdom message.” In addition, after the death and resurrection of Jesus, the parables portray the response of the nations to the church’s message to the end of the age (pp. 184–85).

Turner understands the Sermon on the Mount to be an accurate portrayal of the *ipsissima vox* of Jesus, arguing that one does not need a word-for-word rendering of what was said for historical accuracy to be preserved. For Turner, the sermon amounts to personal ethics for the follower of Jesus (pp. 78–79). Regarding the sermon’s relationship to the Law, Turner makes a good case that one must avoid extremes of too much continuity or discontinuity. Jesus’ teaching is not merely saying “ditto” to what the Law said but transcends it without contradicting it (p. 86), in essence giving “new law” to the disciples. The most discontinuity for Turner is Jesus’ teaching on oaths as Jesus prohibits what the OT permits (p. 92).

On the Olivet Discourse, Turner describes his approach as “preterist-futurist,” as the predictions contain both historical (AD 70 destruction of the temple) and yet future elements. He sees Matt 24:4–14 as happening between the advents of Jesus, while Matt 24:15, 21 envision the AD 70 destruction, “a token of the ultimate judgment which ends the present world” (pp. 308–9). As one who considers Matthew’s focus as primarily yet future (Matt 24:4–end), I find myself here at some divergence with Turner’s work. Bock sees Mark’s description as more generalized in that Matthew and Luke make a clearer distinction between Jesus’ future return and the destruction of the temple in AD 70. Bock sees the AD 70 destruction as a “pattern” of the greater judgment that will occur at the end similar to other OT pattern prophecies (p. 524). Turner understands the abomination of desolation (Matt 24:15; cf. Dan 12:11) to have a continuum of fulfillment including the AD 70 destruction of the temple as well as a yet future fulfillment (p. 313), while Bock, citing Evans, notes that a first-century fulfillment does not seem to fit the known historical data (p. 521).

As the general editor, Philip W. Comfort states in his preface that the commentary was “a natural extension of our vision for the New Living Translation.” One cannot but help think, then, that a primary purpose of the commentary is to promote the NLT. To this end I think in large part the effort succeeds in that it is much easier to use the NLT as a study Bible if you have the Cornerstone commentary with it. At key points the Greek text behind the NLT is brought to much greater light to show the NLT user more word equivalent renderings with accompanying interpretive discussions. Also both Turner and Bock are not averse to occasionally pointing out flaws in the translation when they feel it is warranted (e.g. see Turner’s comment on the NLT rendering of *dikaiosynē* as “justice” in Matt 5:6 or Bock’s comment on “skillfully sidestepping God’s law” in Mark 7:9). They also more often point out positive NLT renderings/interpretations (especially Bock; e.g. Bock on the objective genitive in Mark 1:1; p. 403). These types of comments would be expected for any commentary in which the writers are commenting on a translation not their own. One would hope that in any future revisions to the NLT such comments generated from the Cornerstone series would be considered. While I would much prefer to see a commentary use the commentator’s own renderings in the translation, overall both authors appear to be very supportive of the NLT and do a commendable job interacting with it.

Though this commentary would be and is useful for anyone wishing to study Matthew or Mark, my primary recommendation for purchasing it would be to serious users of the NLT.

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*Early Narrative Christology: The Lord in the Gospel of Luke.* By C. Kavin Rowe. BZNW 139. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2006, vii + 277 pp., €84.00.

Based on a Ph.D. dissertation from Duke University supervised by Richard Hays, this book shows the dividends paid by the use of narrative criticism in word studies. Finding in the word κύριος a *Leitmotif* in the Gospel of Luke, Rowe builds an impressive case for a high Christology in this Gospel. He wants to show that there is an intentional ambiguity in the use of the word κύριος in Luke in that the word is used with reference both to Jesus and to God. The methodological presupposition for this claim is that the individual occurrences of the word must be read in light of the impression created by the totality of occurrences. Rowe’s thesis is that Jesus and God share the identity as κύριος. Refusing to see a title as referring to a static entity, he also observes that Luke maintains the separate identities of Jesus and God.

In the infancy narratives, when God has repeatedly been referred to as κύριος, the fetus in Mary’s womb is suddenly called κύριος by Elizabeth (1:43). The significance of this verse is not lost on Rowe, who finds here an overlap between the κύριος of heaven and the human κύριος. When Luke later in 2:11 brings together the two titles χριστός and κύριος, he provides his interpretation of the Messiah-title. Jesus is a Messiah who is also Lord. The reader is well prepared, therefore, for Jesus’ intimation in 20:41–44 that the Messiah is more than merely David’s son.

Against the background of this significant ambiguity that Luke has created in his use of κύριος, the sayings about the mission of John the Baptist (1:16–17, 76; 3:4–6) become especially pregnant. By preparing the way for the Lord of Israel, John prepares for the embodied Lord, Jesus.

Rowe sees the same ambiguity in the uses of κύριος in the subsequent sections of Luke. By giving attention both to the OT context and the narrative context in Luke,

he observes that in the quotation of Isa 61:1–2 (in Luke 4:18–19) the year of the Lord's favor refers both to the year of God's favor and the ministry of Jesus. Rowe then finds the same ambiguity in the statements regarding the Lord of the harvest (10:2), in the κύριος character in the parables, and in the saying that the Lord has need (of the colt) in the story of the triumphal entry (19:31, 34).

The importance of the κύριος title to Luke becomes evident when his account of the Sabbath controversy (6:1–5) is compared to that of Mark. Omitting Mark's argument that the Sabbath was made for humans' sake and changing the word order, Luke's argument depends more directly on the weight of the title κύριος. Rowe argues that the statement must be understood against the background of God as the Lord of the Sabbath in the OT.

Many previous studies of Luke's Christology have observed that Luke, more than the other evangelists, bases his picture of Jesus on the descriptions of Elijah and Elisha and thus shows Jesus as a prophet. While this may be true, Rowe argues that Luke also wanted to demonstrate that Jesus was more than a prophet. The passage that is richest in Elijah and Elisha imagery, where Jesus raises the widow's son in Nain (7:11–17), is also the passage that contains the first clear redactional reference to Jesus as "the Lord" (7:13). With this touch, Luke shows that to say that Jesus is a prophet is not to say enough about him (cf. the verdict of the crowds in 7:16).

It is commonly argued that there is a big difference between the use of κύριος with the article and the use of the word in the vocative. Only the first use is thought possible to be associated with the divine name in the OT. When κύριος is used to address people, it is thought to be much less profound, as is seen in many translations that simply render it "sir." By focusing on the narrative context, however, Rowe challenges this scholarly consensus. The first instance of κύριος in the vocative in Luke occurs in 5:8, where Peter says to Jesus: "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!" Peter has come to see Jesus as the one who deals with sinful human beings, and the reader of the Gospel is helped to see κύριε in light of the use of the word as a Christological title. Building on these observations, Rowe goes on to argue that other occurrences of the vocative κύριε (5:12; 6:46; 7:6; 9:54, 59, 61; 10:21, 40; 22:33, 38, 49) also involve ambiguity and that Jesus' and God's sharing of the κύριος identity resonates here as well.

The book restricts itself to the Gospel of Luke, even though the use of κύριος in Acts is closely related to the Gospel. In an excursus, however, Rowe discusses the significance of Acts 2:36, where Peter refers to the resurrection and says that Jesus was made both Lord and Messiah. This verse is therefore often seen as the most significant piece of evidence for the view that early Christology was "adoptionistic": Jesus became Lord as a result of his resurrection. Again, Rowe's careful attention to narrative development leads him to a different conclusion. There are no instances of Jesus being called Lord between Peter's denial and the resurrection appearances. This absence communicates the complete rejection by humans of the Lordship of Jesus. The resurrection, however, signals God's vindication of Jesus as Lord, and this is the significance of Peter's announcement. Rowe's understanding aligns with the interpretation of evangelical scholars such as I. Howard Marshall and provides a stronger argument for it.

In his conclusion, therefore, Rowe maintains that Luke's Christology is perfectly compatible with the high Christologies of Paul and John. He disagrees with scholars such as Vielhauer, Tuckett, and Dunn, who have seen Luke at the opposite end of the spectrum when it comes to NT Christologies.

Unfortunately, however, questions of historical development are not discussed. The argument for a high Christology in Luke is made on the basis of detaching the Gospel from its historical foundation in the words and deeds of Jesus. Historical context means for Rowe the original readers/hearers of the Gospel. One wonders, however, if even a narrative study can ignore the question of the historical Jesus altogether. Luke's use



of the vocative κύριε is a case in point. Rowe finds that Luke has carefully crafted this word into his narrative and thereby invested this word with different levels of meaning. However, is it impossible that Luke simply wanted to preserve an accurate record of what the disciples actually said? If so, what are the implications for the levels of ambiguity in the use of the title?

Nevertheless, this book certainly represents a welcome contribution to the investigation of NT theology. Thanks to his unceasing awareness of the impact the whole Gospel has on its individual details, Rowe makes many shrewd exegetical observations and is able to throw new light on a number of passages.

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*The Branches of the Gospel of John: The Reception of the Fourth Gospel in the Early Church.* By Kyle Keefer. Library of New Testament Studies 332. London: T & T Clark, 2006, vii + 118 pp., \$115.00.

This monograph appears to be a revision of a Ph.D. dissertation presented to Emory University under the supervision of Gail O'Day (p. vii), which also appears to have had a slightly different title: "The Tangled Branches of the Fourth Gospel." Using John's metaphor of the vine and the branches, with the Gospel as the vine and the interpretations of the Gospel as branches, Keefer intends to examine the relationship between the Gospel of John and its interpreters, with a focus upon its earliest readers. Although the various interpretations of the Fourth Gospel eventually reached something of a consensus by the beginning of the fourth century, Keefer believes, "Looking at these early interpretations [of John] sheds light not only on the dynamics of interpretation in the early church but also on the Gospel itself" (p. 2). *The Branches of the Gospel of John* contains six chapters: a methodological introduction, three test-case chapters, a synthesis chapter, and a conclusion.

In chapter 1, "Reception Theory and History of New Testament Interpretation," Keefer reveals that the guiding assumption of this study is that the interpretation of the Gospel by some of the primary writers in the late second and early third centuries "informs a contemporary reading of the Gospel itself" (p. 2). What Keefer tries to correct is the modern reading of these patristic writers that renders their understanding of the Fourth Gospel "moot." Keefer wants to avoid a history of scholarship that separates contemporary work from what came before, or worse, lets "interpretations become disembodied chunks of knowledge that either serve as foils to the author or lead teleologically to the author's thesis" (p. 5). Rather than contrasting ancient and modern interpretations of John, Keefer wants the two to facilitate a contemporary reading by using the literary theory of "reception" of Hans Robert Jauss and Gerhard Ebeling. Jauss argues for "an aesthetics of reception" that allows an ongoing relationship between past and present textual experiences, in contrast to a historical-critical approach that looks primarily at "past appearance" and a formalist approach that looks primarily at the "present experience of literature" (p. 11). In a similar vein, though with more historical force, Ebeling makes a corollary argument. Ebeling argues for a church history that takes seriously its ecclesial and historical components and that exists as a distinct branch of inquiry separate from secular history. For Ebeling, past readings of a biblical text are formative upon present readings. This reception method does not view ancient interpretation of John as a competing perspective but as part of the legacy of the Fourth

Gospel. Thus, using reception theory, especially its insight into the present effect of ancient readings, Keefer is prepared to examine three ancient readers of John: Heracleon, Irenaeus, and Origen.

The reading of Heracleon in chapter 2, "A Valentinian Gospel of John," shows how the philosophical language of John's prologue lends itself to the cosmological concerns of the Valentinians. "Since the prologue has such a profound influence over the interpretation of the rest of the Gospel for most readers, and since the Valentinians could find their own cosmology exemplified in these opening verses, they could then read the entire Gospel according to their grounding mythology" (p. 42). However, Keefer admits that the Fourth Gospel is not merely a mold, for at points it challenges Heracleon and Valentinian theology (p. 43).

The reading of Irenaeus in chapter 3, "Irenaeus's Orthodox and Canonical John," is theologically rich. Irenaeus reads John in what is clearly a non-modern way, and his approach is much more difficult to classify than Heracleon's reading (p. 53). In contrast to Heracleon's reading of cosmic language, Irenaeus reads John as an apostolic Gospel—one of four unified Gospels. Irenaeus's reading of John confirmed its apostolic record and its connection to the tradition of the church.

The reading of Origen in chapter 4, "Origen's Allegorical and Spiritual Gospel of John," is one that examines neither the cosmic language in John nor its connection to the Christian tradition, but rather the levels or senses visible within the text. Yet these different levels of Scripture do "not seem to apply so much to exegetical matters as . . . to the uses of Scripture for various audiences" (p. 68). Origen's "literal, psychical, or spiritual exegesis does not indicate a separate set of hermeneutical rules for each level; they each rather indicate an exegetical mode for a certain audience" (p. 68). Origen's use of allegory is not like that of medieval figures, since he thinks of allegory as an interpretive practice that should only be applied to passages that need allegory to convey a spiritual meaning. Unlike Heracleon who sees John's unique language or Irenaeus who sees John's connection to tradition, Origen sees "a complex spiritual treatise that works at a multitude of levels. It attends to literal matters but also to spiritual ones. It represents a multifaceted portrait of Jesus that cannot be summarized" (pp. 79–80).

In chapter 5, "John's Interpreters: Modern and Ancient," Keefer facilitates a combined reading between ancient and modern readers. In a way he spirals the readings of the three ancient readers, Heracleon, Irenaeus, and Origen, with modern readers of the Fourth Gospel. Most intriguing is his interaction with the sectarian reading posited by Martyn, Meeks, and Brown, a reading partially familiar to Heracleon, but foreign to Irenaeus and Origen (pp. 90–94). The comparison forces Keefer to make two important hermeneutical claims for the reading of John. First, even if the Gospel arose in an oppositional setting, reading John oppositionally remains a possible but not necessary option. Second, early (and later readers) show that historical reconstruction of John's origin has, at best, a tenuous relationship with actual readers—texts always have a "surplus of meaning" that goes beyond their historical context (p. 95). While not conclusive or overly controlling, these claims reflect the important influence sensitivity to reception history has on contemporary readings of the Gospel of John.

Finally, in chapter 6, "Toward a Reception History of John," Keefer shows the multifaceted readings of John must be allowed to flex by contemporary, modern, readers of John. As Keefer argues, the Gospel of John was composed as a religious document; "when modern interpretations focus on explanation of its historical development, this religiosity can be lost" (p. 104). Sensitivity to the reception history of John enriches our perception of the Gospel and continues its rich legacy.

*The Branches of the Gospel of John* is an excellent application of reception history on the Gospel of John. Keefer makes a wonderful case for reading John with readers of the past, not merely with the readers of today. He urges a guild dominated by

historical-critical readings rooted in what is new and fresh to heed the readings of those not so historical and clearly not so new. Yet a few questions remain. First, while Keefer clearly describes the various “receptions” of John, not all the readings have clear, cooperative relationships; in fact sometimes Keefer merely proves variety, not synthesis. Second, one wonders if Keefer’s urging to remember the past and not merely the present is not also influenced by a contemporary concern. In an age when multiplicity of meaning is coveted, Keefer implicitly supports a modern agenda. However, this is certainly not Keefer’s stated goal, nor should it take away from the value of this monograph. Even more, in many ways Keefer shows a helpful correction to hyper-historicism or a reading of John that lacks a religious (theological) component. Yet it also proves that we must be self-critical so that our return to the past is not motivated by a contemporary agenda.

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*Judgment and Justification in Early Judaism and the Apostle Paul.* By Chris VanLandingham. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006, xvi + 384 pp., \$29.95.

This slightly revised version of Chris VanLandingham’s 2000 Ph.D. dissertation under George Nickelsburg forms an important addition to the ongoing evaluation of Jewish and Pauline soteriology in the wake of E. P. Sanders’s *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977). At first glance, it appears to be simply another book trying to figure out how justification by faith and judgment according to deeds work together in Judaism and in Paul. However, the reader will quickly discover that VanLandingham poses a far more radical challenge to a whole host of received traditions, both scholarly and theological: justification by faith has little to do with final salvation; obedience, not faith, causes salvation; grace does not mean “unmerited favor,” etc.

The impetus for VanLandingham’s investigation is Sanders’s new perspective on Judaism, namely, that most Jews were not works-based legalists but relied fundamentally on God’s unmerited favor shown in the election of Israel. While few critics of Sanders are interested in resurrecting caricatures of legalistic Judaism, many have been troubled by Sanders’s elimination of Jewish works-righteousness as the foil for Pauline interpretation. Thus, various studies have suggested that works-righteousness could still be found in some versions of Jewish soteriology (see, for example, some of the essays in *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, vol. 1: *The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism* [ed. D. A. Carson, Peter T. O’Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001]). VanLandingham’s critique heads in a different direction: grace as unmerited favor played no role in Jewish soteriology. Lest critics of the New Perspective on Paul applaud too quickly, VanLandingham will argue that grace played an equally minimal role in Paul’s soteriology.

The book’s argument unfolds in four simple steps. Grace, as traditionally understood, was absent from Jewish soteriology (chap. 1). Behavior, not divine mercy, determined final destiny in Judaism (chap. 2). Likewise for Paul, the outcome of eschatological judgment had little to do with grace or justification by faith, but depended upon one’s works (chap. 3). The *dikai-* word group referred not to forensic justification, but to the initial stage of salvation when one is “made righteous” (chap. 4).

Chapter 1 examines the meaning and role of “grace” in early Judaism. (His frequent use of “post-biblical Judaism” as an equivalent term is confusing since it includes the

book of Daniel.) "I find divine grace remarkably absent in Jewish accounts of Abraham's election, or of election in general. . . . God elected Abraham and his descendants as a response to Abraham's obedience. God's grace is not an issue" (p. 16).

This forms the cornerstone of the entire book and tackles an almost unquestioned scholarly consensus as to the nature of grace/election in Israel. Two points are of particular note. First, he disputes the generally understood definition of "grace" as unmerited, unmotivated, undeserved favor or kindness. Instead of a divine attitude held in spite of what one deserves, grace refers to a *beneficence that is deserved* (p. 65). Second, he surveys a large number of biblical and Second Temple texts to demonstrate that divine beneficence to Abraham and to Israel, including election, is never unmerited, but always a response to obedience (especially to Abraham's obedience on behalf of Israel).

Readers may be surprised at the strength of the evidence he marshals in this and other chapters (for a different voice, consult studies such as Rowley's classic *The Biblical Doctrine of Election* [London: Lutterworth, 1950] or Novak's *The Election of Israel* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995; not considered as far as I can tell]). This opening chapter shows both the strengths and weaknesses of the entire volume. Instead of the very narrowly focused analysis found in most dissertations, this study charts a new landscape in understanding Jewish and Pauline texts, one that is neither traditional nor New Perspective. This breadth is also its weakness, since it can only give cursory and suggestive treatment of a host of critical minutiae. To give but one example, Deut 7:7–8 and related OT texts are almost universally held to indicate God's unmerited grace in the election and redemption of Israel. "It was not because you were more numerous than any other people that the LORD set his heart on you and chose you . . . [but] because the LORD loved you and kept the oath that he swore to your ancestors, that the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand." These texts receive brief discussion with plausible counter-interpretations (pp. 40–42), and VanLandingham is certainly aware of opposing viewpoints, but the broad sweep of the book does not allow the kind of thorough interaction that will be necessary to reverse carefully argued opinions.

Chapter 2 deals with the criteria for salvation in Jewish literature. He is particularly exercised by Sanders's thesis that salvation cannot be "earned" and that Jews did not think they could be righteous enough to merit such salvation (p. 67). "Is there *aquid pro quo* involved in God's mercy, or is it completely undeserved?" (p. 122). He holds that the former is always fundamental. Even in the Qumran hymns, with their emphasis on human unworthiness, "God responds to repentance with forgiveness and purification," even there it is "deserved" (p. 124); "salvation and eternal life result from human effort" (p. 125).

Chapter 3 examines Pauline texts, especially Romans 2. The author argues: (1) that Paul is particularly concerned with moral behavior for his Gentile converts, since this moral blamelessness constitutes the apostle's consistent eschatological hope, not the recognition of a legal verdict ("justification"); (2) that the last judgment is retributive (based solely upon works, not upon proleptic justification by faith); and (3) that loss of salvation for moral misbehavior is possible. He appears to adopt Donfried's schema of justification (initiatory stage), sanctification (present experience), glorification/judgment (based upon obedience), but rejects that author's understanding of an already/not yet tension in justification. Thus, "the Last Judgment in Paul always depends on one's deeds, not upon one's faith. The role of deeds or behavior should not be confused with the role of faith or believing, especially faith as the initial act in the Christian life" (p. 214). Again, the breadth of the study is both breathtaking and too cursory.

No one, including me, comes away unscathed in this chapter. The radical continuity posited between Paul and Judaism may appeal to advocates of the New Perspective,

until they realize the continuity is with a form of Jewish nomism *sans* covenantal elements. Pauline scholars, on the other hand, who agreed with the more nomistic Judaism portrayed in chapters 1–2 now find an equally nomistic Paul. “Other than making Jesus Christ the tribunal [rather than Torah], Paul has not altered Jewish belief in the Last Judgment in any significant way. Like his Jewish contemporaries, Paul maintains that . . . an individual’s eternal destiny will be decided at the Last Judgment and that one’s eternal destiny will be adjudicated on the basis of works” (p. 240).

Finally, chapter 4 takes up the language and concept of “justification.” The *dikai*-word group refers only to an initiatory element (= “make righteous,” pp. 246, 303) with no necessary impact on the outcome of the last judgment for final salvation. “Justification” is a mistranslation and is decidedly not forensic; it “simply cannot refer to the gift of acquittal at the Last Judgment” (pp. 244–45). Most of the important bases are covered and given a challenging reinterpretation, including lexical analysis and treatment of relevant Jewish and Pauline texts.

The book closes with a helpful summation of Jewish/Pauline soteriology. “At the time of faith, a person who has been ‘made righteous’ is forgiven of past sins (which then become a dead issue), cleansed from the guilt and impurity of sin, freed from the human propensity to sin, and then given the ability to obey. The Last Judgment will then determine whether a person, as an act of the will, has followed through with these benefits of Christ’s death. If so, eternal life will be the reward; if not, damnation” (p. 335).

Some readers may be inclined to dismiss this non-Reformational reading of Paul and the OT, but there is a great deal to be gained from this book. The traditional understanding of grace as unmerited favor does run the risk of cutting the nerve between divine and human action. (Recent studies of *charis* in Greco-Roman benefaction might strengthen the book’s argument on this point.) Various Jewish and Christian texts do portray God as repaying human obedience with life. The (forensic?) nature of *dikai*-terminology is still worth reconsidering. The author’s concluding appeal to distinguish more carefully between texts referring to the beginning point of salvation and its end point is well worth heeding (p. 334).

Overall, however, I remain unconvinced by VanLandingham’s daring and well-argued reconstruction. Here are three areas of concern. The portrayal of Sanders’s new perspective on Judaism, against which he argues especially in chapter 2, seems unfairly skewed toward a sort of monergism (grace alone). A rigid contrast between “*quid pro quo*” and “completely undeserved” hardly represents Sanders’s covenantal nomism in which salvation is “established on the basis of the covenant,” yet still “requires . . . obedience.” I could not help but feel that the “nomism” element of Sanders’s solution had been unfairly sublimated to the “covenantal” element (for a critical voice acknowledging the both/and in Sanders’s position, see Simon Gathercole’s *Where is Boasting? Early Jewish Soteriology and Paul’s Response in Romans 1–5* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002]).

Second, in chapter 4 on justification, the analysis of *dikaioynē theou*, so central to the position of most others, is given only minimal consideration (pp. 248–52). In the same chapter, an initial survey of the debate over the meaning of justification is confused (pp. 242–44). Statements such as “very little disagreement exists,” most (even Catholics) “endorse the forensic reading” and “almost unanimously favor a relational reading,” and “Roman Catholicism now officially endorses the traditional Lutheran position on justification” gloss over hotly debated issues (not to mention missing Cremer’s distinction between a forensic and a relational interpretation).

Third, I often felt that his equating of “earned” and “deserved” (in spite of American dictionary usage, cf. p. 2, n. 1) missed the possibility in Jewish and Pauline texts that salvation can be “unearned,” yet still “deserved.” He rightly sees in the language of “walking worthy,” etc., that grace cannot be divorced from behavior, but too easily

assumes that such language implies merit or earning as the causative factor (see, for example, 1 Thess 2:12; 2 Thess 1:5, 11).

I hope to see serious engagement with this book by biblical scholars. Its careful attention to the sources will force every reader back to the texts, which can never be a bad thing, can it?

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*By Faith, Not by Sight: Paul and the Order of Salvation.* By Richard B. Gaffin Jr. Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006, viii + 114 pp., \$16.99 paper.

This slim volume packs more truth about salvation according to Paul than many a heftier tome. Written primarily for pastors by a sage faculty member (1965–present) of Westminster Theological Seminary, it offers guidance on trends in soteriology. Convinced that the best defense is a good offense, Gaffin bares the skeleton of Paul’s “order of salvation” (rarer sense: the general application to individuals of what God accomplished in Christ’s historic death and resurrection). For Gaffin, the central saving reality is, from a believer’s vantage point, union with the crucified and living Lord by faith, branching into sanctification (renovation) and justification as twin functions.

This structure correctly grasped is, in Gaffin’s opinion, the best antidote to novelties infiltrating churches from the quarters of the “new perspective” on Paul in mainline scholarship, and the ferment known as the Federal Vision in some Reformed circles, positions he keeps in the corner of his eye. One tendency of the new perspective, traceable to K. Stendahl, E. P. Sanders and J. D. G. Dunn, is to let the ecclesiological dimension of Paul’s gospel—setting Gentile believers on a par with Jews in the people of God—trump Paul’s soteriological aim. Through N. T. Wright, evangelical and adventurous, a social line on justification is attracting many conservatives. The Federal Vision shares with the new perspective an eagerness to transcend Lutheran and Reformed confessions as inadequate. Out of legion proposals, what concerns Gaffin here is the notion that forensic justification—imputation of Christ’s obedience to the believing ungodly—finds weak scriptural support and can be dispensed with in favor of holistic views of righteousness.

To bear on these fads Gaffin brings a sober tradition stemming from Calvin, the Westminster Standards, G. Vos, J. Murray, and H. Ridderbos. Though his sketch rests on discriminating exegesis of key Pauline verses (Rom 2:5–16; 5:12–19; 8:10, 33–34; 1 Cor 15:3–4, 20; 2 Cor 4:16; Phil 2:12–13), more characteristic of Gaffin’s method is substantive reflection in Paul’s footsteps that comes to grips with his system, not just his surface expressions. Gaffin is methodologically aware of the nature of this enterprise (chap. 1).

Chapter 2 explores how the Last Adam rescues people from the human predicament. According to Paul, sin both renders us guilty before our divine judge and enslaves us. God meets this crisis with a corresponding duality, justification and re-creation. Both flow inseparable from incorporation into Christ by faith, a union that lies logically back of either. The new perspective misleadingly champions participation over against justification, when in fact justification is an important corollary of the union. It also downplays the comprehensive, “transethnic” scope of Paul’s Adam/Christ antithesis (Romans 5; 1 Corinthians 15), which brings sin to the fore as the human “plight” to which God has found a “solution.” In proper perspective, parity of Gentiles with Jews is an “epiphenomenon emanating from the soteriological core” of justification (p. 48).

Likewise the Federal Vision rightly sees union with Christ as controlling, but those are wrongheaded who reify the relation as justification's ground—a vacuous concept that may gravitate toward a Tridentine focus on the regenerative work of the Spirit. Justifying righteousness is grounded in Christ's person, distinct from his members and from the bond as such, attributed to them in solidarity with him. Imputation as classically set forth by the Reformers is "integral, indispensable" to Paul's idea of justification (pp. 51–52).

Remarkably, chapter 3 on sanctification precedes chapter 4 on justification, reversing the typical *ordo salutis* (usual sense) of post-Reformation dogmatics. This placement, which counters a pervasive bent in old Protestant churches to view salvation "almost exclusively in terms of justification" and sanctification as a response of gratitude rather than itself part of God's gift (p. 76), is more than merely rhetorical. To read between the lines, Gaffin seems to hold that transformation is the broader teleological program within which imputation fits. "Christ 'in us' is ever 'for us,' and he is for us only as he is in us" (p. 110). From elsewhere: "Our sanctification is strategically more ultimate than our justification" (*WTJ* 65 [2003] 179). Some may desire an exposé of his reasons.

Paul framed his gospel within an inaugurated eschatology, proclaiming the realization "now" of promises not yet fulfilled in all respects. Gaffin discerns this two-phased pattern in Paul's teaching about sanctification and justification alike. His chapter on sanctification emphasizes what churches have neglected, that the resurrection-transformation of the "inner man" occurs even now through union with Christ the firstfruits (indicative) and manifests itself in obedience (imperative) empowered by the Spirit as we await glorification of the "outer man." Sanctification, though involving effort, is not foremost a human work but fundamentally "what God does," "a work of his grace" (p. 77). Contra antinomianism: "Compliance with the imperative is the consequence and attestation apart from which the indicative does not exist" (p. 72).

If Protestants tout the "not yet" of sanctification to the impoverishment of its "already," many teach an "already" of justification to the exclusion of its "not yet." In chapter 4, assuming that readers understand justification as a perfective state, Gaffin tentatively argues the thesis of a future aspect. Whether some "minimal" data (Rom 2:13; 5:19; Gal 5:5; 2 Tim 4:8) point to a terminus of justification is controversial, but Gaffin is inclined to think so and reaches for the *Westminster Catechisms* to scratch up support. Yet he prefers theological arguments. Is justification exempt from the already/not yet scheme of NT eschatology? Will not our bodily resurrection have forensic significance, as did Christ's? Does not adoption, past and future, offer a legal parallel? Even believers face the prospect of judgment according to deeds.

How justification by faith and judgment of deeds cohere is problematic. Here Gaffin retreats into tried formulas: faith is the "alone instrument" of justification, but living faith works and "is not alone"; assurance of final acquittal rests on the perfect righteousness of Christ, our works contributing nothing. Whether such shibboleths capture all Gaffin has unearthed is doubtful; he has yet to clarify the implications of his insights. If life in Christ enables us to please God, at the judgment will we not present deeds that God can approve? Is God's deciding in someone's favor not also to "justify"—significantly so, if verses like Rom 2:13 use the verb's future tense to denote an actual, not hypothetical, outcome (p. 95)? If God values obedience springing from the indwelling Spirit, what force do denials have (pp. 98–99) that the fruit of the Spirit will form a component of final righteousness, admittedly checkered but real? Is the "ground" of justification anything other than an existing quality of righteousness God names in reference to subjects, whether extrinsic (imputed) or intrinsic ("deeds")? Are not both necessary? If the indicative "does not exist" apart from actualization of the imperative, are concrete acts not required to prove vital the believer's connection with Christ, whose

righteousness imputed makes secure? Does assurance arise solely from the corporate status in which Christians stand justified, or also from God's faithfulness ensuring that believers will, through Christ's Spirit, fulfill the outstanding conditions for a culminating, particular verdict in the last day? A big question Gaffin's book leaves unanswered is in what ways Reformed orthodoxy must expand to accommodate the whole of Paul's teaching, rooted in the Trinity, about sanctification as related to justification in eschatological panorama.

For its masterly overview of Pauline soteriology in outline and its stimulus to further inquiry, Gaffin's book is strongly recommended.

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*What are Spiritual Gifts? Rethinking the Conventional View.* By Kenneth Berding. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2006, 363 pp., \$16.99 paper.

Delete all the spiritual gift surveys that are ubiquitous on the internet. Abandon the agonizing search for that unique ability that the Holy Spirit has given you for ministry. Expand Paul's representative gift lists to include an apologetic gift or church discipline gift. Serve the body of Christ out of your weakness. These are just a few of the implications that follow from Kenneth Berding's challenge to rethink the conventional view on spiritual gifts. He offers a biblical and exegetical work that argues the thesis that the Holy Spirit does not give special abilities that need to be discovered; the Holy Spirit instead places Christians into various ministries that build up the church.

The first part of the book explains the distinction between two views on gifting. The conventional view is that spiritual gifts are special abilities or enablements given to believers for ministry. In fact, the terminology of "spiritual gift" itself predisposes the English speaker to understand the gift as an ability, such as a gift for music. Berding rejects this understanding and argues that the so-called spiritual gifts (his nomenclature for the special-abilities view) found in the Pauline corpus should be viewed as spiritual ministries. If we use the gift terminology at all, we must understand it in the sense of something given, like a Christmas gift, rather than a special ability.

Part 2 argues the case for the spiritual-ministries view. I found four arguments to be especially persuasive.

(1) Berding argues that the Greek words *charisma* and *pneumatika* are not technical terms for special abilities. The gift of teaching, for example, refers only to the *ministry* of teaching and cannot carry the semantic load of an *ability* to teach.

(2) Paul's central concern in his letters is always about roles, functions, and ministries. The gift lists continue this concern rather than advancing a new theology of special abilities.

(3) The literary construction "grace" + "given" always refers to ministry assignments (Rom 15:15; 1 Cor 1:4) and should have the same meaning when it is used in the gift lists (Eph 4:7; Rom 12:3, 6).

(4) Berding's key argument concerns the nature of Paul's lists. Based on a working definition of a list as four or more items grouped together, Berding generates a directory of over 100 lists in the Pauline corpus. Each list has a conceptual theme that holds it together.

(a) The list in Eph 4:11–12, for example, is conceptualized by the theme of equipping. An evangelist simply has the task of equipping Christians for ministry. There is no textual indication that Paul is talking about a special ability to do evangelism.



(b) Rom 12:6–8 is an exhortation to humility based on the different functions that are given to the church.

(c) In the context of the body metaphor, 1 Cor 12:28–30 shows Paul's concern for the diversity of gifts. God has given Christians different ministry roles, and the church needs all of them.

(d) The list in 1 Cor 12:8–10 presents a special challenge to Berding's view. Because the focus of the list is on the miraculous, the items in the list require some sort of supernatural empowerment in order to practice them. It would seem natural to understand at least this list in terms of special abilities. This Berding is unwilling to do. Although he acknowledges that all these gifts require a special ability, he argues that they should still be viewed primarily as ministries. The miraculous gifts are a subset of ministries that just happen to require a special empowerment. He argues that 1 Cor 12:1–11 represents the concerns of the Corinthians with their focus on the miraculous while verses 12:12–31 record Paul's attempt to redirect their focus toward his primary concern for ministry functions that build up the church.

Part 3 discusses the broader concepts of ministry, the role of the Holy Spirit in salvation and sanctification, and the concept of empowering and weakness in the letters of Paul. The final section focuses on the application of the study for the local church. Three appendices give: (1) a brief description of the items in Paul's ministry lists; (2) a technical discussion on the syntax of Rom 12:4–8; and (3) an extended version comparison (30 pages) that highlights how ability language has found its way into English translations (e.g. "leadership" in Romans 12:8 becomes "leadership ability" in the NLT).

The intended audience of the book is very broad. The body of the book is directed toward the thinking layperson and is written in a popular format that would be suitable for adult Bible study. The extensive notes (64 pp.) include material of interest to the scholar, but other than the discussion of the sentence structure of Rom 12:4–8, scholars will only find a brief statement of position, brief arguments, and a bibliography on both sides of the issue.

Berding's thesis is not new. Several recent exegetical commentaries have embraced a form of this view. The book is groundbreaking, however, as the first fully developed biblical theology of the spiritual-ministries view. I think Berding proves his basic thesis and presents a liberating perspective on Pauline theology that should have a positive impact on the body life of the church. I am perplexed, however, about some of his statements that have to do with the theme of empowerment. In his zeal to stress ministry involvement, Berding tends to downplay the enablement that comes from God to do the work of the ministry. Statements like "God *normally* does enable us for whatever he calls us to do" (p. 61, italics mine) and "God in his sovereignty *usually* empowers us . . . for the ministries to which he calls us" (p. 164, italics mine) are found throughout the book. When does God *not* empower us for ministry? Berding's answer focuses on Paul's theology of weakness in the Corinthian correspondence. Like Paul, Christians are sometimes asked to minister out of their weaknesses. Yet Berding himself acknowledges that, according to Paul, "weakness is the path to spiritual power" (p. 171). At the end of the book, I am still left wondering when God leaves me to minister apart from his enablement. In another section, Berding states that "God gives general empowerment for ministry and not a special power that goes beyond a general empowerment" (pp. 34–35). The "special power" in this context refers to his polemic against the conventional view, but I am not clear about the distinction between the special power that we do not have and the general power that we do have. Could not the general power be exactly the enablement that the conventional view advances? If so, then the distinction between the two views is minimized and reduced to a play on words: God gives an enablement but not a special enablement. Perhaps it would be better to conclude

that the gift lists are about spiritual ministries, but divine enablement comes with the ministries.

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*Romans: A Commentary.* By Robert Jewett. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007, lxx + 1140 pp., \$90.00.

Pauline scholars have eagerly anticipated Robert Jewett's commentary on Romans for many years. His ten articles, popular commentary (*Romans* [Cokesbury Basic Bible Commentary 22; Nashville: Graded Press, 1988]), and semi-popular monograph on tolerance (*Christian Tolerance: Paul's Message to the Modern Church* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1982]) have whetted our appetites, as have his many lively contributions to the Seminar on Paul at Society of Biblical Literature meetings over the years. This commentary does not disappoint. In keeping with current commentary trends, it is lengthy (over a thousand pages of double-column type) but without bloat: there are remarkably few wasted words (although I did note an obvious editorial doublet on p. 512). In keeping with the Hermeneia series, the commentary is rich in primary source references, densely documented, and focused on the rhetorical nature of the letter (one thinks in this regard especially of Betz on Galatians). Especially noteworthy and indicative of a maturity of judgment that only time can produce is the clear and consistently applied "thesis" of the commentary. Jewett summarizes it in these words on the first page: "Paul writes to gain support for a mission to the barbarians in Spain, which requires that the gospel of impartial, divine righteousness revealed in Christ be clarified to rid it of prejudicial elements that are currently dividing the congregations in Rome." Jewett promises that he will use this rhetorical strategy as a lens to interpret "each verse and paragraph" in the letter, a promise that he comes close to fulfilling. Jewett argues that this kind of unifying purpose matches the nature of ancient rhetoric and makes his approach preferable to the multiple "reasons for Romans" that many commentators are content to work with.

Jewett's focus on the importance of the impending Spanish mission for the letter is not entirely new (Dodd and others have suggested much the same; cf. 15:24), but he uses recent research into the nature of Roman Spain to cast Paul's request for Roman aid for that mission in a new light. This research suggests that the Spain in Paul's day had few Jewish residents, that the inhabitants spoke mainly Latin and indigenous languages, and that they continued to resist efforts to bring Spain fully under the aegis of imperial Rome. Each of these factors posed special problems for a Pauline missionary enterprise. Paul normally used the synagogue as an initial base for evangelism. He proclaimed the gospel in Greek; a mission to Spain would require, for the first time in history, "translation" of the message. Paul needed help from the Roman Christians to mount an evangelistic campaign in Spain that had any chance of succeeding. Yet Paul was worried that any support that Roman Christians might give would be tainted by their own tendencies toward "imperialistic behavior" toward one another. Jewett follows the majority of recent Romans interpreters in thinking that the tensions between the "weak" and the "strong" (14:1–15:13) were based mainly in differences over the continuing importance of the Torah and that the situation resulting from the expulsion of leading Jews and Jewish Christians by Claudius in AD 49 exacerbated these tensions. He estimates that the Roman Christian community was split into eight to ten house and tenement churches ("tenement" because the social status of many Roman Christians

would have required that they meet in “slum” apartments). Whatever the cause of the tensions in the community, the result was that the Christians in Rome were caught up in the typical Roman competition for “honor,” a competition that flew in the face of the unifying and impartial righteousness of God revealed in Christ and that also burdened the gospel for the Spanish “barbarians” with a load of Roman imperial baggage. So Paul writes with the initial goal of unifying the Roman Christians around the counter-cultural gospel of Christ and with the ultimate goal of securing appropriate support for the Spanish mission.

I have identified two features of Jewett’s overall interpretation of Romans that require comment before I move on to other matters. First, a particular strength of Jewett’s commentary is its focus on the social and cultural context of first-century Roman Christianity. Many commentators on Romans (including this one) tend to neglect this social setting, sometimes out of simple ignorance. Jewett, however, obviously knows this first-century world very well and thinks that it is vital for understanding what is going on in Romans. He may be right, but I have two quibbles. First, Jewett tends to suggest that his view of Romans as rhetoric directed to specific cultural circumstances stands in opposition to any view of Romans as an “abstract theological document” (I quote from p. 46, but this is not an isolated comment; its substance is repeated throughout the commentary). However, Jewett is fighting against a non-existent foe: I know of no serious interpreter on Romans who would want to argue that Romans features “abstract” theology. Yet most interpreters would (rightly, I think) insist that Romans is thoroughly theological—and that its theology does not stand in contrast to the letter’s specific rhetorical concern but is, in fact, the engine that drives that rhetoric.

Second, I have to wonder whether the pursuit of honor was as important as Jewett suggests it was. He may be right about the importance of this matter in the culture as a whole, but there are many places in the commentary where I have the sense that this issue is being imposed on the text rather than read out of it. Of course, any serious attempt at historical interpretation will involve a certain amount of imaginative reading in light of the larger culture. However, I would like to see a bit more textual support for Jewett’s particular construal. A second key feature of Jewett’s approach that I identified above is the ultimate concern about the Spanish mission. An obvious objection to this reading of the letter is the very muted nature of the references to Spain. Paul’s intention to travel to Spain is mentioned only twice in the letter (15:24, 28) and his desire to secure support from the Romans is only hinted at in the form of the verb he uses to describe his visit to Rome in 15:24. Jewett is aware of this problem and answers it by arguing that the matter was a delicate one that could not easily be broached in the letter and that Paul was leaving it to Phoebe, the carrier of the letter (16:1–2) to elaborate (p. 89). Jewett also notes that these references to Spain come in the letter’s “peroration” (his rhetorical identification of 15:14–16:23) and that the peroration was the place where the rhetor would bring the argument to a climax and incite the readers to action. However, the imminent trip to Jerusalem receives more attention in the peroration than Spain does. With all allowance for the constraints of diplomacy, then, it remains surprising that Spain does not feature more prominently in the letter if support for a mission there really were its ultimate goal.

A particularly valuable aspect of this commentary is its extremely careful analysis of the literary structure of Romans. Jewett views its macro-structure against the background of his identification of the letter as an “ambassadorial letter” (mixed with other genres as well), identifying five major parts: *exordium* (1:1–12); *narratio* (1:13–15); *propositio* (1:16–17); proof (in four parts: 1:18–4:25; 5:1–8:39; 9:1–11:36; 12:1–15:13); peroration (15:14–16:16, 21–23). I will leave to experts on these matters the evaluation of this structure, although I confess to being somewhat mystified about just what

“proof” in this genre might mean and how 12:1–15:13 might constitute part of that “proof.” However, Jewett’s commentary is especially helpful in its careful literary analysis of each paragraph of the letter. He identifies the various components of each paragraph (often singling out pieces of tradition that he thinks Paul is quoting and adapting) and singles out various literary devices that Paul has used to make his argument compelling. If there is any criticism to be made on this score, it is simply that this laudable focus on literary structure tends to take the place of a clear analysis of the major purpose of paragraphs and their contribution to the overall argument of the letter. The commentary is also notable for its very careful analysis of textual variants, with a full citation of witnesses and detailed discussion.

Reviews of books that are as long and detailed as Jewett’s *Romans* must inevitably be quite subjective in what they talk about. I could use many thousands of words outlining and critiquing Jewett’s interpretations of particular verses and paragraphs. Instead I will comment on three general matters that caught my attention.

First, Jewett’s stance with respect to one of the dominant directions in recent Pauline studies, the so-called “New Perspective,” is interesting. Indeed, one of the remarkable aspects of the commentary is Jewett’s general disregard of the movement *per se*. Whether this reflects a somewhat characteristic “Germanic” approach to the movement—ignore it because it is just an Anglo-Saxon phenomenon—or whether it reflects a studied decision on Jewett’s part to minimize the movement by ignoring it is not entirely clear. Of course, Jewett interacts with broadly “New Perspective” interpretations in numerous places—mainly those found in Dunn’s commentary (N. T. Wright’s commentary in the *New Interpreter’s Bible* is strangely missing from the bibliography). He sometimes agrees with these views but, on the whole, I think it is fair to say, is critical of the New Perspective. One manifestation of his distance from this movement is his tendency to find *nomos* in many key passages referring not to Torah but to “law” in general. (He sometimes argues this on the dubious basis of an anarthrous *nomos*.) Jewett here, and in his interpretation of Paul’s critique of *nomos* in certain texts as involving a “yearning for honor” by obeying it and forcing it on others (e.g. Rom 5:20 [pp. 387–88]; 7:5 [p. 436]), can be seen as the heir to the broad Bultmann/Käsemann tradition of interpretation.

Second, Jewett’s treatment of universalism in Romans is both worth noting and indicative of a larger methodological concern. He rightly notes the importance of the language of “each” and “all” in the letter, but then goes farther than most do by insisting that the words have an extensive and unbounded reference in key texts. Romans 3:24 implies that “all will now be saved” (p. 281); “the expectation of universal salvation in [Rom 11:32] is indisputable” (p. 712); and Rom 11:26 refers to “all members of the house of Israel, who, without exception, [will] be saved” (p. 702). Jewett thinks that exegetical integrity demands these conclusions; and, of course, each claim can be debated at this level (I would disagree in each case). Yet what is more troubling about Jewett’s approach is that he tends in these contexts to acknowledge and dismiss without any argument the problems his conclusions might create for “systematic theology.” However, these texts create problems not just for systematic theology but for the coherence of Paul’s own teaching. Jewett’s silence on the implications of his interpretation of texts in Romans for Paul’s theology (let alone biblical or systematic theology) typifies the commentary and is clearly a deliberate strategy designed to analyze Romans as a discrete piece of rhetorical communication. I think he reacts too strongly at this point to his perception that generations of theologians have misinterpreted Romans by smuggling into the letter their own agendas. However, in any case, Jewett’s commentary is not the place to go for those who want to read Romans theologically.

Third, in keeping with his earlier work on *Tolerance*, Jewett emphasizes the message of Christian inclusiveness in Romans. He rightly argues that Paul is deeply

concerned with this matter, as his exhortations to the “strong” and the “weak” reveal. This message is surely one that our modern fragmented church needs to hear. However, Jewett tends to ignore any possible boundaries in this inclusiveness. He does not think that the issue (or issues) Paul tackles in 14:1–15:13 can be construed as *anadiaphoron*, and at several points he distinguishes Paul’s view of “faith” from what he thinks is a wrong-headed notion of commitment to a particular belief system (e.g. p. 278). Especially telling is his decision to treat the warning about false teaching in 16:17–20a as an interpolation, thereby (conveniently) removing a text that establishes some “boundary lines” for the community.

The incredible range of issues and approaches that need to be incorporated into a modern academic commentary means, sadly, that individual commentaries will seldom be able to “cover the waterfront.” Each will have methodological strengths and weaknesses. Jewett’s *Romans* is not strong in theological analysis or integration with broader biblical themes, but this omission should not detract from its strengths: careful text-critical and literary analysis, impressively extensive reference to ancient sources, interaction with an amazing breadth of scholarship on Romans, and, most of all, analysis of the rhetorical and cultural components of the message of the letter.

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*Heavenly Perspective: A Study of the Apostle Paul’s Response to a Jewish Mystical Movement at Colossae.* By Ian K. Smith. Library of New Testament Studies 326. London: T & T Clark, 2006, xxi + 254 pp., \$130.00.

This study, a revision of the author’s dissertation submitted to the University of Sydney, is a worthy addition to the growing literature on the Colossian heresy. While most studies on the Colossian heresy have focused on selected verses of the first two chapters of Colossians, Smith aims at examining how an understanding of the problems confronted by Paul affects the way in which the entire epistle should be read.

In the first chapter, Smith provides a discussion of the religious practices of the Jews in Phrygia during the Second Temple period. Without offering details on how to locate such communities in the religious landscape of ancient Anatolia, Smith concurs with most that “syncretistic” is an appropriate term to describe such Jewish communities. In terms of authorship, Smith provides a helpful discussion on issues of language and style, theology, and the relationship between Colossians and other Pauline epistles. He concludes that “there is insufficient evidence to deny Pauline authorship of Colossians” (p. 16). Smith ends this chapter with a brief note on “Research Methods.” Other than an assertion that one should uphold the “primacy of the text” (p. 16), Smith is content simply to provide a rough outline of this proposed study.

In his second chapter, Smith provides a helpful overview of scholarship. Refusing to use the loaded term “Colossian heresy,” Smith suggests instead the phrase “Colossian error,” since this would bypass the difficult discussion of orthodoxy and heresy in the first century while affirming the significance of truth claims in early apostolic writings. In his survey, Smith groups previous studies into four broad categories: Essene Judaism and Gnosticism, Hellenism, Paganism, and Judaism. Smith concludes that “[t]he most obvious weakness of recent study on the Colossian philosophy is that it does not give sufficient attention to the text of the letter” (p. 38). Smith also argues that focusing on the written evidence related to first-century Phrygia makes it possible to recognize the widespread impact of Jewish mysticism and its influence behind the “Colossian error.”

Smith then provides a survey of Jewish mystical texts and proceeds to summarize the practices associated with heavenly ascents under four headings: role of angels, dualism, wisdom, and hortatory focus. Smith shows how “Colossian errorists,” who claimed to practice heavenly ascents, posed a challenge to the Pauline gospel: “The danger that such people posed to the harmony of the church was that those who claimed such ascents could also claim a superior spirituality. This super-spirituality was grounded in a dualistic worldview that led to ascetic practices. Boasting of such practices showed a faith that was more dependent on human effort than divine grace, and was thereby a denial of Paul’s gospel” (p. 73).

In the four subsequent chapters, Smith provides a detailed examination of four crucial texts for the identification of the “Colossian error”: Col 2:6–8, 9–15, 16–19, and 20–23. Smith argues that *ta stoicheia tou kosmou* in 2:8 are fallen angels, and the domain of their activity is the world. The “errorists” sought to be liberated from them but in turn became their slaves. In order to escape through heavenly ascent, they denied worldly activities, thus being led into ascetic regulations and practices. In response to such an error, Paul in 2:9–15 emphasized the realized triumph of Christ through the historical realities of his death and resurrection. In his analysis of 2:16–19 Smith includes a detailed argument that the genitive in the phrase “worship of angels” is a subjective genitive (the worship offered by the angels), thus situating the “Colossian error” within a Judaism that continues to affirm its traditional monotheistic stance. Finally, in analyzing the impotence of the “errorists’” message, Smith argues that “the basis of their error is that they continue to trust in their own adherence to regulations rather than the benefits of the death of Christ” (p. 142). Smith concludes this section with a brief chapter that draws together the findings of the preceding exegetical analysis: “It can be seen, therefore, that Paul was not correcting Gnosticism or Paganism but a form of Jewish mysticism that was prevalent in the first century” (p. 145).

In the chapters that follow, Smith moves beyond Colossians 2 in his attempt to show that this reading of the “Colossian error” can be supported by an analysis of the other parts of this epistle. In his discussion of the much-debated “Colossian Hymn” (1:15–20), Smith shows how this section is not primarily concerned with Jewish legalism or Gnosticism but with a form of Jewish mysticism that affects the “Colossian errorists.” Moving to 3:1–4, Smith demonstrates how this section provides a bridge from the response to the “error” in 2:6–23 to the practical implications of Paul’s theological response in 3:5–4:6. Finally, in examining the epistolary paraenesis of 3:5–4:6, Smith focuses on the themes of revelation and victory, and he argues that this paraenetic section tackles issues that are relevant to the “Colossian error.”

In this important study, Smith has moved the discussion forward in several ways. He has successfully revived the thesis that Paul was countering a form of Jewish mysticism that can indeed be dated to Paul’s time and that was prevalent in the Mediterranean world. He provides a helpful survey of texts that point to the significance of “heavenly ascents” in Jewish mysticism, and he is able to show how such “heavenly ascents” build on a corollary set of beliefs, beliefs that can in turn be manifested in a host of practices.

More importantly, this study delivers what it promises in providing a detailed examination of major portions of Colossians. Instead of focusing on selected verses, this study shows how an examination of the entire epistle is necessary in determining what Paul is countering in this epistle. An understanding of the “Colossian error” in turn affects the overall reading of the text. While one may not be convinced by every exegetical decision or even the major conclusions reached, this study forces others who would prefer an alternative approach to the “Colossian error” to provide an equally compelling and detailed exegetical study.

This is not to say, however, that this study provides the final solution and puts the long debate to rest. In this study, several methodological problems remain unresolved. Most of the Jewish texts surveyed can be broadly classified as apocalyptic writings, an observation that leads to several related issues. First, it remains unclear whether the term “mysticism” should be applied to such writings when numerous other central apocalyptic motifs are missing in later *Merkabah* mysticism. Second, the relationship between texts and community practices also needs to be clarified. Should we assume that the community behind such apocalyptic writings did in fact practice “heavenly ascents” in ways that were described in these writings? Third, focusing primarily on these literary works perhaps detracts attention from other ancient non-literary material.

In distinguishing his study from previous works on the Colossian heresy, Smith suggests that most “studies on the Colossian philosophy have focused heavily on background material” (p. 17). Throughout this study, Smith repeatedly asserts that one should not ignore the “primacy of the [Colossian] text” (p. 16). It is surprising, therefore, to see Smith beginning with an analysis of such “background” texts and only then proceeding to “test the thesis that the Colossian error arose from a Jewish mystical movement that focused on heavenly ascents” (p. 74). In light of the emphasis on the primacy of the Colossian text, it might have been more appropriate to begin with Colossians and then to see whether the “Colossian error” that emerges from such an examination of the text can indeed be identified as comparable to another system of thought in the contemporary literature.

Finally, Smith asserts that the mysticism behind the “Colossian error” is to be considered “within Judaism” (p. 33), and “it is not necessary to look beyond Judaism to find the identity of the errorists” (p. 38). While this would certainly set Smith’s work apart from others that see the “Colossian error” as the product of Jewish syncretism, or even peculiar local forms of Hellenistic Judaism, it is unclear what the author means by “within Judaism.” Smith suggests that the recognition of the “diversity” of Second Temple Judaism “has raised doubts about whether there needs to be a second background to the [Colossian] philosophy” (p. 33). Some would argue, however, that such diversity points precisely to the presence of foreign influences in Second Temple Judaism. “Within Judaism” would therefore become a problematic category unless clearly defined. Moreover, Smith later admits that “[a]lthough the background of the Colossian error was clearly Judaism, it was also affected by Hellenism and even Paganism” (p. 143). Yet what is the significance then of asserting that the “Colossian error” must fall within the boundaries of Judaism?

It should be noted, however, that Smith never claims to provide the final word for this long debate on the nature of the Colossian heresy. Nevertheless, no further study on the Colossian text in general and the Colossian heresy in particular can afford to ignore this detailed and careful study.

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*Exploring Protestant Traditions: An Invitation to Hospitality.* By W. David Buschart. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2006, 373 pp., \$26.00 paper.

David Buschart (Ph.D., Drew University), is Reformed in theology, a member of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC), and ironically teaches theology and historical studies at Denver Seminary, a Conservative Baptist Association school that annually requires all faculty to sign a statement of faith that includes belief in believer’s baptism

by immersion. He spent years researching this volume detailing the beliefs of eight Protestant traditions: Lutheran, Anabaptist, Reformed, Anglican, Baptist, Wesleyan, Dispensational, and Pentecostal.

As the subtitle indicates, Buschart seeks to be hospitable, irenic, and kind in his presentation of the views of these disparate Protestant belief systems. To this end, his quotes and citations come primarily from those within the various groups themselves or from those favorable to a particular theology. He normally omits critiquing the different viewpoints, counting on his readers' discernment to safeguard them from error and confusion, although in his Epilogue he uncharacteristically states, "Dispensational theology has too often promoted what I consider to be an unhealthy disjuncture within the people of God" (p. 280). Nearly every chapter contains a helpful one or two-page timeline chart diagramming key movements in the history of the particular Protestant stream being presented.

Buschart follows a delightful pattern in introducing each chapter. First, two or three double-spaced quotes appear in italics. The initial quote from a "Motto on a T-shirt," reads, "*I'm a plain simple Christian.*" Some quotes are from well-known confessions, others are scriptural texts, but most are taken from within the circle of the writers and thinkers of the particular tradition being introduced. Second, Buschart recounts an interesting vignette from his childhood, college, or adult life showing his contact with the group under discussion. Next comes the substance of each chapter, divided into three sections: (1) Context, which covers historical and ecclesiastical background; (2) Approach, which treats theological and hermeneutical method; and (3) Conclusion, which summarizes the findings. This threefold approach demonstrates the coherence found in each tradition's beliefs.

The final section of each chapter, "For Further Study," briefly lists important bibliographies, reference works, survey resources, primary sources, and more recent and even current "explorations." The layout of the entire volume is reader-friendly.

Buschart notes that over the past five centuries, eight traditions have influenced Protestants, and these he chooses to explore. He also encourages readers to make an effort to understand Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Christianities. While some decry the apparent division that differences within Protestantism evidence, Buschart wisely contrasts this with the uniformity and conformity found and demanded in a cult. Instead, the various shades of belief among Protestant groups show a vibrancy of thinking. Though varied in some emphases, each tradition seeks to ground its belief system squarely in the Word of God. Nevertheless, Buschart holds "the humble recognition that all traditions of Christianity contain an admixture of truth and error, of wisdom and weakness" (p. 28), even though each makes vital, unique, and enriching contributions to the body of Christ.

Buschart's first exposition, Lutheranism, he calls "A Gospel of Grace," because, "For Luther, the gospel was the offer of justification by grace through faith alone" (p. 33). The historical synopsis interestingly mentions the major players in early Lutheran history—Luther, Melancthon, and Chemnitz. He centers on some of the intramural Lutheran controversies and the formation of their recognized writings and authoritative confessions: Luther's *Small Catechism*, the *Augsburg Confession*, along with *The Book of Concord* (also known as *Concordia*). Buschart briefly carries the history of Lutherans up to the present day, even detailing the movement in America with the Wisconsin and Missouri Synods (WELS and LCMS) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). He explains various mergers and the founding of some Lutheran seminaries such as Gettysburg Seminary (1826) and Concordia Seminary (1839). Surprisingly, Luther Theological Seminary in St. Paul is omitted.

Theologically as well as hermeneutically, Buschart points out, Lutherans begin with their confessions. This is so because they believe them to contain "a true and



unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God" (p. 44). Lutherans hold to a very literal understanding of Scripture; belief in the "real presence" of Christ in the Lord's Supper is a result of this. Indeed, the dominical statement "This is my body" was interpreted so literally that the Roman Catholic Church, adhering to transubstantiation, was not critical of Luther on this point. But Lutherans also desire proper application of the truth of Scripture. The doctrine of justification by grace through faith without works of the law constitutes their primal doctrinal belief. This major distinctive judges all other doctrines.

Buschart discusses the Lutheran belief that baptism and the Lord's Supper are means of grace, summarizing the idea in these words: "Because baptism is the means of grace through which God saves, it should not be withheld from infants" (p. 52). His conclusion is that Lutherans strongly believe that "salvation for lost humankind is pure gift, the gracious gift of salvation by faith. This gospel of grace is at the heart of the belief and the practices of the Lutheran tradition" (p. 55).

Buschart next treats Anabaptist theology, which he subtitles "Faith for Radical Community." In recounting Anabaptist historical developments, Buschart underscores that the Anabaptists arose with the spiritual awakening sparked by Luther and others. However, their distinctive was "they believed that baptism is to be administered to people who have heard, understood and affirmed the gospel, and who are, as a result, committed to living a new life in Christ. Infants are incapable of such acts and decisions, and therefore they are not fit for baptism" (p. 61). Buschart mentions the roles of Hubmaier, Reublin, Sattler, Mantz, Blaurock, Denk, Hut, Müntzer, Karlstadt, and others, but the striking element is that very few have surviving writings, primarily because most were martyred before they could produce theological works. Recounted also are the migrations of Anabaptists to America and the diverse groups that spring from that tradition today, including various strains of Hutterites, Amish, Mennonites, and Brethren.

Anabaptist theology, writes Buschart, "is rooted most fundamentally not in intellect, but in life" (p. 71), although the "Bible constitutes the stated norm for Anabaptist theological formulation" (p. 72). However, interpretation is to be carried out in the community, under the illumination of the Holy Spirit, and must be characterized by obedience. The NT is given priority over the OT, especially in the light of the principle of Christocentricity. The result is a NT-based "noncreedal approach to following Christ" that includes human free will, engagement in sacrificial service toward all, and non-violence. Part of the Anabaptist concept of community translates into separation, as seen most notably with the Amish. The nonviolence aspect can be observed in the martyrdoms of many early Anabaptist leaders. But as Buschart carefully observes, "nonresistance is not to be equated with noninvolvement" (p. 81), because the Anabaptist traditions seek to serve others.

Buschart's third Protestant tradition is Reformed theology, which he titles, "To the Glory of God and God Alone." Mentioned in the early history of this movement are Calvin, Oecolampadius, Zwingli, Farel, Bucer, Bullinger, Knox and, of course, Arminius. The story spans France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and England before moving to America. The backgrounds of the Presbyterians, Congregationalists, various "united" churches, and movements with "Reformed" in their names are recounted.

Regarding theological and hermeneutical method, Buschart writes, "In accord with the goal of bringing glory to God, a genuinely Reformed method of theology is one in which Scripture is the uniquely supreme source and authority, for Scripture provides as no other source can the divine self-revelation of God" (p. 99). Though the Reformed communions have doctrinal statements such as the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, these "have only a provisional, temporary, relative authority" (p. 100). Experience is rejected as a source of, or a guiding, theological norm. Reformed theology is Word-based

and soteriologically oriented. Key theological beliefs are the sovereignty of God and the grace of God, with a distinction made between common grace and saving grace.

The fourth Protestant tradition Buschart covers is Anglican theology, which he titles “The Spirit of a *Via Media*.” The concept is that of a middle approach—neither Roman (Catholic) nor patterned after Wittenberg or Geneva. There are Catholic practices, but with a Reformed flavor; the Anglican Communion is rooted in antiquity, but free of corrupt influences. Important historical forces were the production of the *King James Version* and *The Book of Common Prayer*. Historically, Anglicans spread from England to America; indeed, “Two-thirds of the signatories of the Declaration of Independence were Episcopalians” (p. 121). Strangely, however, the chart on Anglicans only traces the movement in England and America and does not illustrate their growth into Africa and other parts of the world where their influence is quite strong.

Anglicans considered themselves to be rooted in both the Word of God and tradition. Buschart’s key descriptive words are “Episcopal,” “liturgical,” and “tolerant.” *Episcopal* underscores the essential nature of church government. Furthermore, Anglican liturgy is their way of doing theology. With regard to the final terms, Anglicanism seeks to include, not exclude, embracing ambiguity as part of inclusion. Some interesting Anglican conclusions are that infants should be baptized “in keeping with the analogy between circumcision in the Old Covenant and baptism in the New Covenant” (p. 141), and that the sacrament of the Lord’s Table “is efficacious regardless of the spiritual state of the recipient” (p. 142).

Buschart’s fifth tradition is Baptist theology, which he calls “Freedom for Immediacy.” By this he means that Baptists believe one can be “immediately, directly related to God through Christ. People experience redemption as a result of God applying his truth directly to the heart and mind of individual persons” (p. 169). He traces Baptist beginnings to those who left the Church of England in the late 1500s, differentiating between General and Particular Baptists and noting several Baptist distinctives—regenerate church membership, self-government of the church, religious freedom, and baptism by immersion. The chart on the Baptist tradition covers two full pages listing nearly twenty modern Baptist groups. On the one hand, Buschart contends that “Baptists are staunchly anticreedal” (p. 158). On the other hand, he notes that Baptists do use confessions such as the London (1677), the Philadelphia (1742), and the New Hampshire Confession (1833). One may strain to see the difference between creeds and confessions, but he notes that confessions “do not have binding authority, nor are they final or unalterable” (p. 160).

Sixth, the Wesleyan tradition is entitled “Grace-Full Holiness and Holy Wholeness” because of the emphasis placed on personal holiness, beginning with John Wesley himself. Great diversity is seen among Wesleyan denominations that include varieties of Methodists, Wesleyans, Nazarenes, and Holiness movements, as well as the Church of God (Anderson) and the Salvation Army. A methodological distinctive is the Wesleyan quadrilateral of Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience. The latter three help interpret Scripture, and whatever is not found in Scripture “is not to be made an article of faith” (p. 187). Two characteristic beliefs concern prevenient grace and entire sanctification, the latter being defined as an imparted righteousness and an infusion of divine love.

Included as Buschart’s seventh Protestant tradition is Dispensational theology, subtitled “Rightly Dividing the Scriptures.” After a presentation of the usual historical precedents, most of the discussion centers on differences between varieties of dispensationalism: traditional, progressive, the Scofield/Chafer school, and ultra-dispensationalism (this latter type is somewhat sidelined). With his Reformed leanings, Buschart seems to favor the progressive element. He notes that dispensationalists interpret Scripture from a plain, normal, grammatical-historical approach, aiming for consistency, and that all branches of dispensationalism differentiate between Israel

and the church and emphasize the unconditional nature of the Abrahamic, Davidic, and New Covenants.

Pentecostal theology is Buschart's eighth and final Protestant tradition. He traces its origins to the Azusa Street revival of 1901, discusses the "oneness" controversy, and notes the 2003 appointment of Ted Haggard, a Pentecostal, to head the National Association of Evangelicals. Amazingly, over "320 Pentecostal denominations and church groups exist in the United States" (p. 237). Pentecostals differ on whether there are two or three distinct works of grace in the believer, counting conversion, the removal of sin, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Buschart says that Pentecostals emphasize experience and "that in Pentecostal theology experience is looked to as an authoritative source" (p. 242).

In his concluding chapter, Buschart calls for believers to "live in harmony and, at the same time, to recognize and celebrate diversity" (p. 255). "Individually and collectively, [Christians are to] eagerly recognize, respect, encourage, learn from, and work with sisters and brothers in Christ by virtue of their shared redemptive relationship with Jesus Christ" (p. 260). The goal of Christian hospitality (recall Buschart's subtitle) is to serve others in the body of Christ, respecting them for who they are and thus maintaining proper boundaries. It is "a unity that embraces incarnated particularities" (p. 267). Strangers deserve an embrace, and we can embrace others because we also have received the grace of God. On this point, Buschart has an insightful discussion of the risks and rewards of Christians being hospitable towards fellow believers. The reward is that the world will take note "when Christians incarnate love and acceptance by embracing each other across boundaries of difference" (p. 275).

On the whole, Buschart's work is well researched, well written, fully documented, well structured, insightful, irenic, informative, and interesting to read. It portrays each tradition accurately and helps readers understand their theological neighbors. However, some confusion is introduced when Buschart alludes to the liberalism and unbelief in most Protestant traditions yet classifies the entire tradition as "Christian." In a carefully worded statement, he says, "Christians who are Baptist or Pentecostal, Wesleyan or Reformed, Lutheran or Dispensational, Anglican or Anabaptist, are all members of God's church in this world by virtue of being reconciled to God in Jesus Christ" (emphasis mine, p. 274). But the charts show all kinds of liberal denominations as part of these traditions, and the careful words disappear three pages later where Buschart refers to "Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic Christians." Too often, I am afraid, Buschart uses the word "Christian" without its precise theological definition. This can lead to breaking down and crossing over boundaries in an unbiblical manner. Still, this book should be read, especially by those who teach theology and wish to better understand their subject matter.

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*Justification in Perspective: Historical Developments and Contemporary Challenges.*  
Edited by Bruce L. McCormack. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006, 277 pp., \$24.99 paper.

This work is a collection of papers that were presented at the Edinburgh Dogmatics Conference in the summer of 2003. They have been edited and revised to varying degrees in order to be made available to a wider readership. As the editor states in the preface, no effort was made toward a uniformity of viewpoint on the issues raised, and the result is an immensely helpful and sane treatment of the historical, theological, and biblical issues involved in current discussions of Paul and justification. As is well

known among the readership of this *Journal*, discussions of justification by faith and the so-called “new perspective on Paul” have dominated evangelical theological discourse for at least the last decade, following on from wider scholarly debates in the wake of E. P. Sanders’s work on Judaism. This extended discussion has drawn out the best and worst of evangelical behavior. Some have initiated fresh dialogue and scholarly inquiry, unearthing complex discussions in Paul’s letters along with discovering the rich variety of Pauline scholarship from the past. Others, sadly, have resorted to familiar fundamentalist strategies in efforts to appear relevant or to shore up support among constituencies. For these, the temptation to lay claim to the high ground of orthodoxy through the demonization of others with the harsh rhetoric of glib denunciation has proved too delicious to resist. With all of this in view, what is needed is a vigorous engagement with the actual issues involved in the discussion that is both penetrating and gracious, embodying the very best of evangelical scholarship.

This volume represents a mature work designed to bring clarity to the various debates. McCormack begins the volume with an introduction, which is followed by the conference sermon by Mark Bonnington. Following on from this are two major sections, covering historical discussions of justification by faith and the contemporary challenges that have arisen. No review, very obviously, could do justice to the entire volume and each contribution, so we will focus on some major highlights.

McCormack, in his introduction, does well to commend Rutherford House and its outgoing chairman David Searle for hosting this conference. It is in the truest Reformed spirit to be always reforming, always seeking fresh light from Scripture to inform theological and ecclesiastical debates. The conference was a true embodiment of this spirit as the issues were engaged joyfully and vigorously. Tragically, as McCormack notes, this spirit has not characterized the discussions that surround the issue of justification by faith among those who consider themselves Reformed and/or evangelical. This hardly needs to be substantiated for anyone paying close attention to the debates within the Presbyterian Church in America, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, and among various evangelical communions. Many who have raised questions concerning doctrinal formulations of the past have done so from a desire to be faithful to Scripture, yet they have been demonized as “‘liberal’ Christians or ecumenists with Catholic and/or Orthodox leanings” (p. 8). McCormack is right to call for cautious dialogue as it is the glory of evangelicalism to test all things by Scripture rather than to appeal blindly to past formulations (pp. 8–9).

Nick Needham’s chapter on justification in the Church fathers initiates the section covering historical developments. He demonstrates that the range of discussions in the Fathers exhibits the same flexibility with regard to the usage of righteousness language that is found in Scripture, which accounts for the wide appeal to the Fathers by both Roman Catholic and Protestant theological trajectories (pp. 25–26). Most prominent is the use of such language to refer to forensic justification: “a not-guilty verdict, an acquittal, a declaration of righteousness, a non-imputation of sin, an imputation of righteousness” (p. 36). An exception to this is Clement of Alexandria, who, in addition to forensic language, will often utilize justification language to refer to what is typically called “sanctification” in modern doctrinal discussions (p. 37).

There is a very prominent strand in the early Fathers denying that initial faith is satisfactory for justification if it is not accompanied by a life of perseverance in good works. Statements in the Fathers can be quite bold in this regard, being especially striking to Protestants, who have been trained to protect the pristine character of formulations of justification by faith *alone*. Needham cites Jerome in this regard:

It is of course inquired from this place, if faith alone is sufficient for a Christian: and whether he is not cursed who despises the precepts of the gospel. But faith

is effective for this, that it justifies those who approach God in their initial believing, if afterwards they remain in justification: however, without works of faith (not works of law) faith is dead. For he who does not believe the commands, and those who despise the precepts of the gospel, are alike cursed, as the Savior teaches (p. 43).

Needham rightly relates this to Turretin's reminder that what is being emphasized here is that while justification is by faith alone, the faith that justifies is never alone in that it will also produce good works in the life of the believer (p. 43). Needham continues in the remainder of the chapter to point out how often the Fathers complement such strong statements with equally solid formulations guarding against any notion of human merit attached to justification.

David Wright's chapter on Augustine demonstrates that he wrestled with many of the very same tensions with regard to justification language. Noting that many who seek to mine Augustine's writings for use in contemporary debates often misread him, Wright shows that Augustine was quite faithful to the biblical use of righteousness/justification terminology and nowhere sought to provide a systematic treatment. He seems to recognize both forensic and transformative aspects of the terminology in Scripture, and does not prioritize one over the other. For Augustine, justification is something that is "already" accomplished, a status that is presently enjoyed by believers, but is "not yet" fully their possession: "*Justificatio* is suggestively portrayed as the spirit's anticipation here and now of the future resurrection of the body" (p. 62).

Wright goes on to note that Augustine anticipates other developments of the so-called "new perspective," such as the ethnic component in Paul's discussion of justification. While Augustine is faithful to the various contexts in which justification language appears, which may account for the variety of Christian traditions that appeal to him as fountainhead, he is always anxious to demonstrate the priority of divine grace and the absence of merit when it comes to justification.

Subsequent chapters on justification in pivotal historical figures demonstrate much the same struggle to capture rightly the various notions emphasized by righteousness language in Scripture, and at the same time to synthesize this data theologically.

One of the highlights of the volume is Andrew McGowan's chapter on justification and the *ordo salutis* (order of salvation). It is the shortest chapter in the book but touches quite helpfully on one of the most controversial elements of current discussions related to "the new perspective on Paul": the nature of imputation and its relationship to justification and the *ordo salutis*. The *ordo* is a post-Reformation development, resulting largely from the effort to relate faith and works systematically and logically. It does not appear in the writings of ecclesiastical figures that predate the Reformation, but was developed on the continent by Theodore Beza and in England by William Perkins (p. 150).

McGowan notes that in Reformed thought, justification "was defined in forensic terms as the remission of sin and the imputation of righteousness, all of which in later Reformed theology was set in the context of a federal structure including a covenant of redemption, a covenant of works, and a covenant of grace" (p. 153). The *Westminster Confession*, of course, articulates this in accordance with the active and passive obedience of Christ (chap. 11, sec. 1). According to McGowan, John Owen attempted to strengthen the statement of the *Confession* on imputation in the *Savoy Declaration*. The *Confession's* statement on imputation reads: "but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them, they receiving and resting on him and his righteousness by faith." The more explicit statement on imputation reads as follows from the *Declaration*: "but by imputing Christ's active obedience to the whole law, and passive obedience in his death for their whole and sole righteousness, they receiving and resting on him and his

righteousness by faith.” This alteration did not find wide acceptance among Reformed scholars, because it was viewed as an over-precise formulation (p. 154), going beyond what Calvin would have affirmed. This is particularly instructive for debates currently up and running over the imputation of Christ’s active and passive obedience in the PCA and OPC communions, among which are many who want to elevate imputation to a position that the tradition already had seen fit to deny to it.

McGowan’s discussion on the place of union with Christ and its relationship to imputation and justification makes an excellent contribution to current controversies among these Reformed communions, though it will also be highly instructive for evangelicals generally. McGowan notes the centrality of union with Christ for Reformed theologians, going back to Luther and Calvin.

McGowan then discusses how the notion of union with Christ has been utilized in two Reformed trajectories; that is, among Barthian scholars and the tradition represented by Westminster Theological Seminary. Among broader Reformed scholars, Barth and others emphasized that union with Christ obviates the need for an *ordo salutis*. Further, a focus on union with Christ ought to lead to reflection upon soteriology from the perspective of Christ and not from the perspective of “benefits” received. That is, theology ought to be primarily Christological and not anthropological.

The Westminster tradition has focused on union with Christ, but has not solved the tension involved in holding also to forensic categories. McGowan suggests that this is a tension that was noted by the great Westminster theologian John Murray, along with Norman Shepherd. The resulting difficulties have not yet been thoroughly worked out, as is obvious, and as we have noted above, in the many rather unpleasant controversies that have erupted over imputation in the PCA and OPC.

The cash value of this discussion for evangelicals—almost all of whom do not explicitly submit to any of the great Reformed confessions of faith, such as the *Westminster Confession*—is a recognition of the priority of union with Christ for thinking soteriologically. Union with Christ has always been at the very heart of Reformed soteriology, reflecting its place in NT theology, and the notion of the imputation of Christ’s righteousness is necessary only if a covenant of works is affirmed as part of a soteriological system, as many Reformed theologians have recognized. Those evangelicals who depend upon the Reformed tradition(s) in order to articulate a coherent soteriology must recognize that if one does not affirm a covenant of works (and not even all Reformed thinkers affirm such), then there is no need to include imputation along with union with Christ. The inclusion of imputation leads to nothing other than a bevy of systemic problems, not least of which is the prospect of antinomianism, long recognized in Reformed theological discussions.

One of the highlights of the Edinburgh conference in 2003 was the debate between N. T. Wright and Simon Gathercole over the “new perspective.” This was carried out in a room with about sixty or seventy people and was fairly direct and animated, but also very collegial. It is slightly disappointing that the spirit of that interchange is not captured so well in the subsequent edited contributions to the volume, but these closing chapters go quite some way toward demonstrating what is in play in the current debates.

Gathercole covers several basics of justification in Paul before turning to critique some “new perspective” writers in their own formulations of this issue in Paul. He does well to place rightly the notion of the imputation of Christ’s righteousness (pp. 222–23). As an exegete, Gathercole is aware of how slim is the evidence in the NT speaking of the transfer of Christ’s righteousness to believers. Very simply, there is no mention that it is specifically *Christ’s righteousness* that is the possession of Christians, and it is never spoken of as being *transferred* to believers. While Gathercole does not reject this formulation, and while it very well may be an acceptable way of construing how believers come to possess righteousness, Paul stresses God’s reckoning believers as

righteous based on their having been united to Christ by the Spirit. That is, for Paul, believers become the very righteousness of God by virtue of being “in Christ” (2 Cor 5:21).

Regarding the contentious phrase “the righteousness of God,” Gathercole views this as involving something more than merely an attribute of God—“God’s own righteousness.” There is something active going on, especially when one considers texts in Romans such as 3:25–26, in which God is described as “just and the justifier,” along with 10:3 (p. 223). The activity of God in such passages, however, for Gathercole, is God’s reckoning righteousness to believers, rather than, as Martyn and others (such as Leander Keck) have argued, God’s rectification of creation in Christ—God’s program of conquering and defeating sin to set the world right and restore the created order for the glory of God’s name. Gathercole does attempt to expand the sense of justification language to include items such as forgiveness of wrongs, covering sins, and not reckoning sin, but it seems that he has narrowed the cosmic scope of justification language to merely the personal, perhaps failing to heed the warning of Barth, mentioned by McGowan, of conceiving of justification anthropologically rather than Christologically.

Gathercole again deals with the sense of justification (pp. 225–29) by attempting to navigate a sort of middle way through the extreme alternatives of a merely declarative sense of justification and justification as moral transformation. After quoting Cranfield on the several senses of justification, Gathercole states that he does not want to be seen as articulating a Roman Catholic view that comes close to an infusion of righteousness. But he also wants to avoid shrinking justification in Romans down to a merely forensic concept, since there does seem to be some sense in which justification is transformative in Paul, or at least ontologically determinative. This is set over against a quote from N. T. Wright who supposedly has a minimalistic view of justification, proven by Gathercole’s citation of Wright as claiming that justification is merely the recognition of who is in the covenant. This is a bit puzzling, however, because throughout his writings Wright has stressed the effective or transformative aspects of justification, noting that righteousness language in Paul has to do with God setting right all of creation. For Wright, however, the scope of God’s transformative work is cosmic, whereas for Gathercole, it is personal or individualistic. Gathercole is right to note that Wright has a very covenantal vision of justification in general, and this may indeed be problematic, but it simply is not fair to claim that Wright does not adequately account for Paul’s transformative aspects of justification.

Several comments must be made here. In a number of ways, the complexities and tensions involved in this broader discussion come to a head at precisely this point. First, tension arises here because of the different approaches of systematic theology and biblical exegesis. As Gathercole notes, Paul uses justification language in a variety of ways in his letters, covering both a forensic sense and a transformative sense. The gulf between systematic theology and biblical theology lies at the heart of so many of the issues in play today because evangelical theology in general is far more comfortable with the clear categorization of theological concepts inherent in systematic theology than with the subtleties of biblical theology. Rather than recognizing, along with Luther and Calvin, that Paul utilizes both transformative and forensic imagery and language and both a cosmic and individual scope of vision, some demand an “either/or” answer to these questions, bracketing out the complexity of Paul’s language and ignoring the categories he supplies to the discussion in favor of ones demanded by contemporary doctrinal debates.

Second, Gathercole wants to be understood at this point, and it is only right that all who read him work hard to grasp precisely what he is and is not saying. But this is where it seems appropriate to ask whether he has treated Wright fairly, or if he has failed to understand Wright for what he is and is not saying. Quite frankly, it is difficult

to see where Gathercole differs from Wright when the two chapters are set side by side, but Gathercole manages both to criticize Wright and then to articulate a view of Paul's thought that seems it could be coming from Wright's own pen! While Gathercole is hardly the most egregious example of an unfair dialogue partner, one begins to wonder if critics of the "new perspective" are trolling through Wright's many works in search of any phrase or sentence they do not like in hopes of highlighting something with which to disagree in the name of defending orthodoxy.

Third, and briefly, readers of Gathercole's essay who are inclined to be critical of Wright and others for their emphasis on the eschatological component of justification will need to consider that the same notes are sounded by Gathercole. Frankly, this is true also of nearly all Pauline scholars who are honest with the texts of Paul's letters. Because this is the case, the "already/not yet" dimensions of justification in Paul ought to be taken off the table as a "new perspective" issue, since it is one thing upon which nearly all NT scholars agree.

Overall, these essays demonstrate at least two major points with regard to significant issues in play in current debates. First, theologians from the earliest centuries of Christian history have recognized the multi-faceted nature of Paul's righteousness language, covering both individual and cosmic components, both present and future aspects (the "already/not yet"), and the forensic and transformative/effective elements. Those who are currently clamoring for action that marginalizes or brackets out other scholars who recognize aspects of Paul's thought that have been relatively neglected over the last generation or two of evangelical theology, do not realize how their efforts both betray their Christian theological heritage and treat Scripture with a great lack of respect.

Second, while Reformed articulations of justification typically involve some account of the imputation of Christ's righteousness, this notion is only necessary where there is a prior commitment to a federal or covenantal framework of theology. Further, the notion of imputation is not without problems and very well may be dispensable given the absolute priority of union with Christ in Reformed theology since Luther and Calvin. If it is the case that even in Reformed circles there are discussions that union with Christ obviates any need for imputation, surely in broader evangelical theological circles where there is no prior commitment to a covenantal framework, the demand for a critical analysis of imputation ought not to be heard as a threat to orthodoxy.

This volume of essays is an excellent contribution to the discussions of justification by faith and the "new perspective" on Paul currently up and running in evangelical circles. Its historical and theological discussions provide a rich array of perspectives that have been sorely lacking to this point. It is the hope of many that the increased clarity and sense of historical proportion will be accompanied by a renewed commitment to Christian charity in theological discussion. If this hope goes unrealized, the blame for such a tragedy can in no way be put to the account of McCormack and the contributors to this volume.

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*The New England Theology: From Jonathan Edwards to Edwards Amasa Park.* By Douglas A. Sweeney and Allen C. Guelzo. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006, 320 pp., \$29.99 paper.

Douglas Sweeney and Allen Guelzo cogently argue that while much academic ink has been spilled over Jonathan Edwards, the same is not true of his culturally prominent followers, the Edwardseans. In the century after the Great Awakening, the theo-



logical ideas of Edwards were preserved, interpreted, and even adapted by a series of ministers and theologians who had significant regional influence in the Northeast. Their distinctive system, often known as the "New Divinity," or the "New England Theology," was popular throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, and yet until recently scholars of American religious history have not given much consideration to this relatively important group. Sweeney and Guelzo seek to counter this paucity of attention by providing a helpful anthology that outlines the origins, development, and, ultimately, the demise of this movement.

Jonathan Edwards felt that the "Old Calvinism" had gone stale, and his sympathies lay with the likes of John Wesley and George Whitefield. Edwards provided his followers with an innovative system that sought to reconcile "absolute Calvinist predestination with a demand for immediate and utter surrender of a person's will to the demand for conversion and holiness" (p. 15). What Edwards sought was a way to hold humans accountable for their own sin (Old Calvinism provided excuses for those inclined to play the system) while at the same time fully affirming the sovereignty of God. Some theologians of his era had sought to affirm human action in a way that he felt neglected the primacy of God's role in salvation. This was a balancing act that Edwards' followers labeled "Consistent Calvinism," but some critics felt it was a quintessential case of wanting to have one's cake and eat it too.

However, the ultimate goal of both Edwards and his followers was not the creation of theologically abstract ideas, but to actively promote revival. From that perspective, the system was a success. This was true not just for the first Great Awakening, but it was this group's disciples that also stood behind the Second Awakening of New York state and westward nearly a century later. Sweeney and Guelzo make a cogent case for considering that movement's most prominent figure, Charles Grandison Finney, as Edwardsean in several key respects. Reaching beyond the specifics of revival movements, the authors also trace the importance of the New Divinity to larger American reform movements and identify its concepts as having ongoing influence in contemporary evangelism.

Clearly, the New England Theology does merit the attention given here, and more. In this volume, the authors provide a well-chosen chronological sampling of readings from key figures in the movement that quickly orient the reader to the issues at play. After helpful materials from Edwards himself, they trace his key students, who disseminated their distinctive theology to students of their own. This kind of theological pyramid scheme gained momentum for nearly a century, peaking around the time of the Second Awakening, and then was quietly laid to rest in the theological systems of Edwards Amasa Park. Park, a professor at Andover Seminary from 1836 to 1881, was conveniently named after Edwards (and, incidentally, married his great-granddaughter).

Overall, this book does a fine job providing an introduction to this movement and its ideas. However, there are several points that would benefit from further explanation. One of the most prominent of these is the nature of the relationship between Edwards's own ideas and those of the Edwardseans. Sweeney and Guelzo indicate that there were developments and additions during the century following Edwards' initial outlines of the movement's theology. At several points, they direct the reader's attention to such novelties. At other times, they seem to allow the Edwardseans to dictate the terms of their inheritance. It would be helpful to have even more commentary from the editors both in the introduction, and in their comments preceding the readings, on the growing distinctions between the founder and the movement that carried on his legacy. For example, Jonathan Edwards, Jr. provides a piece on this issue that presents his understanding of the founder and subsequent movement as presenting a "seamless whole," but it would be helpful to read something from one of the Princetonians mentioned in the text who did not see this connection in the same light (p. 124)

The one exception to the continuity that Edwards, Jr. otherwise asserts pertains to the interpretation of the work of Christ. Here, he claims, the followers of his father threw “new and important light upon *The Doctrine of the Atonement*” (p. 128). To this reader, the revision of the atonement is perhaps the most significant move made by this group, and it is the one with complex implications. The Edwardseans’ proposal did not see the death of Christ as “the payment of a debt,” for if that were true, they asked, how would one assert the reality of grace? (p. 128). For them, it is the “*beneficial consequences of [Christ’s] righteousness* which are transferred” to the converted, rather than “*the righteousness of Christ itself*” (p. 129). Sweeney and Guelzo do well to notice this subtle but important maneuver of the Edwardseans, devoting a great deal of space to the elucidation of this particular development. The underlying motivation for these modifications again traces back to pragmatic concerns. Just as Edwards’s theology was goal oriented rather than merely theoretical, the Edwardseans also sought to encourage revival and conversion. The typical Calvinist judicial model of the atonement gave the sinner a radically passive role, and like their founder, his disciples wished to promote personal accountability and action, both during conversion and in the process of sanctification. The potential danger here was that “death did not provide a literal application of Christ’s merits,” but rather this event “created a theater in which God showed his anger” against sin, causing the unconverted to “take note and repent” (p. 134). This was indeed something new, but many disagreed with Edwards, Jr. that it was a more accurate vision of the atonement. The controversial aspect of the Edwardsean interpretation is made clear in a piece where advocate John Smalley argues that, “the sins of believers are not so taken away by the sufferings of Christ, but that they have occasion enough still to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling . . . that they should not think, Christ has so done all for them in this matter, that there is nothing left for them to do” (p. 148).

This emphasis on human action makes sense, given that the real goal was to promote revival. This is where the editors’ interpretation of Charles G. Finney is so helpful. Finney is often considered an advocate of free will Arminianism, but with the able guidance of Sweeney and Guelzo, one can readily see the Edwardsean perspective shining through in Finney’s writings. In between Finney’s vociferous disdain for traditional Calvinism (and its emphasis on human inability) and his erstwhile critique of certain specific details of Edwards’s own theology, there is a distinctive presence of the New England Theology in his system. His claim that “men cannot do the devil’s work more effectually than by preaching up the Sovereignty of God as a reason why we should not put forth efforts to produce a revival,” echoes the Edwardseans just as much as his emphasis on sanctification does (p. 231). Indeed, Finney often cited Edwards directly—e.g. “Edwards I revere; his blunders I deplore”—and even his critiques of Edwards were arguably influenced by the newly fashioned ideas of the Edwardseans (p. 242). While Finney is not easily pigeonholed as a member of the New Divinity, the confluence of known Edwardsean influences upon him, and the residue of like-minded concepts in his theology, convincingly places him within the sphere of influence of this movement.

A few things could be done differently in this book. As noted above, I think it would be helpful for the editors to give more attention to the distinctions between the Edwardseans and their contemporaries—particularly ones who might appear on the surface to have much in common with them. For example, the text regularly refers to the tension between Princeton Seminary and the New Divinity thinkers, but the analysis would benefit from additional background on this point. While it would not be necessary to provide an elaborate discussion of the nineteenth-century distinction between Old School and New School, it would be helpful to give more context and information on why certain prominent theologians responded so negatively to the New

Divinity. Since Sweeney and Guelzo make use of the Princeton comparison, that would provide a helpful and direct example of this period division. In addition, the work ends with a few selections from Harriet Beecher Stowe that seem a bit out of place, even though she does give a contemporary reading of Edwardseanism. Finally, a few production flaws hurt the book. The three-page index is too brief to be useful, and the review copy suffered from many blurred pages, making reading difficult in several key sections.

These minor points aside, this volume provides a genuine service to scholarship by fleshing out this significant theological movement. This is a valuable contribution, for the long-standing insufficient attention to the New Divinity left a blind spot in the big picture of American church history. Sweeney and Guelzo provide a carefully selected anthology that will orient readers to the significance and nuance of the New England Theology.

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*Transatlantic Revivalism: Popular Evangelicalism in Britain and America 1790–1865.*  
By Richard Carwardine. Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 2007, 268 pp., \$36.99 paper.

Richard Carwardine has been Rhodes Professor of American History at St. Catherine's College Oxford since 2002. His work *Lincoln: A Life of Purpose and Power* published in 2003 won the Lincoln Prize in 2004 presented annually by the Lincoln and Soldiers Institute at Gettysburg College. This work was so popular that even President Bush claims to have read it! This Lincoln biography cemented the author's reputation as one of the premier historians of American religion in the pre-Civil War era.

Carwardine's *Transatlantic Revivalism* was first published in 1978 by Greenwood Publishing Group. The reprint by Paternoster Press is not a revision of the original work, but a republication of it as part of the series *Studies in Evangelical History and Thought*. In light of the notoriety that the author has received for his work on Lincoln, it makes sense to reintroduce *Transatlantic Revivalism* to a fresh audience.

The author's general premise is that revivalism had a major impact not only on American religion, but also in the shaping of American society and culture. Although most Americans saw this revivalistic environment as markedly distinct from religious life in Europe, Carwardine shows a strong connection between Britain and America especially as it concerned the Methodist movement. British enthusiasts devoured the literature of American Methodism, and many major American revivalists made grand tours of Britain. The author also notes the major changes in revival techniques, moving from a more passive waiting for God to start a revival to the "new measures" of the 1820s and 1830s by which revivalists sought to foster conditions for revival.

Painting a broad panorama of the spirit of revivalism, Carwardine focuses on the major figures that spanned both countries. James Caughey and Charles Finney were the most famous and most effective, but the author also looks at other important evangelists such as Asahel Nettleton, Calvin Cotton, William Bell Sprague, Edward Norris Kirk, Edward Payton Hammond, and Walter and Phoebe Palmer.

Revivalism was not as respectable in Britain, at least among the more privileged classes and the ecclesiastical establishment, but the impact of revivalism was still significant. Carwardine documents hundreds of thousands of converts, most of whom joined non-established churches. Furthermore, in America, the revivalists eventually became the establishment while in Britain the revivalist churches always remained

on the periphery. Carwardine notes that this is the reason why revivalism has received so little attention among historians of British history compared with the vast amount of material accorded to the movement in America.

The author is also careful to define his terms. He notes two different usages for the word "revival." First, "it referred to a period of unusually intense 'religious interest' in a single church at a time when penitents sought counsel and salvation in above-average numbers." In a broader sense, it can also mean a revival movement "or the multiplication of local revivals over a broad geographical area for a prolonged period of perhaps several years" (p. xv).

Starting with a survey of "new-measure revivalism" in the 1820s to 1830s, the period generally known as the Second Great Awakening, Carwardine notes that it was part of the Jacksonian optimism of the period, an era in which leaders sought to affect a moral revolution in American society. The new measures were techniques that the revivalists used to try to stir up the revival. The idea that man could do something to "kick-start" a revival ran counter to the prevailing Calvinist approach that emphasized God's role in fostering a revival. Moreover, this new approach served as a challenge to established norms of order and decency. Outdoor meetings lasting for days on end and held outside of the confines of the buildings of the established churches denoted a more egalitarian approach to the faith. The revivalists may have been poorly educated, but they possessed an unbridled energy that helped them bring the simple gospel message to frontier society where the audience was less sophisticated and structured than the more established society back east.

Many of these early revivalists were Methodists who owed their roots to the Wesleys and to British support. The British sent ministers, religious literature, and immigrants to buttress the fledgling movement. However, Carwardine argues that the British added refinement to American Methodism, helping it become more effective in urban areas. They helped to distill the images of an uneducated, crude form of the faith that was meant for the rural poor. The most prominent and successful of the more polished Methodist preachers was John Summerfield, whose Washington parishioners included John Quincy Adams and John C. Calhoun.

Methodologically, Carwardine documents the impact of revivalism on American and British Methodist churches through simple charts of year-to-year membership. The unmistakable pattern is one of growth and decline, which the author calls the "psychology of revivals." The revivals generally grew out of a sense of great expectation of what God would do, a great feeling of optimism coupled with a charismatic revivalist preacher. The declines, however, would be inevitable. It was difficult to maintain the fever pitch, especially when the revivalists were running out of potential converts and many former converts began to fall away from their previous commitments.

Next, in his focus on British revivals, the author notes that they became important for two nonconforming denominations: the Baptists and the Congregationalists. These groups targeted those who were disaffected with the established church. One major theological problem for the Calvinists was their fervent belief in God's absolute sovereignty; this made it difficult for some to employ the new measures of revivalism. But such was not the case for all Calvinists. For example, one pastor, Edward Williams of Rotherham, argued for a modified Calvinism in which human depravity has to do more with human nature rather than human will. As a result, he contended, believers are able to make their own decision for Christ.

Although these British Baptist and Congregationalist denominations emulated American revivalism, there initially remained significant differences between the two movements. For example, the British generally did not stretch out the revivals over several days or weeks. They also typically did not set up special services devoted solely

to revivals. So, the British revivals were not as spectacular as their American counterparts. New churches were planted and, when coupled with itinerant preaching, resulted in a gradual and steady increase in church membership. By the 1830s the British were sending representatives to observe the American revivals; upon their return, they introduced some of the new measures such as lay participation and itinerant preaching. The most influential of American books on revivalism during the 1830s was Finney's *Lectures on Revivals*, which became available in Britain in 1837 and quickly sold out. Finney's work was also very influential in Wales and became a major factor in the Welsh revivals of 1839 and 1840. Other major changes included the more prominent role of an animated preacher, congregational singing, and protracted meetings over several days. These all followed the American model.

Carwardine goes on to detail the ministries of American revivalist in Britain, with special emphasis on James Caughey and his use of the communion rail in places such as Sheffield. Caughey is best known for his influence on William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army, but the author notes the significant impact that Caughey had in his own right. Carwardine focuses here on the British Methodists whose theology was more predisposed to revivalism. Nevertheless, their revivals were less emotional and tolerant of innovation than were their American counterparts. Caughey's revivalism caused such a great deal of controversy within the British Methodist Conference by 1846 that it led to Caughey's dismissal and ultimately contributed to the schism of 1849–50. The key problem with the revivalists was that they challenged the authority of denominational leadership.

Charles Finney's ministry in Britain lasted from 1849–51, long after his heyday as an evangelist in America, but he went with an established reputation as an evangelist. His ministry there produced mixed results. He did win large numbers of converts and the endorsement of the leading Dissenters, but it was not the spectacular success that he had grown accustomed to seeing. Carwardine attributes this relative lack of success to several factors. First, Finney did not make an active push in Wales and Scotland where he would have received a warm reception. Second, Finney ministered in an era of declining influence of revivalism. Third, the non-conformists by this time had become too middle class and too settled in their ways to be greatly receptive to Finney's colloquial style of preaching.

So, Carwardine is correct in showing that the British, who were foundational in the establishment of revivals in America, became the recipients of new ways of conducting revivals by the next generation. This excellent analysis establishes a strong foundation for the relationship between revivalism in America and Britain in the antebellum era. We welcome the re-edition of such a seminal work that is a must-read for those interested in the history of revivals and of evangelicalism.

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*The Keswick Movement: A Comprehensive Guide.* By Charles Edwin Jones. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 2007, xxxi + 403 pp., \$75.00 cloth.

Comprehensive bibliographic guides to the Keswick Movement are markedly scarce. In fact, Charles Edwin Jones's landmark 1974 work, *A Guide to the Study of the Holiness Movement*, which included a section detailing the Keswick Movement, may stand as the first and last of its kind. With the exception of *Keswick: A Bibliographic*

*Introduction to the Higher Life Movements*, David Bundy's laconic treatment of the movement a year later, scant attention has been given to this most elusive of movements. And there is good reason for this. Keswick, unlike its American Holiness forbearers, has proven ineluctably difficult to delineate. A strand of holiness teaching that enjoyed majority support among evangelicals in the wake of early twentieth-century fundamentalism, Keswick has resisted the pull of institutionalization, preferring instead the path of relative obscurity. Thus, it was founded and has continued largely as an annual convention in the bucolic lake district of northwest England.

Now, more than thirty years later, Jones has refined and expanded his original work into four large volumes: *The Wesleyan Holiness Movement: A Comprehensive Guide*, in two volumes; *The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement: A Comprehensive Guide*; and *The Keswick Movement: A Comprehensive Guide*. Each of these acts to guide the reader through the sometimes foggy travails of these respective movements. The last volume, consisting of more than 3,700 total selected entries, introduces researchers and Holiness Movement enthusiasts alike to the leaders, dissenters, and ideas of the Keswick Movement. In addition, Jones includes entries related to the vast network of trans-denominational Bible conferences, domestic and foreign mission agencies, collegiate and training institutions, and publishers sympathetic to the teachings promulgated by the annual Keswick meetings.

Unlike his earlier treatment—characterized by a *mélange* of disparate subject headings—Jones's work is organized in five distinct parts. He first sets the movement in its historical context, illuminating the settings and intellectual climates in which the Keswick Movement spread. Next, a section devoted to a catena of works revered by Keswick participants is given. The third part includes several classified works—including those by non-Keswick authors—that address Keswick adherents as a whole. Part four demarcates the various scholastic institutions indebted to Keswick teaching, offering a historical outline of names and locations of each school with dates and related bibliography. In the final and, what amounts to the largest, section of the book, Jones provides a compendium of biographical entries consisting of works by and about individuals associated with Keswick. Here, with few exceptions, inclusion is limited to persons born before 1940.

The most notable oversight in Jones's work is his awkward placement of "Non-Keswick Authors" under the subheading of the "Keswick Convention." Keswick teaching, the subject of much criticism over the years, is perhaps best known through the vituperative efforts of J. C. Ryle (*Holiness*), B. B. Warfield (*Perfectionism*), and J. I. Packer ("'Keswick' and the Reformed Doctrine of Sanctification"). Because of its close affiliation with such attacks, the works of non-Keswick authors would seem to merit an independent heading under the larger rubric of the "Keswick Movement." As it stands, a search for these critiques amidst the shortlist of non-Keswick authors is best undertaken by a turn to the book's index.

Historians have much to be excited about in what will certainly stand as an indispensable guide to understanding and interpreting the figures and ideas behind arguably one of the most influential evangelical movements of the last century. In a day dominated by digital convenience—online databases, catalogs, and search engines—handbooks such as this one offer a respite from endless, shapeless, and often circular inquiries. Here, selection and interpretation are confined to the pages of a single volume. Jones has undoubtedly done a noble service in making possible what is sure to result in a swathe of *au courant* and insightful research into the ever-changing face of the Keswick Movement.

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*Everyday Theology: How to Read Cultural Texts and Interpret Trends.* Cultural Exegesis Series. Edited by Kevin J. Vanhoozer, Charles A. Anderson, and Michael J. Slesman. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007, 287 pp., \$23.99.

Popular culture in contemporary America plays a dominant role in shaping the hearts and minds of those inside the church and without. Most Christians spend more time watching TV on high definition digital cable, surfing the Internet via broadband connections, and listening to podcasts in any given week than they spend under the formative influences of the church or academy. In an age of information overload, how can the Christian live out and promote the gospel?

*Everyday Theology* by Vanhoozer *et al.* seeks to provide the everyday Christian with the tools to sort through everything in culture from checkout lines to rap music from a theological standpoint. Using a biblical filter, a hefty hermeneutic, and a gracious attitude, *Everyday Theology* is a life preserver for the Christian soul inundated by pop culture.

In chapter one Vanhoozer lays out the core method for the book. The subsequent chapters are theological reflections on various aspects of Western culture written by Vanhoozer's past students. These essays provide concrete "models" of Vanhoozer's method enacted by people who are "everyday" Christians. In this review, I will focus primarily on that first programmatic chapter because the subsequent essays are an attempt to employ the method described there. The first chapter provides a defense for the theological examination of culture, a section that seeks to define culture, and a description of the theologically-based method that Christians should use when interacting with various aspects of cultural expression.

In light of the ambiguous attitudes some Christians possess in regard to culture, Vanhoozer wisely supplies a rationale for why Christians should theologically examine culture in the first place. His first reason is missiological; the second, spiritual. To ignore culture, in Vanhoozer's eyes, is to commit "the Great Omission" because in order to love our neighbors, we need to understand them (p. 17). Popular culture shapes the way people think about success, redemption, God, and themselves. In addition, our spiritual development depends upon a careful interaction with culture. It is naive to think that we as Christians are impervious to the lauded cultural values of the time. Culture is not a value-free zone, and culture is the place where humans express their conceptions of the true, the good, and the beautiful.

Vanhoozer weaves an impressive tapestry that combines the likes of Dilthey, Geertz, and Augustine so as to provide a "semiotics of spiritual culture." Essentially, culture is like a "web of meaning" (Clifford Geertz) that exhibits the spirit of a particular group, or what Paul Tillich calls ultimate concern. Vanhoozer draws the appropriate conclusion that culture actively influences our spiritual formation. This book, then, could be viewed as an exercise in a spirituality that is biblically connected and culturally aware. In these essays, theological reasoning illuminates concrete spiritual and ethical interactions with other human beings and the cultural texts and trends they have created.

For Vanhoozer, the particularly Christian interaction with culture resides in four Christian doctrines: the incarnation, general revelation, common grace, and the *imago Dei*. Tying all these doctrines together is the assumption that the Holy Spirit is at work outside the church. Each of these doctrines affirms a sense of God's presence in some manner in everyday life.

Vanhoozer briefly points to an interpretive framework of "theodrama," or the interaction of God with humanity expressed in the biblical rubric of creation-fall-redemption. This rubric allows Christians to see the various elements of the cultural work from the different dimensions of God's story in the world. Vanhoozer proposes this rubric within

a few simple paragraphs and a footnote to his book *The Drama of Doctrine*. Personally, I wish he had spent less time on the genealogy of culture studies and more time exploring the concept of theodrama.

Vanhoozer next employs the help of Paul Ricoeur, Mortimer Adler, and others to construct a hermeneutic that can provide a “thick” description of cultural texts and trends. This is by far the most complex section of the book. Vanhoozer argues that interpretation of a cultural text or trend must be multi-perspectival, multi-level, and multi-dimensional. The first notion means that a variety of academic perspectives must be employed in cultural interpretation in order to avoid reductionism. Sociology, history, psychology, theology, film studies, and other disciplines can provide a much more nuanced understanding of a cultural text or trend when they are used in tandem with one another than when isolated from each other. A multi-level approach organizes these various disciplines into a hierarchical relationship in order both to simplify the process of interpreting culture and to privilege the biblical worldview as the highest level of cultural interpretation. So while Marxist critiques can describe in vivid detail the economic forces of a particular aspect of culture, we cannot reduce a cultural work to just a Marxist analysis. Finally, a multi-dimensional approach draws on the general schema of author-text-reader and the biblical schema of creation-fall-redemption. This approach takes into account issues and contingencies that did not make it into the actual cultural text itself but shaped its formation and intention in some way. For example, Eminem’s boyhood in Detroit is not always explicit in his songs, but that aspect of his life still can shape the topics and concerns he raises.

The thick description in chapter one of Vanhoozer’s method could quickly become a quagmire for the uninitiated interpreter. Fortunately, both at the end of the chapter and in the glossary, Vanhoozer provides the key guidelines of the interpretive method in simplified form. Referring back to these key points often while reading chapter one will keep some of the more scholarly references to Ricoeur, Adler, Geertz, and others from becoming more confusing than profitable. While this section of the book is illuminating and scholarly rigorous, some of its contents may be tangential to the ability of the novice Christian interpreter to begin immediately applying the method.

The middle (and largest) portion of the book is an extended illustration of this method enacted by several of Vanhoozer’s students. It is divided into “reading cultural texts” (supermarket checkout lines, Eminem’s music, the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, megachurch architecture, and the film *Gladiator*) and “interpreting cultural trends” (busyness, blogging, transhumanism, and fantasy funerals). In general, Vanhoozer uses the word “texts” to refer to discrete productions of culture that tend to have an identifiable author; for example, a marketing strategist’s vision enacted at the check out line (presented in the essay “The Gospel According to Safeway”). “Trends” tend to be larger in scope and include such matters as America’s obsession with celebrity and the “American dream.” The strength of these essays lies both in their fascinating theological observations on texts and trends that relate to a wide audience as well as in their ability to illustrate Vanhoozer’s method. The inevitable weakness of the essays is that these particular cultural topics will quickly become dated as culture evolves. As time passes, some of these essays will lose the novelty that they currently possess. Still, application of the method will hopefully continue.

One of the most interesting essays in this middle section reflects on the controversial rapper, Eminem. The essay “Despair and Redemption: A Theological Account of Eminem,” by Darrin Sarisky, provides clear evidence that employing Vanhoozer’s method produces a more nuanced approach to culture than the usual evangelical fare. Many Christians (Sarisky mentions a reviewer at *Focus on the Family*) tend to react superficially to Eminem’s music by counting swear words; Sarisky delves into Eminem’s



own world without succumbing to the temptation to label him as just another rapper with a potty mouth. While acknowledging the many dangerous and immoral aspects of Eminem's music, Sarisky notes that his lyrics and life give us a window into what redemption might mean for someone with a poverty-stricken, abusive, and lonely childhood.

Sarisky first limits himself to a few songs and the movie about Eminem's life, *8 Mile*; he next situates Eminem within the context of rap music. Vanhoozer often stresses that the cultural text must be understood on its own terms. The attention Sarisky pays to the context of Eminem's own life and situation highlights the emotional human element of his work. This allows Christian readers to look beyond the offensive content and language and into Eminem's own experiences and ideas. Sarisky then uses the biblical motif of redemption to examine the way Eminem's character in the movie *8 Mile* views success as a rapper as a way to transcend poverty and, in effect, offer salvation. The movie ends on an ambiguous note, indicating that Eminem's hopes of salvation and peace cannot come from rap music. Lastly, Sarisky turns to the Gospel of Luke as a biblical source for how a Christian should respond to those on the margins of society and their search for redemption. He notes as well that Eminem's lyrics resonate with those people whom the church should help.

The concluding essay, "Putting it into Practice: Weddings for Everyday Theologians," co-written by two of the editors Anderson and Sleasman, has a slightly different intention. While the other essays illustrate Vanhoozer's method, this last chapter takes the reader "behind the scenes." This is an invaluable chapter because it makes explicit the goals of the method and illustrates how this method would actually affect the choices of an individual person in the very practical arena of planning a wedding. If this book is used in the classroom, this concluding essay will probably help the most to illustrate how the method can aid in ethical decision-making.

Two shortcomings in this book should be mentioned. First, there is an inadequate description of the church's role in the interpretation of culture. Vanhoozer rightly recognizes that the duty of interpretation belongs to each believer, lay or pastoral, but fails to delineate how this works out within the community of the church. While Vanhoozer calls the church "a community of interpreters" (p. 55), he does not elaborate on how that community is anything more than a number of individuals interpreting on their own. I found myself wondering if this book is merely a manual for the individual to follow. Second, while Vanhoozer claims that this method is suitable for all times and cultures, his claim is not demonstrated through any of the essays. Perhaps an essay with an Asian, African, or Latin American cultural perspective would have rounded out this book.

Overall, *Everyday Theology* is a useful, well-written, and timely work that seeks to provide Christians with a heightened sense of cultural literacy. *Everyday Theology* will equip its readers with the skills for understanding the intimate relationship between culture, theology, and the Christian life. The method employed here gives the reader a sophisticated matrix that draws on different disciplines and properly orders them according to their respective merit. The method also attends to the wider milieu in which the text or trend emerged. This book is a lively, engaging, and accessible description of interpreting culture that is sorely needed today.

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*How Much Does God Foreknow?: A Comprehensive Bible Study.* By Steven C. Roy. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2006, 312 pp., \$22.00 paper.

The issue of God's foreknowledge has been, and continues to be, a contentious one among evangelicals. The debate has raged ever since open theism burst onto the evangelical scene in the early 1990s with the publication of *The Openness of God*. The debate perhaps reached its zenith at the beginning of this decade, when it was the focus of an annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society (2001) and when a myriad of books were published either condemning or defending open theism and its challenge to God's exhaustive foreknowledge. Steven C. Roy did much of his research on God's foreknowledge and open theism during that time, defending his doctoral dissertation on the subject, *How Much Does God Foreknow? An Evangelical Assessment of the Doctrine of the Extent of the Foreknowledge of God in Light of the Teaching of Open Theism*, before the faculty of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in 2001. Since that time, Roy has continued to sharpen his thinking on the issue as associate professor of pastoral theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, culminating in the publication of this book.

While the debate within evangelicalism over the extent of God's foreknowledge may have reached its zenith a few years ago, it has by no means been resolved, nor has it ceased to be an important topic. What one believes about God's foreknowledge affects almost everything else in one's theological system. It obviously affects what one believes about God and his nature, but it also has crucial implications on issues such as human freedom, prayer, salvation, the life and work of Jesus Christ, and eschatology. The publication of this book is therefore a welcome addition to the field of literature on the subject. It pointedly and unabashedly seeks to establish the Bible's position on God's foreknowledge, and only then moves onto some of the philosophical and practical implications of that position.

The purpose of the book is to demonstrate that "the model of exhaustive divine foreknowledge that embraces all of the future, including free human decisions, is best able to account for the data of Scripture" (p. 23). In doing so, Roy uses open theism as a foil throughout his book, contrasting his view with that view. Roy's goal is to prove that his model is the most consistent with *all* of the biblical teaching on the subject and that it therefore provides the best hope and comfort in life and ministry. He does this by going through all of the most relevant biblical passages on the subject of God's foreknowledge. Two thirds of the book is devoted to biblical exegesis from both the Old and the New Testaments, demonstrating that God's exhaustive foreknowledge is a consistent theme throughout Scripture, and that the open theist's interpretations of certain passages of Scripture are incompatible with the Bible's overall teaching on the subject.

Roy's introductory chapter effectively brings the reader up to speed on the importance of God's foreknowledge both practically and biblically. He accurately describes the dilemma surrounding God's foreknowledge as arising from its compatibility (or incompatibility) with human freedom. Historically, there have been three ways to understand the relationship between God's foreknowledge and human freedom. First, many philosophers and theologians such as Origen, Boethius, and Arminius have argued that while exhaustive divine foreknowledge and libertarian human freedom may seem incompatible, they are in fact compatible at the deepest level. Second, there have been those such as Jonathan Edwards, John Calvin, and Martin Luther, who have argued that genuine human freedom is fully compatible with God's exhaustive foreknowledge, but that genuine human freedom is not libertarian but compatibilist, or fully compatible with a strong view of divine determinism. For the most part, compatibilists disagree with those in the first group, believing that exhaustive divine foreknowledge is incompatible with libertarian freedom. The third way of understanding the relationship between human freedom and God's foreknowledge is to affirm libertarian freedom,

like the first group, and to affirm that libertarian freedom is ultimately incompatible with exhaustive divine foreknowledge, like the second group. Those who believe this way therefore understand God's foreknowledge differently: God does not foreknow free decisions that will be made by those possessing libertarian freedom. This third way has come to be known as open theism.

After this brief introduction, Roy explores open theism in more detail. He does this by explaining the reasoning behind open theism, allowing open theists to explain themselves through quotes and footnotes leading the reader to open theists' writings, such as those by Clark Pinnock, John Sanders, Richard Rice, David Basinger, Gregory Boyd, and William Hasker. This is one of the main strengths of the book. Although Roy means to critique the open theists' understanding of God's foreknowledge, he consistently allows open theists to speak for themselves, presents their position accurately, does not slander or mischaracterize their position, and is fair and irenic throughout his discussion. For example, Roy is quick to acknowledge that open theists agree with almost all other Christians in affirming God's essential omniscience, a point that has often been misunderstood in the debate. Open theists believe that God must know and does truly know all things that can be truly known, but that this does not include future free human decisions. This is because future free human decisions do not yet exist, and therefore they cannot be known. If they were known in advance, this would contradict libertarian human freedom, which open theists believe is crucial to a right understanding of humanity. Ultimately, open theists do base their position on Scripture itself, understanding many biblical texts to portray God as not having exhaustive foreknowledge.

After presenting the reasoning behind open theism, Roy articulates the purpose of the book and what the book seeks to accomplish. He will argue that exhaustive divine foreknowledge is biblical, and that open theism is an insufficient position both biblically and practically. Roy is quick to point out that despite the polemical nature of the book, he has no desire to be mean-spirited, but views the debate as one that is carried on within the family of God. He also makes it clear that he will not be exploring every relevant question about God's foreknowledge, such as how God foreknows human free decisions. Roy also states that he will not explore the nature of human freedom, despite its importance for the debate, because he seeks to demonstrate that the Bible depicts God as foreknowing the kind of events that everyone, both libertarians and compatibilists, insists are free. Admitting up front that he is a compatibilist, Roy avers that the conclusions he comes to are just as applicable and relevant for those who affirm libertarian freedom. He simply wants to demonstrate that Scripture teaches that God's foreknowledge includes future free human decisions and that therefore open theism is incorrect in its major tenet. The second chapter of the book examines the OT evidence for exhaustive divine foreknowledge, the third chapter examines the NT evidence, and the fourth chapter examines the passages that open theists use to support their position. The fifth chapter discusses two important interpretive questions that have been raised by open theists and that could possibly contradict Roy's conclusions, and the sixth chapter assesses the practicality of exhaustive divine foreknowledge, especially as it compares with the practicality of open theism.

In his chapter on the OT evidence for exhaustive divine foreknowledge, Roy seeks to understand how this corpus portrays God's knowledge of the future. He first examines Psalm 139, perhaps the most often cited passage in the OT concerning divine foreknowledge; he then moves on to predictive prophecy. In this category Roy looks at the promise-fulfillment motif of 1-2 Kings, Isaiah 40-48, and messianic prophecies such as Mic 5:2 and Ps 22:8. He then ends the chapter by critiquing the understanding of predictive prophecy within open theism. Throughout the chapter he presents his exegesis and then interacts with the open theists' exegesis of the same passages. The chapter on the NT evidence for exhaustive divine foreknowledge is similar. Roy examines

the words used in the NT for “foreknowledge” in their contexts, comments on the relationship the NT depicts between God’s foreknowledge and prayer, looks at the many passages where the foreknowledge of Jesus is presented, and then examines the passages that teach divine foreknowledge of the fall.

These two are the most important chapters in the book, and the evidence that Roy presents for God’s exhaustive foreknowledge is overwhelming. Both his exegesis and his critique of the open theists’ interpretations of passages he covers, are accurate and convincing. Some of the strongest evidence that Roy presents for his position is found in the sheer number of predictive prophecies in the OT that relate to free human decisions (he counts 2,323 of these types of prophecies in canonical Scripture, a list he includes in his dissertation but not his book; p. 34). When one simply sees how many of these prophecies are included in one small portion of Scripture such as 1–2 Kings, it is difficult if not impossible to understand how God could *not* exhaustively know the future free decisions of human beings. Roy also correctly demonstrates the main thrust of Isaiah 40–48, that the very ability to accurately predict (and therefore know) the future free actions of human beings is the criterion that God uses to demonstrate his absolute and unique deity.

The evidence for God’s exhaustive foreknowledge that Roy presents in his chapter on the NT is perhaps even more convincing than the evidence he presents in his chapter on the OT. Passages that express God’s foreknowledge, such as Acts 2:23, Rom 8:29 and 9:11, 1 Pet 1:2 and 1:19–20, show that God’s foreknowledge is personal, intimately connected with God’s omnipotent will, and includes factual knowledge of free human decisions. Jesus states in Matt 6:7–8 and 6:31–32 that assurance in prayer is based upon that fact that our Father knows our needs *before* we ask him about them. This knowledge of our future needs by necessity includes knowledge of our future free decisions, as Roy clearly demonstrates. Passages such as Rom 8:29–30, 1 Pet 1:2, Eph 1:3–14, 1 Cor 2:7, 2 Tim 1:9–10, and Rev 13:8 and 21:27 also make it clear that God foreknew the fall of humanity into sin, which took place as a result of Adam and Eve’s free decisions, decisions that God knew far in advance. Perhaps the strongest part of this chapter is the section on Jesus’ foreknowledge. Jesus predicted his passion, Peter’s denial, Judas Iscariot’s betrayal; all these predictions involved future free human actions. John 13:19 is particularly important in this regard because Jesus told his disciples that he predicted the future so that they would know that that he was truly God when his predictions would be fulfilled. Roy rightfully points out the significance of this passage and its similarity to Isaiah 40–48. Jesus predicated his deity, much like his Father did, on his ability to know the future free decisions of human beings before they take place.

In the fourth and fifth chapters Roy moves from constructively building his case for exhaustive divine foreknowledge to responding to the arguments of open theists. The fourth chapter is spent responding to the biblical arguments of open theists. Roy first presents the open theists’ interpretations of passages that speak of God repenting in response to human sin, repentance, and intercessory prayer, as well as those found in creedal statements such as Exod 34:6–7 and Joel 2:12–14. He then goes through select passages that affirm that God does not repent. This is followed by a discussion of metaphors, models, and anthropomorphisms, together with a discussion of how the anthropomorphism of God repenting should be understood. At the end of chapter four, Roy briefly examines four other categories of texts that open theists use: those that depict God testing his people (e.g. Genesis 22), those where God says “perhaps” (e.g. Jer 26:2–3), those that contain rhetorical questions (e.g. Gen 3:9), and those that express God’s expectations that failed to pass (e.g. Jer 3:19–20). In chapter five, Roy responds to two important interpretive questions that open theists ask: how has Greek philosophy influenced our analysis of the Bible, and does the Bible teach that the future is partially open and partially fixed?

Roy effectively responds to the arguments of open theists against his understanding of God's exhaustive foreknowledge. Most important in this regard is his discussion of metaphors, models, and anthropomorphisms. Roy correctly notes that all metaphors express both similarities and dissimilarities between two objects. The key to correctly interpreting a metaphor is to understand what similarities the metaphor is expressing and to not confuse the similarities with the differences inherent in the metaphor. Roy is right to acknowledge that the metaphor of God's repentance clearly expresses "a real change in emotion or action" in God (p. 169). However, this repentance is not the same as human repentance, which is the point of the biblical texts that state that God does not repent like a man; therefore, God's repentance cannot be understood as being the same as human repentance, which is how open theists understand it. God does repent, but he repents as one who has exhaustive divine foreknowledge, making his repentance similar to, but also fundamentally different from, that of human beings.

While Roy's treatment of open theism's understanding of God's foreknowledge is overall strong, and his response to the role of philosophy and presuppositions in his interpretation is well done, these two chapters do seem to try to put too much information in too few pages. Roy himself seem to acknowledge this deficiency, as for example when he remarks that he will not be able to deal with several lines of open theists' evidence in detail. There are certain restrictions placed on all books, but it seems that an explanation as to why these lines of evidence could not be dealt with in the same way that the texts concerning God's repentance are handled is called for here. These are important arguments that open theists advance, and they deserve detailed response. The same thing is true when Roy states that he cannot possibly address all of the philosophical factors that have influenced open and classical theism. This is undoubtedly true, and what Roy does say in his limited amount of space is worthwhile and a good response to open theism's accusations, but due to the importance of the subject and its impact on biblical interpretation, it left this reader wanting more.

The final chapter concerns the practical implications of God's exhaustive foreknowledge. It is an appropriate conclusion because all theological models that claim to represent biblical teaching must also adequately meet the demands of life and ministry. It is also appropriate to conclude in this way because open theists often assert that the practical implications of open theism for prayer and one's relationship with God are some of the strongest arguments for their position. Roy demonstrates the contrary, as he goes through five different areas of the Christian life in order to show that God's exhaustive foreknowledge is absolutely necessary for a biblically consistent life and ministry. Specifically, he looks at the biblical practices of worship, prayer, God's guidance, grappling with suffering and evil, and hope in the ultimate triumph of God. Through all these sections Roy compares and contrasts his position with that of open theism, showing how God's exhaustive foreknowledge is better in a concrete, practical way for Christian life and ministry. Again, one wishes that more was said here, as Roy also acknowledges, but to be fair his book could have been written on the practical implications of God's exhaustive foreknowledge alone, and it was not the primary intent of his book to do this. The last chapter serves as a fitting conclusion to the work, showing how God's exhaustive foreknowledge is not only biblically but practically consistent and necessary.

This book is fair, irenic, comprehensive, and biblical. It is deep enough for professional theologians, philosophers, and exegetes, yet it is written in such a way that mature Christians without the benefit of a seminary education can understand and profit from it. While the material is clearly presented from a Calvinist perspective, there are many Arminians who would agree with the central thrust and arguments of this book, making it something that almost all evangelicals can use. Pastors who might not be as familiar with the intricacies of the debate will certainly benefit from reading this book, as it

is purposely practical and pastorally-minded. Open theists will certainly disagree with almost the entire book, but they will also benefit from seriously wrestling with the objections and exegesis that Roy presents. I would be interested to see a thoroughly open theist's response to Roy's work. The book is similar to (and therefore benefits from) previous evangelical critiques of open theism such as *God's Lesser Glory* by Bruce Ware, *What Does God Know*, by Millard Erickson, and *Beyond the Bounds* by John Piper, Justin Taylor, and Paul Kjoss Helseth. At the same time, it offers enough that is fresh, especially the comprehensive sections on God's foreknowledge, that readers of previous works on open theism will also profit from this one. I would heartily recommend this book to all those interested in a thorough, biblical treatment of God's attribute of foreknowledge, the nature of open theism, and the practical importance of God's knowing the future.

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*Saved from Sacrifice: A Theology of the Cross.* By S. Mark Heim. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006, xiv + 346 pp., \$27.00 paper.

A dark, thunderous storm, a distant echo of the one during Christ's crucifixion, has rolled over atonement theology recently. Low pressure, ushered in by books such as J. Denny Weaver's *The Nonviolent Atonement* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), Darby Kathleen Ray's *Deceiving the Devil: Atonement, Abuse, and Ransom* (Cleveland: Pilgrim, 1998), and Anthony Bartlett's *Cross Purposes: The Violent Grammar of Christian Atonement* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity, 2001), has clashed with high pressure works like *The Glory of the Atonement: Biblical, Historical, and Practical Perspectives* edited by Charles E. Hill and Frank A. James (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004), Leon Morris's classic *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), and John Stott's *The Cross of Christ* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1986), creating a swirling cloud of intense debate. The howling wind of *Pierced for Our Transgressions: Rediscovering the Glory of Penal Substitution*, by Steven Jeffrey, Mike Ovey, and Andrew Sach (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2007) haunts the gloomy scene. And just as the crucifixion storm added to the confusion of Christ's cross, likewise this recent uproar has only clouded the mysterious meaning of the atonement. Must punishment precede forgiveness? Does the violence of the cross spawn more violence? Is violence necessary for reconciliation? Or is the violent cross God's means to everlasting peace? These and other questions have been raining down as of late.

Attendant, and due in part, to this development is a massive increase in atonement literature. Within the last five years alone there have been several major studies, including Hans Boersma's masterful *Violence, Hospitality, and the Cross: Reappropriating the Atonement Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), Scot McKnight's *N. T. Wrightian Jesus and His Death: Historiography, the Historical Jesus, and Atonement Theory* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2005), and Alan Spence's *The Promise of Peace: A Unified Theory of Atonement* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2007). This is accompanied by popular interest sparked in part by Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ*, the film that prompted John Piper's *The Passion of Jesus Christ: Fifty Reasons Why He Came to Die* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2004). Atonement theology is a fertile but well sown field for debate and inquiry.

Onto this precarious scene steps S. Mark Heim, Professor of Christian Theology at Andover Newton Theological School. He sympathizes with those who find sacrificial atonement inappropriately violent and primitive, yet he is unwilling to abandon sac-

rifice altogether, believing it to be integral to the biblical witness and an essential aspect of the human plight. Indeed, he faults those who, like Weaver, attempt to “purge Christianity of sacrificial [motifs]” (p. 6). “What is needed,” says Heim, “is an interpretive path *through* the problematic texts and not around them, a theological vision that does not depend on excluding all atonement themes but provides the most convincing account of their true significance” (p. 7, emphasis original). Thus, he believes that sacrificial themes have been misunderstood, and that once their “true significance” is uncovered, the complaints will be extinguished. Herein lies Heim’s goal. And with the Girardian title, it is clear that this means understanding sacrifice not as a divine event wherein human sins are cleansed through an act of atonement, but as a human mechanism in which humanity mollifies its own aggression by focusing it on a scapegoat. Christ’s cross, then, saves humanity from sacrifice by exposing this mechanism as morally bankrupt and creating an alternative community where true peace prevails.

Heim begins by charting the aforementioned storm looming over atonement theology, particularly penal substitution. He outlines five reasons why this model is the subject of controversy, confusion, and ire: (1) sacrifice has no meaning in modern culture; (2) its is associated with anti-Semitism; (3) the uniqueness of the cross has been diluted by the fact that myths about a dying and rising savior are common to many religions; (4) traditional models trade on a morally questionable picture of God, i.e., one who requires blood and violence before offering forgiveness and peace; and (5) the cross often becomes the basis for violent psychological and social behaviors such as masochism, sadism, and abuse. However, Heim does not allow these objections to have the last word; he recounts several examples where marginalized or violent individuals found the cross dignifying and peaceful.

To solve this discrepancy, he proposes a theology of the cross that understands sacrificial themes in a way that both avoids becoming a justification for violence and accounts for the positive responses many have to traditional sacrificial theories. Part 1 sets the stage. It is aptly titled “Things Hidden from the Foundation of the World” after René Girard’s earlier work *Des choses cachées depuis fondation du monde* (Paris: Grasset & Fasquelle, 1978) as it largely recapitulates the French anthropological philosopher’s understanding of humanity’s struggle with mimetic desire and violence. For Girard, sacrifice is not an incoherent, primitive practice rooted in myths about the demands of deities. Rather, as Heim notes, it is “a real solution to a real problem” (p. 60) that “stands at the structural origin of both human society and human religion” (p. 41). Sacrifice is *always* lurking underneath social interaction, even in the West’s civilized, modern world, for it is the way humanity copes with competition, mimetic desire, retribution, and difference. As corporate angst crescendos into mob violence, the fear and hatred is focused onto a scapegoat who is blamed for society’s ills and then sacrificed in appeasement of the community. On this account, ritualistic myths do not precede sacrificial practice but are the lies humans tell themselves about why they sacrifice; that is, myths do not cause sacrifices but explain them. This amounts to “sacred violence,” killing that is no longer considered morally reprehensible because it is legitimized by a religious myth.

Girard offered a bold rereading of Scripture, arguing that within it one can find the scapegoat mechanism being exposed and subverted. Here, Heim follows, examining Genesis, Leviticus, the Psalms, the book of Job (a book Girard also focused on in his *La route antique des hommes pervers* [Paris: Grasset & Fasquelle, 1985]), and the prophets. Considering Leviticus, Heim discovers that the scapegoat mechanism is turned on its head. Whereas in most cultures the innocent scapegoat is mythologized as an aberrant, guilty individual who is the presence of evil within a community, in the OT the scapegoat remains innocent, functioning as a substitute for the guilty community. The author then traces the way in which the voice of the scapegoat is heard

in the Bible. Take the Psalms, for example, where the “plea for deliverance seeks relief from an oddly specific kind of evil: conspiracy of a whole community or crowd against a weak and abandoned one, the crushing of an arbitrarily chosen person on a false pretext” (p. 82).

Isaiah 52–53 has tremendous significance for understanding atonement. Heim’s handling of this pericope, which historically many such as John Calvin have understood to be the *sine qua non* of biblical support for penal substitution, will have great bearing on the credibility of his thesis for evangelicals. In passages like 53:3–4, Heim detects sacrificial scapegoating: a victim whom the community abandons, turns against, and sacrifices on the pretense that it is God’s will. Yet this passage is characteristically honest since it acknowledges that it was the guilt of the community that was placed on the suffering servant who was unjustly condemned. But what of 53:6 or 53:10, which seem to indicate that this was endorsed by YHWH? Not so, answers Heim, for there is a clear distinction between God’s will and the will of the executioners. While the latter are involved in a typical sacrifice, God implodes this process (as chapter 53 concludes) by exalting the suffering servant and displaying his innocence.

There is an inner tension in the OT between the naked depiction of the practice and its subversion, a tension that is ultimately eased by the dominance of the biblical God who opposes sacrificial scapegoating. Through this tension, Heim suggests, the scapegoating process is demythologized. The OT, then, is far from another myth used to legitimate sacrifice, but an “antimyth” that critiques the scapegoating ritual from within. For Heim, this movement represents the uniqueness of Scripture and is the reason why it counts as revelation.

Part 2, “Visible Victim,” turns to the NT and tradition. What sets the Gospels apart from typical mythic accounts of a savior is that they depict the passion from the scapegoat’s standpoint, thereby revealing both the injustice of sacrifice and the innocence of the victim who was falsely condemned by the community. What is evident in the passion narratives, argues Heim, is not a redemptive sacrifice that saves humanity from sin—actually, it was the idea of redemptive sacrifice that led to Christ’s wrongful crucifixion (a warning to Christian theology, says Heim)—but how God in Christ saves humanity from sacrificial ideology by entering into the place of a sacrificial victim so as to render the hidden evil of sacrifice and thereby neutralize its mythic power.

Earliest Christian preaching recounted in Acts and found in Paul’s epistles validates this interpretation, according to Heim. Particularly important is his treatment of Romans 3:21–26, another key passage for evangelical atonement theologies (see, e.g., D. A. Carson, “Atonement in Romans 3:21–26,” in *The Glory of the Atonement*). Heim first notes that Paul quotes three “scapegoat psalms” (3:10–18); therefore, the “sin” of which we are all guilty is sacrificial scapegoating. Next, Heim focuses on the debated term “a sacrifice of atonement” (ἱλαστήριον), asserting that it describes how “God enters into the position of the victim of sacrificial atonement . . . and occupies it so as to be able to act from that place to reverse sacrifice and redeem us from it” (p. 143). He grounds this interpretation in the fact that διὰ πίστεω follows ἱλαστήριον so that Christ’s “sacrifice of atonement” was completed “in faith” that God would vindicate him; the ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι is not the object of πίστεω but the means of ἱλαστήριον διὰ πίστεω, according to Heim. Accordingly, Christians do not have faith in Christ’s blood as if to suggest that his sacrifice is redemptive, but in God’s continued vindication of sacrificial victims, a faith that is rooted in the resurrection of Christ by which God proves that he is both opposed to sacrifice and for sacrificial victims.

Heim also finds warrant in the book of Hebrews where the author’s message is that Jesus died as a “sacrifice to end sacrifice.” Although the writer seems to understand sacrificial redemption positively, “Christ’s sacrifice is presented as the opposite and in fact the end of that dynamic” (p. 158). This reading of the NT means that the essence



of evil is humanity's penchant to blame others and sacrifice them to its pacification. Satan is the instigator of this process and the deceiver who cultivates the myths used to rationalize such. But after the cross unmasks his ploy and, indeed, beats the devil at his own deceptive game (Heim rehabilitates the Eastern belief that in the cross God deceives the devil), it becomes the task of the Spirit to be an advocate for scapegoats by tying the devil's sacrificial process through testimony to the anti-sacrificial death and resurrection of Christ.

While Heim admits that post-NT Christians quickly became adherents of a sacrificial understanding of Christ's death, he points to two instances where they seemed to grasp the anti-sacrificiality of the cross. These are the use of Jonah as a type of Christ in early Christian art, and the popularity of the tale of Susanna as Christological folklore. According to Heim, Jonah and Susanna are classic instances of scapegoating, and early Christian appeal to them suggests an awareness of Christ's death as having to do with scapegoating.

No theory of the atonement can make a claim to legitimacy if it cannot account for Christian living and worship. So Part 3, "In Remembrance of Me," explores the implications of this Girardian *theologia crucis* for Christian praxis. Here, baptism is about identifying with a scapegoat. The Eucharist concerns remembering Christ's innocence and the horror of sacrificial scapegoating as well as substituting the elements of bread and wine for would-be sacrificial victims, finding our communal peace at the table rather than in the unison of a lynch mob. Heim expounds how his theory unhinges violence from Christian practice. One might think that, if Christ dies pacifying humanity's desire for a scapegoat, then Christians, in sharing in his suffering, ought to substitute themselves for today's scapegoats. But this idea "makes no more sense than the idea that . . . to be like God we should try to create a universe in six days" (p. 245). After all, "[r]edemptive violence is what we are to be saved from, not what we are to copy, either as perpetrators or victims" (p. 245).

Christian praxis becomes a matter of taking up the case of scapegoats in the power of the Spirit who, as *paraclete*, is lead defense attorney. Christians, then, through their identification with Jesus Christ, make victims visible to this world. Their task is to unveil the myths created to justify victimization. They are agents of true peace, not the superficial peace found in the scapegoating mechanism, but the everlasting peace found in Jesus's non-rivalry and the absence of sacrifice. In fact, Heim contends that his model offers a new understanding of God's transcendence: non-rivalry. God is not a competitor with humanity, nor is he bound to the cycles of imitation that spawn violence. As such, God is a moral example with which human desires can be aligned and reprogrammed. Looking to God, we realize that human society should not be based upon competition and rivalry, but interdependence and friendly assistance. The church represents an alternative economy and relational order.

Heim finishes with a critique of penal substitutionary atonement. Like Weaver before him, Heim focuses on Anselm who went horribly wrong when he took human guilt as the reason for the cross. "Christ died for us, to save us from what killed him," writes Heim, "[a]nd what killed him was not God's justice but our redemptive violence" (p. 306). To be reconciled with God is not to have our guilt atoned for, but "to recognize victims when we see them, to convert from the crowd that gathers around them, and to be reconciled with each other without them" (p. 329).

It is easy to see how Heim successfully answers the five objections to sacrificial theories he noted at the outset. As it turns out, in answer to concern (1), sacrifice is not as foreign to modern culture as it would seem since it is a universal cultural tool for dealing with humanity's tensions, ambiguities, and conflicts. Anti-Semitism, objection (2), cannot be justified by the cross, because the cross condemns such as another instance of societal scapegoating. In answer to (3), while the sacrificial rituals are not

unique, Christianity's understanding of them is unique, because it exposes the innocence of the victim, highlights the guilt of the community, and ultimately presents a God who opposes sacrificial practice. Consequently, Christianity's unique God is not morally questionable as in (4). Likewise, *mutatis mutandis*, criticism (5).

Yet these benefits are predicated on Heim's radical rereading of the Scriptures, a rereading many will view as misreading. Quite often Heim appears too eager to find that for which he is looking. Is it really the case, for example, that for Paul "to accept Jesus is to be converted from scapegoating persecution to identify with those against whom he had practiced it" (p. 139), especially in light of Seyoon Kim's much more measured *The Origins of Paul's Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982)? What of Heim's comment that in Hebrews, Jesus' sacrifice is the "opposite" of Israel's sacrificial cult? Most commentators understand the writer to be saying that Jesus' cross is the fulfillment of the OT type. Take Barnabas Lindars, who concluded that the author is far from an "anti-ritualist," one who saw the perfection of the Day of Atonement sacrifice in Christ's death where the covenantal burden of sin is definitively removed (*The Theology of the Letter to the Hebrews* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991] 90–98). Furthermore, Heim completely ignores the theme of high priesthood, itself a cultic concept, in Hebrews, a theme that has great bearing on the nature of Jesus' sacrifice. Donald Hagner has argued that the high priesthood of Christ is central to Hebrews's Christology ("The Son of God as Unique High Priest: The Christology of the Epistle to the Hebrews," in Richard Longenecker, ed., *Contours of Christology in the New Testament* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005]). So how well could Heim understand sacrifice in Hebrews without consideration of this theme?

Seldom if ever does Heim interact with standard commentaries. He constantly reads Girard's anthropological thesis into his texts, evinced by his consistent redefinition of "sacrifice" as scapegoating and the "offering" as a victim, neglecting the fact that no biblical author thought of these cultural artifacts in this way. Nor does he discuss the historical-cultural and linguistic evidence concerning the key concepts of "sacrifice," "atonement," "purity," "sin," etc. And he cavalierly simplifies the complexity of Israel's sacrificial cult by reducing it to scapegoating. This misreading extends into his understanding of the Eucharist as well. Surely Christians are not gathering around a sacrificial victim (represented in the bread and wine) to soothe their scapegoating tendencies. Instead they are celebrating how Christ's death has brought them communion with God. Heim, therefore, is quite selective with sources as he remains silent about those commentators who would legitimately object to his interpretations and those texts that cannot be incorporated into his thesis. While his proposals might be compelling to anthropologists, exegetically and historically speaking they appear both naïve and irresponsible. Thus, those concerned with understanding Christian sources on their own terms will often find Heim's Girardian interpretations *violently* contrived and utterly fanciful. So while he is successful in meeting his own goals, I wonder whether Heim has sacrificed (!) disciplined scholarship in the process.

My major theological concerns have to do with the nature of sacrifice and the relationship between the priestly and prophetic work of Christ. The major studies of Israelite sacrifice of which I am aware recognize that sacrifice was the means of dealing with human immorality and ritual impurity that were obstacles to communion with God; sacrifice dealt with human fallenness. But for Heim, sacrifice is not the solution but rather humanity's deepest problem. When Heim's theory is applied to Jesus' death, there is no room for the way in which the sacrificial dimension of the cross, traditionally the basis for divine-human relationship, objectively alters humanity's legal status or procures covenant fellowship. Heim fails to acknowledge materially that fractured communion with God is part of the human plight.

What does this mean for soteriology, harmatology, justification, and Christian ethics? Soteriologically, because Heim removes the positive aspects of sacrifice vis-à-vis sin, he at the very least owes us an account of how the moral and legal aspects of sin are overcome. Harmatologically, Heim seems to abandon traditional notions, because sin is no longer a moral and ontological stain that calls for sacrifice, but the practice of sacrifice itself. Justification is wholly lost because Christ's death is not a sacrifice that creates the covenantal status of righteousness for humanity. Moreover, the object of faith has been changed from Christ's atoning work to God's vindication of scapegoats. And what has Heim done with the Christian ethic of self-sacrifice? Gone, then, are huge swaths of traditional Christian theology, making Heim's proposal an entirely new worldview, the vocabulary of which, while similar to traditional theological vocabulary, has undergone substantial redefinition. I am reminded of Douglas Farrow's review of Weaver's *The Nonviolent Atonement*; his shrewd words there apply to Heim as well: "I am against the kind of violence represented by this book, which does harm to the life, limb and dignity of Christian theology" (*International Journal of Systematic Theology* 6 [2004] 97).

Heim has so redefined Christ's sacrifice that its salvific benefits arise not from the event itself, but from the revelation accompanying it in the Gospels and manifest in the resurrection. This is solely a moral influence theory, and a relatively weak one at that. (Most moral exemplar models at least see the cross itself as revelatory.) By removing the sacrificial features of Christ's death, Heim has eliminated the priestly dimension of Christ's work, collapsing it into the prophetic. And because the heart of salvation is reduced to revelation—true knowledge about scapegoating—his proposal shares more in common with Gnosticism than Christianity.

*Saved from Sacrifice*, therefore, is a speculative rereading of Scripture and tradition, one that does violence to the sources, amounting to a complete revision of the Christian worldview that will not prove persuasive under serious scrutiny. Consequently, Heim's contribution lies in his awakening us unto the pervasiveness of scapegoating. It is hard not to think about modern day scapegoats after reading this book. Surely, satanic scapegoating was operating in the case of the three Duke University lacrosse team defendants who were falsely accused of rape. But Heim makes me ask: Is President George W. Bush, ever decreasing in popularity and subject to abounding charges of villainy, just a contemporary scapegoat, an innocent victim of America's mimetic media blame game? And who knows, maybe Heim is just my scapegoat. . . .

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