

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Getting the Old Testament: What It Meant to Them, What It Means for Us.* By Steven L. Bridge. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2009. xx + 227 pp., \$14.95.

Many readers misinterpret, misapply, and misjudge the OT because they lack awareness of the cultural, historical, and literary backgrounds of the biblical texts. In *Getting the Old Testament*, Steven L. Bridge, Professor of Theology at St. Joseph's College, Maine, desires to show beginning audiences spanning both academic and faith communities (Muslim, Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant) how a contextually informed reading of various OT texts can unlock their genuine lessons. Those familiar with Bridge's *Getting the Gospels: Understanding the New Testament Accounts of Jesus' Life* (Hendrickson, 2004) will quickly note the similarity of purpose and style in his two volumes.

The tripartite structure of *Getting the Old Testament* corresponds to the major divisions of the Hebrew Bible—Law (chaps. 1–5), Prophets (chaps. 6–8), and Writings (chaps. 9–11)—with each section engaging multiple selected biblical texts as case studies for interpretation and application. In Part I, Bridge interacts with both creation accounts (Genesis 1–2), the flood narrative (Genesis 6–9), the Abraham narratives (Genesis 12–21), and the Torah's collection of laws. He interprets Genesis 1 as an artistic rendering that complements science's perspective on creation. Read under the influence of the *Enuma Elish*, the Priestly writer's systematic presentation is seen to be a narrative emphasizing monotheism, divine transcendence, the goodness of creation, and human dominion and privilege. Bridge enumerates factual contradictions between Genesis 1 and 2 but claims these differences do not preclude an affirmation of their respective theological truth claims. Similarly, he finds the significance of Genesis 6–9 not in discussions about its (dubious) historicity but in its comparison with other ancient flood narratives like the Gilgamesh Epic and the Story of Atrahasis, thus exposing the biblical author's ability to retell the account within a monotheistic framework that maintains both God's justice and mercy. Chapter 4 proposes insights from Genesis 12–21 as a path to resolving contemporary Jewish/Muslim tensions. Identifying divergent treatments of Ishmael and Hagar, Bridge exposes the Yahwist as condemnatory but finds that the Priestly/Elohists sources maintain a place for cherishing and blessing Ishmael in addition to Isaac. Finally, Bridge categorizes the Torah laws according to eight general principles thought to reflect the prevailing ideology of their authors and cultures in their attempts to create a nation characterized by fidelity to their God.

Switching genres, Part II clarifies contemporary misconceptions of prophecy by describing four predominant messages of the Minor Prophets: a call to fidelity and justice; an indictment of guilt; punishment; and mercy and restoration. In chapter 7, Bridge proposes that for those who know the typical experiences and messages of prophets, the book of Jonah comes across as prophecy parodied. Depending upon its historical setting, the record of a reluctant prophet and a repentant non-Jewish audience may suggest that the intent of this work was to remind the Judahite exiles that God cared about Babylon, too, or perhaps to draw attention to their own stubbornness and failure to respond to the numerous prophets God had sent to them prior to their devastation and punishment. Chapter 8 then engages the apocalyptic visions of Daniel. Setting the production of Daniel during the rule of Antiochus IV, Bridge shows how the great majority of Daniel's supposed prophecies are descriptions of events after the fact intended to

bolster the authority of his text and to enable the reader to trust Daniel's vision of an imminent overthrow of Antiochus. The overall effect is a series of visions meant to affirm God's sovereignty in the midst of intense persecution.

The final section addressing the Writings stresses the internal contradictions of the Wisdom Literature. Proverbs is characterized by its attempt to motivate readers toward the virtues of wisdom and righteousness and their related behaviors in recognition of the authority of God, king, and parents and of a direct relationship between behavior and consequence. However, Ecclesiastes deems this pursuit of wisdom to be meaningless and the supposed cause/effect relationship to be invalid in light of the realities of death and injustice. Instead, the author posits meaning only in a content enjoyment of life for as long as it lasts. Similarly, Bridge finds in Job an illustration of the shortcomings of conventional wisdom's belief that righteousness results in blessing. Calling readers to identify with the perspectives of Job's acquaintances rather than with the suffering of Job, Bridge believes the text is transformed from a book addressing the question of why the righteous suffer into one about how to (and how not to) respond to the victims of tragedy with compassion rather than with judgment.

Overall, there is much to commend in this book. Bridge effectively grips his audience with numerous poignant and engaging illustrations from personal experience and from popular culture (e.g. *The Simpsons*, *The Bible Code*, Alan Jackson's "Where Were You," and more). His clear writing style is full of humor and is accessible to the introductory student, and his charts, tables, and appendices superbly parallel his prose. Nevertheless, although the methodological commitment to seeking textual meaning in authorial intent is laudable, throughout the work Bridge follows the "scholarly consensus" on most critical issues of authorship and audience of the biblical texts, and due to the scope of the writing, these views more often than not are asserted rather than argued. As a result, those who hold to differing, and particularly more traditional, views on matters of historical background will be frustrated by the lack of engagement with these positions and may find limited validity to Bridge's interpretations. Such readers may prefer Fee and Stuart's *How to Read the Bible* or Duvall and Hays's *Grasping God's Word* as introductions to an author-centered hermeneutical approach that also include discussions of genre-specific OT matters.

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*Tight Fists or Open Hands? Wealth and Poverty in Old Testament Law.* By David L. Baker. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009, 435 pp., \$36.00 paper.

David Baker's *Tight Fists or Open Hands* represents, to my knowledge, the first thorough study of poverty in the OT. As such, the work is a welcome addition to the various, specialized studies on various facets of wealth and poverty. Responding to the "magnitude of the problem of wealth and poverty at the beginning of the third millennium" (p. xiii), Baker states his belief that "a Christian response to this problem should be based on a sound understanding of the Bible and a realistic view of how things really are today" (p. xiii). The author asserts that "'Two thirds of the World' does not permit a simplistic prosperity theology," while "liberation theology's preferential option for the poor" emphasises certain biblical texts and downplays others" (pp. xiii–xiv). The OT is in direct contrast with this state of affairs because it "both affirms the good things of this world and condemns those who monopolise them for their own benefit" as well as recording how "God blesses his people in tangible ways and judges those who deprive others of their legitimate rights to material possessions" (p. xiv).

This broader approach to wealth and poverty in the OT provides the foundation for Baker to present “a new translation and exegetical study of all the biblical laws concerned with wealth and poverty” (p. xiv). He employs a typological classification of the OT laws in order to give “consideration to the similarities and the differences between the Decalogue, Book of the Covenant, Holiness code and Deuteronomic laws” (p. xiv). Greater breadth and depth is given to the study by the author’s discussion of these laws “in the wider context of the ancient Near Eastern law.” This placement helps to demonstrate “which attitudes are distinctively biblical and which are held in common with other civilised peoples” (p. xiv).

The methodology by which Baker accomplishes this involves twelve chapters. Chapter 1 examines the major Near Eastern laws (Sumerian, Babylonian, Hittite, Assyrian) as well as the OT Decalogue, Book of the Covenant, the Holiness code, and the Deuteronomic Laws. Chapter 12 furnishes a detailed conclusion comparing the similarities and differences existing between ancient Near Eastern and biblical laws, as well as the theological and ethical implications of the study. Chapters 2–11 comprise the body of the work. These chapters are grouped together under a general theme with each chapter containing specific topics discussed under that theme. A detailed conclusion follows the discussion of each theme that summarizes the significant ideas and relationships shown to exist among the biblical and ancient Near Eastern law codes. Chapters 2–4 discuss topics which fall under the theme of “Property and Land.” Chapter 2, entitled “Property rights,” explores theft (Exod 20:15; 22:1–4; Lev 19:11a; Deut 5:19), coveting (Exod 20:17; Deut 5:21), and lost property (Exod 23:4–5; Deut 22:1–4). Chapter 3, entitled “Property Responsibilities,” explores owner liability (Exod 21:28–36; Deut 22:8), negligent damage (Exod 22:5–6), and care of property (Exod 22:7–15). Chapter 4, entitled “Ancestral Land,” explores Jubilee (Lev 25:8–17, 23–34), boundaries (Deut 19:14), and military service (Deut 20:5–7). Chapters 5–7 discuss topics that fall under the theme of “Marginal People.” Chapter 5, entitled “Slaves,” explores chattel slaves (Exod 21:16; Lev 25:44–46; Deut 24:7), slave abuse (Exod 21:20–21, 26–27), and fugitive slaves (Deut 23:15–16). Chapter 6, entitled, “Semi-Slaves,” explores temporary slaves (Exod 21:2–6; Deut 15:12–18), concubines (Exod 21:7–11; Deut 21:10–14), and bonded laborers (Lev 25:39–43, 47–55). Chapter 7, entitled “Other Vulnerable Groups,” explores resident aliens (Exod 22:21; 23:9; Lev 19:33–34; 24:22; Deut 24:17–18) and widows and orphans (Exod 22:22–24; Deut 24:17–18). Chapters 8–11 discuss topics that fall under the theme of “Justice and Generosity.” Chapter 8, entitled “Just Lawsuits,” explores witnesses (Exod 20:16; 23:1–2; Deut 5:20; 17:6; 19:15–21), impartiality (Exod 23:3, 6–7; Lev 19:15; Deut 16:18–19a), and bribery (Exod 23:8; Deut 16:19b–20). Chapter 9, entitled “Shared Harvests,” explores the sabbatical year (Exod 23:10–11; Lev 25:1–7, 18–22), gleaning (Lev 19:9–10; 23:22; Deut 24:19–22), triennial tithes (Deut 14:28–29; 26:12–13), and “scrumpling” (Deut 23:24–25). Chapter 10, entitled “Generous Loans,” explores interest (Exod 22:25; Lev 25:35–38; Deut 23:19–20), security (Exod 22:26–27; Deut 24:6, 10–13, 17b), and debt relief (Deut 15:1–11). Chapter 11, entitled “Fair Trade,” explores holidays (Exod 20:8–11; 23:12; Deut 5:12–15; 12:12, 18; 16:11, 14; 26:11), wages (Lev 19:13b; Deut 24:14–15), and weights and measures (Lev 19:35–36; Deut 25:13–16).

The study could perhaps have been improved had Baker inserted into his introduction a discussion that attempted to define “wealth” and “poverty.” Doing so would have provided a working definition with which to conduct the research reported in chapters 2–11. However, this is a minor issue when compared to the results yielded by the existing investigation.

The study also contains a number of aids that facilitate further study and research. The footnotes provide both documentation and give particular information incidental to the study. The detailed bibliography is particularly useful; since this study is seminal, it provides in one location specific studies related to this investigation. The

indices of subjects, foreign words, Scripture references, ancient Near Eastern laws, and authors facilitate further study of this subject by encouraging comparisons in specific areas, as well as linking this study with other similar issues. The conclusions at the end of each chapter do much more than comparing the similarities and differences of these laws. Baker dialogues between the themes found in these laws and poverty in the world today. In this way, the study becomes a backdrop and springboard for discussion of issues that affect both rich and poor alike in the twenty-first century. As such, the work combines exegesis and modern application in a way that points to the significance of these laws in the modern world. This fact alone makes the book useful whether the reader is a pastor, scholar, or student in a theological or ethics course. *Tight Fists or Open Hands?* is a must-read for anyone seeking to explore these issues.

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*Everyday Law in Biblical Israel: An Introduction.* By Raymond Westbrook and Bruce Wells. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009, ix + 156 pp., \$24.95 paper.

Raymond Westbrook, the W. W. Spence Professor in Semitic Languages at Johns Hopkins University, died of cancer at the age of 62 in July 2009 while this monograph was at press. He will be deeply missed by his family, friends, and colleagues. Westbrook's early death is unfortunate for the study of biblical law. For nearly forty years he was one of the leading authorities on ancient Near Eastern and biblical law (see the partial list of his works in the bibliography in this volume, pp. 148–49). Westbrook wrote *Everyday Law in Biblical Israel* with his student Bruce Wells, assistant professor of Hebrew Bible at Saint Joseph's University in Philadelphia. Wells earned his Ph.D. in 2003 from Johns Hopkins University and has contributed several significant studies on biblical law (p. 148).

Raymond Westbrook was a champion of the “diffusionist school” of ancient legal studies, which assumes a common, comprehensive, and consistent legal culture dispersed throughout the ancient Near East. This model allowed him to reconstruct a monolithic legal system by comparing individual statements in ancient Near Eastern law codes, judicial documents, and biblical narratives. Accordingly, Westbrook and Wells argue that everyday law in biblical Israel was part of the underlying common legal tradition attested throughout Mesopotamia and Canaan (pp. 23–24).

This book is designed to be an introductory textbook for college students with some familiarity with the JPS Hebrew Bible and not much knowledge of Hebrew (p. 1). The authors do, however, give their own translation when citing passages (p. 2). There are only a few explanatory footnotes; the authors prefer to remand the scholarly references to the Further Reading section at the end of each chapter and to the bibliography. The bibliography (pp. 137–49) lists all works cited in the monograph. The added feature in the bibliography of listing the major topics “to which each entry most closely relates” is very helpful (p. 137). A brief glossary of modern legal terms (pp. 135–36) and a subject index (pp. 151–56) are also included. An index of Bible passages cited would have been very helpful; its lack mars the usefulness of the work as a reference tool.

This book is not about religious laws that regulate the covenantal relationship between God and humans (i.e. *tsedakah*), nor is it truly about ethical laws or precepts (i.e. *mishpatim*) that specify the covenantal relationship between humans (cf. Isa 5:7; Amos 5:24). Moral precepts are met with disapproval by the society “or a sanction by a suprasocietal being such as a deity” (p. 3). Westbrook and Wells do recognize that within an ancient society where a divine sanction was just as important as a human

one, “the distinction between law and morality cannot be so sharply defined” (p. 3). They do not outright disregard the latter; however, their interest is in the former.

Thus, this book is about everyday law—a category that the authors admit is modern (p. 2). Everyday law is a societal construct. It refers to rules that regulate “members of a society in the conduct of their everyday lives, protecting their economic, social, corporal, and psychological interests” (p. 1). Breach of this type of law is met by an organized response of the society in the form of a coercive sanction (p. 3). Such a sanction may be a refusal to enforce rights or pecuniary or physical penalties.

Everyday laws establish rights that hold up in court, are applicable to developed legal systems, and fall into set categories, “such as property, inheritance, contracts, crimes and evidence” (p. 1). The authors set about reconstructing the everyday laws of biblical Israel primarily by comparing the evidence provided by the Bible and extrabiblical material (primarily Mesopotamian documents, but also including rabbinic and Roman legal materials). The first chapter discusses the various sources, biblical and extrabiblical, that are examined in the book. The everyday laws are then discussed in five chapters under the headings of litigation, status and family, crimes and delicts, property and inheritance, and contracts.

Not everyone will agree with Westbrook and Wells’s comparative methodological approach. Some will find them overly optimistic in comparing sources from one period or era with other sources of a different period or time. Nevertheless, the pitfalls of propinquity and homogeneity are clearly recognized and addressed.

This work should stimulate much discussion and reevaluation of several biblical texts. Many ETS readers will not appreciate the critical stance of the book, nor be likely to use it as a textbook in religion courses on biblical law in general. Even so, no student of ancient biblical law can afford to dismiss this approach.

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*Deuteronomy.* By Telford Work. Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2009, 333 pp., \$29.99.

The Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible promises to be a different kind of commentary series. It aims to confront the idea that the Bible should be studied apart from theological systems and teaching, that is, dogma in the best sense of the term. R. R. Reno argues in the Series Preface, “This series of Biblical commentaries was born out of the conviction that dogma clarifies rather than obscures. The Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible advances upon the assumption that the Nicene tradition, in all its diversity and controversy, provides the proper basis for the interpretation of the Bible as Christian Scripture” (p. 10). He seems to be using the Nicene Creed as a metonymy for the collected body of church doctrine as a whole and its ability to provide structure, guidance, and boundaries for biblical interpretation. He continues, “Doctrine, then, is not a moldering scrim of antique prejudice obscuring the meaning of the Bible. It is a crucial aspect of divine pedagogy, a clarifying agent for our minds fogged by self deceptions” (p. 10).

This goal drove the selection of commentators for this project, and Reno states unapologetically, “The commentators in this series have not been chosen because of their historical or philological expertise. In the main, they are not biblical scholars in the conventional, modern sense of the term. Instead, the commentators were chosen because of their knowledge of and expertise in using the Christian doctrinal tradition. They are qualified by virtue of the doctrinal formation of their mental habits, for it is

the conceit of this series of biblical commentaries that theological training in the Nicene tradition prepares one for biblical interpretation, and thus it is to theologians and not biblical scholars that we have turned. 'War is too important,' it has been said, 'to leave to the generals' (p. 10).

This goal seems noble, but Reno admits that the Nicene tradition "does not provide a formula for the solution of exegetical problems" (p. 10). This leads to the puzzling statement, "Doctrine is intrinsically fluid on the margins and most powerful as a habit of mind rather than a *list of propositions* [emphasis added]. This commentary series cannot settle difficult questions of method and content at the outset" (p. 10). This is puzzling at best because the idea of dogma at least implies a list of propositions Christians believe. Reno has invoked the name Nicea. Does he mean to suggest its understanding of the Trinity is fluid? Is belief in the nature of Christ a "habit of the mind" or a fact to which all Christians must assent?

In what appears to be a very postmodern admission, Reno declares, "The Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible is deliberately ecumenical in scope, because the editors are convinced that early church fathers were correct: church doctrine does not compete with Scripture in a limited economy of epistemic authority" (p. 11). Interpreted, this seems to say, since we cannot know the meaning of Scripture with certainty, all should have their chance to interpret according to their tradition and be heard. The editors are to be commended for trying to clothe "naked seminarians" (p. 11) who never learned to connect the theology with exegesis and *vice versa*, but whose theology are they trying to connect with exegesis? Reno has used words such as "dogma" and "doctrine," and these imply some ideas should be believed while others should be rejected. Inasmuch as this series is taking an ecumenical approach without declaring up front which system is going to guide the exegesis, readers are left with the conclusion that all systems are right—a very postmodern conclusion indeed.

As of this writing, eight series volumes are available: Deuteronomy (reviewed below, Leviticus, 1 & 2 Kings, Ezra & Nehemiah, Jonah, Matthew, Acts, The Pastoral Epistles with Philemon, and Jude. Telford Work introduces his commentary on the book of Deuteronomy with the statement, "This theological commentary is a recovery project. . . . We need to read Deuteronomy as a volume in the canon of the Church of Jesus Christ, and to do it well" (p. 18). This is a wonderful challenge. For many Christians, Deuteronomy is another collection of arcane Jewish laws that have no bearing on church life in the least. To be sure, Christians do not live under the Mosaic law, but inasmuch as Deuteronomy is part of the canon, it does make claims on our lives, a fact that motivates Work's efforts. His desire to recover this book for the church is commendable. His goal is "to form and discipline a contemporary apostolic imagination by reading every passage of Deuteronomy according to the sensibilities of the New Testament church" (p. 18).

To do this, Work employs four concepts that he argues sum up the interpretive approach of the Middle Ages known as the "fourfold sense." His analogues to the literal, allegorical, tropological, and analogical methods of interpretation yield four categories: plain, faith, hope, and love. Plain refers to the plain meaning of the passage. Faith examines the allegorical meaning of the text. Hope looks at the eschatological meaning of the text inspired by Israel's return from the Babylonian exile. Love exposes guidance for the church. Each section of Deuteronomy is examined through the lens these four categories provide.

My biggest disappointment with this commentary is that Work provides little new material on the plain meaning of the text. That is to say, he does not provide the exegetical foundation for his theological interpretations. That said, he acknowledges this deficiency in the introduction and quite humbly suggests he has little to add "to the many fine commentaries that already comment on the plain sense, often exclusively" (p. 19). This probably explains why the commentary does not include a section

on the traditional discipline of Introduction. Nevertheless, Work's contribution is useful inasmuch as he actually helps readers think about just how Deuteronomy could be applied to the church. This is something many commentaries simply ignore.

Hermeneutically, this commentary accomplishes exactly what it sets out to do. Each text is read almost exclusively in light of the church. As an example, commenting on Deuteronomy 1:3's "in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month . . ." Work notes that it has taken Israel forty years to travel the distance from Sinai to Canaan. Sin, punishment, and delay were part of this journey, yet Israel made it through. From this Work comments, "Sin's frustration is never total and never final. The long time we take to fulfill the will of the Father can always become a short time if we stop resisting" (p. 26).

Commenting on the Great Shema (Deut 6:4), Work writes, "The Shema is often spoken, but it must be *heard* [emphasis his]. Confessors must not only confess but hear one another's confession. The primary audience of third-person confession is not God but others" (p. 95). On the Law of the King (Deuteronomy 17), Work makes the observation that Jesus fulfills the injunctions against accumulating wealth, weapons, or women, and did not lift himself up above his brother.

This kind of commentary is devotional and even helpful. The challenge this method faces is its seeming lack of foundation in the text. Work has given us theology, not exegesis. This is perhaps why so many commentaries stick to the plain, literal meaning of the text. Once the allegorical cat is out of the bag it is hard to control where it goes. Work's commentary reads like a collection of insights into the text of Deuteronomy rather than an extended, methodical presentation of the argument of the book. It is a bit atomistic. The sections on hope and love in particular seem to be presented apart from their context. That said, this commentary will force readers to remember it is not enough to leave this wonderful revelation in its historical context. Work has provided the end product of the exegetical process. He leaves it up to the teacher to do the exegetical spade work.

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*Ecclesiastes*. By Craig G. Bartholomew. Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009, 448 pp., \$39.99.

*Ecclesiastes* is the kind of book that invites reflection and comment each time it is read. This magisterial commentary provides a wealth of insight into the structure and message of *Ecclesiastes* and compels further reflection on the profound wisdom in the book that warns about the making of books (Eccl 12:12). The bibliography consists of 30 pages and there are three indices consisting of 28 pages: subject, author and reference (Scripture, ancient Near East sources, classical writers, Josephus, rabbinic writings and Church Fathers). The introduction to the book comprises 100 pages, and there is a postscript of 15 pages on "psychology, spiritual formation and preaching." The commentary analyzes the book as consisting of a frame narrative (1:1–11; 12:8–14) that encloses 21 topics of reflection. A translation is provided to introduce each topical unit; these units are subdivided for interpretive comment, with the translation being repeated for each of the subsequent divisions. Each topical division is concluded with a comprehensive section on theological implications.

The introduction discusses canonicity, authorship, date, and text, none of which has any substantial bearing on interpretation. Evidence at Qumran suggests *Ecclesiastes* carried authority in pre-Christian times. The term *qōhelet* suggests the book is a

collection of arranged sayings. Bartholomew traces a history of discussion on authorship, noting that the literary association with Solomon ends completely in the third chapter as the author turns to topics such as abuse of power. The shifts from third and first person to second person exhortation indicate a text designed for instruction. The emphasis on sensory experience as an arbiter of knowledge might indicate influence of Epicureanism, and the cyclical determinism of history is affirmative of Stoic philosophy. Linguistic evidence is most determinative for date, as noted by Delitzsch (1875); the Hebrew of Ecclesiastes represents the latest stage of Biblical Hebrew, being closest in approximation to Mishnaic Hebrew. Postexilic times “led Qohelet and his educated contemporaries to question the reality of the Israelite vision of life into which they were born and nurtured” (p. 59).

A review of the history of interpretation, both premodern and modern (pp. 21–43), covers a gamut of interpretation, from Jerome and Origen to the Reformers, on to modern commentators from Gunkel to Childs (New Criticism). Fox makes a major contribution in highlighting epistemology as a central concern of the book. A substantive portion of the introduction deals with the critical questions of structure and genre. Bartholomew critiques the views of Perdue and Longman, who contend for a genre of fictional autobiography based on ancient Near Eastern and especially Akkadian parallels. A weakness of both these positions is that neither explains in any detailed or satisfactory way how the epilogue relates to the rest of the book (p. 69); both rely on a diachronic analysis that identifies the first-person narration as the main element. A critical methodological issue is at stake: “Comparative genre analysis must be based on literary analyses, that, initially at least, are performed independently of studies of comparative genre” (p. 70).

Bartholomew incorporates the variety of positive observations of genre analyses in describing Ecclesiastes as “a developed wisdom form of the royal testament or fictional autobiography cast in a frame narrative” (p. 74). Fox has observed that on three occasions, a voice other than that of Qoheleth is heard (1:2; 7:27; 12:8). In 7:27, this third-person voice is heard in the midst of a first-person sentence; a narrator comments on the search by Qoheleth. A frame narrator (1:2; 12:8) tells about Qoheleth the seeker, the reporter in first person (“I”) who looks back from old age and speaks about the younger Qoheleth making his investigations into life. The frame narrator affirms that Qoheleth was a wise man with worthy goals but is subtly noncommittal about the truth of Qoheleth’s words. The way to discover the meaning of Ecclesiastes is to inquire after the implied author by exploring the interrelationship of the characters of the narrator and Qoheleth.

Particularly significant in Ecclesiastes are the seven *carpe diem* passages (e.g. 2:24–26; 3:10–15). The book concludes on this note (11:7–12:7), expressing the voice of Qoheleth, the Israelite believer, who affirms life as God’s good creation. Opposing perspectives are *deliberately* juxtaposed gaps (author’s emphasis). Following Sternberg, gaps must be understood as relevancies that demand closure. Gaps move the reader between truth and the whole truth, giving rise to fullness in the reading.

The journey of Qoheleth is carried forward by the *hebel* (vanity) conclusions and their juxtaposition with the *carpe diem* passages. Bartholomew chooses “enigmatic” as a consistent rendering of *hebel*; it is not that life lacks meaning, but that it cannot be grasped, it is incomprehensible (p. 93). In the epilogue (12:9–14) the narrator describes Qoheleth as wise; like Lady Wisdom (cf. Proverbs 1–9), the voice of Qoheleth was constantly instructing the people. The making of many books (v. 12) is an instruction akin to a canonical formula (Deut 4:2; 12:32 [13:1]; Rev 22:18–19); it is a warning against the “folly” of seeking truth outside the accepted books, a remarkable affirmation of the instruction of Qoheleth. Wisdom is closely related to *torah* (Eccl 12:13–14); the imperative of reverence for God is found in the observance of *torah* and is the positive way



in which humanity is fulfilled. Ecclesiastes, like Job, holds out hope for those struggling with the mysteries of life.

Somewhat like Job (cf. Job 28), the narrator comments on the inaccessibility of wisdom (7:23–29). Wisdom is autonomous and different from wisdom in Proverbs, for ironically the search “by wisdom” fails to yield wisdom (vv. 23–24). The images of the woman more bitter than death (vv. 25–28) recall the description of Dame Folly in Proverbs (Prov 5:1–6). Unlike Proverbs, Qoheleth has much more than sexual deviance in mind (v. 26). Qoheleth here expresses in very traditional wisdom language the two ways of wisdom: if one pleases God (i.e. the observance of the *torah*) one escapes Dame Folly but the sinner is seized by her (p. 267). In this passage Qoheleth finds that his epistemology had led him right into the arms of Dame Folly (p. 94). This is most clear in 11:7–12:7 in which remembering the Creator resolves the acute tension in Qoheleth’s experience. God and the world cannot be related by some necessity or determinism at work in the laws of the cosmos. Israel is urged to pursue genuine wisdom by fearing God as Creator so they can enjoy his good gifts and obey his laws amid the enigma of his purposes.

What I find so compelling about this commentary is the pursuit of understanding Ecclesiastes in relationship with traditional wisdom and law. The implied author has used a variety of literary forms and has interacted to some measure with various philosophies, as numerous comparative studies have demonstrated. But it only makes sense that a book early assigned canonical authority was understood to affirm the faith of Israel as expressed by wisdom.

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*Jeremiah: A Commentary.* By Leslie C. Allen. The Old Testament Library. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008. 546 pp., \$59.95.

Leslie Allen, Senior Professor of Old Testament at Fuller Theological Seminary, contributes this final volume of the Old Testament Library series. Allen is an experienced and accomplished scholar with particular expertise in literary criticism. He has an obvious love for the study of the literary text itself. The great contribution of Allen’s scholarship is his vision of Jeremiah as an intricately woven tapestry of literary allusions, poetic devices, and word play. He traces how words and themes are interwoven in this carefully crafted literary masterpiece, utilizing devices such as bicola and tricola, ABB’A’ structure, and chiasmus.

The reader profits not only from Allen’s seasoned scholarship in literary analysis, but also from the fresh translation of Jeremiah he offers in this volume. Allen attempts at points to convey even the Hebrew word play in his English translation (p. 81). A translation of the book of Jeremiah is a complex task, compounded by the textual criticism issue that the Septuagint is about 15 percent shorter than the longer Masoretic text. In his translation, Allen helpfully italicizes the words he takes to be expansions of the earlier text in the Masoretic text. Allen adds question marks when the translations are particularly questionable, and denotes when the English numbering of verses differs from Hebrew variations. These tools provide useful assistance to the scholar comparing these textual traditions, and Allen’s love for the text comes through in the translation.

This commentary has a much briefer introductory section than one might normally anticipate in such a volume. Little is said concerning issues such as the dating of the

book, the historical situation, authorship, and theological themes. Although Allen enunciates his hermeneutical presuppositions rather clearly, a fuller discussion of these issues, particularly defending these presuppositions rather than simply announcing them, would have assisted the reader in understanding more fully the rationale for Allen's approach to the text.

In his introduction, Allen establishes some interesting premises for the commentary. One premise is that he does not make any effort to make contemporary application of the text; Jeremiah is studied as essentially a self-contained text without much effort to address the meaning or significance of Jeremiah's message for today. Indeed, little effort is made to explain Jeremiah's specific historical setting and how Jeremiah's prophecy addressed his own generation (at least, the part of the book of Jeremiah that was extant in his own day). The hermeneutical arch is thus left largely unconstructed at both ends. This is a significant shortcoming for pastors and scholars interested in the meaning and application of the text for our generation. Scholars interested in how key passages such as Jeremiah's famous "confessions," his visit to the potter's house in chapter 18, and his prophecy of the new covenant in chapter 31, will find just a few paragraphs discussing the theological significance of each of these texts. The commentary primarily describes the literary composition and structure of these texts, along with conjectures about the motive for redactional amendments. The focus is thus almost entirely on the *style* of the text rather than the *content* of the text.

Allen posits a Jeremiah (or a team of Jeremiah redactors) remarkably gifted in literary composition, utilizing an impressive array of literary devices so technical that only someone with extensive training in literary composition could have produced such a work—gifts and interests, in fact, remarkably similar to Allen's own gifts and interests. In other words, it appears that (to some degree) Allen may have created a Jeremiah in his own image; or at the very least, that Allen so focuses on this aspect of the book that he effectively gives short shrift to others. What was the primary intent of the original Jeremiah? Was he primarily interested in weaving an intricate literary tapestry as a work of literature, or in communicating a message from God? Certainly, literary criticism is a useful tool in interpreting the text, but while it is part of the interpretive process, it is not all that one expects of a major commentary. This is the point at which Allen's strength in literary analysis becomes his weakness. Allen seems to be so consumed with analyzing the trees (*bicola* and *tricola*) that he misses the forest (the meaning of the text). His literary analysis, then, becomes an end in itself rather than a hermeneutical tool. In other words, after he has identified the literary construction, possible redactions, and literary allusions in a text, the reader is still left with the question, "So what?" To what end is the careful analysis? What difference does it make in the meaning of the text? While the literary analysis of the parts is excellent, the sense of how the parts fit into a holistic message goes largely unanswered.

Several of Allen's six premises of the commentary appear to be at odds with each other. Although Allen initially claims his commentary will focus on "the final form of the book as the canonical version, theologically and literally," he also has "listened to other ancient texts and versions with care and . . . sometimes preferred them," and has "made some effort to ascertain early stages of the literary process that led to the final form" (p. 2). This latter statement is a colossal understatement; Allen's speculations about the source, form, and redaction behind the text appear on almost every page of the commentary. Allen's heavy utilization of textual, source, and redaction criticism, along with some form criticism, reflects the interests of an earlier generation of biblical scholarship. A commentary based on the canonical form of the text would have been more useful for many readers.

Some of Allen's methodological presuppositions are questionable. Allen purports to find literary allusions to other texts in the OT throughout Jeremiah. While some of

these are unquestionably valid, at other times the word association is so minimal that these allusions may be illusions. Furthermore, since Allen evidently views the text of Jeremiah as a “work in progress” of redaction until at least the exilic period and perhaps as late as the earliest form of the Masoretic text (because of its significantly different wording), Allen’s insistence that Jeremiah is citing other OT books is problematic. Was Jeremiah the only book in the OT canon that received such a redaction, or were other OT books similarly redacted? If other books were undergoing redaction over a long period of time (as Allen’s dozen references to Second Isaiah would suggest), what confidence can we have that the supposed sources of these literary allusions were available? In other words, it seems disingenuous to posit that all the other OT books were in their final, static form while Jeremiah was in an ongoing process of redaction.

Consistent with other commentaries in the Old Testament Library series, Allen never overtly claims a high view of biblical inspiration for Jeremiah in this commentary. A reader who believed Jeremiah was merely a great book of human literature would find nothing in this work to challenge his position. While Allen never overtly denies divine inspiration, the focus is almost exclusively on human redactors. Promises of future restoration are assumed to be from the exilic period (p. 192), not prophecies of a revealed future.

There are a few additional minor flaws, such as describing as a “syllogism” an argument that should more accurately be described as an *a fortiori* argument (p. 109). However, despite these shortcomings, Allen’s commentary is a valuable contribution to OT scholarship, especially in its literary analysis of the text. It will be more interesting and useful to OT scholars, however, than to pastors and laypersons. Allen’s commentary is a fitting end to bring completion to the Old Testament Library series.

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*Reading Daniel as a Text in Theological Hermeneutics.* By Aaron B. Hebbard. Princeton Theological Monograph Series 109. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2009, xii + 243 pp., \$28.00 paper.

Aaron Hebbard has provided a book that offers a close reading of the text of Daniel that he defines as interdisciplinary, that is, it seeks to consider both historical and literary issues. The author clearly states that his intention is not to write a commentary on Daniel (p. 3). The work is clearly organized with a brief introduction that helpfully explains the author’s convention when referring to Daniel as a person or *character* (Daniel<sup>C</sup>) and Daniel as a literary work or *book* (Daniel<sup>B</sup>). Two preliminary chapters outline his approach to reading Daniel<sup>B</sup>. The first chapter, “A Hermeneutic Reading of Daniel,” contains sections that deal with the “Danielic Community,” the purpose (or purposes) of the book of Daniel, and “Danielic Hermeneutics.” Chapter 2 develops the author’s case for three separate narrators who are heard in Daniel<sup>B</sup>, the primary narrator, the Babylonian ruler Nebuchadnezzar, and Daniel himself.

Chapters 3–5 are dedicated to the close reading of Daniel<sup>B</sup>. Hebbard’s interaction with a wide range of commentaries, both ancient and modern, yields a number of helpful insights into what Daniel<sup>B</sup> is seeking to communicate. In the author’s third chapter, Daniel 1 is viewed as an introduction to the entirety of Daniel<sup>B</sup>. The author provides some introductory remarks for the chapter as a whole (he views it as not a court tale like the court tales of chapters 2–6; p. 54). In addition, he offers an outline of the chapter with a detailed discussion of each section. Chapter 4 covers chapters 2–6 of Daniel<sup>B</sup>.

These chapters are designated as court tales, and each biblical chapter is outlined and discussed in detail. The fifth chapter covers chapters 7–12, and these chapters are understood as a series of apocalyptic visions. The format is the same as it was in chapter 4. Chapter 6, “The Reader as Hermeneut,” aims to bring the author’s argument to a conclusion. Here Hebbard discusses the reader as character, text, and interpreter.

The main strength of Hebbard’s book is found in his close reading of Daniel<sup>B</sup>. His careful attention to the text results in a number of helpful insights into the dynamics of how Daniel<sup>B</sup> works to communicate its message. Examples of these insights include the use of Shinar in chapter 1 and the link to the tower of Babel (p. 57), as well as the mention of irony in the use of the phrase “O King, live forever” in chapter 3 (p. 95).

There are, however, a number of weaknesses in the work. Perhaps the major one relates to his understanding that Daniel<sup>B</sup> is a sort of textbook for hermeneutics. While it is undoubtedly true that Daniel<sup>B</sup> speaks to the issue of hermeneutics, this would seem to be a far too narrow way to express the aim or purpose of the book. It seems to bypass altogether the issue of how the book of Daniel relates to both history (what happened in Judah and Babylon in the sixth century BC) and prophecy (what would happen in Maccabean times, long after the composition of the book of Daniel, and what will yet happen in eschatological times). In connection with this issue of the aim or purpose of the book, many readers may be unhappy with the lack of clarity in relation to the nature of the book of Daniel that Hebbard espouses. He states on page 21 that Daniel “reads and functions like fiction.” He immediately adds that the book is not deemed to be fiction, but on page 22 he again states that we “will read Daniel<sup>B</sup> as we might *other* (emphasis added) historical fictions like William Shakespeare’s *King Lear*. . . .” Greater caution and clarity is desired in discussing issues such as fictionality in relation to the Bible.

Another weakness in Hebbard’s work is a lack of clarity in his use of the term “text.” This is especially critical in his favorable quotation of Stroup’s comment that “Scripture and the history of the community’s attempts to interpret the text and make it intelligible to the rest of society constitute the community’s . . . narrative identity” (p. 9). This issue goes to the heart of where the Christian community’s authority lies. Does it reside in Scripture alone, or is it found in Scripture *plus* some additional component? This particular quote is found in the section that Hebbard titles “The Historic Continuum of the Danielic Community.” It strikes me that such terminology elevates Daniel to a too exalted place. It would be better to speak of the redemptive community or the covenant community in order to identify the community with the main thrust of biblical theology.

A final weakness of this reading of Daniel is that there is not sufficient clarity with regard to the issue of interpretation. This can be seen in particular in two quotes from Hebbard’s work. He states that there “are . . . bound to be . . . as many interpretations as there are interpreters” (p. 162). He also maintains that “the text and reader still interact to formulate meaning” (p. 185). It is important to hold that the interpretation of a text will yield (at least in a theoretical sense) a unitary interpretation. The task of the reader is to discover the author’s intended meaning. That intended authorial meaning, once captured by the reader, can and does have any number of significances (or applications) that will vary because of the background or temporal setting of the reader. Maintaining a plurality of interpretations results ultimately in complete subjectivism.

Hebbard’s reading of Daniel, though weak in certain areas, is valuable because it offers important insights into what Daniel<sup>B</sup> is about. The areas of weakness will provoke thought, and such provocation can be of pedagogical benefit in either classes on the book of Daniel or classes on hermeneutics.

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*The Historical Christ and the Theological Jesus*. By Dale C. Allison. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009, ix + 126 pp., \$16.00 paper.

When I grow up, I want like to write like Dale Allison. In a discipline often displaying obfuscation rather than good prose, Allison is a model of a good writer. Moreover, one can also infer that good writers are good thinkers. One need not look further for this confirmation: Allison writes well because he also thinks well.

In his latest manifesto, *The Historical Christ and the Theological Jesus*, Allison ventures into somewhat new territory: he wants to challenge the predictable (and often confining) categories of the various “quests” for the historical Jesus. He wants to eradicate the unexamined presuppositions in the field of biblical studies. Instead of perpetuating the quests for the historical Jesus, Allison offers a “third way.” What are the religious implications of the quest? Allison informs his readers of two things he feels assured about before beginning his task: “The first is that, as unchanging things do not grow—rocks remains rocks—informed changes should be welcomed, not feared. The second is this: the unexamined Christ is not worth living” (p. 5).

Allison’s thesis unfolds masterfully with precision and insight, first by articulating the problem of theological utility (“The correlations between personal belief and historical discovery must be endless” [p. 16]), then by surfacing some anticipated disputed questions (“How much history does theology require? . . . It depends on one’s presuppositions, one’s worldview, one’s theology, and so on” [p. 39]). What follows next is what one may deem as Allison’s methodology (seemingly his longest chapter, discussed in detail below) and then some difficult conclusions, grappling with issues of Christology, eschatology, and context. Finally, Allison offers some personal impressions about how he attempts to navigate the often murky (but important) waters of historical Jesus research. He is keen to remind us that “[t]he New Testament offers us neither the historical Jesus unsullied by Christian interests and beliefs and distortions nor Christian distortions and beliefs and interests unsullied by the historical Jesus” (p. 28).

The chapter that appears to be Allison’s most significant is “How to Proceed.” What I appreciated most about this chapter is Allison’s courageous willingness to plunge forward with a methodology rather than to have his readers sink into scholarly cynicism. Allison is no cynic, just an inquisitive skeptic asking the guild to rethink how they approach the task of Jesus research. I do not know who decided the title for this monograph, *The Historical Christ and the Theological Jesus*, but I applaud its use to illustrate the inherent tension. If we read the title too quickly, we may see *The Historical Jesus*. We may also see a “versus” instead of an “and.” These differences, for Allison, make all the difference.

Furthermore, Allison makes several salient and related points in this chapter. First, we must scrap the well-worn and unproductive criteria of authenticity (reminiscent of M. Hooker’s plea in “On Using the Wrong Tool,” *Theology* 75 [1972] 570–81). They simply have not curbed our subjectivity. We inevitably discover the Jesus we hope to discover. In their place, we must secondly recapture the role of memory (here I think about the recent contributions of R. Bauckham and earlier ones by B. Gerhardsson). Memory can be forgetful (no pun intended), according to Allison, but “[e]ven when human memory fails to retain the particulars, it can still get general impressions right” (p. 61). So the quest for Allison is the “memorable Jesus,” so to speak, rather than the elusive historical one. Lastly, Allison offers a sobering portrait of miracles in the NT. How is one to understand miracles as they relate to the historical Jesus? Allison wrestles with, on one hand, the question of “How does one historically validate the miracles of Jesus?” and, on the other hand, the question of “How does one read the NT with an open-mindedness to the miraculous and supernatural?” (something Allison personally addresses further in his final chapter). Allison offers sage advice about the Gospel

accounts of miracles: “their [miracle stories] origin is not subject to our demonstration” (p. 77).

Examining the unexamined Christ always involves a confession: “I remain skeptical that we can very often show that any particular saying or story goes back to Jesus or does not go back to him. We need to quit pretending to do what we cannot do. The Gospels are parables. When we read them, we should think not that Jesus said this or did that but rather: Jesus did things like this, and he said things like that” (p. 66). I read this paragraph several times, during the course of several days. I read the paragraph aloud. I thought about my own academic training and how I approach reading the Gospels. I began to reflect about Allison’s crafting of words and phrases. I asked myself, “Does this make sense?” I have hesitation when it comes to equating the Gospels as parables. Also, Allison often muses that historical inquiry can be set apart from theology. I am not sure. When studying the NT, can scholars (religious or non-religious) separate their historical and theological pursuits? Are they not inseparable, even when one claims to be just reading the text as a historian? For me, these questions remain, as Allison muses in his final chapter, the “coincidence of opposites” (Nicholas of Cusa). Nevertheless, reading Allison’s book was a formative endeavor in “unlearning.” This is often the first step of needed new knowledge.

Anyone who embarks upon historical Jesus research will need to read this book. Those who do not neglect to do so at their own peril. Allison’s contribution is a vital one, worthy, in my opinion, of being placed in the short list of books that have shaped or now will shape the landscape of biblical studies.

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*After Jesus. Vol. 3: Finding the Historical Christ.* By Paul Barnett. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009, xi + 299 pp., \$22.00 paper.

The title, *Finding the Historical Christ*, is a deliberate reaction to “the dichotomy between ‘the Jesus of history’ and the ‘Christ of faith’” (p. 1). Against those who argue that the pre-resurrection Jesus was merely a prophet, a rabbi, or a social reformer, Barnett’s primary purpose is to demonstrate that the historical Jesus *is* the Christ of faith and was believed to be so even before the resurrection.

Barnett argues that the first step in the quest for the historical Jesus is to assess the historical value of our sources. He reviews numerous second-century sources—Christian, Gnostic, and secular—concluding that they have little value as historical sources for Jesus.

Arguing that Papias should be taken seriously when he attributed the content of Mark’s Gospel to Peter, Barnett proposes that after the resurrection the disciples created a summary of Jesus’ life, which became the basis for Peter’s preaching. Paul received this biography as early as AD 34–36, either from the Christians he met in Damascus after his conversion or from Peter and James in Jerusalem. Peter and Mark later collaborated in producing a narrative of Jesus’ last days, a narrative that was used for instruction and worship until Mark eventually incorporated it into his Gospel.

Barnett argues that the prologue to Luke should be taken seriously when it claims to be relying on those who were eyewitnesses from the beginning. Luke’s investigations would have given him direct access to Paul and Mark and indirect access to Peter and James. Luke may also have had other sources like Manaen, Joanna, and possibly even Jesus’ mother. Luke’s narrative sources may have included Mark’s passion narrative,

if not Mark's entire Gospel, as well as Q and L. Barnett argues that all of these sources support the thesis that Jesus believed himself to be the Christ.

After reviewing parallels in Mark and John, Barnett concludes that John was written entirely independent of Mark and "merits respect as a source of information about the historical Christ" (p. 175). Barnett then evaluates the data from Paul's letters concluding that Paul's message of "Christ crucified" implies that Jesus was already believed to be the Christ before he was crucified.

Barnett sums up the thesis of his book saying that the hypothesis that makes the most sense of the evidence is that the historical Jesus taught that he was the Christ and that this was confirmed by the resurrection. *Finding the Historical Christ* is well written and well indexed and provides numerous valuable insights into the historical Jesus. It provides a helpful correction to many of the scholarly studies that argue that Jesus was only thought to be the Christ after his resurrection.

There are a few places, however, where minor corrections or clarifications might improve a future edition of the book. First, Barnett argues that the Gospel of Thomas is dependent on the canonical Gospels, explaining that it is more likely that the Gospel of Thomas borrowed according to some predetermined sequence than that he scrambled the sequence. Since this apparent lack of sequence is one of the main arguments used to support the *independence* of Thomas, Barnett's case would have been strengthened by interacting with that argument. Barnett's case could have also been strengthened by referring to Nicholas Perrin's argument about the sequence of the Coptic version of Thomas being derived from Tatian's Syriac Diatessaron.

Second, Barnett argues against the model of oral transmission proposed by Bailey and used by Dunn, arguing Bailey's theory "suffers from the fatal problem that the hearing community is the guarantor of the storyteller's veracity" (p. 76). Barnett does not explain why the evidence is more solid when one person, such as Luke or Papias, is a guarantor of the testimony than it is when the whole community is a guarantor of the testimony. Barnett comes to the bold conclusion that "[i]n one stroke Papias demolishes several of the much-loved theories about the transmission of information about Christ. . . . Contrary to theories of the words and works of Christ being relayed by generations of village storytellers before being blindly recorded by the earliest synoptic author, the reality is dramatically otherwise" (p. 79). Barnett's point that the Gospels are derived, either directly or indirectly, from "eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word" rather than from "generations of village storytellers" is well taken, but to lump Bailey and Dunn in with Bultmann and the form critics is profoundly unfair and makes me wonder whether Barnett has really understood Bailey or Dunn. Barnett seems to think that Bailey's theory somehow undermines the testimony of Papias, which, I would argue, is not the case.

Third, Barnett says that, when Jesus asserted his authority as the Son of Man to forgive sins and to abrogate the Sabbath, "it was in *anticipation* of the authority he would assume following his death and resurrection" (p. 131; my emphasis). This, of course, is not what the text actually says. According to Mark 2:10, Jesus said, "The Son of Man *has* [ἔχει, not "will have"] authority on earth to forgive sins," and in Mark 2:28, "the Son of Man *is* [ἐστιν, not "will be"] Lord even of the Sabbath." Jesus' actions in these cases were not in *anticipation* of authority. Jesus was claiming that he had this authority *on earth* over Sabbath and to forgive sins. It is hard to imagine that the early church—being entirely Jewish—would have actually worshipped Jesus if they had thought of him only in terms of Messiah. Barnett's case might have been strengthened by making this point.

Fourth, Barnett agrees with most scholars that John was not *literarily* dependent on Mark. Barnett may overstate his case, however, when he argues that John did not even know of Mark's "existence and content." Barnett asks how we would know, apart

from “identifiable literary dependence,” that John was aware of Mark’s content (p. 154). Barnett, however, lists nine stories common to Mark and John, and all but one of them are in the same order—even though Papias, on whom Barnett depends, seems to indicate that Mark was not writing in chronological order. Some scholars might be excused for thinking this could be evidence that John was aware of the content of Mark’s Gospel. Barnett’s position is particularly puzzling considering the fact that he later argues that “several passages [in John] depend on details found more broadly in the Gospel of Mark” (p. 156). It is unclear how these passages in John can depend on details found in Mark if John was not even aware of Mark’s existence.

Fifth, after quoting numerous passages from Paul in which Jesus is proclaimed as the Christ, the Son, and the Lord, Barnett concludes, “The crucified One was already the Christ” before his resurrection (p. 177). Barnett tells us, “We must treat Paul’s words as factual and beyond doubt or dispute, and that should forever settle the question about Paul’s knowledge of the preresurrected Jesus” (p. 185). Unfortunately, there are many who do not see it that way, and Barnett’s work could be significantly improved if he would devote more effort to interacting with and/or refuting their arguments. Similarly when Barnett discusses Q, he asserts that “sayings of Jesus preserved in Q powerfully establish that Jesus was convinced he was the Christ” (pp. 133–34). I agree, but Barnett seems entirely unaware that there are many scholars who argue that Q does not speak of Jesus as the Christ at all. Barnett’s book would be significantly improved by interacting with those arguments.

Barnett has provided a valuable case for the fact that Jesus believed himself to be, and was believed by his disciples to be, the Messiah even before the resurrection. Tweaking a few arguments would strengthen his case.

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*Are You the One Who Is to Come? The Historical Jesus and the Messianic Question.* By Michael F. Bird. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009, 207 pp., \$22.99 paper.

In this new volume, Michael Bird addresses a question that is certainly of great relevance to the field of NT studies. *What is the origin of the belief that Jesus of Nazareth was the Jewish Messiah?* Was this claim a result of the convictions and experiences of the post-Easter church, read back into the life of the historical Jesus? Or did Jesus himself encourage others to formulate the link between his own words and actions and biblical messianic texts and expectations? The volume is divided into six main sections.

In chapter 1, Bird lays out the broad landscape of the question, noting that there are four positions taken within the academy (pp. 27–28). Some argue that the preaching of the church is the origin of Jesus’ messianic identity. Others argue for an origin in the life of the historical Jesus, either as a misunderstanding of Jesus’ claims, or due to his failure to deny the charge of being a messianic pretender at his trial, or because of Jesus’ own lofty self-understanding of his role and vocation. Bird stakes an interest in defending the last of these options, arguing that Jesus had a messianic self-understanding, which is to say, he identified himself “in a messianic role” and couched his activities “as messianic in character and purpose” (p. 29). Bird avoids the term “messianic self-consciousness” because he thinks it is laden with problematic psychological overtones (p. 29). He also makes it clear that he is “fairly confident” that Jesus did not use the title “Messiah” of himself (p. 29); so he is not attempting to prove that such a direct assertion can be put on the lips of Jesus.



In chapter 2, Bird surveys the landscape of Second Temple Judaism, noting the presence of messianic beliefs in the OT, first-century AD political movements and uprisings (recorded by Josephus), the Dead Sea Scrolls, the apocrypha, the pseudepigrapha, and the early Church Fathers (who shed light on contemporary Jewish messianic expectations in the immediate post-NT period). His discussion throughout (especially when handling the OT materials) is—in my mind—concise, clear, lucid, and mostly compelling. His interaction with the relevant secondary literature is generally helpful and thorough, without being distracting to the reader.

In chapter 3, the author provides a clearly structured overview of competing theories. Was Jesus' messianic identity inferred from the resurrection (pp. 64–65)? Bird reminds us that “resurrected hero” does not equate to “Messiah” in Judaism. Is Mark's “messianic secret” motif evidence that Jesus never claimed to be the Messiah (pp. 66–70)? Bird argues that the apocalyptic mindset regarding the disclosure of secrets and the political climate in Palestine provide more likely explanations than the supposition that such claims for Jesus originated only in the post-Easter period. Did others besides Jesus declare him to be the Messiah during his lifetime, leading to his tragic execution as a political threat to Roman rule in Judea (pp. 70–73)? However, as Bird asks, why then did Jesus not simply deny the charge at his trial? And why did Jewish apologists not point this out in their polemics against Christians? Furthermore, how then *did* the early Christians come to the conclusion that Jesus was the Messiah, if such a link was not based upon his own words and actions? Bird also discusses other views, such as the notion that the Christians derived their conviction about Jesus being the Messiah from the inscription “King of the Jews” that was placed on the cross (pp. 73–74) and that the narratives about Jesus are fictitious re-readings of OT texts, cast in the form of Christian story-telling (pp. 74–76).

In chapter 4, Bird discusses various images of the Messiah that originated in a new reinterpretation and application of Israel's sacred traditions. He discusses the “Son of Man” expression derived from Daniel 7 (pp. 78–98); the “anointed one” of Isaiah 61 (pp. 98–104); Jesus' role in the “kingdom of God” (pp. 104–7); allusions to the profiles of David and Solomon (pp. 107–9); and the “I have come” sayings in the Gospels (pp. 109–14). While his research is credible and convincing, he omits from his discussion of the “son of man” expression Paul Owen and David Shepherd, “Speaking Up for Qumran, Dalman and the Son of Man: Was *Bar Enasha* a Common Term for ‘Man’ in the Time of Jesus?” *JSNNT* 81 (2001): 81–122. There we demonstrate that, in point of fact, *bar enasha* (the son of man) never bears the generic meaning of “man” in Middle Aramaic texts near the time of Jesus. One does find the occasional use of *bar enash* (a son of man) in the indefinite sense of “a man/someone,” but only when there is some contextual reason to do so. It was *not* in fact a normal way (whether with or without the article) to refer to human beings, or to oneself in particular, in the culture of first-century Galilee or Judea, which makes Jesus' choice of this idiom highly unusual (and most likely due to the associations Jesus wished to draw with the figure depicted in Dan 7:13).

Chapter 5 is a collected discussion of a variety of issues, mostly offering defenses of the authenticity and the messianic meaning of certain events in the life of Jesus, such as Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi (pp. 118–21); the anointing of Jesus at Bethany (pp. 121–23); the triumphal entry (pp. 123–30); and Jesus' trial (pp. 136–40). He also discusses other matters of relevance to the question at hand, including Jesus' use of Psalm 110 (pp. 130–32); Jesus' appropriation of Zechariah 13 (pp. 134–36); and the presentation of Jesus in the earliest Gospel sources, Mark and Q (pp. 142–48). Chapter 6 closes by summarizing some of the theological implications of his study (pp. 161–67).

One cannot but be impressed by this contribution to the field of historical Jesus research. For the purposes of this review, a few remarks and queries are called for simply

by way of balance and productive discussion. First of all, I would not disagree too sharply with Bird's handling of OT messianic texts, and I do appreciate how he sees them as genuinely preparing the way for messianic beliefs through open-ended language. Yet I have to wonder if his developmental scheme is overly influenced by modern assumptions about the evolution of ideas. For example, Bird admits only "proto-messianism" in the OT (p. 36). He considers it "misguided and even anachronistic" to see in the Psalms a "highly developed" messianism (p. 37). Isaiah 9 predicts a child who will be born "probably" during the reign of Hezekiah (p. 38) and hence is obviously not directly messianic. The terms employed by Daniel ("stone," "son of man," "anointed one") contain "many of the ingredients for later messianism" but are not "strictly messianic" (p. 42). Such guarded language sits uneasily with traditional Christian convictions about the relationship of OT and NT faith.

Did the resurrected Jesus not tell the church that messianic proof-texts such as can be drawn from the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms were in fact (in his language) "written about me" (Luke 24:44)? Our resurrected Lord said "written," not "read." How do we move from "written about me" to merely paving the way for "later" messianic readings? Did Jesus not (according to John) tell us that "Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day" (John 8:56)? According to John's Jesus, "if you believed Moses you would believe me; for he wrote of me" (John 5:46). Did Moses *write* of the Messiah, or did Moses just write things that were "open" to a messianic interpretation by later readers? Did Moses in fact, as the author of Hebrews says, "consider the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt" (Heb 11:26)? It is instructive, for example, to compare Bird's handling of OT texts with that of the Eastern Orthodox scholar Eugen J. Pentiuc (*Jesus the Messiah in the Hebrew Bible* [New York: Paulist, 2006]).

Likewise, when countering the charge of engaging in apologetics, Bird suggests that it matters little to the Christian faith whether or not Jesus presented himself to others as the Messiah (pp. 161–62). He says, "I would not be bothered at all if the historical Jesus never claimed to be the Messiah" (p. 162). He even cites his agreement with Marcus Borg on this point (p. 162, n. 3). He insists that his faith "would not be particularly impaired or revised if Jesus had not claimed to be the Messiah and the early church had attached this title to him as merely one way of explicating his significance" (p. 161). What Christian faith is this exactly that Bird has in mind? Obviously, for the early church, it was very important to establish that Jesus *did in fact* make such claims for himself. All four of the Gospel writers are united in giving precisely that impression (as Bird so adeptly demonstrates in this work). They all attribute to Jesus experiences, actions, and utterances that are nothing short of demonstrations that the faith of the church's messianic proclamation *is in fact* grounded in the historical life of Jesus of Nazareth. That is why they wrote Christian Gospels after all (John 20:30–31; Luke 1:4; cf. Acts 1:1).

Obviously, the early Christians put their faith in the Jesus who was affirmed to be the Messiah from the time of his birth and again at his baptism and who acted out the biblical script for the Messiah throughout his ministry, especially on the cross. The Christians believed that when Peter confessed Jesus to be the Messiah, he admitted it (Matt 16:17). When he was accused of such a lofty self-understanding at his trial, he openly confessed it (Mark 14:62). What sort of faith is it, then, that can be divorced from the earliest convictions of the apostolic church and remain unaffected? It may be the faith of the scholarly guild, but it is not the faith of catholic Christianity. We all need to be reminded now and then, when arguing our case before the eyes of the watching academy, that while we may be writing in the world, we are not of the world.

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*The Recapitulation of Israel: The Use of Israel's History in Matthew 1:1–4:11.* By Joel Kennedy. WUNT 2/257. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008, x + 264 pp., €59.00 paper.

Many exegetes have commented on the necessity of understanding Israel's history, especially the exodus, for interpreting Matthew 1–4. Joel Kennedy's contribution consists in a carefully analyzed and detailed explanation of "the recapitulation thesis" in one monograph. He "seeks to penetrate further into Matthew's christology, in as detailed a manner as possible, by especially seeking to understand the story of Jesus in Matthew's early chapters as a recapitulation of Israel's history" (p. 9). Kennedy defines recapitulation as "a particular subset of typology" that "[repeats] foundational events and aspects of the past" (p. 21). Such repetition also involves "summing up, representation, and embodiment" (p. 23). To demonstrate this, Kennedy devotes chapters to Matthew's genealogy, Matt 2:1–21, and Jesus' baptism and wilderness testing. His method is eclectic, employing many critical tools under the larger umbrella of the historical-critical approach.

After considering different classifications of genealogies, Kennedy calls Matthew's and Ruth's "teleological genealogies," a term he himself coins. Such genealogies are not intended to legitimize a descendent but to demonstrate a goal to which history under God's sovereignty has been heading. This common genealogical orientation, together with common names, emphases on David as the needed king, and the use of numbers lead Kennedy to call Matt 1:3b–6a a quotation of Ruth 4:18–22. He also notices influences of genealogies in Genesis and 1 Chronicles. Especially important to Kennedy is how these genealogies are situated in, and integrally tied to, narratives, giving them a narrative quality as well. The genealogies need the narratives and vice versa. The differences between the genres may not be as different as commonly thought. Kennedy concludes that Matthew's genealogy is a teleological narrative that retells Israel's history in summary form—emphasizing the rise of King David, the descent into exile, and the current need for a king without which the exile persists. In his own words, Matthew's genealogy "recapitulates the story of Israel precisely because the story of Jesus cannot be understood without it, nor for Matthew can Israel's story be understood without Jesus" (p. 101).

Matthew 1:18–25 is not dealt with because it "does not contain a clear recapitulation element" (p. 24, n. 119; p. 102, n. 328); therefore Kennedy moves on to consider Matt 2:1–21 (but not 2:22–23). He argues that Jesus passively recapitulates Israel's history, particularly Moses' pre-ministry life and Israel's exodus. Josephus's *Jewish Antiquities* and the *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* are used to identify the exodus motif in Matt 2:1–12. Kennedy does not argue that Matthew was influenced by these texts *per se* but simply that they show that the exodus tradition had been expanding in some ways around Matthew's time. The main expansions highlighted are that Pharaoh received warnings about the birth of an Israelite who would humble Egypt and exalt Israel (*Ant.* 2.205; *Tg. Ps.-J.* Exod 1:15) and that based on such Pharaoh attempted to kill Moses (*Ant.* 2.234–35). Kennedy sees the arrival of the magi in Jerusalem, the quotation of Micah 5 by the priests, and the news about the star (cf. Num 24:17) as parallel warnings to Herod. This painting of Herod as the new Pharaoh suggests to Kennedy that the Hos 11:1 quotation in Matt 2:15 is not out of place in the narrative (*prima facie* it appears so, since readers would expect a pronouncement of the fulfillment that God has called his son out of Egypt only *after* Jesus returns from literal Egypt) but perfectly located in order to demonstrate that Judea under Herod parallels Israel under Pharaoh. Thus Judea becomes a metaphorical Egypt, and Jesus recapitulates Moses' flight from danger only to return to the same place to rescue God's people—hence Matt 1:21. At the same time, Kennedy also suggests that the parallel wording of Matt 2:14 and 2:21 shows Jesus recapitulating Israel's migration down to literal Egypt and exodus thence. Thus, "Matthew presents Jesus as recapitulating both Israel's history and

Moses [*sic*] experience” (p. 127; cf. p. 147). Moreover, Matthew’s use of Jer 31:15 (LXX 38:15) “telescopes” Israel’s history by depicting an “‘exilic’ situation . . . within an overall exodus motif in chapter two” (pp. 148–49).

Jesus’ baptism and wilderness testing are dealt with together because Kennedy sees them both as part of Jesus’ mission to “fulfill all righteousness” and because Matt 3:1–4:11 demonstrates a high degree of unity. In these two narratives Jesus actively recapitulates Israel’s history. Kennedy argues that the primary goal of Matt 3:1–12 is to narrow the focus of the narrative, from the crowds to the Pharisees and finally down to Jesus, in order to single Jesus out as the only one who can embody and represent Israel. He then demonstrates how Jesus’ baptism recapitulates Israel’s exodus, seen mainly in five key words reminiscent of the exodus in Matt 3:16–17: ὕδατος, πνεῦμα, υἱός, ἀγαπητός, and εὐδόκησα (cf. *inter alia* Exod 4:22–23; Deut 1:31; Hos 11:1; Isa 40:3; 42:1; 63:14, 19; Wis 18:13). Moving on, Kennedy argues that the testing of Jesus in the wilderness continues the exodus recapitulation theme. He contends that Jesus’ tests follow the order of Israel’s tests in the wilderness (Exodus 16; 17; 32), while Deuteronomy 8 provides the “overall background to the testing narrative” (p. 189). He then examines each test, particularly in view of the devil’s statements that begin “*since* you are the Son of God.” In each case, he argues against primarily messianic readings and contends for a thoroughgoing exodus reading of the entire episode. The pericope closes with a divine approval in 4:11 similar to the one after the baptism in 3:17. Kennedy concludes that Matt 3:1–4:11 shows that Jesus has “fulfilled all righteousness”—through submission to baptism and success in testing where Israel failed—making him the only perfect representative in whom the people of God are incorporated (pp. 213–14). Kennedy ends his work with a pithy review of his findings, suggestive conclusions, and ideas for further research. Pages 216–24 provide a concise yet thorough review, which is well worth reading.

Kennedy’s overall thesis is quite cogent, and a number of his exegetical observations on particular texts will prove helpful to scholars. For example, see my comments above on the forms and functions of genealogies, the use of the entirety of Ruth and the emphasis on the exile in Matthew’s genealogy, the placement of Hos 11:1, and Jesus’ fulfillment of “all righteousness.” In each of these instances Kennedy provides helpful observations and convincing conclusions.

That said, despite the overall strength of this work, I do have three questions. First, is “recapitulation” really the “most apt [term for] describing this utilization of Israel’s history” (p. 23) *throughout* Matthew 1–4? It appears that two definitions of the term are used. In the genealogy, Israel’s history is retold in summary form. Yet, in Matthew 2–4, it is relived. While “retell” and “relive” are both within the semantic field of recapitulation, they themselves are not synonymous. What is missed by not differentiating them?

Second, would differentiation release Kennedy from insisting that *all* of Israel’s history is being relived? After devoting much time to examining the exodus motif in Matthew 2–4, Kennedy then concludes that *the whole* of Israel’s history is recapitulated (p. 146; cf. pp. 187, 214, 225). Clearly, it is recapitulated in the sense of its retelling in the genealogy, but only the exodus is relived in Matthew 2–4. Kennedy seems to be aware of this and attempts to show how Israel’s history is “telescoped” through a brief consideration of the exile (pp. 147–50), an examination of the identity of God’s son throughout the OT (pp. 181–82), and the determinative nature of the exodus for the rest of Israel’s history (p. 187). It seems unnatural, though, to think that these three minor points draw all of Israel’s history into a context where the exodus is so thoroughly and consistently foregrounded.

Third, Kennedy reads “Egypt” in contradictory ways in Matt 2:14–15. In verse 14, Egypt is the literal geographic place where both Israel and Jesus went. However, in

verse 15 Judea becomes metaphorical Egypt, and Egypt itself the place of refuge for Jesus as Midian was for Moses. Of course, it is completely legitimate to ascribe different characteristics to the same thing, but in this case Kennedy has Jesus both arriving in and leaving Egypt in the same event. It reads unnaturally; it seems like a stretch in order to have Jesus' movement match that of both Israel and Moses. Does not the text read more naturally to continue with the recapitulation of Moses' pre-exodus life only in Matthew 2, and *then* read a recapitulation of Israel's exodus in Matthew 3–4?

These questions notwithstanding, Kennedy's overall thesis is persuasive, and the abovementioned exegetical insights are incisive. This monograph will be valuable to scholars interested in Matthew 1–4, especially in the way in which the OT is used in this passage. On the themes of Israel and its history in Matthew, this monograph supplements works such as Allison's *The New Moses* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993); Kynes's *A Christology of Solidarity* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1991); and even Watts's *Isaiah's New Exodus in Mark* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), among others. I would echo Kennedy's own words that "analysis of the recapitulation of Israel in the Gospel of Matthew should certainly continue with the rest of the Gospel" (p. 228).

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*The Gentile Mission in Old Testament Citations in Acts: Text, Hermeneutic, and Purpose.* By James A. Meek. London: T & T Clark, 2009, viii + 179 pp., \$130.00.

This book focuses on OT citations in Acts in order to "contribute to the understanding of the OT in Luke-Acts (and in the NT generally) by focusing attention on the neglected use of the OT to legitimate the Gentile mission in Luke-Acts" (p. 9). This will lead to shedding "fresh light" on the text behind Luke's citation, his hermeneutic for interpreting the OT, and his purpose in using these citations.

According to Meek, the emphasis by many on the use of the OT for Christology has led to the relative neglect of citations that focus on the Gentile mission and to a consideration of Luke's OT usage from the perspective of only one aspect of Luke's theology. In order to understand Luke's use of the OT, other citations must be brought into the discussion. "Because of the central place occupied by the Gentile mission in the ecclesiology of Luke-Acts," Meek examines citations related to this topic (p. 10). Meek's study considers in chapters 3–6 four OT citations and related themes: Isa 49:6 in Acts 13:47; Amos 9:11–12 in Acts 15:16–18; Joel 3:1–5 MT in Acts 2:17–21; and Gen 22:18 in Acts 3:25.

In chapter 2, "Listening to Luke," Meek examines two ways in which Luke appealed to the OT: fourteen statements that summarize OT teaching without citing a specific passage and over seventy-five explicit OT citations. Meek quotes all or part of several of the summaries upon which he bases his conclusion that these passages all have a Christological focus. They speak of five themes: (1) the suffering, death, resurrection, and exaltation of Christ; (2) eschatological blessings that Christ brings; (3) warnings of future judgment; (4) rejection of Christ by many Jews; and (5) the offer of forgiveness to both Jews and Gentiles. Meek then discusses the challenge of identifying citations, pointing readers to a work from 1896 for more detailed discussion. Meek asserts that, while the summaries show what Luke believed the OT said generally, the citations show "how" the OT does this (i.e. Luke's hermeneutic). After a *brief* analysis of the seventy-five OT citations in Acts, Meek concludes that both the summaries and the citations emphasize the same themes.

Chapters 3 through 6 share a common structure. Meek compares the text of the OT citation in the MT, the LXX, and in Acts, analyzes the OT passage in its original context, and analyzes the way that Acts uses the citation. Meek treats the use of Isa 49:6 in Acts 13:47 in the third chapter. Meek surveys the debate concerning the identity of the “servant” of Yhwh in Isaiah and concludes that the figure is probably an eschatological individual. Meek then analyzes the application of Isa 49:6 by Paul to himself and Barnabas. Meek rightly challenges views that this could be applied in Luke-Acts to both Christ and Paul and Barnabas because first-century authors “felt little need to be logical or consistent in their use of the OT” (p. 49). Such a view, however, is “self-confirming: no rationale will be found if none is sought” (p. 49). Meek argues, based on the perspective on typology of Richard Davidson, that Luke’s hermeneutic is that of typology in the sense that Jesus was a type for the church. Since Jesus had fulfilled the commission of the servant in Isa 49:6, “the church’s (and particularly Paul’s) active engagement in the Gentile mission is now an obligation” (p. 54).

Amos 9:11–12 in Acts 15:16–18 is the subject of the fourth chapter. Meek argues that while the LXX version of Amos 9:11–12 cannot be readily explained in terms of the MT, it should be seen as based in the Hebrew text we have, not a supposed lost *Vorlage*. The “tabernacle of David” refers in both its context and in Acts to the Davidic kingdom. The citation of Amos 9 is uniquely suited for its use in Acts, being used by Luke in a way that is faithful to its meaning in its original context. The phrase in Amos 9:12, “all the Gentiles who are called by my name,” emphasizes that all (in the distributive sense) the Gentiles are claimed by God. A second and more important way in which this citation is appropriate to Acts 15 is that it links the restoration of the Davidic kingdom with the inclusion of the Gentiles in God’s people. The wording *hopōs an* in Acts 15:17a shows that God is restoring the kingdom for the purpose of claiming Gentiles as his own. This citation serves to legitimate the Gentile mission.

The next chapter treats Joel 3:1–5 (LXX) in Acts 2:17–21. Meek concludes that the prediction clearly has a universal scope, and “Gentiles are included in the promises of Joel 3:1–5 MT in their original context” and in Acts 2 (p. 112). Luke understands this OT citation Christologically, “as an eschatological promise that is fulfilled only through [Christ’s] agency” (p. 112). This citation is used in Acts as “proof from prophecy,” which is a rhetorical strategy by which Peter seeks to convince his audience that Jesus is both Lord and Christ. Joel 3 is used to anticipate the Gentile mission, and thus it not only explains the events of Pentecost but assures Gentile readers that “God had intended their salvation all along” (p. 113).

The sixth chapter treats the citation of Gen 22:18 in Acts 3:25. Meek begins by comparing Acts 3:25 to five passages in Genesis in which the promise to Abraham appears. The text in Acts is not identical to any of these but is most likely an adaptation of Gen 22:18. This is based on the fact that the promise in 22:18 is spoken to Abraham and that it, like Acts 3:25, uses the word *spermati*. Meek notes, however, that Barnabas Lindars has asserted that the focus in Acts is the promise and the citation is not connected to any particular text. Therefore, according to Lindars, no conclusions may be drawn from the original context. Meek does not challenge Lindars’s view, even though his discussion of the citation assumes that in fact Gen 22:18 is the passage that Peter (or Luke) cites. In his analysis of Gen 22:18 in its original context, Meek asserts that God promises not only that Abraham and his descendants will be blessed but that “[a]t the heart of OT particularism is the promise that God’s choice of Abraham and his descendants was for the purpose of blessing the world” (p. 120). In Peter’s speech, the “seed” is understood not as a collective noun, which is the way it is used in Genesis, but as applying to one person. One descendant is fundamental to God’s plan, so that one person assumes a primary role in the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham. Luke’s hermeneutic is Christological. Jesus’ coming in fulfillment of the promise “demands an intentional Gentile mission” (p. 127).

In the final chapter, Meek summarizes his study. All four of the citations he analyzes could have come from either the LXX or MT. In no case would either the LXX or MT version make any difference. In each case, the use of the citation in Acts is “congruent” with the original context. Each citation is understood Christologically and “the central prophetic themes they evoke illustrate how Luke understands all of the OT to be about Christ and how broadly the OT supports the Gentile mission” (p. 132). The four citations are used by Luke to legitimate the Gentile mission of the church and demonstrate “proof from prophecy.”

Meek’s study is helpful in considering the original context and in what ways that is taken up in Acts. The focus on the use of the OT in Acts for legitimating the Gentile mission is also helpful, and Meek has several good interpretive suggestions. The overall treatment of OT citations in Acts, however, is inadequate. Spending only four pages to summarize the themes found in over seventy citations in Acts is insufficient to demonstrate the presence of these themes. Multiple times an issue is raised by Meek; he describes the views of various scholars and then moves on without choosing a position explicitly, let alone arguing for a specific position (as in the case of the meaning of “blessing” in the promise to Abraham). The introduction put forward Christopher Stanley’s view that Paul uses Scripture as only one of several arguments for a particular position, and Meek suggests the same is true in Acts. At a few points, Meek refers to Stanley’s position as being helpful in understanding Acts, but he never shows in detail how Stanley’s concept works in the flow of a speech. Meek uses the terminology “proof from prophecy,” but this phrase is used too elastically. Meek’s study addresses an important topic and his attention to the original context is valuable, but a study that treats adequately all the biblical citations, allusions, and other intertextual references used in Acts that support a Lukan affirmation of the scriptural necessity for a Gentile mission remains to be written.

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*Introducing Paul: The Man, His Mission, and His Message.* By Michael F. Bird. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2008, 192 pp., \$20.00 paper.

Michael Bird has written a wonderfully helpful introduction to Paul. He is clearly well informed on the issues, and he writes thoughtfully in an engaging style. As someone who teaches Paul, I found his little book covered every salient point, and he concluded debated issues well—I almost always agreed; perhaps this is why I liked his book so well. Bird cannot be accused of shallow, superficial reading. If one knows the issues, then the reader finds subtle allusions to the crux of a debated point and a clear (evangelical) conclusion. Here, however, are both the strength and the weakness of the book. It is unfair to criticize its brevity because the goal was a short introduction. In fact, I was astounded how much the author was able to cram into such a small amount of space and yet be a delightful, almost deceptively casual, read. When brief, it is always an easy critique to ask, “Was it too brief?”

As a student of Paul, I found the book marvelous, a wonderful summary and reminder of key issues in Pauline studies, presented in a fresh manner. I read it with languor, pondering and rereading. In fact, I suspect the more readers know about Paul, the more they will enjoy the book. As a teacher of Paul, though, the book has stumped me. I love the book. I am determined my students need to read his book; I am just not sure how to use it in the classroom. As someone who teaches an introductory course on Paul, I am doubtful an undergraduate student of Paul will catch most of the issues without an

instructor to point them out. For example, “Paul writes as a substitute for his personal presence” (p. 13) is part of one sentence and the only line on this matter, despite M. Mitchell’s insightful work. Bird’s conclusion is fair and perhaps still the majority view, and I cannot fault him, since he states his goal is “to go deeper into Paul without losing people in the mire of scholarly debate and complex technicalities” (p. 6, also p. 169). It is a cheap shot to point out an omission, but my students are unlikely to realize there is more to this matter. In fact, I question if they would even catch the line. How is an unescorted student to know that “this line” is loaded with baggage, while the next line is undisputed? Yet it is a poor critique to argue a book may be underappreciated by its readers. So, what am I to do with this fine book that cries out for wide usage?

Perhaps before voicing an opinion, I need to say more about the book. Bird uses all thirteen letters as well as material from Acts, moving beyond the more pessimistic readings of Luke’s historicity. Bird is clearly influenced by the work of Tom Wright, Martin Hengel, Scot McKnight, Simon Gathercole, Ben Witherington, and others; yet, particularly when examining theology, he is conversant with Ridderbos, Keck, Fitzmyer, Segal, and others from a broader perspective. He introduces Paul by characterizing Paul’s worldview as formed by the grand metanarrative of Scripture—Tom Wright’s influence is unmistakable here, although a reader would be wrong to dismiss Bird’s book as merely “New Perspective.” A Reformed reader of Paul will find little to dispute here.

Paul’s gospel is cast against the backdrop of the OT as well as the imperial cult, including a helpful table showing the linguistic parallels. Yet, I would mislead to imply the book delves much into historical background. Bird’s chapter on “Reading Someone Else’s Mail” does not actually discuss letter writing at all but provides an insightful (but brief) summary of each of Paul’s letters. At times, this book seems more an introduction to the theology of Paul. The argumentation is better documented and more elaborated when discussing theology. For example, Bird has about one page each on the prison letters (pp. 64–67) but also a full page on Rom 4:5 (p. 132), two pages on 2 Tim 2:8 (pp. 82–83), over four pages on law with two pages on Romans 7 (pp. 141–43), and six pages on sex and women (pp. 155–60). It is perhaps indicative that Bird identifies his favorite passage in his favorite book as the Colossian hymn. Perhaps paradigmatically, its hymnic nature is not discussed, but its theological aspects are at some length (p. 129).

Bird finds Paul’s Damascus road experience to be the formative element in Paul’s experience. While allowing for maturation, he does not see Paul changing his mind. He cites as examples the eschatology in 1 Corinthians 15 and 2 Corinthians 5 and law between Galatians and Romans. Again I agree; again I am unsure a reader who is being introduced to Paul would even notice the brief examples. Bird may be writing on two levels (to two audiences): to the beginning readers of Paul and (over their shoulder) to their teachers. In many ways, he does this admirably. As a final example, Bird dates Galatians early, equating Acts 11 with Galatians 2, although I doubt either the issues or the explanation will be sufficiently clear just from his brief comments.

I do not mean to imply Bird’s brevity is crippling. He accomplishes a smooth reading that an uninitiated reader will have no trouble following. He does not presume the reader has an open Bible in hand; rather he quotes passages when needed, including extended ones. Ancient parallels are not merely referenced but quoted enough to inform the reader. Bird accomplishes in my opinion exactly what he intended: a brief introduction that does not delve into the complexities.

Lastly, the book is a delightful read. He is a clever wordsmith and should appeal to the younger reader (e.g. “Parousia: Game over, Dude” [p. 120]). Bird ends the book with a nicely practical conclusion on the role of cruciformity and anastasis (his term?) in the life of believers today (pp. 162–68). Since he documents little, the brief index of authors is probably complete as are the much longer indices of biblical references and ancient sources. Alas, a subject index would have helped since the table of contents is



scanty. For example, to find a discussion of adoption in Paul, one must know a likely scriptural reference, such as Gal 4:5, or thumb through looking for headings.

What should be done with this book? It should be a crime for a Paulinist not to read it. In fact, my review seems (to me) to unfairly malign and nitpick what is an excellent little book. Obviously, students of Paul should read this book, especially those beyond the beginning level. The title and a perusal of the table of contents should not mislead. It is far more than a short, casual, lightweight introduction. How can an instructor use this book? I will assign it to introduce students to the theology of Paul. It is also a great choice for a supplementary textbook on Paul, perhaps in a NT survey class.

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*Romans*. By Craig S. Keener. New Covenant Commentary Series. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2009, 274 pp., \$32.00 paper.

Keener's new commentary on Romans seeks a niche among "concise, academically informed commentaries for a general audience" (p. xi). It is the second volume of the fresh New Covenant Commentary Series, edited by Keener and Michael Bird, a series that claims the distinction of a truly international authorship ("drawn from every continent of the world [except Antarctica]"), a focus on the larger units of the text (rather than verse-by-verse), and a goal of demonstrating how the NT impacts the new covenant community (i.e. the church).

In general, this commentary accomplishes the goals of the author and the series. It is amazingly concise for a letter as long as Romans—only 175 pages for the actual commentary on the text of Romans. It focuses on the paragraphs but keeps an eye on the details of the text throughout. Keener's explanations will be understood by a general audience, although in some cases readers may be confused by technical terms (e.g. Romans 4 is called a "midrash" without any explanation [p. 63]). The commentary also relates the text to the church through five "Fusing the Horizons" sections. The most useful of these is the longest section, which is about homosexual activity. Keener concludes that Paul rejects all sexual activity outside heterosexual marriage but notes that Paul's strategy is to expose all sin as deadly and all people as sinners. Overall, I thought these sections were a little sparse for a commentary series with the stated goal of reflecting on the impact of the text for the church.

In line with its goals, the commentary is also academically informed. Keener makes clear his positions on the major interpretive issues in Romans. For those keeping tabs: Keener argues that the purpose of Romans was primarily to address Jewish and Gentile relations among Christians at Rome (currently the majority position of the "Romans debate"), but he allows for other purposes as well. He argues that the righteousness of God is both forensic and transformative. He sees a Jewish interlocutor throughout Romans 2, including 2:1–16. He takes a mediating position on  $\epsilon\rho\gamma\alpha$  νόμου (3:20), allowing for the traditional reading of works in general while also seeing a correct emphasis in the New Perspective reading of Jewish boundary markers. He reads πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (3:22, 26) as an objective genitive ("faith in Jesus Christ"), and he argues that πίστις also includes the sense of "faithfulness." He stresses the propitiatory view of the atonement, emphasized when Paul speaks of "blood" even though the cross was not a particularly bloody death. He argues that Paul's problem with the law was not with the law itself but with a wrong approach to the law—trying to gain righteousness through it. Contra some older commentators, he sees Romans 9–11 as integral to the argument

of Romans, not as a digression. "All Israel" in Rom 11:26 refers to ethnic Israel, and in this context Paul speaks of the completion of his Gentile mission, which would stir Israel to jealousy and lead them to faith in Jesus Christ. The general situation of Rom 14:1–15:13 is a problem between Jewish and Gentile Christians. Incidentally, Keener does not see any interpolations after Romans 14, as some have argued because of the textual tradition.

One area that seems particularly strong academically is Keener's judicious use of rhetorical analysis. He notes in the introduction that some scholars have "overplayed rhetoric," by "seeking to structure Paul's letters as if they were speeches" (p. 3). However, since Paul's extant letters include extensive argumentation, "which was characteristically the domain of rhetoric rather than of letters" (p. 3), the study of ancient rhetoric can illumine Paul's argument.

His references to ancient rhetoric throughout the commentary point to the most notable aspect of Keener's volume, its extensive use of parallels from Greco-Roman sources. Almost every page contains documentation of parallels with Greco-Roman sources, as well as Second Temple Jewish sources, rabbinic literature, and occasionally patristic literature. Keener seems to be fond of parallels in general; he gives several helpful charts in the commentary comparing various parts of Romans (e.g. a chart comparing the final doxology [16:25–27] with earlier points Paul has made in Romans).

Often the parallels with Greco-Roman sources are helpful, shedding light on Paul's images and argument. For example, Keener notes that ancient authors confirm that branches from wild olive trees could be grafted into cultivated olive trees (pp. 135–36). He also provides an excursus on ancient Mediterranean food customs that includes comments from non-Jewish authors on Jewish customs (p. 161). Also helpful is Keener's discussion of Latin and Greek names in Rome in relation to Paul's greetings in Romans 16 (p. 184).

In some cases, though, I wondered if Keener provides either false parallels or "true parallels which are of no consequence" (a helpful phrase drawn from Samuel Sandmel, "Parallelomania," *JBL* 81 [1962] 4). For example, Keener argues that Paul's words "Spirit of Christ" (8:9) imply Jesus' deity. He then notes that "some philosophers spoke of deity dwelling in humans . . . but sometimes in pantheistic terms; Paul's imagery is more Jewish" (p. 101, n. 9). This seems like a false parallel to me, and I can envision a reader inferring that Paul's Christology was influenced by these philosophers, even though Keener does not draw this conclusion himself. Here are other examples. In his discussion of Rom 5:1–11, Keener mentions in a footnote that some philosophers (Cicero, Seneca, and Epictetus), apocalyptists (*2 Baruch*), and others (Sirach) encouraged joy during suffering (p. 71, n. 3). Similarly, speaking of Paul's charge to submit to authorities, Keener notes that "this bears some resemblance to Stoic submission to fate, except with trust in God's gracious providence" (pp. 153–54). Even if all these are true parallels, one wants to ask, "So what?" What is the *significance* of these parallels?

Keener's knowledge of the background sources for the NT is extensive, but in my opinion he needs to define more clearly his criteria for determining true parallels and then discriminate between significant and insignificant parallels. If he is able to write a more extensive commentary in the future (which he hints at in the introduction), then this kind of discrimination could make a valuable contribution to the study of Romans. I would also suggest printing key passages from significant parallels within the text of a future commentary, so that those without access to an academic library can see the parallels for themselves.

Finally, while Keener's commentary engages with current scholarship, he interacts very little with the history of interpretation of Romans after the patristic period. In particular, he says nothing about the debates over the reading of justification in Romans that fueled the Protestant Reformation. His discussion of the righteousness of God

simply notes that the transformative view of righteousness has been the dominant position in church history. His translation of *δικαιόω* uses various English renderings such as “righted,” “set right,” and “made right,” without noting the historical debates. Commentators must choose what they will emphasize, particularly when writing a small commentary like this one, but I think it is fair to ask, concerning a series whose goal is to show how the NT impacts the church, “Should not these historical debates be a concern?” I suggest that they should be for at least two reasons. First, twenty-first century readings come through the reception history of the Reformation as much as they do the Fathers. Thus, more discussion of the history of interpretation will enable readers to discern their own presuppositions. Second, many pastors and Christians are concerned to learn what Romans says about justification by faith in light of church history in order to understand modern church divisions.

I hope that these criticisms, however, do not leave a bad impression of this commentary. Keener is to be commended for this excellent work—a concise commentary that wrestles well with such an important letter. I have learned much from this commentary, and I hope we will see a larger commentary in the future that enhances the strengths of this volume.

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*Reading Romans in Pompeii: Paul's Letter at Ground Level.* By Peter Oakes. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009, xiii + 224 pp., \$39.00.

What would it be like to read Paul's letter to the Romans at “ground level”? Peter Oakes begins his book, literally, at the level of the ground. Chapter 1 drops us into a street in Pompeii outside “the house of the stoneworkers,” then walks us into “the doorway of Region 1, Block 10, House 10 (according to the numbering system devised by the archaeologists).” Once inside, we are given a physical description of what one might see by walking into the ruins of this house today: “slots in the doorposts,” “a patch of white plasterwork,” “a *lararium*.” We are informed that the excavation reports also include “a pair of basins (c. 1 m × 0.6 m each, with 0.88 m-high walls between them and on their east side)” and “a small bronze buckle” that were present when excavations first took place. Furthermore, “the excavators record the presence of a cesspit” that “caused the floor to sag.” When Oakes finishes with the stoneworkers' “house” (i.e. apartment), he moves on to describe other “houses,” all which are connected to a larger insula in one section of Pompeii. Where is all this detail going?

Peter Oakes has drawn upon the excavation records at Pompeii to construct a model for how to read Paul's letter to the Romans. He wants us to read Romans at “ground level,” that is, from the standpoint of a few hypothetical members of a reconstructed house church. He infers whatever he can about the differing social and economic situations of those who once resided in this section of Pompeii based upon the physical remains of particular Pompeian dwellings (chap. 1). He then lays out a “space-distribution” model (and compares it to other proposed models) for identifying the relative wealth or poverty of various people living in the neighborhood (chap. 2). Oakes's space-distribution model works on the assumption that people will rent larger facilities if they have the means to do so. After presenting and arguing for this model, he lays out a tentative table of likely income distribution in Pompeii via the amount of space each household occupied. In chapter 3, he takes the further step of attempting to construct a model Christian group in Pompeii based upon such distribution of household

space. Oakes then makes some adjustments to his model for Rome, since, as he accurately points out, there would have been a few differences between Pompeii and Rome, particularly regarding the amount of space a person of the same occupation probably would have been able to rent. Since rents would have been more expensive in Rome than in Pompeii, a craftsperson's dwelling would have been smaller of necessity. So whereas Oakes's model Pompeian house church (which he places in a cabinet-maker's shop) would have allowed for 40 people, his model Roman house church (for the same cabinet-maker) would have allowed for only 30. Finally, at the end of chapter 3 he constructs a table (p. 96) on which he conceptualizes the actual composition of one house church.

In chapters 4–6, Oakes uses the model he has painstakingly constructed in the first three chapters to “listen” to Paul's letter to the Romans as he supposes his hypothetical Roman hearers would have heard it. In chapter 4, Oakes describes how he imagines first-century participants of this Roman house church might have understood the various injunctions in Romans 12. He works through all of Romans 12 and reads it in light of first-century concerns about honor, status, interdependence, patronage, allocated tasks, economics, family boundaries, social hierarchy, slavery, suffering, expectations of hospitality, folk-religious curses, the poor, and retributive violence. (Note: This chapter could potentially stand alone as introductory reading on the social setting of the NT for an introductory class.)

Chapters 5 and 6 address the issue of how individual members in Oakes's sociological model might have interpreted Paul's message of salvation. The four members (to whom he assigns names) include a middle-aged male slave who spends his days stoking the bath-house boiler but who also struggles with the injustice of his situation, a very poor married female former slave who works alongside her husband doing stonework but struggles to keep food on the table, a sexually exploited slave who spends her days serving low-life customers in a bar, and a cabinet-maker in whose shop the Christian group meets but who experiences discomfort with the Jewish background of the Christian movement. As Oakes reads the letter of Romans through the eyes of this last character, Oakes suggests that Romans can more generally be read “as introducing Christianity as a Jewish phenomenon to gentiles who are uninterested in, and disdainful of, Judaism” (p. 151).

This is a fascinating book, and I highly recommend it. Oakes is a careful scholar who is judicious in the way he weighs evidence, whether physical evidence as in the first half of the book or literary evidence as in the second. Drawing inferences from an archeological site to construct a social model for a first-century house church is a wonderful idea, and Oakes executes his task well. Yet anyone picking up the book should be warned in advance that the second half of the book is a much more engaging read than the first half because details necessarily fill up much of the first half of the book. Still, whoever reads through the reasoning of the first half will benefit from observing the care with which Oakes has constructed his model and the restraint he customarily exercises in drawing conclusions from the data.

My only substantial concern with the book is that starting from an all-Gentile insula in Pompeii leads Oakes to read Romans as though it were written to an entirely Gentile audience (chap. 6). Certainly, it is possible that some of the house churches in Rome were composed only of Gentiles, but others, as is clear in the case of the church that met in the house of Priscilla and Aquila, included Jews (Rom 16:3–5). Although Oakes briefly acknowledges this (p. 162), this recognition does not really factor into his reading strategy. It seems to me, however, that we lose something in our understanding of Romans if we employ a hypothetical model composed entirely of Gentiles. Is it not more fruitful to read the letter as written to various Christian groups meeting in Rome (at least five discernible groups in Romans 16) and to assume that some of what Paul wrote in his letter is envisioning Gentile Christians interacting—and potentially in conflict—

with Jewish Christians? Oakes's Gentile house church reading offers little explanatory power in Romans 9–11, the most densely-packed use of OT quotations in the NT. (See pp. 159–61 for his reading of this passage.) I think it is easier and more exegetically satisfying to assume that Jewish readers who know the OT well are also part of Paul's intended recipients alongside their Gentile brothers and sisters.

There are two minor issues where the book could have been improved. The textual notes that follow the author's translation of various verses throughout chapter 4 are kept in-text and printed in distracting bold-and-italic letters just after the verses themselves. It would have been easier to read chapter 4 if the textual and translational notes had been placed at the bottom of the page along with the regular footnotes. Also, although Oakes has already described the social situation of his four fictitious house-church characters in chapter 1, he assumes that his readers will remember his earlier descriptions of them when they finally arrive at chapter 5 where he uses them extensively. Since Oakes introduces these characters in chapter 1 but mostly ignores three of them in the chapters in between, it would be helpful if one or two sentences at the beginning of each section in chapter 5 could be included to remind his readers about the characters.

I hope such comments do not distract attention from the many truly helpful and sometimes eye-opening aspects of this book. Perhaps the greatest strength of the book is found in Oakes's decision to employ a space-distribution model as the foundation of his study. I found myself mentally adjusting some of my own assumptions about the composition of first-century house churches as I read through this book. *Reading Romans in Pompeii* has helped me to be more attentive and to listen more carefully to what Paul's first readers might have heard when his letter to the Romans arrived in their city.

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*Anti-Judaism in Galatians? Exegetical Studies on a Polemical Letter and on Paul's Theology.* By Michael Bachmann. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008, xiv + 234 pp., \$45.00 paper.

The title to Michael Bachmann's volume—*Anti-Judaism in Galatians?*—is enough to entice the curious reader. The question mark leaves undefined the conclusion that will be made, and the term “anti-Judaism” harkens back to a previous period when Judaism was viewed with extreme negativity. In these essays, however, Bachmann argues that Paul's letter to the Galatians is not anti-Judaic nor is he opposing “Jewish convictions concerning ‘justification by good works’” (p. xi). Rather, Paul is addressing Christians and Christian problems. Each of the essays attempts to show that Paul respects the redemptive-historical priority of Judaism and that his comments—despite the history of interpretation—do not disparage Judaism.

The first two essays address the phrase “works of the law.” Bachmann argues that this phrase refers not to acting in accordance to the law, but to the commands of the law themselves, “the *hlkw* that are to be observed” (p. 9). In the first essay, he looks at what the individual words in the phrase and the grammatical construction indicate about the phrase. He then contends that his understanding of “works of the law” as a reference to the commandments solves the problems of Galatians 3: Paul objects not to fulfillment of the law but to “the orientation toward individual commands and prohibitions of the Torah” (p. 14). The second essay takes up the phrase “works of the Torah” in 4QMMT. In dialogue with James D. G. Dunn, Bachmann contends that this phrase refers to halakhot, the commandments of the Torah. Bachmann identifies several

parallels between this letter from Qumran and Paul's letter to the Galatians. His observations on Galatians summarize the arguments made in chapter 1. One wonders, however, why Bachmann does not give more attention to the phrase "faith in Christ," and if his interpretation actually lessens Paul's claim that one cannot be justified by doing these things. An element of action is implicit in Paul's argument, even if not directly in the phrase "works of the law" itself.

The third chapter is a fascinating look at some mosaics discovered in synagogues. Bachmann contends that the mosaics (dated from AD 240s–500s) reflect the basic elements of covenantal nomism because they emphasize God's gracious covenant with Abraham, while also indicating that the Torah is at the center of one's relationship with God. Bachmann compares these mosaics with Paul's argument in Gal 3:15–29 and argues that Paul's statements here reveal that he was fully aware of a Judaism that gave central place to God's covenant with Abraham and the Torah. Bachmann contends, however, that Paul redefines these ideas in light of the Christ-event so that rather than moving his readers from Abraham to the Torah, as the mosaics did, Paul moves his readers from Abraham to his seed—Christ. In the end, however, Bachmann's explanation of the mosaics seems driven more by his prior acceptance of covenantal nomism than what one can actually learn from the mosaics themselves.

In chapter 4, Bachmann argues against a common interpretation of Gal 3:19–20 that focuses on the role of the angels in giving the law. He proposes that the statement about angels is inconsequential to the argument. The mediator is Moses, "of one" in verse 20a is the seed, Christ, and the point is that God gave both the law and the promises. The law was given to Israel, while the promise is given to the seed. Rather than indicating that the law and the promise contradict one another, this statement differentiates the two "chronologically, sociologically and functionally," while maintaining them "equally as works of God" (p. 83). In the end, then, this statement expresses nothing negative about the Torah or Moses.

Chapter 5 deals with Gal 4:21–5:1. Taking a clue from stained glass windows in the Freiburg Cathedral, Bachmann sets out the typical interpretation of these verses as an opposition between Judaism and Christianity. Against this reading, Bachmann contends that the two women, their sons, and the two Jerusalems do not represent Judaism and Christianity. Rather, Hagar and the parts connected to her stand for slavery in whatever form possible. This section of the Galatian letter is not a dispute with Jewish opponents but rather Paul's attempt to reorient the Galatians back to Christ rather than the Torah.

In the final essay, Bachmann addresses the problematic phrase "Israel of God" in 6:16. He argues strongly that this phrase refers to Jews who do not believe in Jesus as the Messiah. He traces Paul's use of various words, such as "mercy" and "Israel," to show that they are connected to unbelieving Jews. He also traces the argument of Galatians in order to show that Paul maintains the priority of Judaism in redemptive history. This conclusion means, according to Bachmann, that the salvation of the Gentiles is bound up with the salvation of Jews. This is an impressive case for identifying "Israel of God" as unbelieving Jews, and worth carefully reading.

This volume makes several interesting contributions to the understanding of Paul's theology and his relationship to and engagement (or lack of it) with Judaism. English scholarship will profit not least from Bachmann's detailed notes (82 pp. in total) on German scholarship. The use of art in his arguments is particularly intriguing, even if his conclusions are not entirely convincing.

The overall argument of the book, however, seems hampered by the lack of a clear definition of "anti-Judaism." That Paul is addressing those who believe in Jesus as the Christ (i.e. Christians) is a given, but, for Bachmann, this means that Paul's thought is not in dialogue with Judaism. All of Paul's apparently negative statements about

Judaism are explained, in fact, as positive, neutral, or not even directed at Judaism. This is particularly clear from Bachmann's analysis of Galatians 3 and 4 in chapters 4 and 5 of this book. This position, however, is difficult to maintain, as Bachmann's interpretations often leave out elements or undercut aspects of Paul's argument. A couple of examples of this problem were noted above. Moreover, Bachmann's hard distinction between "Christianity" and "Judaism" is problematic, since "Christianity" was still part of Judaism at this point. The works of, for example, Francis Watson (*Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* [London: T & T Clark, 2004]) and Simon Gathercole (*Where is Boasting? Early Jewish Soteriology and Paul's Response in Romans 1–5* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002]) stand against Bachmann's contention that Paul does not oppose some aspects of the various forms of Judaism that thrived in his day.

Finally, one should note the publication history of this volume. As it stands, the book is an English translation of a German volume that appeared in 1999 under the title *Antijudaismus im Galaterbrief?* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht). The essays themselves were published in some form prior to this German collection (except chap. 6). The essays, therefore, reflect the state of scholarship at that point. Yet debates on these issues have moved on greatly. Some of Bachmann's arguments have been severely critiqued (see Jacqueline C. R. de Roo, *Works of the Law at Qumran and in Paul* [Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2007] 84–94), and the reader is left wondering how his position fits into a scholarly climate that is moving beyond the New Perspective. The book includes a list of Bachmann's more recent publications related to the issues in this volume, but the book would have benefited greatly if interaction with more recent scholarship had been included. Perhaps this is an indication that English scholarship could benefit from a translation of Bachmann's more recent work.

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*The First and Second Letters to the Thessalonians.* By Gordon D. Fee. NICNT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009, xxviii + 366 pp., \$44.00.

1 and 2 Thessalonians had been until recently a neglected gem among the letters of Paul. These important documents were largely gathering dust while both the academic community and the church were concentrating on other letters in their various debates about the "New Perspective on Paul," the ordination of women, and other controversial matters. This neglect of the Thessalonian correspondence, however, has been corrected of late, as the past decade has witnessed the appearance of several significant commentaries in English on these two letters: Abraham Malherbe (2000); Gene Green (2002); Greg Beale (2003); Ben Witherington (2006); Victor Furnish (2007); and Linda McKinnish Bridges (2008). To this growing list may now also be added the commentary by Gordon Fee.

Fee's volume is part of the New International Commentary on the New Testament series, which has emerged as one of the more important and successful series among the plethora of candidates that have increasingly come onto the scene. The commentary by Fee replaces the previous one in the series by Leon Morris, originally published in 1959 and republished with minor revisions in 1991. Fee comes to this writing project exceedingly well qualified for the task, having lots of experience in writing several commentaries on Paul's other letters, as well as having taught 1 and 2 Thessalonians at three different seminaries over the past thirty years. He also brings to the table expertise in textual criticism and a long history of serving on the TNIV translation

committee. When all this seasoned experience and knowledge is combined with a passion for the gospel and an ability to present the truth of any given text in a succinct and clear manner, the result is a commentary that both scholar and pastor alike will find highly profitable for their ministry.

Introductory matters on 1 Thessalonians are handled in an extremely brief manner, covering a mere six pages. This brevity stems apparently from Fee's questioning the value of responding to the extreme historical skepticism raised against, for example, the Pauline authorship of 1 Thessalonians, stating: "such denial faces enormous historical difficulties—so much so that one wonders, 'Why bother?'" Although the evangelical audience for whom this commentary is primarily written will likely agree with Fee's assessment, it nonetheless would have been helpful to see how a mature, Pauline scholar like Fee would respond to this and other critical introductory issues surrounding this letter. Instead, Fee briefly reviews the history of the city of the Thessalonica, the account in Acts 17:1–10 about Paul's ministry there (which, despite the reference to the "three Sabbaths," lasted "probably some six or more months" [p. 6]), and the occasion and place of writing of the letter. His findings are entirely traditional, concluding that Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians around AD 50 during his ministry in Corinth in response to Timothy's essentially good report. There are three matters that caused the apostle to write the letter: "a question about the sanctity of the marriage bed; the refusal to work by some who were able to but chose instead to live off the largesse of others; and questions about the nature and timing of the Lord's return" (p. 8).

Fee's introduction to 2 Thessalonians is deliberately located not at the beginning of the volume but before the commentary of the second letter "so that it will be recognized as having 'its own place in the sun' as a Pauline document, and not simply get absorbed in the Introduction to the first letter" (p. 237). Although Fee's goal to legitimize the value of 2 Thessalonians is a laudable one, it is undermined by the fact that his introduction to this letter is also extremely brief, covering again a mere six pages, even though there is a wide-spread assumption in academic circles that this letter is a forgery. Fee himself seems to acknowledge that he should say more in his introduction about the letter's authenticity, conceding that his comments "will be much briefer than some think is fair or reasonable" (p. 237). Nevertheless, he chooses not to engage in further debate on this issue, other than to present briefly ten points about 2 Thessalonians that support the claim that this letter was indeed written by Paul. Fee's conclusions on introductory matters pertaining to 2 Thessalonians are again entirely traditional. It was written about AD 50 in response to the report of Timothy who returned from delivering the first letter with mixed news about the situation in Thessalonica: on the one hand, the congregation was enduring well increased persecution from their fellow citizens (chap. 1), but, on the other hand, two issues addressed in the previous letter continued to be a problem, namely, anxiety about the timing of the day of the Lord (chap. 2), and certain members whose disruptive, idle behavior had become worse (chap. 3).

Introductory matters, however, are not the place where users of a commentary will typically find themselves. They will turn first and foremost to the explanation of specific passages in the two letters, and here is where Fee delivers the exegetical goods. He follows his lifelong habit of writing the commentary first and only then consulting the secondary literature. This results in a commentary that does not get bogged down in scholarly debates about what often are minor matters but moves along in a relatively brief yet competent manner in explaining clearly for the reader the keys issues at hand in any given text. Each section of the commentary begins with an English translation of the Greek text, which contains an above average amount of footnotes dealing with textual and translation matters—hardly surprising given Fee's background in textual criticism and translation work. Next, before the exegesis proper, comes an important



introductory section dealing with the overall structure or logical flow of the passage—crucial for providing the reader with the “big picture” view of the passage. After this proposed structure is fleshed out exegetically, each section concludes with a brief paragraph that applies the text to today’s contemporary situation.

As good as Fee’s commentary may be, it is to be expected that not everyone will agree with all of his views on the many interpretative issues found in 1 and 2 Thessalonians. In the brief space remaining in this review, I would first like to give a few examples of where Fee, in my judgment, gets it right, but then also provide a few examples where a different interpretation might be preferable.

On the issue of the co-senders listed in both letter openings and whether this reveals a single or plural authorship of the letters, Fee rightly sees the occasional “lapses” into the first person singular (1 Thess 2:18; 3:5; 5:27; 2 Thess 3:17) as evidence that Paul is the true author of the letters, with Silas possibly serving as the amanuensis. On the matter of 2:1–12 and the function of this passage, Fee rejects the majority opinion of the past two decades that Paul is not defending himself but presenting himself as a model or example to be followed. Instead, Fee correctly recognizes that there existed a considerable smear campaign against Paul in which he was charged as being just another religious charlatan, who curried people’s favor and then ran out of town at the first sign of trouble. Paul feared that this infant church, under heavy opposition, might buy into these trumped-up charges, and so he opens the first half of the letter with a calculated defense of his integrity, intended to reaffirm his readers’ trust in him such that they would hear and heed his admonitions given in the second half of the letter. On the perennial textual problem in 2:7 of whether Paul wrote “infants” (νήπιοι) or “gentle” (ἤπιοι), Fee presents not only a lengthy and compelling argument in support of the former reading but also spells out clearly the significance of this reading in the apostle’s overall argument in this passage. On the issue of those in the church who were idle, a problem that Paul addresses in both letters (1 Thess 4:9–12; 5:14; 2 Thess 3:1–15), Fee rightly argues that the Greek root ἄτακτ- used to identify such folks expresses not just their laziness per se but the unruly nature of their refusal to work that disrupted the shalom of the entire community.

There is much, much more from Fee’s insightful commentary with which I concur, but now I move on to raise a few areas of different emphasis or disagreement. For example, Fee views the Thessalonian church as an essentially healthy congregation where the exhortations that make up the second half of the letter (4:1–5:22) are aimed at “so few of them” (p. 157) that they make up “a very small minority” (p. 161). It is true that Paul acknowledges the good progress that the church has made in many areas of their Christian life (4:1: “just as you are indeed doing”; 4:10: “For you are indeed doing this”). Nevertheless, on the matter of their sexual conduct (4:3–8), the fact that Paul treats this subject first in the exhortative half of the letter (4:1–5:22) and at some length, giving no less than three specific commands (vv. 3b–6a) and then grounding these commands with three strongly worded causal statements why they ought to be holy in their sexual activity (vv. 6b–8), suggests that this was a significant concern on the apostle’s part that involved more than just a few of the church’s members. Similarly, Paul’s extended discussion of the fate of those believers who die before Jesus’ return (4:13–18), as well as the fate of those believers who are alive at Jesus’ return (5:1–11), concluding each section with the exhortation to “comfort one another” (4:18; 5:11), suggests that anxiety and even fear about these matters involved more than just “a very small minority.”

On the phrase “Peace and security” in 5:3 (“Whenever people say, ‘Peace and security,’ then sudden destruction comes upon them, like birth pangs come upon a pregnant woman, and they will certainly not escape”), Fee argues that Paul is “borrowing from the prophetic tradition, especially Jeremiah 6:14” (p. 189). This phrase, however, is not

a *prophetic warning* but *political propaganda*, as the Romans vigorously promoted themselves as the providers of “peace.” They widely issued coins with the word *pax* (“peace”) alongside the image of the various emperors, and the phrase *pax Augusti* (“The peace of Augustus”) is a characteristic one of the numismatic evidence. The Romans erected key monuments and distributed official proclamations that celebrated the peace that their rule provided. Many ancient authors further enhanced the notion of the Romans as the restorers and extenders of peace (e.g. Seneca, *On Mercy* 1.4.1–2; Ovid, *Ex Ponto* 2.5.18; Tacitus, *Histories* 2.12; 4.74). Even the Jewish writer Philo acknowledges Augustus as “the guardian of peace” (*Embassy to Gaius* 147). Most convincing, however, is the fact that the parallel is more exact to Roman sloganeering than false prophets who cried: “Peace, peace, where there is no peace.” The word pair “Peace and security” does not occur anywhere in the prophets but is found in references to Roman peace (see the first-century historian Velleius Paterculus, *Compendium of Roman History* II, 103.5; also Josephus, *Ant.* 14.10.22). Furthermore, given the widespread nature of this political slogan, the predominantly Gentile believers in Thessalonica would have immediately thought that Paul with these words was referring to the Roman state and its claim of providing “Peace and security.” Paul’s citation of such imperial propaganda is particularly appropriate for his Thessalonian readers, given the financial and political benefits that their city enjoyed from the Roman state.

Readers who are interested in identifying eschatological references in 2 Thess 2:1–17 to the man of lawlessness, the apostasy, the restraining person and the restraining thing will not find the answers they are looking for in Fee’s treatment of this passage, as these things are either treated very briefly or simply ignored. On the one hand, Fee’s strategy of downplaying these things is understandable and even commendable, since questions about such eschatological matters tend to distort Paul’s overall purpose in the passage, which is not to *predict* but to *pastor*. Such a strategy also follows the honest assessment of the great church leader, Augustine, who after wrestling with this passage, stated: “I frankly confess that the meaning of this completely escapes me” (*City of God* 20.19). On the other hand, the apostle was referring to *something* with these references, and it would have been helpful for Fee to give greater attention to these details and so provide the modern reader with helpful guidance through the plethora of proposed interpretations. For example, with regard to the “riddle of the restrainer,” a strong case can be made that Paul is referring to an angel, specifically the archangel Michael. This case rests on the allusions in this passage to the vision of Daniel 10–12, where Michael, the patron angel of the Jews, is said to withstand (restrain?) the evil patron angels of Israel’s enemies, Persia and Greece. Since Paul’s use of the title “the man of lawlessness” in 2:3b is likely influenced by Dan 12:10 with its description of the lawless conduct characteristic of individuals living in the last days and his description of this eschatological enemy in 2:4 parallels even more closely Daniel’s prophecy about a future king of the north who “will exalt and magnify himself above every god” (Dan 11:36) and who will desecrate the temple (Dan 11:31), this enhances the possibility that the apostle’s description of the restraining entity in 2:6–7 is similarly influenced by material from the same vision of Daniel 10–12.

To summarize: I am deeply appreciative of Fee’s careful, clear, and concise exegesis of 1 and 2 Thessalonians and only wish that in some places he had written a bit more. His commentary ranks among the best of the volumes currently available on the Thessalonian correspondence and, as such, will become a beloved resource by both scholar and pastor alike whenever they turn to these two important Pauline letters.

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*First and Second Timothy, Titus.* By George T. Montague. Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008, 267 pp., \$17.00 paper.

This is the inaugural volume for the new series, Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture, and it does not disappoint. In the words of the series preface, “These volumes seek to offer scholarship illumined by faith, in the conviction that the ultimate aim of biblical interpretation is to discover what God has revealed and is still speaking through the sacred text” (p. 9). The volumes pursue this goal through historical and literary methods and prayerful reflection in line with the statements of Vatican II. They are particularly designed for those involved in ministry and do not pursue detailed technical issues. Though written from a clear Catholic perspective, they engage other traditions and aspire to be useful to others.

This first volume accomplishes the series goals well. It is much more useful than several other recent attempts at a more theological interpretation (e.g. the Brazos series volume on these same letters). Although it is not overly technical, it seriously engages the text, even wrestling with Greek terms. Deriving theological content from the text is not a secondary step but is done naturally. Montague engages the text more thoroughly than many “theological” commentaries while also keeping in view the big picture unlike many technical commentaries. The engagement with patristic sources also accomplishes much of the aim of the ACCS series. Thus, this is a very useful commentary.

The commentary also has a user-friendly format. Sidebars provide further reflection on various issues often citing official catholic documents or patristic sources. Useful photos of places or items pertinent to the text are also included throughout. A glossary is included defining key terms (ranging from traditional terms [e.g. *charism*], to Greek tense names, to patristic names). Also, each section of biblical text is followed by a list of cross references in the OT and NT, as well as in the Catechism and lectionaries. The layout of this commentary is well done and increases its usefulness.

In a brief space Montague does an admirable job summarizing the debate over the authorship of these letters, fairly representing the different sides. He concludes in favor of Pauline authorship, defending that position admirably. In fact, this is now one of the best places to go for a sound, concise defense of Pauline authorship.

In keeping with the current (and, I believe, correct) trend, Montague argues that each of these letters must be understood on its own terms before being combined with one another. Furthermore, Montague also corrects the common misunderstanding that these letters are mainly of interest for pastors today. After acknowledging this tendency, he writes, “Granted that Paul speaks about bishops, presbyters, and deacons in these letters, there is a wealth of doctrine, spirituality, and down-to-earth common sense that will feed everyone” (p. 25). This is an important point often missed in churches and in the academy.

Another key battleground in the Pastorals is the interpretation of 1 Timothy 2. In his even-handed, calm tone seen throughout this volume, Montague surveys the issue and lands on a complementarian understanding. His treatment is both theological and pastoral. After acknowledging various efforts to understand the background of the text, he argues that the text plainly forbids authoritative public teaching of men by women and that women are forbidden to hold positions of authority over men. He then writes: “If this is the correct way to understand this difficult passage, it means that leadership and teaching authority in the Church is not modeled after secular society but on Christian marriage—and this is within the context of the broader sacramental symbolism of the Church as the bride of Christ” (p. 68). The theological issue of the symbolism of Christ and the church is too often missing from this discussion. Montague goes on to state: “We are in the realm of symbols, which the contemporary mind sometimes finds

difficult to understand. But for the Church, the marital relationship between Christ and the Church is not mere metaphor; it is essential to the structuring of the Church” (p. 70). This truth goes beyond the gender debate (e.g. our difficulty with appreciating symbols, the marital metaphor impacting how we structure church). The church today needs more reflection on these important issues as well.

Moving to 1 Tim 2:15 on the reference to women being saved through childbearing, Montague states: “In our day, when women have assumed more public roles both in society and Church, the idea of ‘salvation by motherhood’ may seem antiquated. Yet perhaps, after the advancement of women in professional fields formerly dominated by men, it is appropriate to recall that the role of mothers is crucial for the healthy psychosocial development of children and is more than a profession. It is a vocation divinely sanctioned and divinely blessed” (p. 71). This is a needed word today, affirming the incredible value of the divinely ordained vocation of motherhood.

Distinctly Catholic teaching, of course, shows up in various places such as the discussion of Christ as the “one mediator” in 1 Tim 2:5. Here Montague affirms strongly the uniqueness of Christ’s role as mediator while also defending the practice of praying to Mary and the saints.

As a Protestant, I found myself more appreciative of this commentary than I expected. There are, of course, places where Catholic teaching emerges with which I disagree. However, the overall approach was refreshing, and I found Montague a helpful and engaging discussion partner with the text. Because he takes the text seriously, reads it in concert with the church through the ages, and treats the Scripture as a theological document, his writing is beneficial even when we differ. This will be a useful commentary for Protestants.

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*1 and 2 Timothy and Titus.* By Samuel M. Ngewa. Africa Bible Commentary Series. Grand Rapids: Hippo Books, 2009, xxii + 466 pp., \$21.99 paper.

In the wake of the appearance of Zondervan’s one-volume *Africa Bible Commentary* in 2006, a more detailed and advanced series of individual commentaries was envisioned. Samuel Ngewa’s commentary on the Pastoral Epistles is the first of these commentaries to appear. The orientation and format keep the needs of pastors, students, and church workers in mind. This is not an advanced technical commentary. While a sizable work, its two-page bibliography lists neither non-English books nor journal articles; it is composed almost entirely of commentaries, with a few reference works (chiefly Greek grammars) added in.

An editorial foreword states that works in this series will focus on application in the context of African churches. The informing conviction is that “listening to or reading the Word should always lead to obedience and to putting what one has read into practice” (p. xx). Works in this series will also respect the statement of faith of the Association of Evangelicals in Africa (<http://www.aeafrika.org/aboutus/statementoffaith.htm>).

Each of the Pastoral Epistles is analyzed by “units.” These units correspond to thematic divisions. First Timothy, for example, contains 19 units. “Questions for Discussion” appear at the end of each unit. These features give the book more of a Christian education feel and less the heft of a work of NT exegesis and scholarship proper. It is, of course, possible that the former is the more pressing need for readers in Africa at this time. The danger would be if practical inferences were drawn from less than rigorous

interpretation. It is practically suggestive, for example, to propose that *diakonia*, translated as “service,” in 1 Tim 1:12, combines the preposition *dia* (through) with the noun *konis* (dust). Ngewa concludes on this basis that the word “suggests moving so fast to carry out a duty that one leaves in a cloud of dust” (p. 26). Yet standard Greek lexica offer no backing for this understanding of the word. Christian *diakonia* (service, ministry) in NT usage had nothing in particular to do with “dust” or even hurrying, any more than “service” in English has some relationship to “ice.” Fanciful etymologies should be avoided in all translation work but most of all when it comes to Scripture. Future volumes in this series would profit from an editorial pass by another NT (or OT) scholar.

Regarding authorship, Ngewa deals with the matter in the first three pages. He recognizes that “not all scholars agree” that Paul is the author of the Pastoral Epistles. This is an understatement; as Raymond Brown pointed out some years ago, over 80 percent of modern scholars concur that the Pastoral Epistles were written after Paul’s lifetime and are pseudepigraphic, with most viewing AD 80–90 as a plausible time of appearance. Categories in Ngewa’s brief breakdown of and response to the authorship question are reminiscent of those found in Donald Guthrie’s writings on this subject. More detailed discussion of authorship matters is offered in the endnotes (pp. 417–20). Ngewa feels that evidence does not justify overturning the surface claims in the Pastoral Epistles concerning Pauline authorship. More broadly, Ngewa affirms the ancient view that Paul wrote the Pastoral Epistles following release from the imprisonment described in Acts 28. The date of the Pastoral Epistles, in Ngewa’s estimation, is AD 67 or 68, with 2 Timothy being written just before Paul’s martyrdom.

Regarding individual points of interpretation, Ngewa leans toward regarding “wives” in 1 Tim 3:11 as “a group of women leaders equivalent to deaconesses,” though he recognizes the data are not conclusive (pp. 76–77). He affirms women in the pastorate if local cultural conditions allow it (p. 57), but he equates teaching mathematics in a school, for example, with pastoral discourse in a church. This is a point in which the commentary’s simplicity prevents adequate consideration of the issues at hand. Ngewa does raise the question whether “teach and exercise authority” (1 Tim 2:12) is *hendiadys*; he concludes it is not (p. 425). He thinks 1 Tim 3:16 is a hymn or creed (p. 82) but notes the different interpretations assigned to the six Christological truths it contains (p. 429). With reference to 2 Tim 3:16, “Scripture” refers to the OT: “However, it also includes any parts of the New Testament that would have been recognized as authoritative when this letter was written (around AD 67)” (p. 286).

By way of assessment, this commentary’s strength is its interface with that segment of African life and culture with which Ngewa is most familiar. Africa is a vast continent, and “African” defies monolithic definition. Yet this exposition of the Pastoral Epistles is adept at sketching a certain range of African scenes and sensibilities and then relating the Pastoral Epistles to these. At the same time, this approach is more fruitful in some passages than in others. The treatment of “persecution” (pp. 282–83) as it relates to Paul’s declaration in 2 Tim 3:12, for example, will be felt somewhat thin by Christian readers in places like Upper Egypt, Sudan, and many other regions, including (increasingly of late) certain parts of Nigeria. Nor is there much more potency to related discussions earlier in 2 Timothy (pp. 187–88, 197–201). Still, at numerous junctures African readers will mark a ready connection between the biblical discourse and their own social setting. This will aid in application of the Scriptures to real life. It also makes the commentary more readable due to the numerous anecdotes, news items, and other slices of African (and occasionally, international) life that are set forth in interaction with the biblical text.

An example of insightful engagement with African issues is at 1 Tim 4:3, in which Ngewa notes the problem of teachers taking a true biblical point but then moving

beyond it to make false claims. He correlates this to current thinkers who rightly recognize that (1) some points of traditional African religion are affirmed in the Bible; and that (2) Africa needs to shake free of colonialism. “These two truths are taken too far,” Ngewa notes, “when some scholars argue that all the truths of the Jewish faith were already known in African Traditional Religion, and that this religion is all Africa needs” (p. 89). Without fancy nomenclature, Ngewa speaks decisively here to complex questions of contextualization and the Africanization discussion.

Occasionally, the contrasts between Africa and, say, North America are so stark as to be humorous. Regarding the requirement that elders’ children not be ill-behaved (Titus 1:6), Ngewa notes, “In Africa, where people live in communities in which people know each other, it is not uncommon to hear people say they will not believe in Christ because of the bad behavior of the church leaders’ children” (p. 340). This calls attention to what many readers resident in the US will immediately recognize: many of us live in “communities” in which we do *not* know each other—surely an oxymoronic definition of “community.”

In other places one is reminded of how small the world is. Regarding Paul’s exhortation for Timothy to “endure hardship” (2 Tim 4:5), Ngewa acknowledges a typical African issue: “Christian police officers will be harassed when they refuse to participate in a bribery scheme that their boss is involved in” (p. 296). Readers from, say, Chicago may feel a peculiar solidarity here.

Another strength is how this commentary will encourage some readers to dig deeper. By producing the first Pastoral Epistles commentary of this scope by an academically trained African, Ngewa (M.Div., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School; Th.M., Ph.D., Westminster Theological Seminary) has blazed a clear and helpful trail. Yet as a work of scholarship it marks a preliminary beginning. Ngewa excels at level-headed pastoral exposition and application that is in touch with the Greek text. African churches, as well as NT scholarship, stand in need of a treatment of the Pastoral Epistles that builds on Ngewa’s work to engage even more aggressively, precisely with the range of insights that an African thinker is poised to contribute, with the fuller range of issues occupying Pastoral Epistles research on the international scene. Ngewa has furnished an excellent foundation upon which subsequent attempts would do well to build.

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*The Use of the Old Testament in Hebrews. A Case Study in Early Jewish Bible Interpretation.* By Susan E. Docherty. WUNT 2/260. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009, xi + 233 pp., €59.00 paper.

Given the extensive use of the OT in Hebrews, this area of study offers a fascinating field of investigation that is in constant need of further exploration and refinement. Susan Docherty’s revised version of her Ph.D. thesis, submitted to the University of Manchester in 2007, contributes to the continuation of the scholarly dialogue. Although many studies have been conducted in the last five decades, Docherty contends that more needs to be done in two particular areas that “have not been adequately considered by New Testament scholars to date” (p. 3). The first one is the intersection of NT studies with the insights gained from recent midrashic studies, an area of research with promising results for the analysis of the NT use of Scripture. The second one results from rapid developments in Septuagint studies, attesting to a growing appreciation for the Septuagint as the Bible of the author of Hebrews.

While both these fields have known considerable growth in the last decades, it is the former that constitutes the bulk of Docherty's exploration. The proposed methodology is adopted from Arnold Goldberg, a thorough practitioner of form analysis, a method of studying rabbinic texts "which begins with the identification and detailed description of the various literary forms present in the texts, including the individual hermeneutical operations by which a scriptural segment was interpreted" (p. 6). Goldberg's seminal approach was further refined by one of his students, Alexander Samely, who applied Goldberg's insights to the exegesis of Scripture in the targumim and midrashim. Docherty undertakes to "demonstrate that this approach both illuminates new aspects of the biblical exegesis of the author of Hebrews, and also offers a way of explaining some of the features of his use of the OT which have long been noted by commentators but never adequately explained" (p. 7). A form analysis approach to the use of the OT in Hebrews, Docherty argues, lends better results in qualifying the author's use of Scriptures. Instead of making an appeal to the (presupposed) theological interpretation of Scriptures that the author of Hebrews might have had, it would be more correct to conclude that his scriptural interpretations are "likely to be derived from a genuine difficulty or ambiguity within the biblical text as were those of their contemporaries within early post-biblical Judaism and indeed the later rabbinic authorities" (p. 146).

Three introductory chapters prepare the reader for a better understanding and assessment of the new proposal. Chapter 2 reviews the previous scholarship on Hebrews, focusing first on commentaries since the late nineteenth century (divided in four chronological periods), moving on to theological and structural studies on Hebrews, and concluding with the studies of the interpretation of the OT in Hebrews. Throughout this extensive review, Docherty signals the unfortunate lack of cross-pollination between NT studies and their midrashic counterpart.

Chapter 3 surveys developments in the area of midrashic studies, focusing on several established approaches. The reader is introduced to the tradition-historical approach of R. Bloch and G. Vermes, the rabbinic hermeneutical rules pioneered by I. Heinemann, the intertextuality and midrash based on the work on inner-biblical exegesis of M. Fishbane and D. Boyarin, and the documentary analysis of J. Neusner. The survey culminates with the form-analysis of the Goldbergian school (established by A. Goldberg and further developed by A. Samely) and with the midrash as literary genre approach of P. Alexander. Docherty concludes with an extensive list of ways in which recent developments in the area of midrash studies could help the NT scholars. Among them are the use of a more precise definition of the literary forms and genres of Jewish biblical commentary; a renewed emphasis on exegetical questions as opposed to external theological concerns; a precise analytical instrumentarium offered in the works of Goldberg and Samely; the application of linguistics insights in the area of NT exegesis of the OT; an appreciation of the axioms behind the exegetical methods revealing their understanding of Scripture, language, and exegesis; and, lastly, the interconnectiveness and mutual influence of early Christian and Jewish biblical interpretation.

Developments in Septuagintal studies form the content of chapter 4, with selective emphases on current issues and trends, the Greek versions of the Psalms, and the textual sources of the specific OT citations in Hebrews. Docherty upholds the author of Hebrews' faithfulness in citing the Scripture, aligning herself with those who contend that the divergences between the author's text and the textual forms we now possess are due not to intentional alterations but to the faithful reproduction of his *Vorlage* containing a text type no longer extant. In the passages investigated in Hebrews 1, for example, she concludes that the author of Hebrews made only one deliberate change to his Septuagint text (i.e. Psalm 44 cited in Hebrews 1), and even there the changes are of imperceptible consequence. It should be noted, however, that a fair assessment of

the author of Hebrews' citation of Scripture ought to be based on a complete analysis of all the quotations in the book; about half a dozen cases, most notoriously the use of Habakkuk 2 in Hebrews 10, cannot be easily accommodated within Docherty's assessment.

Chapter 5 constitutes the substance of Docherty's research, in which the descriptive-analytical method borrowed from midrashic studies is applied to the use and interpretation of the OT in Hebrews. The method is "intended to draw out some new insights into the ways in which the author of the letter interpreted his Old Testament citations and to provide a new vocabulary for describing his exegetical techniques" (p. 143). Moreover, the analysis focuses on "uncovering the axioms about the nature of scripture which underlie its interpretation in Hebrews" (p. 143). The study examines, in turn, the quotations in Hebrews 1 and in Hebrews 3-4, two representative segments with contrastive features. Each quotation in these passages is analyzed under the sub-rubrics of the source of citation, the exegetical techniques, and the wider context of the quotation. The analysis concludes with a summary of the exegetical methods exhibited in scriptural segments as well as with an assessment the scriptural axioms at work. A summary of the exegetical methods is drafted in a set of statements—twenty one for Hebrews 1, fifteen for Hebrews 3-4—highlighting the benefits of the descriptive analysis of the Goldbergian School. Largely unfamiliar to NT scholars, this approach offers: a new technical working vocabulary; better explanations for features of the author's exegetical method; fuller appreciation for his hermeneutical techniques; a greater precision of analysis; and useful ideas for further research in this area (p. 176). Similarly, in assessing the hermeneutical axioms, Docherty emphasizes the importance of Scripture for the author of Hebrews, his general faithfulness to the source, and the importance and relevancy of every word in that Scripture, which for him constituted "first and foremost a written artifact" (p. 180), just as it did for the rabbis.

The conclusion issues a call to NT scholarship to embrace the increasingly useful results from recent studies of Jewish exegetical practices, which will enable them to move with more precision and with a more adequate technical instrumentarium in the analysis of the exegetical work of NT authors. The ultimate outcome would be a re-drawing of the fault line between the exegetical practices and the theological perspectives of the NT authors in the handling of the Scriptures, moving firmly away from the latter and closer to the former.

The reading of Docherty's monograph commenced with a measure of reservation due to some notable lacunae in her bibliography, such as D. I. Brewer's *Techniques and Assumptions in Jewish Exegesis before 70 CE* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992; listed yet not engaged), J. Laansma's monograph on Hebrews 3-4, *'I Will Give You Rest'* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), and G. Guthrie's chapter on Hebrews in the volume edited by G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson, *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007). The promise for yet another approach in a field that has been thoroughly ploughed in the last decades raised the suspicion even more. Of course, adding the term "linguistics" to the mix did not improve the prospects. Nevertheless, as the reading progressed, my reservations subsided, and I concluded that Docherty has indeed made a sustained and convincing argument for the usefulness of the Goldbergian approach. Valuable exegetical insights emerged in most of the passages discussed, offering the reader more reasonable explications for Hebrews' distinct use of Scripture than those previously held.

Before the form-analysis approach can be embraced, however, several issues need to be addressed more convincingly. First and foremost, Docherty pays little overt attention to localize historically and chronologically the exegetical midrashic procedures. It is possible that these foundational matters are addressed by Goldberg and Samely. However, before finding parallels between the midrashic interpretation of Scripture



and the type of interpretations displayed in the NT, one must consider the chronological factor. To what extent were the pre-AD 70 exegetical procedures in Judaism similar or identical to those reflected in the midrashic literature of subsequent centuries? D. I. Brewer's study would have been a useful dialogue partner in this respect.

In a more fundamental way, however, Docherty's endeavor to divert the attention of NT scholars more to the exegetical practices of the NT authors and away from their theological axioms, thus matching their midrashic counterpart, seems to create an imbalance in the fragile equilibrium that might have just been reached recently: interpreting the Scriptures Christologically, while at the same time interpreting the Jesus event scripturally. Without the towering figure of Jesus of Nazareth, the man and his message, the NT use of Scriptures does not make much historical sense. "To account for the beginning of this most original and fruitful process of rethinking the Old Testament," C. H. Dodd memorably remarked, "we found need to postulate a creative mind. The Gospels offer us one. Are we compelled to reject the offer?" (*According to the Scriptures* [London: Nisbet, 1952] 110). In as much as formal analysis midrashic style can be pursued without neglecting or diminishing the role of this formidable first cause, NT studies will make assured progress. NT scholarship, not least the readers of Hebrews, will be indebted to Docherty who alerted them to this fruitful area of cross-pollination.

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*The Revelation of John: A Narrative Commentary.* By James L. Resseguie. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009, 288 pp., \$24.99 paper.

To write a narrative commentary on an apocalypse is by definition a genre mistake. So James Resseguie's task has difficulties to address from page one. Unfortunately, he does not address the validity of narrative analysis applied to apocalyptic literature before he begins the task.

According to his introductory comments, a narrative commentary treats the Apocalypse as "an organic unity" paying careful attention to "the structure, rhetoric, setting, characters, point of view, plot, and the narrator's style and his repertoire. The narrator's repertoire includes intertextual allusions, the social and cultural location of the narrator, the political environment, and the evaluative or ideological point of view of the narrator" (p. 18). In a lengthy introduction, Resseguie defines these narrative elements more clearly and provides ample illustrations from the Apocalypse. The remainder of the book then consists of 22 chapters that highlight these elements as they appear in each logical division of the Apocalypse.

In the introduction, Resseguie not only defines and illustrates typical narrative elements such as characterization, setting, and plot, he also includes a section on two-step progressions and symbolic numbers that seems to overlook insights from the historical context in favor of finding (or creating) the narrator's repertoire. He observes multiple redundancies in the Apocalypse and concludes it is a narrative style that David Rhoads and others have identified as two-step progressions in the Gospel of Mark. From the way it is presented, the reader is left to believe that two-step progressions are a fresh form of literary analysis for the Apocalypse. However, it would be better to identify the synthetic and antithetical progressions as manifestations of the author's Hebraic writing style that reflects traditional Semitic parallelism. In another section on symbolic numbers, Resseguie concludes that every number in the Apocalypse should be read figuratively. Threes create superlative force; fours represent the earth; sixes are

one step short of completion/perfection; sevens are completeness; tens emphasize totality; and twelves represent the complete people of God. Since he believes that every number is symbolic in the entire book, even the 1600 stadia filled with blood up to a horse's bridle (in Rev 14:20) becomes  $4 \times 4 \times 10 \times 10$  representing the totality of the earth. One wonders if it makes more sense to equate 1600 stadia with the size of Roman Judea rather than seek a symbolic equation behind every number. At certain times, sometimes, or maybe even half the time, one wonders if he is not merely finding what he is looking for. The problem crystallizes when Rev 16:21 refers to hailstones weighing "one talent" that pound the earth. Is that numerical description symbolic like all the others or is it chosen because Roman armies catapulted stones that size in John's day?

Both questions about symbolic numbers and two-step progressions are symptomatic of a larger concern about the commentary's commitment to account for the "social and cultural location" of the narrator as promised in the introduction. In his opening remarks on the narrator's language, he follows Maier in concluding that the irregular Greek grammar is an "anti-language" designed purposefully for the book. Yet this purposeful "narrative style" is more likely the effect of Semitic constructions infused into the Greek language (is that also the reason for the masculine/neuter interchange in Revelation 13 since a Hebraic mind has no categories for the neuter gender?). In Resseguie's narrative analysis of the book, he summarizes the plot as a U-shaped comedy where it starts on a high note, plunges into chaos, and returns to shalom in the end. He similarly uses this paradigm to analyze the plot of each one of the seven letters in Revelation 2–3. By doing so, he demonstrates the inclination of narrative analysis to miss the insights from proper historical investigation. The seven letters of Revelation 2–3 have strong parallels to contemporary Roman imperial edicts not short stories. The attempt to fit each letter into a U-shaped narrative plot creates unnecessary questions about why each letter does not fit the pattern (e.g. Sardis and Laodicea have no initial stable condition). This particular example highlights the shortfall of narrative analysis to depict an apocalyptic world that borrows imagery and meaning from its social, literary, and cultural contexts.

Although one will not find philological, grammatical, or historical acuity in this narrative commentary, Resseguie will carefully direct your attention to elements of characterization and setting that other approaches are more prone to miss. As for characterization, Resseguie is particularly apt at recognizing the importance of visual characterization (see pp. 38–42). For example, he notes how the hybrid traits of many characters create a connection between earthly realities and their counterparts either in the world above or the evil world below (e.g. the four living creatures of Revelation 4, the locusts of Revelation 9, and the beasts of Revelation 13). He observes that Christ's sword comes "out of his mouth" rather than being held in his right hand (pp. 75, 78). The imagery reveals that Christ conquers (as do the two witnesses with fire coming out of their mouths in Rev 11:3–10) through testimony to truth. Beyond the observance of visual characterization, Resseguie is also careful to note that "what John hears interprets what he sees" (p. 173). For example, the beast from the land looks like a lamb, but John hears the voice of a dragon in Rev 13:11 (p. 118). In Rev 7:4, John hears about 144,000 faithful followers sealed by God, but in Rev 7:9 he sees an incalculable multitude. What John hears in each one of these examples reveals the true nature of what he sees. Resseguie rightly accentuates this subtle distinction between what is heard and seen.

As for his astute analysis of the setting throughout John's visions, he highlights in Revelation 1 how the light increases in magnitude closer to the figure in the middle of the vision (p. 79) and in Revelation 4–5 how concentric circles of characters create a focal point on God's throne (p. 105). Of course, some critical elements of the setting do not receive appropriate attention throughout the commentary. First and foremost, Resseguie fails to recognize the prominent references to the temple and all its parts and

vessels throughout the entire Apocalypse. Telling the story of a new Jerusalem where God's presence will now reside without painting the constant picture of the temple setting in the book may be acceptable for a twenty-first-century narrative but not for John's Jewish and Jewish Christian contemporaries (e.g. the priests in Revelation 1, 5, and 20; the temple in Revelation 3, 7, 11, 14, 15, 16, and 21; the altar of incense in Revelation 8 and 9; the golden bowls of incense in Revelation 5, 15, 16, 17, 21; the altar of burnt offerings in Revelation 6 and 16; etc.).

When Resseguie claims to treat Revelation as an "organic whole," he does remain true to his word. Time and again Resseguie will find important dynamics locked up in intratextual connections. For example, in Rev 5:12 he notes the unusual attribution of "wealth" to the Messiah in the angelic praise song. Although the context has described the Messiah as a "lamb that was slaughtered," here John turns the world upside down by proclaiming true riches to the Messiah. The world attributes the greatest wealth to Babylon, and the Laodiceans have lost sight of true riches, but John sees the ultimate truth (p. 122). Constantly connecting words and themes between different parts of the book increases the power of the apocalyptic drama.

In the final analysis, Resseguie's narrative commentary will move into the field alongside David Barr's *Tales of the End: A Narrative Commentary on the Book of Revelation* (Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge, 1998). It does not presume to have the near exhaustive references to literary parallels as Aune's three-volume commentary. It does not intend to reflect the theological constructiveness and specificity of Bauckham's *Theology of the Book of Revelation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). Neither does it display the familiarity with apocalyptic thought and literature as Schüssler Fiorenza or the fresh hypotheses about the book's *Sitz im Leben* as Margaret Barker's work. Instead, Resseguie offers a spotlight on the visual drama of the Apocalypse with its intricate characters and setting that cannot be overlooked if we are truly to comprehend the meaning of its mysteries.

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*Ministry by the Book: New Testament Patterns for Pastoral Leadership.* By Derek Tidball. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2008, 277 pp., \$25.00 paper.

"Multi-coloured, not monochrome" is the phrase used by Derek Tidball to describe biblical ministry (p. 14). In this exploration of models for pastoral leadership (he uses the terms interchangeably) Tidball examines each of the NT authors to discover what model for ministry they present. This enterprise is well worth the effort in this age when there is so much discussion and controversy over what constitutes pastoral ministry, with so many different styles of ministry being evident.

While this work is more summative than exegetical in its content, it provides a significant analysis of ministry in each portion of the NT, even those, such as Revelation, that would not naturally come to mind for providing a model of pastoral leadership. The insights it provides give a valuable resource for exploring the richness and variety of leadership models in the NT. Tidball examines both the models presented within each book and those practiced by the various NT authors.

His exploration of Matthew focuses on the ministry of a scribe, noting the rare positive use of *grammateus* in 13:52, where Jesus says, "Every scribe who has become a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a head of a household, who brings out of his treasure things new and old," and 23:35, where Jesus promises the crowds who have

suffered under false teachers, "I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes" (p. 25). These examples serve to demonstrate that for Matthew, scribal ministry was not eliminated but renewed. Tidball examines the calling of a scribe and Jesus' ministry as a model of the teaching ministry of a scribe, and he gives a helpful discussion of the temptations of a scribe from Jesus' warnings in chapter 23.

In his chapter on Mark, he reviews the cross-bearing nature of discipleship, and thereby leadership in God's church. In Luke, he sees the pattern of ministry to outsiders, while in John he examines ministry as shepherding and ministry as witness. Tidball's analysis of Acts focuses on the nature of the church, noting the use of *ekklesia* 19 times. He concludes that the church is "above all else a community of the Spirit" (p. 87). He focuses on the appointment and function of leaders, giving careful attention to Paul's farewell address to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20.

Paul's letters are divided among three chapters, loosely based on the chronology of Paul's ministry. Tidball recognizes Paul as being more apostle, pioneer evangelist, and astute theologian than pastor. Nevertheless, he rightly comments that Paul's "theology arises out of questions thrown up by pastoral and everyday situations in the churches . . . and reveal his pastoral heart, his pastoral ambitions, his pastoral techniques, his pastoral advice, and his pastoral frustrations" (p. 108). Under the rubric "ministry in an infant church" he looks primarily at Paul's understanding of the church and its ministry, the eschatological horizon that guided his life and ministry, and his authority as church planter and founding father. Of particular value are Tidball's discussions of Paul's humility and his instruction to imitate his imitation of Christ (pp. 118–21).

The category "ministry in a maturing church" examines Paul as teacher. It looks at his self-understanding as teacher, the method of teaching, and the content of his teaching as a model for pastoral teaching. The pastoral letters, which Tidball rightly concludes "make immense sense as his autobiographical letters" (p. 146), are surveyed as "ministry in an aging church." He notes that with "tremendous realism" Paul assesses and addresses the situation in the church and its leadership needs. It is not the content of ministry that is Paul's focus but the character and worthiness of the one called to that ministry (pp. 149–51).

The pattern of ministry found in Hebrews is viewed as that in a faltering church, and Tidball looks closely at the use of *hēgoumenoi* in chapter 13, a term he identifies as the secular language of leadership in the first century. He argues that the obedience called for in 13:17 is not a mindless one but an obedience earned by the leaders through humility and integrity (p. 172). James is characterized as presenting ministry in a half-hearted church, as evidenced in the call to be perfect (whole, complete) and the abhorrence of double-mindedness, instability, and disorder (1:25, 3:8, 16; 4:8). Tidball also notes the use of "teachers" when stressing responsibility and "elders" when describing ministry to the infirm (p. 183).

1 Peter is said to represent ministry in a despised church and is important for its acknowledgment of both Peter and the leaders he addresses as elders and for the resumption of the shepherd motif prominent in the Gospel of John. The pastoral task is one that recognizes the "real-life actualities of believers," while pastors as "good shepherds guide their sheep through the struggles of every-day reality" (p. 193).

The letters of John are described by Tidball as ministry in a compromised church. He notes that the one who identifies himself as "elder" conceives of the church primarily as family and writes as an older brother or loving father (p. 199). While exhorting them to be uncompromising in their stand on truth and the right behavior that accompanies it, he does so as the "father of a family rather than the boss of an organization" (p. 206). Jude and 2 Peter are designated as representing ministry in an endangered church and are said by Tidball to model a ministry of pastoral polemics (p. 208). The goal is that the church be built up in the faith and firmly grounded in the truth, while living in an

environment hostile to the things of God in the context of the last days (p. 215). Tidball cautions that the “calling to be a pastoral polemicist is rare” (p. 220).

The book of the Revelation is characterized as representing ministry in a hostile world, which requires a ministry of prophetic proclamation. Tidball recognizes that at first glance this final NT book is not where one would turn for models of pastoral ministry, but implicit within it is found the nature of ministry that is needed “when the church faces hostility and even the threat of annihilation” (p. 223).

In his final chapter, Tidball refutes the mistaken notion of the lack of unity in the midst of the diversity of the NT. The various models for ministry that he has identified are varied but “are neither mutually exclusive nor in conflict with one another” (p. 235). He critiques contemporary models of ministry for often “being more rooted in culture than in Christ” (p. 238). He also faults pastors for their oft-uttered complaints about the wide range of expectations being put upon them, while at the same time being unwilling or incapable of sharing the task of ministry by entrusting it to others. He concludes that in all of the NT models ministry is first and foremost about Jesus Christ, and helping the church grow into a community of mature disciples, ministering together “for the glory of God’s name” (p. 246).

One might not agree with all of Tidball’s exegetical conclusions, such as his conclusion that Paul is addressing women deacons and not the wives of deacons in 1 Tim 3:11 (p. 157). It is also possible to quibble with his choice of terminology in some instances. In discussing the ministry of an “elder statesman,” he says that Paul demonstrated three required gifts: the ability to mentor; the ability to learn from experience; and the awareness to be “in tune with the needs of the hour” (pp. 160–61). In light of the significance of the term “gift” in the NT understanding of ministry (see Ephesians 4), is it really the appropriate word here?

Tidball’s most debatable characterizations of NT ministry may be in his choice of chapter titles. While the schism evident in the background of John’s letters may indicate a portrayal of “ministry in a compromised church,” is it accurate to designate Matthew as “ministry in a divided church,” Mark as “ministry in an oppressed culture,” or John as “ministry in a spiritual desert”? Are the titles “ministry in a half-hearted church” and “ministry in a despised church” accurate as summaries of the portrayal of ministry in James and 1 Peter? However, these perhaps unfortunate choices of chapter titles are minor problems that in no way diminish the value of this work, which provides helpful insights into pastoral ministry. *Ministry by the Book* is a valuable resource for anyone who takes the NT seriously in looking for biblically acceptable models for ministry in today’s church.

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*Divine Impassibility and the Mystery of Human Suffering*. Edited by James F. Keating and Thomas Joseph White. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009, x + 357 pp., \$45.00 paper.

The first thing to note about *Divine Impassibility and the Mystery of Human Suffering* (hereafter *DIMHS*) is that because it is a collection of essays advancing different perspectives on divine impassibility, it is somewhat difficult to review as a singular piece. What is lacking from such a publication is the kind of clear overarching thesis that would normally bind a single-authored monograph together. Of course, since a multi-perspective approach is part of the design, this does not count as a deficiency for *DIMHS*. Consequently, though, the book must be judged, not so much on the development of an

overarching thesis as on the contributions of the individual essays themselves. On the plus side, what is gained in this format is a lively and stimulating debate over a doctrine that may, at one and the same time, be both conceptually difficult for the average believer to understand and yet profoundly relevant to our walk in a fallen world. Indeed, as the editors suggest in their introductory chapter (p. 2), and as the book's title itself indicates, one of the primary motives for reconsidering the doctrine of divine impassibility is the *human* experience of suffering.

At the outset of this review, it should be pointed out that *DIMHS* originated from the contributors' participation in a conference, held under the same title, at Providence College in 2007. As I did not attend the conference, my analysis will, of necessity, be limited to the final published form of these essays. Not surprisingly, the essays in *DIMHS* vary as to their value and contribution to the debate over divine impassibility. So, rather than merely summarize each of the essays, my aim in this review is first to categorize the essays in a couple of different ways, then to interact with the best of the passibilist and impassibilist presentations before finally rendering my overall assessment of the volume as a whole.

One additional preliminary tidbit: allowing for all the nuanced variations of passibilism and impassibilism, it appears that the contributors to *DIMHS* who may rightly be designated as some form of impassibilist outnumbered the contributors who would best be deemed passibilistic by a ratio of roughly two to one. This is not surprising, considering that the conference was hosted at a Catholic institution and that the majority of the contributors are themselves Catholic. What is interesting, however, is that this ratio is not reflective of the broader sweep of modern Protestant theology in which passibilism appears to have replaced impassibilism as the majority view.

Returning to the arguments within the book itself, several authors utilize historical approaches to the question of divine impassibility. In particular, several essays focus their analyses through the lens of a particularly seminal theologian. Essays that adopt this methodology as a primary focus include Bruce McCormack's passibilist reading of Karl Barth, Trent Pomplun's chapter on Hilary of Poitiers, and Paul Gondreau's chapter on Thomas Aquinas's reading of Christ's suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane. Indeed, in terms of key church historical figures, Thomas Aquinas is perhaps the most frequently engaged theologian in the book (with Cyril of Alexandria a close second)—a fact that, again, is not surprising given the number of Catholic contributors to *DIMHS*. A couple of essays in *DIMHS*, such as the contributions from Paul Gavrilyuk and Gilles Emery, also attempt to give a wider survey of the history of debate over divine impassibility. Certainly, the historical dimensions of the discussion receive great attention by the authors.

A couple of the authors adopt the approach of focusing on key moments in the life of Christ. In this case, the main examples are Gondreau's aforementioned Thomistic reflection on Christ's experience in the Garden of Gethsemane and Bruce Marshall's essay on Jesus' cry of dereliction from the cross.

Interestingly enough, as it turns out, a couple of the essays—though otherwise thoughtful—provide very little in the way of formal reflection on divine impassibility. The contribution from the late Avery Dulles, for example, virtually bypass the topic of divine impassibility altogether, with little more than a fleeting reference to Thomas Weinandy's earlier book *Does God Suffer?* Dulles, instead, devotes most of his attention to a survey of the problem of evil and human suffering, without connecting those reflections to the topic of divine impassibility. David Bentley Hart's essay also largely avoids direct engagement with the doctrine of divine impassibility. This was unexpected, as Hart is firmly on the record in his impassibilism in several recent publications. Hart begins his essay by laboring the importance of a proper understanding of divine tran-

scendence, which is, of course, a critical place to begin a discussion of divine impassibility. However, instead of detailing that point over against passibilist claims, Hart spends most of the rest of his essay with his criticisms aimed at (mainly Thomistic) determinists for failing to adequately grasp the true nature of divine transcendence (pp. 307–12). Consequently, Hart's essay has less to do with the doctrine of divine impassibility than with his attempt to establish the claim that the God of determinism is evil and should therefore be discarded (pp. 310, 317, 321).

Theologically speaking, there are many facets to this debate, though they do not all receive equal treatment among the authors of this book. Among this collection of authors, it seems that, above other possible theological considerations, two particular issues garner the most extensive treatment. The first focal theological issue in *DIMHS* is the incarnational component of the debate. Here the central question is usually broached along these lines: if the two-natured Jesus experienced suffering and death in the incarnation, how can we say that his divine nature did not experience pathos along with his human nature? In assessing this question, the essays contributed by Gavriilyuk, Gondreau, and Marshall are among the most capable and/or thought-provoking treatments of this aspect in *DIMHS*.

Paul Gavriilyuk's essay reprises the helpful contribution originally provided in his recent book, *The Suffering of the Impassible God: The Dialectics of Patristic Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). Gavriilyuk's in-depth analysis of the patristic treatment of divine impassibility leads him to the conclusion that patristic discussion of God's impassibility "commonly appears in the context of other apophatic markers of the divine transcendence. . . . This implies that *divine impassibility is primarily a meta-physical term, marking God's unlikeness to everything in the created order, not a psychological term denoting* (as modern passibilists allege) *God's emotional apathy*" (p. 139; emphasis his). The Christological consequence of understanding divine impassibility in this way, according to Gavriilyuk, is that divine impassibility qualifies the manner in which the incarnate Son underwent suffering (p. 143). That is, the incarnate Son experienced suffering *humanly*, and the impassibility of his divine nature ensured that the Son's experience of suffering would not leave him conquered by suffering and death, but rather the conqueror of those two great enemies. And, as Gavriilyuk further argues, this view of the incarnation is critical, because true divine compassion is not found in the passibilistic view of one who eternally joins us as a hapless victim of suffering, but is instead found in the love-inspired action ultimately to rescue us from such suffering (p. 145).

Paul Gondreau reaches a similar conclusion in his chapter on Thomas Aquinas and Christ's experience in Gethsemane. After detailing the distinction Thomas draws between a more instinctive (*voluntas ut natura*) and a more deliberative (*voluntas ut ratio*) aspect of Christ's human will (pp. 224–39), Gondreau emphasizes Thomas's explanation of the "unique mode of being" of Jesus' human nature, which as a human nature is the same as ours, though it uniquely subsists in a divine person, i.e., the Word (p. 240; cf. Marshall's treatment of Cyril on this "unique mode"; pp. 257–58). What naturally follows from this claim is a recognition that "the Word is the acting subject of this humanity" (p. 241).

And yet, according to Bruce Marshall, this does not amount to *divine* suffering, for as he explains in his own essay, "Natures do not suffer or act. Persons do, because they have a nature that allows them to suffer, and to act" (p. 281–82). In other words, natures do not act in the abstract; persons with a nature capable of action do (hence the concept of enhypostasis). The point that Marshall develops here is that since the second person of the Trinity did not have a nature capable of suffering, he had to take on a human nature through which he would be able to experience *human* suffering. I would simply

add to Marshall's argument the observation that it was Jesus' suffering and death, *as a man*, that was the soteriologically necessitated point of the incarnation and crucifixion in the first place.

Most of the impassibilist contributors to *DIMHS* seem to agree on this point, insofar as their essays touched on the incarnational component. It was somewhat puzzling, then, when Gondreau, who started down this same path, winds up affirming that Jesus' divine nature does experience suffering as a result of the communication of idioms (pp. 243–44). In my judgment, Gondreau would have been better served to heed the direction of Marshall who, expanding on his previously quoted statement, contends that "Christ's human *nature* did not suffer in his passion, any more than his divine nature did. He, the person of the Word become flesh, suffered, because he had assumed a nature that exposes its possessors to suffering. . . . As much suffers as can: the whole person, on account of his human, not his divine, nature" (283; emphasis his).

Gondreau does, however, helpfully conclude that "God could do no more to prove he is anything but cold or indifferent to our suffering than to take on a nature capable of suffering" (p. 245). Indeed, in light of the incarnation and cross, it is difficult to claim that God is aloof or uncaring. Thus, perhaps, it is not as straightforwardly easy to attribute passibility to the divine nature, as a result of the cross, as some passibilists seem to suggest. In fact, as we have seen from several of the aforementioned impassibilistic contributors to *DIMHS*, the very logic of the incarnation appears to tell against the thesis of *divine* suffering.

The incarnational discussion leads us into a consideration of the closely connected second theological emphasis within the pages of *DIMHS*, namely, the Trinitarian facet of the debate over divine impassibility. Here the debated question may be stated as follows: if the incarnate Christ experienced suffering and death in redemptive history, what bearing, if any, does that suffering have on the eternal intra-Trinitarian relationships? In *DIMHS*, there is a clear disagreement between those authors, on the one hand, who tend toward a defense of eternal divine suffering within the Trinity, and those authors, on the other hand, who critique what they perceive as the errors of such a view.

In connection with this Trinitarian dimension, I found Gary Culpepper's chapter to be imprecise, for despite his affirmation that God is eternally characterized by suffering (pp. 78–80), his claim is, nevertheless, predicated on the usage of an extremely weakened sense of the term "suffering." Specifically, Culpepper adopts the sense of being "moved by another" as the definition of suffering that he employs in his case for divine passibility. As a result, he argues that "suffering" is part of the eternal Trinitarian experience, because Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are each moved by the others in their inter-relationships (p. 90). The problem here is that, in using such a weakened definition of "suffering," Culpepper actually ceases to address the impassibility question. In other words, asserting that God allows himself to be "moved by another," whether *ad intra* or *ad extra*, does not support the case for divine passibility, because that is not the claim of contemporary passibilism. Indeed, many impassibilists are quite happy to affirm that God is "moved by another." The key issue is whether or not God is so moved *voluntarily* or against his will. So, when Culpepper follows his claim that there is an eternal experience of "suffering" in the Trinity, with the qualification that "this does not affirm that in God, according to the divine nature, there exists any defect, such as physical or emotional pain, all of which are proper only to the form of suffering found in creatures" (pp. 90–91; cf. p. 97), it seems that he has removed from himself the footing necessary to identify as a passibilist.

In addition to Culpepper's analysis, the exchange between Weinandy and Jenson was both interesting and apparently quite heated. But, more so even than those two essays, the main showdown on the Trinitarian component of this debate came in the contrasting essays by Bruce McCormack and Bruce Marshall. Though the conceptual



relationship of the economic and the immanent Trinity only constitutes a portion of each essay, their respective reflections on the matter helpfully illustrate some of the key differences between passibilists and impassibilists on this point.

McCormack's interpretation of Barth on this point was very intriguing, for he argues that when it comes to the quest for a "single-subject Christology," Barth is "Cyril in reverse" (p. 169). He agrees that both Cyril and Barth seek a single-subject Christology, but argues that they do so in different ways. Not surprisingly, McCormack prefers Barth's solution. Specifically, McCormack argues that Cyril's single-subject Christology comes as a result of the Logos' "instrumentalization" of the human Jesus" (p. 168), whereas Barth contends that the man Jesus is the "performative agent" of all his actions owing to a "novel understanding of the trinitarian relations" (p. 169; cf. p. 177).

McCormack, then, proceeds to explain that, for Barth, the eternal obedience of the Son is essential to God, such that "the divine decision which sets in motion the economy of salvation is the act which *constitutes* God as God" (p. 171; emphasis his). With respect to divine impassibility, McCormack suggests that this "smoothing out" of Barth's position protects the divine immutability in a way that Barth would have appreciated by "making the divine suffering in time to be the outworking of an eternal humility that is truly *essential* to God" (p. 173; emphasis his). In other words, whereas earlier theologians would typically have thought of immutability and impassibility as corollaries, McCormack's argument is that Barth divided the two (p. 173). On these terms, God's immutability is no longer an immutability free from suffering, but is instead an immutability of eternally taking up the human suffering of the man Jesus into the divine nature itself. Thus, it seems that, for McCormack, the economic suffering of the man Jesus is the *necessary* outworking and actualization of these eternal intra-Trinitarian relationships.

Consider the following comment from McCormack: "the modality of receptivity vis-à-vis the man Jesus is not merely an economic relationship; it is rather that which constitutes God's second 'mode of being' already in eternity-past. The second 'person' of the Trinity is not a Logos *asarkos* considered in abstraction from the human 'nature' to be assumed. The second 'person' of the Trinity is the God-man. So even in the act of hypostatic *uniting*, the 'subject' who performs that action is the God-man, Jesus Christ in his divine-human unity. What happens in time in the historical enfleshment is simply the actualization in history of that which God has determined for himself from eternity and which, therefore, is already real in him" (p. 178; emphasis his). In all of this, Barth's motivation, according to McCormack, was the desire to avoid bifurcating between God in himself and God for us (pp. 165–66).

McCormack's chapter is well written and stimulating. Indeed, I found myself in agreement with several of his observations. I concur, for example, with his affirmation of the eternal *functional* submission of the Son to the Father, as part of the distinction in relationships between the Trinitarian persons. I further agree that, in itself, this claim does not amount to Arianism, which maintains a subordination of *essence* by the Son to the Father. Nevertheless, McCormack's manner of relating the economic to the immanent still leaves something to be desired. (I address this as McCormack's view, because he claims to hold and to smooth out Barth's position.) Indeed, the errors that follow from wrongly connecting the economic and the immanent can be disastrous, and it was, at precisely this point, that Bruce Marshall's essay offers such capable guidance.

Marshall offers some significant Trinitarian reflections in section six of his essay, but his Trinitarian analysis, which is squarely opposed to McCormack's on this point, culminates in section eight. There, he develops in some detail the unpalatable consequences of making the identity of the Trinitarian persons dependent on temporal events (p. 284). Citing McCormack's essay explicitly, Marshall observes, "On this reading, Barth apparently holds that the Father is constituted as a divine person . . . by a

command that a particular act take place in time, namely the humble obedience of the man Jesus. Presumably this command also constitutes the man Jesus as the Son of God, 'positing' him as a divine person distinct from the Father (or perhaps Jesus' actual obedience to the command does this). A command whose content is the performance of a historical action is, we could say, an identity-constituting property of God the Father: without this command, he would not be the Father, but someone or something else. Similarly, being commanded to undertake this historical action is, it seems, an identity-constituting property of the man Jesus, and just so of God the Son, as a divine person" (p. 284).

As Marshall sees it, there are essentially two alternatives—both of them undesirable—available to someone like McCormack, who collapses the immanent Trinity into the economic and so construes the identity of the Trinitarian persons as dependent on temporal events. Either, the "identity of each divine person is itself contingent," or the "temporal actions, events, or states of affairs on which the identity of each divine person depends are themselves necessary" (p. 286). After stating the alternatives in this manner, Marshall then relentlessly unpacks the prospects of each option.

The former possibility, again, is that the identity of the Trinitarian persons is *contingent*, in which case "the Son comes forth from God not by nature, but by will . . . indeed by the same free act in which God contingently constitutes himself as Father" (p. 287). In other words, on these terms, God's being a Trinity is not an eternally necessary reality. Put differently, God is only a Trinity "for us" by choice. In going this route, however, what God is in himself, before willing to be a Trinity, now becomes permanently inscrutable. Marshall's response to the question of who makes the decision to be a Trinity is telling: "'God,' presumably, but not God the Father, God the Son, or God the Holy Spirit. These three are the contingent outcome of God's decision about who he will be . . . and so cannot individually or jointly be the ones who make it. 'For us,' God is the Trinity, and what we know of God always depends on the way God is for us in his temporal actions. As a result, who or what it is that makes the decision to be the Trinity for us is truly the unknown God" (p. 288). Ironically, those who go this route wind up losing what they had hoped to gain, because, on the terms of divine contingency, the bifurcation between God "for us" and God "in himself" that they sought to avoid, winds up becoming permanently established.

Since that alternative is self-defeating, many Trinitarian passibilists opt instead for the second alternative. In so doing, they now claim that the identity of Trinitarian persons is not contingent, while still insisting that their identity is dependent on economic events, in this case, particularly the event of the cross. Such a maneuver does indeed avoid the problem of contingency, but in so doing, these proponents run headlong into the problem of making certain temporal events necessarily constitutive of the divine identity. Whereas, in the former case (i.e., contingency), "the Son comes forth from God not by nature, but by will," in this case, the economic events upon which God's identity is predicated are now *necessary* to the very being of God. To be sure, on these terms, God "in himself" is precisely the same as God "for us" (p. 289). But God is not free. Creation, sin, and the cross now come "forth from God by nature, and not by will" (p. 289).

As Marshall puts it with respect to the necessity of creation that follows from this alternative, "God will not only create this world necessarily, as the place in which alone he can give and obey this particular command. He will create this world *in order to* give the command obeyed on Calvary. The triune God needs this world, logically and ontologically, so that he can undertake the non-contingent actions in which his identity consists. The very existence of this created world will not, therefore, be an act of pure generosity on God's part, a free sharing of his goodness unexacted by anything in God, let alone by the not-yet-existent creature. It will be an act of self-preservation on God's

part, an act undertaken in his own interests, not the creature's" (p. 290; emphasis his). More than that, with respect to sin, Marshall lucidly adds, "a world in which even one innocent person is crucified is a fallen world, one marked by sin. According to" this alternative "a crucified innocent belongs non-contingently to God's identity, to the Son as the innocent one who undergoes the cross, and to the Father as the one who commands it. This means, though, that God needs more than this created world in order to be himself. In order to carry out the temporal acts that make him who he is, God needs this world's *sin*" (p. 290; emphasis his). The upshot, for this alternative, is that "God does not really will this created world . . . or its sin. They just occur, inexorably, given who God is. Creation and sin are not so much personal acts as inevitable events" (p. 291).

From there, Marshall surveys other possible ways of tweaking these alternatives, in order to show that, ultimately, there is no escape from this dilemma. Accordingly, he observes that, "when confronted by the problems one of these options poses," Trinitarian passibilists typically "take refuge in the other, oscillating between two mutually exclusive, and equally undesirable, alternatives" (p. 291). In the end, he argues that the cross only saves us if it is a unique redemptive event and not the necessary identity-forming extension of God's own eternal suffering (p. 297; cf. Gavrilyuk's four-fold criticism of eternal divine suffering; p. 147). Thus, Marshall sides with the tradition in affirming that the Son of God suffers for us, redemptively, in virtue of the human nature that he assumes (p. 297).

In all of this, it is important to note with Marshall that Jesus is more, and not less, vibrant in zeal than sinners on account of his incarnate passion. Marshall recognizes that the sin Jesus mourns on the cross is clearly not his own sin, but ours. And yet, "his sorrow over all the sins of the world brings with it a suffering in body and soul which is his own, and which has no parallel in our suffering—we who do not mourn our own sin, let alone the sins of others, as Jesus does" (p. 273).

On the whole, though the merits of the individual essays vary a bit, the book itself is a valuable addition to the long-standing debate over divine impassibility. While it does not seem that an abundance of new ground is broken, one notable development is that in light of recent scholarship—particularly Gavrilyuk's previously cited volume—most of the contributors appear to agree that the Hellenization charge against impassibilism cannot be cast about as recklessly as it has been (pp. 6–7). Furthermore, it appears that even the critics of impassibility in *DIMHS* refrain from superficially dismissing impassibility as patently foolish and unbiblical. This is a commendable departure from much of the contemporary criticism of divine impassibility. In these respects, *DIMHS* provides a nice snapshot of the slightly altered landscape of the debate amongst these reflective Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant scholars.

Theologically speaking, the major strengths of *DIMHS*, as a whole, are its thorough and thoughtful discussions of the focal issues of Christology and Trinitarianism, even as significant distance remains between the passibilist and impassibilist presenters on these aspects of the debate. In addition, as noted above, the doctrinal history of divine impassibility, particularly in the cases of Thomas and Cyril, receives ample attention. At the same time, there are also some areas in which *DIMHS* is lacking. For example, direct textual engagement in *DIMHS* is very selective; more is needed. Moreover, I had hoped to see more specific attention given to the issue of divine emotion and not just to divine suffering. The issue of divine emotion is central to the question of divine impassibility and yet, with a few exceptions (e.g. pp. 55–59, 66–68) this component of the debate receives slight treatment. Lastly, I am of the opinion that *DIMHS* could have benefitted from more of an evangelical presence.

In the end, given the scholarly nature of this book and its point of origin at an academic conference, *DIMHS* is a book for trained theologians or, at least, for theologians

in training at the seminary level. The book simply and understandably was not conceived with the laity in mind as the target audience. Of course, it is no fault of *DIMHS* that it seeks to address the debate over divine impassibility at a high theological level; such is the contribution of scholarship. In the broader collection of publications on divine impassibility, however, what is most discernibly lacking today is a distinctively evangelical assessment of divine impassibility that is both holistic in outlook and competent in scholarship. In addition, there seems to be a place for a more accessible treatment that, while very practically aimed at a more of a lay readership, nevertheless avoids the tendency of more popularly oriented publications to be superficially dismissive of divine impassibility.

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*Atonement: The Person and Work of Christ.* By Thomas F. Torrance. Downer's Grove: InterVarsity, 2009, lxxxiv + 489 pp., \$37.00.

This book is comprised of lectures that T. F. Torrance delivered to his students in Christian Dogmatics at New College, Edinburgh, over the course of twenty six years (1952–1978). Together with its companion volume, *Incarnation*, they form a massive and comprehensive Christology and soteriology. These lectures have been edited into their current book format by Torrance's nephew, Robert Walker (Torrance suffered a stroke in 2003 and was prevented from doing so himself). Torrance is considered by many to be one of the most important theologians of the twentieth century, and this publication makes him accessible to a wider audience, especially to those who might have otherwise passed on his more technical, scholarly publications. This work is a searching and profound theology of the atonement, which for Torrance means more than a mere explication of the cross (though not less). Indeed, *Atonement*, as the subtitle indicates, is a foray into numerous aspects of the person and work of Christ and is, in fact, an extensive soteriology.

One of the defining marks of Torrance's theology, evident throughout these lectures, is his insistence on the inextricable relation between the person of Jesus Christ and the saving work he accomplished on behalf of sinners. It is impossible to speak of what Christ accomplished for sinners in abstraction from who he is in his person. The atonement is, for Torrance, an incarnational event, which is to say that Christ does not merely *perform* salvation; he *is* salvation, so the entirety of Christ in his person and work is involved in the atonement. Thus, chapters which reflect traditional soteriological *loci*—atonement, redemption, justification, and reconciliation—are complemented by those on the saving priesthood, resurrection, ascension, and parousia of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, discussion of the saving person-work of Christ necessarily entails a doctrine of his church and of eschatology—all that Christ has done, and is doing, in his person is relevant to the atonement.

To say this work is searching and profound does not mean it is either abstruse or pedantic. On the contrary, this text is eminently readable, elevated prose that (suitably) suggests of a learned lecture. It is adorned with useful but not cluttered footnotes, most of which have either been provided by the editor to refer the reader to Torrance's other works or to offer references for the innumerable biblical allusions in the text. As for accoutrements, the editor provides a very useful, extended introduction to the leading themes in the lectures. Also included are a bibliography for further reading, a glossary of theological terms, and general and biblical indices. What follows is an attempt to highlight several important chapters and themes in a theologically incisive work.

Chapter 1 serves as something of a prolegomena to the work, asserting the sheer enigma of the atonement: “the innermost mystery of atonement and intercession remains mystery: it cannot be spelled out, and it cannot be spied out. That is the ultimate mystery of the blood of Christ, the blood of God incarnate, a holy and infinite mystery which is more to be adored than expressed” (p. 2). However, this does not mean that the Bible does not articulate a theology of the atonement. Indeed, the Old Testament covenant—exemplified at Sinai in God’s self-giving and drawing of his people into communion with himself (“I shall be their God and they shall be my people”)—prefigures and helps elucidate the mystery of the atonement in Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, the atonement remains unimaginable outside of the person and work of Jesus Christ, the covenant-fulfiller, God acting on behalf of God and man as the atoning sacrifice. The meaning of the atonement is expressed by Jesus in the giving of his blood, through which we are reconciled and by which we return to communion with the Father as dear children—“which the sacrament expresses better than words” (p. 22). The meaning is also exemplified by Mark 10:45, which Torrance interprets to mean that Jesus includes the whole course of his life and obedience in the affirmation “I give my life as a ransom”; Jesus did not divorce his death from his life. His life as the servant comes to its completion in his sacrifice on the cross, but the significance of that sacrifice reposes also upon the fact that he has lived out a life of perfect obedience to the Father’s will in the midst of our estranged humanity” (p. 22).

Chapter 2 includes a fairly lengthy word study of three Hebrew roots for *redemption* that factor significantly in the NT, and are assimilated into the life and work of Jesus Christ. Although the three concepts overlap in meaning, Torrance distinguishes them by way of their historical use in the church: the dramatic aspect of the atonement (*padah*), the cultic-forensic aspect (*kipper*), and the ontological/incarnational aspect (*goel*). Taken together, as Torrance insists they should be, these redemptive concepts constitute the fullness of Christ’s saving work and cohere, for instance, in the *triplex munus*. Various ecclesiastical traditions and historical periods have, however, tended to overstress (or distort) one aspect of the atonement to the detriment of the holistic biblical understanding. For example, Torrance thought the danger in his day was an overemphasis on the dramatic element, represented by the *Christus victor* motif, and notes that Evangelical Protestantism has historically combined a penal-substitutionary forensic emphasis with a “narrowed view of justification” (p. 57). For those familiar with Torrance, it will come as no surprise that he highlights the ontological/incarnational aspect of redemption as that which provides the inner cohesion of all three. These redemptive categories fold over into a chapter on the priesthood of Christ, in which Torrance emphasizes, among other things, the eternal, heavenly priesthood of the resurrected Christ, who performed not only the *act* of atonement but is *himself* the atonement, and is so forever.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 comprise Torrance’s exploration of a Pauline theology of the atonement, addressing the concepts of justification, reconciliation, and redemption, respectively. Each chapter begins with a study of the relevant biblical terms (e.g. *dikaioyne*, *katallassō*, *lytrōsis*) and proceeds to explicate atonement in light of Paul’s thought. Much of what Torrance says in these chapters is classically Protestant and Reformed, though hardly regurgitated and never stale. His thoughts are vital and exuberant, often bringing compelling and provocative insight into even well-worn matters. The chapter on justification provides a case in point. To be sure, Torrance addresses the kinds of topics one might expect in such a chapter, such as the righteousness of God, the law, sin, God’s justice and mercy, and faith. But he also expounds some profoundly biblical and (perfectly orthodox) ideas in relatively unconventional terms, to which many evangelicals will be unaccustomed: the grounding of justification in the resurrection; the idea of justification as incorporation into the body of Jesus Christ; justification as participation in the new humanity and righteousness inaugurated in Christ; and

imputation as both forensic and eschatological, both aspects of which are enshrined in the sacraments. Torrance's insights are surely germane to the recent, heightened debates over justification. Chapters 5 and 6 shall have to pass without extended comment, except to note his discussion of reconciliation as the "wonderful exchange" between Christ and sinner (chap. 5), and his much-discussed understanding of the extent of the atonement (chap. 6), which is both an enlightening and challenging read, given that Torrance espouses what may be called a universal atonement without simultaneously accepting universal salvation.

The chapters on the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ occupy 114 pages of the volume, giving the reader an indication of the importance Torrance attached to these redemptive events, which he views as necessary for the accomplishment and realization of the atoning work of Christ. For example, the resurrection is inseparably related to, and the actualization of, both the incarnation and the atonement, standing as the decisive approbation of creation. Justification is itself unthinkable and distorted without proper recognition of the resurrected Christ. The ascension, says Walker, was for Torrance "one of the most important of all theological doctrines" (p. li). The ascension means, *inter alia*, that Jesus has taken us up into the unity and communion of God in the Trinity, and by ascending he sends the Spirit, through whom we (the church) are united to Christ to enjoy all the blessings of salvation. Thus it becomes clear that resurrection and ascension are essential and not peripheral soteriological doctrines.

Chapter 10 deals with the doctrine of Scripture and will be of great interest to many (a word on that below), as will the inclusion of a following chapter on ecclesiology; after all, the church is conspicuously absent from most books on salvation. For an evangelicalism that possesses a rather thin ecclesiology, Torrance may just prove helpful. His ecclesiology is richly trinitarian, communal, and intimate. His absorbing account of the church as the body of Christ is a natural outworking of his understanding of union with Jesus Christ: "It is only through participating and sharing in Christ that the church is to be regarded as his body, as his image and likeness among mankind, as the expression of his love and truth, as the reflection of his humility and glory, as the instrument of his gospel" (p. 363). So, too, the very attributes of the church—*notae ecclesiae*: the Nicene "one, holy, catholic, apostolic"—are not independent properties of the church; rather "[t]hey are first of all attributes of Christ himself, but attributes in which the church shares through its union and communion with him" (p. 381). A final chapter on eschatology, in which Torrance focuses on the tension created by God entering into time in the radically substitutionary life, death and resurrection of Christ, and the encounter thereby created between old and new creation and death and life, serves as the fitting conclusion to the study.

The theological depth of this volume makes it resistant to easy categorization, generalization, and the necessary brevity of a book review. The preceding chapter accounts are but mere snapshots of a much larger theological mosaic. Before concluding, some defining characteristics of Torrance's mosaic are worth noting, a few of which may be of particular interest to readers of *JETS*. First, Torrance was a student of Karl Barth at the University of Basel and served as editor of the 13-volume *Church Dogmatics*. Barth's imprint is discernible throughout, although Torrance may strike some as clearer in expression and perhaps more conservative in theology. The Barthian undertones are manifest, for instance, in Torrance's doctrine of the Word of God. The Bible is the inspired, written Word—which Torrance calls the "secondary text"—and has as its *content* Jesus Christ himself—whom Torrance refers to as the "primary text." The two "texts" are not to be confused, nor are they to be separated. Thus, the written Word bears a sacramental relation to the living Word: the written Word objectively makes known and brings Jesus Christ, who is himself subjectively received through the Spirit. Torrance's bibliology, as Barth's, is sure to be vigorously debated among evangelicals.

Second, for Torrance the atonement is never abstracted from the very person of Jesus Christ, the incarnate One who fully unites humankind to God; soteriology flows uninterruptedly from incarnational Christology. Salvation is thus “contained” in the person of Christ insofar as all the benefits of salvation are found only “in him” (a NT emphasis, for which Torrance is undoubtedly indebted also to John Calvin). This is a pervasive theme in Torrance and accounts for his stress on the necessity of being united to the person of Christ in faith (the faith of the individual being a derivative of Christ’s faithfulness, to anticipate a contemporary debate regarding the Greek phrase *pistis Christou*). This theme also accounts for (1) the importance of the incarnation in Torrance’s understanding of salvation; (2) the ubiquitous references to Baptism and the Lord’s Supper—which help to elucidate that union; and (3) his inclusion of a doctrine of the church—“the body of Jesus Christ”—in his soteriology. It further accounts for his insistence that justification can never be reduced to a merely legal or forensic notion, given that salvation is first of all a participation in the incarnate Son of God.

The publication of Torrance’s lectures provides the most thorough and accessible avenue into his theology and is bound to make a significant impact on the theological world, particularly the evangelical world, for many years to come. While this volume can certainly stand alone, its depth is best mined by attending to Torrance’s preceding, companion volume, *Incarnation* (InterVarsity, 2008). The two together constitute a sweeping, comprehensive Christo-soteriology that contemporary theologians should hardly ignore. This highly recommended work is not necessarily beyond the level of the undergraduate student or theological novice, but may be best suited for the educated layperson, pastor, or graduate student (its original audience).

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*Salvation and Sovereignty: A Molinist Approach.* By Kenneth Keathley. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2010, vii + 232 pp., \$24.99 paper.

Kenneth Keathley has proposed a third way, a *tertium quid*, between Calvinism and Arminianism that he believes is biblically successful. He is frustrated with Calvinism’s view that God is the cause of all things and believes such a claim cannot be substantiated by Scripture. Keathley’s “work contends that (contrary to the teachings of many in Reformed circles) God’s sovereignty cannot be understood in terms of necessity, nor can human actions be defined in terms of causal determinism” (p. 14). Instead, “I will make the case for a middle knowledge approach to God’s sovereignty and a soft libertarian understanding of human choice” (p. 15). Consequently, he rejects Calvinism’s TULIP and demands that ROSES be the flower of choice: R for radical depravity, O for overcoming grace, S for sovereign election, E for eternal life, and S for singular redemption.

Unfortunately, Keathley’s middle way proposal is unbiblical and theologically inconsistent; therefore, several criticisms are in order. First, his “Biblical Case for Molinism” lacks the biblical justification he thinks it provides. While he demonstrates biblically that God possesses counterfactual knowledge, he never shows from Scripture that God ever uses his middle knowledge in his deliberation of what world to ordain, a serious problem for Keathley because “Molinism does not merely argue that God knows all counterfactual truths of creaturely freedom; it contends that God uses all such counterfactual knowledge” (p. 39). He fails to show scriptural support for his claim, leaving the case for Molinism without biblical warrant. Indeed, even Keathley admits, “Scripture never states explicitly that God utilizes middle knowledge to accomplish his

will” (p. 41). He must settle instead for a “reasonable proposal” that draws from questionable textual inferences rather than one that is biblically grounded. Furthermore, Keathley insists that God, whether by his natural, middle, or free knowledge, is omniscient, knowing all things past, present, and future, including the free will choices of man. Yet he is adamant that God’s foreknowledge in no way implies necessity or determinism. Keathley clings to libertarian freedom, believing that though God knows the exact choice a person will make, the agent still possesses the ability to choose otherwise. But how is it that the agent is able to do otherwise if God possesses true, factual, and guaranteed knowledge that the agent will indeed choose one thing and not another? The grounding objection is left unanswered, and the fatal tension between divine omniscience and libertarian freedom remains. Keathley believes this problem is inconsequential for his view, admitting that “how exactly God knows what free creatures will decide and choose remains unknown” (p. 13). Toward the end of the book Keathley even confesses that he cannot solve this dilemma between God’s omniscience and man’s libertarian freedom (p. 161). His excuse, however, is that he would rather place the mystery in God’s omniscience rather than in God’s righteousness, which the Calvinist does (according to Keathley) in making God the author of sin. What he fails to realize is that if he cannot solve the serious dilemma of reconciling libertarian freedom with God’s omniscience, then he is left with a weak, impotent God who cannot know or control the future.

As for a second criticism, in chapter two Keathley argues against the Reformed distinction between God’s revealed, preceptive will and God’s decretive, hidden will. Instead, he argues for the traditional Arminian distinction between God’s antecedent and consequent will. Antecedently, God desires and wills that all be saved, but consequent to foreseeing that not all would choose to believe, God wills that only those who believe will be saved. The difference is apparent: the Arminian conditions God’s will on man’s free will, whereas the Calvinist conditions man’s will on God’s sovereign choice. Keathley sides with the Arminian position and argues that because God is love, he could never desire or will the damnation of the lost. Nevertheless, Keathley is far from persuasive on this point. While he presents several objections to the Reformed distinction (e.g. God is made to be hypocritical; God is made the author of evil), he never actually addresses the exact texts Calvinists believe justify the distinction between the hidden and revealed will (e.g. Exod 4:21; Acts 2:23; 4:27–28; Rev 17:16–17). If the debate is to be decided on scriptural grounds, then Calvinism’s appeal to Scripture for the distinction in God’s will remains intact.

Third, perhaps one of the most surprising and unfortunate moves Keathley makes is in his chapter on “Overcoming Grace.” He rejects the distinction between a special, effectual call and a general, gospel call, despite the many passages that affirm otherwise (e.g. Matt 11:28; Act 17:30; John 6:35–65; 1 Cor 1:18–31; Rom 8:28–30). Instead, Keathley sides with Arminianism in arguing that God’s grace is only effective if man does not resist it. That is, God’s grace overcomes as long as man does not exercise his libertarian free will to reject it. Consequently, conversion precedes regeneration in the *ordo salutis*, thereby conditioning God’s effectiveness on human free will. Any synergistic Arminian would warmly welcome Keathley’s *ordo*. Shockingly, Keathley then insists that his view is still monergistic. He defines monergism broadly as God working alone to save. Keathley is extremely misleading at this point, because the Reformed tradition (e.g. Hodge, Berkhof, Frame) has always defined monergism as including the belief that regeneration causally precedes conversion. God’s unilateral act to awaken the dead sinner to new life is not conditioned upon one’s faith, but one’s faith is the result of God’s regenerate act (Ezek 36:26; John 1:12–13; 3:6–8).

Moreover, Keathley’s reasoning as to why conversion precedes regeneration is exegetically fallacious. He argues that passages such as Luke 7:50 (“Your faith has saved



you”) and Acts 16:31 (“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved”) show that conversion precedes regeneration (cf. Rom 10:9), whereby “saved” refers to regeneration. He applies the same logic to passages on “eternal life.” For example, his understanding of John 3:36 (“The one who believes in the Son has eternal life” (cf. John 5:24; 1 Tim 1:16) equates eternal life with regeneration. This is poor and reductionistic exegesis on Keathley’s part. Why should the reader interpret “saved” or “eternal life” in such a narrow manner, equating them with regeneration? Why not interpret them as referring to conversion, justification, or adoption? Why interpret “saved” as referring to any particular aspect of the *ordo salutis* at all? Why not understand it as referring to deliverance from hell or the promise of heaven? Such an exegetical error becomes obvious if one applies Keathley’s logic to other texts. For example, Matt 10:22 would have to read “All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be regenerated (saved).” Likewise, Paul would be saying to the Corinthians to expel the evil brother “for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be regenerated (saved) in the day of the Lord” (1 Cor 5:5; cf. Rom 13:11; 1 Cor 3:15; 1 Tim 2:15; 4:16). And again, Rom 2:6–7 would have to read “He will render to each one according to his work; to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give regeneration (eternal life)” (cf. 6:23; Gal 6:8; 1 Tim 6:19; Titus 1:2; 3:7). Such interpretation is a classic case of eisegesis, whereby one reads one’s theological agenda into the text.

Coming to a fourth criticism, Keathley’s work lacks significant research. For example, he presents an overwhelming picture of God’s universal love for all and concludes that God antecedently wills the salvation of all. However, in *The Difficult Doctrine of the Love of God*, D. A. Carson has demonstrated that God’s love is much more complex than the Arminian makes it out to be. Yes, God has a universal love for all people, but God also has an unconditional, special, efficacious, particular, and restricted love for his elect, a love that excludes unbelievers and is not contingent upon human choice. Regrettably, Keathley never interacts with Carson’s arguments. A second example is evident in Keathley’s defense of Molinism where he fails to address other scholars such as Paul Helm who raise serious objections. Such an omission is regrettable, if not inexcusable. The same is true for Keathley’s defense of soft libertarianism. John Feinberg, in *No One Like Him*, spends chapters refuting libertarianism biblically and philosophically; likewise, John Frame, in *The Doctrine of God*, lists eighteen reasons why libertarianism fails. Yet Keathley never responds to either (Frame even fails to make Keathley’s bibliography!). Moreover, when he does interact with the opposing view, he tends to pick the most extreme representatives (e.g. hyper-Calvinists such as Engelsma and Hoeksema), which only misrepresents the Reformed view. For example, when discussing how Calvinists handle the origin of evil, Keathley chooses R. C. Sproul, Jr. (not Sr.), who says God is the direct cause of sin. Keathley confesses that this extreme position strays drastically from the entire Reformed tradition in attributing evil to God, yet Keathley persists in using it in his refutation of the Calvinist view. One gets the impression at times that Keathley is simply avoiding opposing arguments from the best of the Reformed tradition.

Fifth, Keathley presents his work as an alternative to both Calvinism and Arminianism. However, it becomes obvious that the majority of his views adheres to the conditionality of Arminianism. Keathley tries to veil his Arminian tendencies with the acronym ROSES, but almost every one of his chapters identifies with Arminianism, as he conditions the will of God on libertarian human freedom. Moreover, Keathley seems to be less than transparent in his identity. For instance, he states that he agrees with three out of the five points of Calvinism (i.e. total depravity, unconditional election, and perseverance), but he then confesses that even these three must undergo serious “re-tooling” (p. 1). Furthermore, the work is exceedingly biased. He presents his view as

a solution to the Calvinism-Arminianism divide; however, his work is almost entirely a critical reaction to Calvinism, lacking any criticism of Arminianism. If Keathley is not overly sympathetic with Arminianism, then why is no critique of Arminianism evident?

Finally, space does not permit me to continue elaborating on the many other problems with this work (e.g. election, the extent of the atonement, assurance, and perseverance), but perhaps one of the most troubling, distracting, and grievous aspects of Keathley's book is the plethora of historical and theological caricatures and misrepresentations of Calvinism. Simply put, there are too many to count. At one point Keathley even associates the atheistic determinism of Richard Dawkins's Darwinianism with Bruce Ware's evangelical compatibilism, thereby committing the error of guilt by association. Later, he even accuses Thomas Schreiner and Ardel Caneday of departing from the Reformation and advocating a view of perseverance that leads to salvation by works. Such caricatures are not only inaccurate but reveal an inability to represent opposing positions fairly.

In conclusion, Keathley's work presents far more problems than solutions. Most importantly, his proposal places the emphasis on the human will rather than on the sovereignty of God, making it difficult for Keathley to consistently and simultaneously cling to libertarian freedom while also agreeing with Paul's statement, "So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy" (Rom 9:16).

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*John Calvin: A Pilgrim's Life.* By Herman J. Selderhuis. Translated by Albert Gootjes. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2009, 287 pp., \$17.50 paper.

Herman J. Selderhuis, professor of church history and polity at the Theological University Apeldoorn in the Netherlands, is also the director of the University's Institute for Reformation Research. In addition to this volume on John Calvin, he has also written Calvin's Theology of the Psalms. The author is widely recognized as one of Europe's leading Reformation historians, so this volume on Calvin is a welcome contribution.

*John Calvin: A Pilgrim's Life* is a thorough and well-written biography of the Reformation's preeminent pastor/theologian. With this in mind, the reader should not be discouraged by the lackluster "Introduction." With a dispassionate tone, the author writes, "In this book, Calvin is approached as neither friend nor enemy; I just do not categorize him in that sense. I feel nothing for Calvin either way, but I am fascinated by him as a person" (p. 8). Although I put down the book for two weeks after reading the "Introduction," I am very glad I picked it up again. This is simply one of the best biographies of Calvin in print, and it contains no evidence of a disinterested author.

The book consists of ten chapters guiding the reader through the life Calvin. Each chapter contains numerous subsections, which makes the book easy to read conceptually. Though limited by the extant material on Calvin's early development, the author succinctly traverses Calvin's family history, education, and turn to Protestantism. These aspects are vividly described, though not with the belabored academic precision of Alister E. McGrath's *A Life of John Calvin* (Blackwell, 1995).

Upon discussing the Reformer's adulthood, one of the author's greatest contributions arises: Calvin's correspondence. In the inception of his book, Selderhuis identifies Calvin's correspondence to be the most important source for the author's biography. Selderhuis demonstrates great command of the content of Calvin's letters and inserts quotations when appropriate. It is in the Reformer's correspondence that the reader senses the true heart and soul of Calvin, not as a man writing for publication, but as a man writing to his contemporaries. Selderhuis observes that Calvin believed his letters

to reveal “the living image” of his soul. In Calvin’s correspondences, his rudeness (p. 30), timidity (p. 31), harshness (p. 71), sensitivity (pp. 107–8, 252–54), humility (p. 94), use of mockery (pp. 164–65), aversion to money (pp. 219–20), discipline (p. 221), sarcasm (p. 227), anger (pp. 231–32), and pleas for forgiveness (p. 255) are revealed. The author’s selection of correspondence provides insight as to the forces shaping the Reformer and his ministry. Of particular interest is his correspondence involving Louis du Tillet, Guillaume Farel, Gérard Roussel, Martin Bucer, Jacopo Sadoletto, Martin Luther, Heinrich Bullinger, Sebastian Castellio, Pierre Ameaux, Ami Perrin, and other prominent figures.

Furthermore, the author does a superb job in relating the influence the Reformer’s theological convictions had upon the evolution of Calvin’s thought. Essential to Calvin’s theological convictions was his unshakable trust in and defense of the sovereignty and majesty of God in all events. In short, “Calvin became God’s advocate. He would devote every minute of the rest of his life to the defense of God and of his cause. Calvin’s is the story of that one God and that one man. He wanted nothing more than to defend God against any attack that deprived him of his due, that made him appear small, or portrayed him as a tyrant or conversely as some kind of Santa Claus. . . . [H]e was in fact simply a shepherd’s watchdog who wanted to protect the sheep, keep the flock with the shepherd and in so doing take the shepherd under his protection. Calvin made himself God’s advocate” (p. 22).

For a biography of its length, Selderhuis sufficiently covers the main aspects of Calvin’s life and ministry. Particular to Geneva, he discusses the important role of the city government in relation to Calvin and the Consistory, the expulsion of 1538, the formative years in Strasbourg with Martin Bucer, the return to Geneva in 1541, and select controversies such as those with the Libertines and with his perennial critics. Other subjects discussed are the nature of Calvin’s views on the arts (music in particular), missionary work, marriage, the debate over the Lord’s Supper, focus on education (particularly the Academy of Geneva), the role of French refugees in Geneva, his physical ailments; even the debated topic of Calvin’s influence on capitalism is broached. Of particular interest is the focus on Calvin’s expository ministry of the Word of God. He lived out his own advice to his students: “boldly dare to do all for God’s Word, and force every power, fame, wisdom and highness to submit to the majesty of the Word and to be obedient to it; supported by the power of the Word, to command all, from the highest to the lowest; to build up the house of Christ, to overturn that of Satan; to pasture the flock, to tear apart the wolves; to educate and spur on the teachable; to punish, rebuke and subdue the rebellious and obstinate; and finally, if necessary, to break out with words of thunder and hurl verbal lightning bolts. But everything through the Word of God” (p. 242).

Of course, no biography of Calvin would be complete without a discussion of the execution of Michael Servetus. The author’s assessment of this event concurs with a majority of scholarship. He writes, “Questions as to whether or not Calvin was mentally disturbed, and perhaps even a psychological case, are raised most often in connection with the Servetus affair. These questions can be answered negatively very quickly upon consideration of the facts, but this is precisely the problem. Over the years, books have created such a clearly crystallized mental image of Calvin that even the facts can hardly change it” (p. 203). Responding to accusations that Calvin was the tyrant of Geneva, Selderhuis offers, “Calvin was certainly not the big boss of Geneva, and in fact had no political power at all” (p. 128). Purposely avoiding a discussion of all the nuances of Servetus’s execution, the author makes a strong case to vindicate Calvin from false charges.

Selderhuis’s style of writing is very engaging (no doubt a debt of gratitude goes to the translator). He possesses the rare gift of making scholarly research eminently readable and understandable. Though not as exhaustive as Bruce Gordon’s *Calvin*

(Yale University Press, 2009), Selderhuis's biography surpasses Gordon's work on several counts, providing valuable insights from which many scholars will benefit. In particular, the author's research into the letters of Calvin is invaluable. One may wish Selderhuis would have more thoroughly discussed Calvin's *Institutes*, but his analysis was adequate. English readers will be frustrated at the lack of accessibility to the majority of the author's citations, but this is the nature of Calvin's primary sources. In this regard, the reader may be unfamiliar with the form of the endnotes not appearing in numerical order (there are no numbers assigned to quotations) but by page number and a brief excerpt of the quote in question. For example, "p. 226 'Jesus Christ was not a tailor': CO 49.681" (p. 282). In addition, the lack of a subject index is a hindrance for further research.

Selderhuis is fair in his treatment of Calvin, approaching controversial issues with historical sensitivity rather than anachronism. For example, in response to the three hundred excommunications of 1559 (out of a Geneva population of 20,000), Selderhuis explains, "To keep things in perspective, we would also do well to remember that in Calvin's context, church discipline and civil law all but coincided, and that breaking the law immediately meant the involvement of the church as well" (p. 216). Just criticism of Calvin also is not withheld, however, and unsavory details of his ministry are examined. Perhaps more could have been said about Calvin's failures in various situations, such as the expulsion of 1538 and the subsequent meeting in Zürich. However, no matter one's opinion of Calvin, I think the reader will be satisfied with this treatment of Calvin's life. Indeed, it is the most enjoyable book I have read in a long time, and I commend it to the reader, confident that Selderhuis's work will be relished.

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*The Surprising Work of God: Harold John Ockenga, Billy Graham, and the Rebirth of Evangelicalism.* By Garth M. Rosell. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008, 288 pp., \$19.99 paper.

Garth M. Rosell is professor of church history at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in Hamilton, MA, and former director of the Ockenga Institute at GCTS. An Americanist historian, he has written or edited eight books, including *The Memoirs of Charles Finney* and *Commending the Faith: The Preaching of D. L. Moody*.

In *The Surprising Work of God*, Rosell unearths the legacy of neo-evangelicalism, the mid-twentieth-century movement he believes was spurred by evangelist Billy Graham and pastor-theologian Harold John Ockenga. The author finds in this movement both Southern and New England influences, a confluence that mirrors the friendship between the two evangelical leaders: "It is this story, pictured in microcosm by the friendship between Harold John Ockenga and Billy Graham, that this book attempts to tell" (p. 19). The story of neo-evangelicalism is a wild and woolly tale that links "the steepled church with the revival tent, the aroma of candles with the smell of sawdust," and "the three-piece suit with the blue denim jacket" (p. 19). The recounting of this "surprising work" of God involves biographical history, social history, and historical theology, narrative threads that together form an invigorating tour through the banner years of the first evangelicals. The book fits nicely in the already established yet burgeoning field of modern evangelical history which includes such seminal works as George Marsden's *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, Joel A. Carpenter's *Revive Us Again*, and D. G. Hart's *Defending the Faith*.

In the first chapter, "The Surprising Work of God," Rosell roots the work of the neo-evangelicals in their past. He traces how American Christians, working out of a Puritan heritage, came to view themselves as linked more closely with fellow preachers of the "new birth" than with mere denominational adherents. This "evangelical" mindset developed through the labor of men like Jonathan Edwards who, in leading and analyzing the "Great Awakening" of the New England colonies in the 1730s and 1740s, developed the formal theological understanding of a trans-denominational gospel movement. When Harold Ockenga brought Billy Graham to Boston in 1950, he saw this occurrence, Rosell notes, as the renewal of God's "surprising work" begun in Edwards's day and continued in his own (p. 38).

Chapter Two, "The Lone Wolf," traces Ockenga's background. Rosell suggests "Few would have imagined in the summer of 1905 that the son born to Herman and Angie Ockenga would grow up to be a giant among giants" (p. 39). The future pastor grew up in Chicago in a nominal Methodist home, was converted at a revival, and matriculated at Taylor University in Upland, Indiana. There Ockenga threw himself into his studies and ministry opportunities, whether debating, singing, or preaching. At Princeton Theological Seminary, he came under the tutelage of J. Gresham Machen and busied himself from 6:30 a.m. to 12 a.m. (p. 54). Called to the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh when just twenty-five, he soon moved to Point Breeze Presbyterian in Pittsburgh, where he remained until his call to the famed Park Street Church of Boston.

Ockenga's move to the Park Street pulpit occupies much of Chapter Three, "The Grand Vision." The church had a storied history, being located on Boston Common and the site of the first performance of "My Country 'Tis of Thee." Ockenga wasted little time in laying out an expansive vision for the church. He also began such groups as the National Association of Evangelicals and served as its first president from 1942–1944. In this and other organizational activities, Ockenga charted a course of leadership for himself that would position him as one of the two or three most essential evangelical figures of his era, though he is largely forgotten today. "All moral leaders," Rosell notes, "embody in some sense the deepest hopes and aspirations of those who choose to follow them. For those who felt marginalized, Ockenga was a self-described lone wolf who sought to gather them in a pack" (p. 103).

*The Surprising Work of God* broadens its scope in Chapter Four, "Band of Brothers," to encompass some of the contiguous developments within conservative American Christianity in this period. Rosell takes the reader on a whirlwind tour through youth movements such as Youth for Christ. He also introduces Billy Graham at this point in the narrative, examining how Graham drew a constellation of vibrant young evangelists in the 1940s that included Percy Crawford, Merv Rosell, Hyman Appelman, Jack Wyrzten, and others (p. 120). A spirit of collegiality and togetherness pervaded this association of passionate evangelists, and it seemed that the Lord was indeed prosecuting a unique work as "the friendships between a growing band of brothers that had been forged on the Youth for Christ circuit were providing tested leadership for America's emerging spiritual awakening" (p. 125).

In "A Mid-Twentieth Century Awakening" (ch. 5), Rosell examines the New England Mid-Century Revival of 1949–1950 in which Graham carried out an extensive crusade in Boston and other cities. This was a period, the author notes, of increased revival activity and religious interest in America; church affiliation, for example, increased by twenty percent between 1940 and 1960 (p. 128). Graham's work in New England rode the crest of this wave—or perhaps drove it. For week after week, the young evangelist and his team scorched the frozen spiritual soil of the region, drawing large numbers of professing Christians in the process. In the process, writes Rosell, it "had enormous importance for the future of the evangelical movement itself." The partnerships formed during it offered "essential leadership for the burgeoning evangelical movement for

more than a generation" (p. 147). Rosell continues to examine revival efforts of the neo-evangelicals in "The Floodtide of Revival" (ch. 6). Here the author covers the 1957 New York City crusade of Graham and the growing dissension within evangelicalism.

The final three chapters of the book examine how evangelicals busied themselves with "Reclaiming the Culture" (chap. 7), "Renewing the Mind" (chap. 8), and "Reaching the World" (chap. 9). Rosell nicely works through unknown Ockenga sermons that reveal a nuanced approach to various cultural issues. He connects the renewal of the evangelical mind with Charles Grandison Finney's efforts at Oberlin College, noting that "[b]y abandoning America's elite centers of research, evangelicals were tending to also abandon their responsibility to be salt and light within those important cultural centers" (p. 195). *The Surprising Work of God* then considers several important intellectual initiatives promoted and led by Ockenga, including Fuller Theological Seminary and *Christianity Today*. Rosell finally touches on Ockenga's missionary heart, uncovering through various sources how the pastor worked tirelessly to promote the spread of the gospel among all the peoples of the earth, labor that helped to produce the global evangelical awakening currently unfolding in disparate corners of the world today.

*The Surprising Work of God* comes highly recommended. It is essential reading for those who wish to understand what happened in the mid-twentieth century to so dramatically reposition conservative American Christianity in the academy, the culture, and the broader society. Due to his access to the Ockenga archives, the author has tapped a wide array of sources, including untouched sermons, letters, addresses, interviews, and more. The book reads less like a work of historical drudgery and more like a movie script. This is perhaps the text's greatest strength. In its freewheeling, fast-paced nature, it captures something of the essence of neo-evangelicalism itself, the movement begun by a few discrete individuals with exceptional leadership and ministry ability that soon exploded into a broad range of organizations, institutions, and personalities, including this very *Journal* and many of the schools and ministries that house those currently reading it.

Rosell deftly maneuvers between snapshot biographies, enlightening anecdotes, historical theology, and spiritual commentary in the text, making for a work that is unapologetically evangelical but undeniably profitable. This is a different style of history than that practiced by some leading Christian historians; it is more distinctly appreciative and engaged with the story it tells. Though some would eschew this approach, it does not seem, in my view, to detract from the tale at hand. Because of the rich sourcing and the skill with which the history is told, the book stands as a work of academic history while simultaneously edifying and challenging the reader. Those who skew closer to a "partisan" model of historical scholarship could take this text as an inspiration and impetus for future endeavors.

In the judgment of a young historian-in-training, the only significant weakness of the project relates to the ambitious scope of *The Surprising Work of God*. Rosell has bitten off a great deal in tackling, in slightly over two hundred pages, Billy Graham, Harold Ockenga, and neo-evangelicalism. Each of these subjects merits at least a definitive scholarly treatment, if not a sub-field, with the last of these forming a program that many scholars have made the focus of their life's work. Even as his life stretches on, Graham's legacy has sponsored a cottage industry of writers, with the upcoming biographical treatment by Grant Wacker representing one of the most anticipated monographs in American religious history since, perhaps, Geroge Marsden's *Jonathan Edwards*. All this to say that Rosell is to be commended for his aim, though he was forced by it to focus more on certain elements of his subjects than on others. We do not begrudge him for this, and we are thankful for his ambition. But students of Ockenga, for example, may find themselves wanting more focus on the pastor-theologian, even as students of Graham or neo-evangelicalism may register the same desires.

Perhaps the only other matter worth mentioning on this point is the inclusion of narrative elements such as Merv Rosell and Charles Grandison Finney. The material on these two important Christian figures is illuminating, but in a text already brimming with interests, it caused me to desire fuller coverage elsewhere (as indeed Rosell has provided in the case of Finney). It seems that the matter of which stories to tell is a constant preoccupation of students of neo-evangelicalism—and to broaden this rather maximally, students of church history and historical theology. As noted above, the neo-evangelical movement is not short on personalities, events, institutions, twists, turns, and tie-ins, a reality which places appreciative students of this period in a tricky position.

Rosell's work in the post-war field, in fact, should help to nudge coming historians to continue to delve into the key institutions, personalities, and intellectual and theological trends of the era. Considerable, even daunting, research remains for those who would tell the stories of the schools, churches, parachurch groups, and leading lights of the post-war evangelical boom. Those intrigued by this possibility may take encouragement from the nature of *The Surprising Work of God* and know that this will not be a dry and dusty affair, but one that engages both the heart and the mind. One need not approve of every initiative—or even the founding base—of the neo-evangelicals to find that they raise many important questions that past and present Christians have encountered, not least among them the role of evangelicals in a fallen society, the role of theology in evangelical programs, the status ideally sought by Christians in the intellectual realm, and the ideal means by which to advance the kingdom of God in Christ's interregnum.

Historians will continue to debate the significance of neo-evangelicalism, arguing over its goals, its pursuit of said goals, its legacy. The conversation, like the movement itself, will not dull the senses. Whatever the conclusion of various thinkers, it seems that Garth Rosell has fastened on to an important truth in his important work. Through people like Harold John Ockenga and Billy Graham, God did something unusual in the mid-twentieth century. This "surprising work" was, like the evangelical cooperation first characterized in these terms by Jonathan Edwards, a new and welcome development in a day when the passions and ambitions of many orthodox Christians had cooled. Perhaps these same developments will spur deeper reflection on the part of God's people in days to come about their role in the world; perhaps this reflection will yield results still more surprising.

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