

BOOK REVIEWS

An Introduction to the Old Testament: Sacred Texts and Imperial Contexts of the Hebrew Bible. By David M. Carr. Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010, 276 pp., £19.99; €24.00 paper.

An Introduction to the Bible: Sacred Texts and Imperial Contexts. By David M. Carr and Colleen M. Conway. Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010, 383 pp., £24.99; €30.00 paper.

These works, both introductions to the Bible, structure the data of the biblical storyline around a framework that was erected by the great empires of the ancient Near East. The approach is thus historical, though not one that follows the Bible's internal chronology or patterns of cause and effect. Rather, David Carr (Professor of Old Testament/Hebrew Bible at Union Theological Seminary) and Colleen Conway (Professor of Religious Studies at Seton Hall University) proceed by analyzing individual biblical texts in relationship to a sequence of larger historical contexts, each composed of events precipitated by the great empires of the ancient world. The Bible is thus a composite of texts and traditions, shaped, reshaped, and shaped again, by Israelites and (later) Jews who, as understudies on the world stage, sought to define their identity(ies) and reason(s) for being in light of larger world forces that swirled around them, forces which they were scarcely able to control but sometimes wanted to mimic and other times wanted to shun.

In the reconstruction of Carr and Conway, the history of ancient Israel begins in the early Iron Age (the period of the Judges) with a few oral traditions shaped around a shared (or invented?) memory of resistance to domination by Egypt and/or the Canaanite city states (e.g. Judges 5 and the early chapters of Exodus). It then moves to a period of Zion-thinking and incipient nationalism patterned after the royal theologies of prior ancient Near Eastern empires (illustrated by some of the Psalms and Proverbs), followed by a century or so of prophetic introspection in the face of the Assyrian threat (Amos, Hosea, Micah, early Isaiah, and the like). A try at moral nationalism that coincides with falling Assyria and rising Babylon (prompting the books of Deuteronomy through 2 Kings, Jeremiah, Nahum, and Zephaniah) gives way to the purification of the Babylonian Exile (Ezekiel, Isaiah 40–55, certain Abrahamic narratives in Genesis 12–25, and the book of Leviticus), then the return from exile under Persian domination (Isaiah 56–66, Jonah, Ruth, Job) and the crisis of Hellenism (prompting Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, Chronicles, and Esther). Sociological, economic, and political aspects of the Roman Empire shaped the letters of Paul, with the Gospels and Acts written later (John and his Epistles, an other-worldly turn inward, away from Empire, much later).

The role of first century Judaism in the life and thinking of Jesus and Paul—its varieties, attraction, and energy—receives scant attention in the chapters related to the NT. This is certainly unfortunate, though not surprising given the emphasis of Carr and Conway on reaction-to-Empire as the primary force that shaped the agendas of the biblical memory-makers. On the other hand, we do hear a clear echo of early rabbinic approaches to the text that sought to find a credible place for then-contemporary Judaism in a Rome-dominated world.

So, it is back to the sources—the extrabiblical kind that inform our understanding of the development of the culture of the world of the Bible but also the higher-critical kind, oral traditions, and written accounts that took on a life of their own as they were

melded to meet the needs of new generations of Israelites throughout the period of the Bible. This seems to be the overall motor that drives the analysis of Carr and Conway, and they remind us again and again, in a variety of ways, of additions, corrections, evolutions, and adaptations in the text (even Barack Obama and Martin Luther King make an appearance in the author's discussions of the veracity of reshaped tradition). Israel, it seems, was more reactive than creative, or one might say that the creativity of the Bible was limited to factors of its own time(s) and place(s). Such an assessment is all very natural, of course, and naturalistic.

Scholars fluent and active in higher critical methodologies will find much that is familiar here, but I hope that those of us who prefer other approaches will not be put off, for there is much to gain between the lines in the fresh way that Carr and Conway bring the world to the Bible, and the Bible to the world. One can appreciate aspects of detail without accepting the whole.

These two volumes should be taken together, although they are not properly companions. The first two-thirds of *An Introduction to the Bible* (hereafter *IB*) is essentially a reprint of *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (hereafter *IOT*), though the pictures and maps in the former are in full color while those in the latter are printed in black-and-white or two-tone. The maps are adequate to the discussion at hand, though pretty basic (no topography is shown), and the photographs are well-chosen to reflect the impact of empires in the region even if not all are placed very precisely (e.g. the cuneiform tablet on page 37 of *IB*/page 38 of *IOT* is upside down). The layout of the printed page is interactive and student-friendly. Sidebars of many types abound, offering everything from notes on methodology to brief outlines and basic summaries of the content of biblical books, timelines, comments on key words or concepts, assignments and exercises for the student, and more. These volumes are well written in an engaging style (a delightful read, actually) and offer students plenty of opportunities to interact with key ideas, realities and texts.

Carr and Conway are careful to distinguish an academic approach toward the biblical text (though theirs seems to me to be also inherently political) from "indoctrination into biblical theologies or values" that beginning students often bring to the classroom from their church or parochial high school experiences (*IB* p. 21). Yet they note that an academic approach that focuses on a never-ending process of re-formation by the biblical authors in the face of outside (Imperial) influences does offer certain benefits that impact theologizing. Among these is the realization that "where once the Bible might have seemed a monolithic, ancient set of rules, it becomes a rich variety of different perspectives that have stood the test of time" (*IB* p. 21), and so in this way remains relevant to a world of souls in need. Fair enough; yet their concluding assessment notes only two points of contact between the Bible and the modern world, both hot-button topics in today's political arena but hardly the stuff of the life-changing gospel, namely, what the Bible might say in regard to the boundaries of the modern state of Israel, or to the legality of same-sex marriage (*IB* p. 367). For *this* our forefathers kept all those traditions alive? Comments such as these make textbooks such as these immediately relevant, and soon dated.

Paul H. Wright
Jerusalem University College, Jerusalem, Israel

Old Testament Theology. Volume 3: *Israel's Life*. By John Goldingay. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2009, 912 pp., \$50.00.

With the appearance of this volume, John Goldingay's massive theological trilogy comes to an end, a project consisting of some 2,700 pages in all. Much of this, of course,

is consumed by prefatory matters and exhaustive indices; nevertheless, the achievement is remarkable in its sheer length and density. The strategy Goldingay offers is to view OT theology through three prisms or angles: Israel's Gospel (vol. 1); Israel's Faith (vol. 2); and Israel's Life (vol. 3). While this scheme is well conceived from the standpoint of logic and conceptual flow, it inevitably invites repetition of themes or topics amongst the volumes precisely because they all address fundamentally the same categories. In this respect, Goldingay is not unique; indeed, anyone who has attempted a full-blown biblical theology can testify to both the constant need for recapitulation and the accompanying fall-out of covering the same ground more than once even if in slightly different ways.

This said, the problem is exacerbated here by the selection of such terms as "gospel" and "faith" as though they are discrete realms of theological inquiry. What difference can there be after all between gospel and faith? Goldingay's response is that "gospel" describes "how things were, or what God and Israel have done. It is a work of narrative theology" (*Old Testament Theology*, vol. 1: *Israel's Gospel* [IVP, 2003] 28). The volume on "faith," on the other hand, Goldingay describes as "the nearest to traditional theology in this work as a whole. It will concern the Old Testament's faith and hope, or how things are and will be, or who God is and who we are." To put the matter simply (and perhaps simplistically), "gospel" is the story of what Israel was and did in relation to God in the past whereas "faith" deals with the present which both Israel and we share as the people of God. The one is descriptive, the other more normative.

The chapter titles of the first two volumes provide succinct entrées into the major thrusts of each. Thus, volume 1 consists of subject and action predicates, with God as the active one. He began, started over, promised, delivered, sealed, gave, accommodated, wrestled, preserved, and sent, all works of grace and beneficence toward Israel and, indeed, the whole world. Strangely to my mind, volume 2 addresses the topic of God *qua* God and those with whom he relates/related, namely, Israel, humanity, the world, and the nations. Here action gives way to connection, which in turn sets the stage for how those in relationship to God are to live out their respective callings.

The volume under review is the attempt to move away from how things were or are to what they should have been and should be now, that is, the practical outworking in daily life of the great theological principles outlined in the first two volumes. It "studies Israel's life: not the life Israel actually lived (which is also often critiqued) but the life the First Testament reckons Israel should/could live or should/could have lived" (p. 13). Here the emphasis is again on relationship—with God, others, and oneself—but not as something so much initiated as already established and in need of maintenance and regulation so as to achieve wholeness and well-being. Thus, the theology here rightly caps off the more theoretical aspects of the discipline (vols. 1 and 2) with a program that demands adherence to the principles established in the previous volumes.

Important themes that bear on these objectives are divided by Goldingay into three major divisions: Living with God; Living with One Another; and Living with Ourselves. The author, in my view, is at his best in this area of theology. What has been addressed in the previous two volumes, though not without some novel and refreshing insights, is for the most part to be found in many other OT theology publications in the past 30 years or so. A clear awakening to the dual need of (1) making the OT relevant to the modern Christian generation; and (2) confronting modern society with Bible-based ethics is evident from a plethora of works in the area of biblical mores and ethics. None has done better than this climactic volume by Goldingay, an endeavor that could easily stand on its own as a handbook on the subject. Subthemes such as submission and celebration, prayer and thanksgiving, family and community, city and nation, spirituality and character, and leaders and servants are all immediately obvious as crying issues demanding attention if not complete resolution in the Church—if not the larger world—in modern times. These make up the content of many a sermon and editorial because of their self-evident need for redress.

Most of the driving motivation for biblical ethics originates in the OT because of its insistence on the holiness of God and the requisite response of human holiness if a bridge between the two is to be established. God provides the reconciliation but humankind—whether Israel or the larger community—must understand and implement the means whereby the relationship can be sustained and fostered. This is Goldingay's principal tenet, one that surely has firm biblical grounding. Speaking of the laws of Torah, he maintains that they "are set in a theological macronarrative or metanarrative extending forward into a more complete realization of Yhwh's purpose for Israel [in Christ and the Gospel] and for the world [repristination] that goes back to creation" (p. 45). OT ethics, then, is not just for "them then," but for us now and for all mankind.

Under the rubric of worship, Goldingay illustrates the continuum that exists between the OT and NT in terms of the ethic of serving God. An issue that plagues the modern church is that of style or manner of worship, a notion that is very much a part of what it means to relate properly to God and to serve him (thus, worship *service*). Goldingay's counsel here is most pastorally relevant: "For many Western Christians the criterion for evaluating worship is how good it makes them feel; whether they enjoy it, whether it gives them a sense of being in God's presence, whether they feel encouraged and built up by it. . . . If worship is service, whether it makes us feel good is totally irrelevant to its evaluation" (p. 117). His point is that service is first of all obedience, a demand that is not always enjoyable except in its being done.

Under his heading "Living with One Another," Goldingay touches on such controversial, even inflammatory social issues as divorce, prostitution, polygamy, and same-sex unions. With regard to the latter, his exegesis of texts such as Lev 18:22 and 20:13 is sensitive to their contexts and to the cultural world in which they were promulgated. Yet he helpfully demonstrates their theological application to modern times by drawing attention to the fact that "the Torah's ban on homosexual acts is based not just in rules about cleanness and taboo but on the purpose of creation" (p. 381).

Finally, in an impassioned plea to the Christian reader to take the OT more seriously as Christian literature, Goldingay reminds us that the OT was the Bible of Jesus and the early church but "from the worship and life of churches in the West, you would never have realized that they accepted this. They may or may not read bits of the First Testament in church, but their preachers are unlikely to preach from it and their people are unlikely to read it" (p. 833). To such a reminder the contemporary church would do well to heed.

If one can afford only one volume of the magisterial three-volume work under review, this third one is by far most likely to exhibit both sound exegetical underpinning for OT theology and the kind of practical life-situation application that should characterize all works of its genre.

Eugene H. Merrill
Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, TX

Multiple Originals: New Approaches to Hebrew Bible Textual Criticism. By Gary D. Martin. Text-Critical Studies 7. Atlanta: SBL, 2010, xiv + 341 pp., \$42.95 paper.

Gary Martin's book has a twofold aim: (1) to "underscore shortcomings in those practices of textual criticism that operate predominantly from a reductionistic view of text"; and (2) to "offer theoretical and practical approaches to account for multivalent realities of textual origins that are generally overlooked in the text-critical enterprise" (p. ix). There is a lack of clarity in both the book's title and this statement of purpose.

Does Martin mean that text critics should look for multiple texts throughout the OT? Or does he want to say that some elements of the text may be multivalent?

In chapter 1, "In Search of the Original," Martin surveys a wide range of fields that share a common interest in recovering authentic works from the past. He considers classical Greek and Roman literature, relatively modern drama, music, vernacular poetry, ancient Mesopotamian and Egyptian literature, sacred texts of current world religions, and finally, both NT and OT literature. Casting his net into so many different kinds of waters is helpful, but also potentially confusing. The vast differences between genres and historical periods treated surely call for caution when drawing conclusions from the various fields. It might have helped if at a minimum, the author had followed a chronological organization in dealing with such varied materials. Surely ancient Near Eastern literature has much more bearing on OT textual criticism than either issues related to Handel's *Messiah* or to more modern Sikh religious literature.

There is a missing heading on page 45. This is confusing since the author's treatment of NT and OT literature appears to be a continuation of his discussion of modern religious literatures rather than a separate topic (cf. his outlining on pp. 13–14). Martin's main conclusion after this survey is that OT text critics should not speak exclusively of one original text, but rather of a plurality of original texts.

The second chapter, "Theories and Methods of Orality," highlights the increasing popularity of oral studies as an academic discipline. Martin also maintains that the number of textual variants is greater in manuscripts that are more distant from a supposed original, and argues that there is no "observed textual convergence that would imply a uniform textual transmission in the remote past" (p. 66). These declarations are either simply stating the obvious, or they are gross oversimplifications if the author intends to argue that OT text critics need to shift their focus from a supposed original text to original texts. The chapter concludes with a consideration of formulas, and in particular, the headings of the OT prophetic books. Martin wisely calls attention to the extreme variability of these headings. However, it seems too much to argue that since headings vary between books, the headings of individual books must also have been variable.

Part 2, "Multivalences of Meaning," is largely devoted to lexical and translation issues. A major focus in this part of the book is how one should understand and translate a Hebrew word in Song of Songs 1:2. The issue bears relation to textual criticism, to be sure, but it seems a much broader matter that also relates to lexicography, hermeneutics, and translation. A word that may be understood in one or both of two ways in a given text is intriguing. However, for me it does not go far enough to sustain the author's main argument that OT text critics need to give up their pursuit of the *one* original text as they study the readings of a variety of ancient manuscripts and translations.

The focus in Part 3, "Multivalences of Text," is largely on the Decalogue. Martin uses the different forms of this most basic of all OT law in Exodus and Deuteronomy to bolster his argument that the text critic should consider the possibility of different original texts as the goal for text criticism. But this seems wrong-headed. Martin acknowledges on page 212 that each of these texts has its own *Sitz im Leben*. Exodus 20 gives the narrative account of the giving of the Decalogue by God. Deuteronomy 5 gives a narrative record of a sermon Moses delivered on the Ten Commandments to the new generation of Israelites. The two texts are different, not only in wording but in setting. A text critic should not try to resolve one of these two texts to the other. Each should be allowed to stand in its own right. They are both an original text (or, more appropriately, both can be resolved to a most likely original form by a text critic). But there seems to be a disconnect between Martin's acknowledgement of this (p. 6) and his later statement that "the fundamental law code given to Israel on two tablets of stone at Mount Sinai is multivalent" (p. 205).

Martin calls attention to an intriguing feature of the text of the Decalogue: certain verses have dual accents shown in *BHS*, and some verses even have a double vocalization (cf. Exod 20:3). His discussion of this difference was very helpful. However, this difference in no way sustains his major argument that text critics must consider the possibility that multiple originals exist. This difference is a minor one, and the meaning of the two texts would be exactly the same. So while the different systems of vowels and accents are of historical interest, they in no way impact the meaning of the Decalogue or its translation.

The final chapter of part 3 shifts from the Decalogue to two prophetic texts: Habakkuk 2:4 and Amos 9:10–11. Martin discusses both the text critical situation as well as the use of these two passages in the NT. The issues are complex and worthy of discussion; but to me, the passages do not sustain Martin's basic thesis that text critics must entertain the possibility that multiple originals occur for the OT text. Martin himself recognizes this when he says that "[t]he tradition is multivalent only in the versions and in the NT citations of the versions" (p. 255).

Martin's conclusions are found in the final two chapters. Chapter 14, titled "Audiences and Agendas," covers both how text critical work can be communicated to different audiences as well as what the significance of textual variants may be. This chapter could be nicely used in a course on textual criticism to introduce the topic and help develop student dialogue. But much more needs to be said in relation to the significance of textual variants. Some kind of profile needs to be developed so that variants can be divided into different categories. What comes to mind is at least a four-part division into variants that make *no* impact on the meaning of the text, that make *minimal* impact on the elucidation of the text, that make *significant* change in translation, or that make *a major* difference in the exegesis of a text. Such a system will go a long way to combat the flamboyant and careless rhetoric of a Bart Ehrman, whom Martin quotes (pp. 265–66). Martin's final chapter, "To Where from Here," contains suggestions for the making of critical editions that are used in the text critical enterprise.

Martin's book contains several chapters that could be effectively used in classes on OT text criticism, but it will not substitute for other more traditional introductions to the field. The book does highlight the possibility of intentional multivalence that an author may have occasionally used as he wrote his work. However, obviously such cases are extremely rare. Perhaps his work could have been more appropriately titled "Occasional Cases of Multivalence: New Approaches to Fine-Tuning Hebrew Bible Textual Criticism."

Ellis R. Brotzman
Hume, NY

Forgotten Scriptures: The Selection and Rejection of Early Christian Writings, by Lee Martin McDonald. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009. xiv + 313 pp., \$30.00.

The last 150 years have been filled with sensational discoveries of apocryphal materials that have raised new questions about which books should be included in our Bibles. It seems the appetite for discussions of "lost" books is insatiable—both inside and outside the academy. Such discoveries have spurred all sorts of publications with provocative titles that raise questions about the state of the canon; see, for example, *The Five Gospels* (Funk); *Lost Scriptures* (Ehrman); and *The Hidden Sayings of Jesus* (Meyer). Now, Lee Martin McDonald, who has written extensively on the topic of canon, has offered his own contribution to this popular topic in his book *Forgotten Scriptures*. Unlike most of these other books, McDonald also addresses the issue of "lost" texts of the OT

as well as the NT, providing a helpful introduction to some of the critical issues related to canon formation and the role of apocryphal literature in Judaism and Christianity.

Section 1 of this volume provides a detailed discussion of the definition of the term "canon." For those familiar with McDonald's work elsewhere, it is no surprise that he is a strong advocate of Sundberg's definition of canon as a closed, complete list, to which nothing can be added or taken away. With this definition in hand, McDonald insists that we do not have a real "canon" until at least the fourth century and maybe even later. While McDonald acknowledges that other definitions of canon in use by scholars would provide an earlier date, he insists these other definitions are anachronistic and misleading. Thus, he declares, "The *notion* of a fixed canon does not appear before the fourth century" (p. 27, emphasis mine). However, McDonald never discusses Origen's apparent list of canonical books in the third century (*Hom. Josh.* 7.1), nor does he address the late second-century anti-Montanist author who declared his inhibition about adding any books to the "word of the new covenant of the gospel to which no one . . . can add and from which he cannot take away" (*Hist. eccl.* 5.16.3). At a first glance at least, these references seem to be instances of a "notion of a fixed canon" well before the fourth and fifth centuries.

In section 2, McDonald explores the development of the OT Scriptures and the variety of apocryphal and pseudepigraphal books that were used by early Jews but never made it into the final canonical collection. This second section constitutes the bulk of the volume and McDonald's discussions are wide ranging, even covering topics such as the translation and textual transmission of the OT. For those unfamiliar with the key issues in the development of Jewish literature during this time period, these chapters provide an informative and helpful introduction.

However, as McDonald gauges the status of various books in early Jewish communities, he regularly seems to confuse the mere use of a book and the reception of that book as Scripture. Just because a book was used (even used a lot) by a certain group does not necessarily mean that book has authoritative status. Jews used a wide body of literature they deemed useful and edifying—but they were still able to distinguish these books from those they regarded as canonical. This confusion is evident in two areas. First, McDonald assesses the status of books at Qumran by observing that "[t]he Qumran texts include considerably more than the Old Testament canonical books, *and this suggests that the Essene collection of sacred texts was considerably broader than the current Old Testament biblical canon*" (p. 70, emphasis mine). However, how does the first part of this sentence form an adequate basis for the second? The mere existence of apocryphal books at Qumran does not demonstrate their scriptural status. Surely it is reasonable to think that any "library" would consist of books beyond Scripture that are deemed useful or beneficial. Indeed, what if a *modern* Christian library were discovered in the sand a thousand years from now? Would it be reasonable to infer that hymnals, creeds, or theological treatises were regarded as Scripture merely because they existed in the same library as a Bible?

A second example of this confusion is McDonald's assessment of the OT canon of Jesus and the early church. While acknowledging that "when ancient writers quoted or cited sources, we cannot assume that they regarded them as sacred" (p. 126), McDonald nonetheless proceeds to list all sorts of allusions and echoes of intertestamental literature found in the NT, and on this basis, he concludes that the OT of Jesus and the OT of early Christians had "tenuous boundaries" (p. 135). However, it is unclear again how mere *allusions* to apocryphal books (many of which are quite uncertain) provide grounds for such a conclusion. Moreover, McDonald gives little attention to the fundamental fact that all the books expressly cited as "Scripture" by the NT writers are from the OT as we know it and not from apocryphal books (Jude 14 notwithstanding). In other words, all the evidence suggests the NT writers regarded the OT books as

belonging in an entirely different category than the apocryphal books. McDonald, on the other hand, reaches the opposite conclusion.

The third and final section of this volume addresses the issue of the NT's formation and focuses largely on manuscripts and textual transmission. Once again, McDonald seems intent on convincing the reader that the canon's development was a loose and amorphous affair. He appeals to the various NT manuscript "collections" and points out that many of these included non-canonical works. On this basis, he concludes that "there was no complete agreement on the scope of the Christian scriptures at the time" (p. 165). However, McDonald's analysis runs into a point of confusion here. He does not carefully distinguish between a "collection" of books (meaning books found at the same *site*) and a "codex" of books (meaning books found within the same *manuscript*). This confusion allows him to portray the canon as much more diverse than it actually was. Incredibly, he appeals to the Oxyrhynchus "collection" as evidence for such canonical diversity (p. 166). But, this so-called "collection" has come from the garbage dump of the ancient city of Oxyrhynchus—an archaeological site that has been active for more than a century. Just because canonical and apocryphal books were discovered at the same site is not a sufficient basis for concluding the early Christian canon was wide open. The site also included thousands of documentary papyri (e.g. receipts, private letters, city records); are we to think these were also regarded as Scripture? When one looks more narrowly (and appropriately) at the books that occur within the same manuscript, and not just those that are found at the same site, it becomes clear that the NT canon of early Christians was not nearly as diverse as McDonald maintains. Sure, there are occasional exceptions (e.g. Papyrus 72), but these cannot be used to downplay the reality that we rarely see NT books and apocryphal books in the same manuscripts. Indeed, when it comes to the canonical Gospels, this trend is especially clear. We have no instance of an apocryphal gospel in the same manuscript as a canonical Gospel anywhere in early Christianity.

Even with some of these weaknesses, McDonald's volume is still a helpful overview of non-canonical texts—a topic that always needs more attention from the average Christian in the pew. However, the last chapter of the book, "Postscript: The Search for a Perfect Bible," is an unfortunate conclusion. McDonald uses this chapter as an opportunity to critique (in a rather pointed fashion) the concept of inerrancy, particularly as it has been historically applied to the original autographs of Scripture. Not only have the manuscripts of the Bible been substantially changed, argues McDonald, but there are numerous overt errors and mistakes in the Bible, and he lists out more than a dozen alleged examples. Aside from whether McDonald's critiques are accurate (and many of them are attacking caricatures of inerrancy), the entire chapter seems out of place and disconnected to the main point of the book—which has to do with non-canonical books, not inerrancy. As a result, the final chapter comes across a bit like McDonald was looking for an opportunity to express his personal theological views and this was the place he found to do it. A different, more positive ending would have improved the overall tone of the volume and it would have kept the focus where it needed to be, namely on apocryphal literature and the development of the canon.

Michael J. Kruger

Reformed Theological Seminary, Charlotte, NC

40 Questions About Interpreting the Bible. By Robert L. Plummer. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2010, 347 pp., \$17.99 paper.

The second installment of Kregel's 40 Questions series (ed. Benjamin L. Merkle), Robert Plummer's *40 Questions About Interpreting the Bible* should prove to be a

valuable textbook option for introductory courses in hermeneutics and Bible survey. Plummer also provides free online materials—student workbook, lesson plans, and PowerPoint presentations—at www.robplummer.com.

Over the past year in my course OT Literature and Interpretation—a required course usually taken in the Freshman or Sophomore year—I have been using this book as a supplemental textbook (along with the soon-to-be-published *What the OT Authors Really Cared About* [Kregel, Fall 2011]). Therefore, this review will focus especially on the usefulness of Plummer's book based on my own experience and student feedback.

The forty "questions" (i.e. chapters) are divided into four major parts. Part 1, "Getting Started: Text, Canon, and Translation," covers seven major questions related to the Bible's purpose, structure, authorship, historical veracity, textual transmission, canonicity, and the translational philosophy of English versions. Part 2, "Approaching the Bible Generally," addresses broad-based questions related to both interpretation (chaps. 8–13) and meaning (chaps. 14–20). Individual topics here include general principles for interpreting the Bible, a summary of biblical interpretation in church history, authorial intent, the role of the Holy Spirit, the overarching message and Christ-centered nature of Scripture, and practical discussions on how to improve as an interpreter and how to deal with disagreement among Bible readers.

In these first two sections, Plummer shows himself to be thoroughly evangelical and relatively conservative on the various topics. He exhibits confidence in the Bible's inspiration, accuracy, and unity; balances a grammatical-historical approach with a Christocentric focus; and adheres to traditional stances on authorial intent and illumination. As a teacher at a conservative evangelical college, I find his discussions appropriately "safe" for a student's (often) first encounter with these topics. Plummer actually keeps me on target, so that I do not stray into every nuance and qualification that more advanced study tends to emphasize.

Though the majority of my students come from Christian homes and churches, these so-called "basic" topics can be daunting and confusing. Plummer's winsome style and consistent sensitivity to the intended audience alleviates the initial *angst*. Terminology—technical or non-technical—is never assumed. Illustrations are clear, contemporary, and appropriate. The short chapters (averaging less than eight pages each) make it manageable for students to absorb each topic, and the reflection questions at the end of each chapter provide a platform for students to appropriate the material immediately. (I have students discuss these and other questions in small groups outside of class before we cover the material in class.) Finally, students appreciate the overall spiritual and practical tone—from repetitive encouragements to incorporate prayer and meditation with study, to the personal reflection questions, to whole chapters focusing on the "practical" (e.g. "How Can I Improve as an Interpreter of the Bible?" [chap. 12] and "What Are Some Helpful Books or Tools for Interpreting the Bible?" [chap. 13]).

The second half of the book is more focused. Part 3, "Approaching Specific Texts" (chaps. 21–35), analyzes various biblical genres. Besides separate (and sometimes multiple) discussions of OT-dominant genres (e.g. proverbs, poetry, psalms) and NT-dominant genres (e.g. parables, epistles), this part also handles the "shared" genres of historical narrative, prophecy, and apocalyptic literature, and common literary features such as hyperbole and figures of speech. Though not as detailed as Fee and Stuart's *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* (2d ed.; Zondervan, 1993) or the second half of Duvall and Hays's *Grasping God's Word* (2d ed.; Zondervan, 2005), I find Plummer's brevity and examples more helpful for my beginning students.

Overall, Plummer's treatment of genre is clear and judicious. One might quibble with the arrangement or selection of specific topics. As an OT guy, for example, I would have preferred more attention to historical narrative in the OT itself; yet, the chapter on historical narrative (chap. 22) concentrates its examples on the Gospels. Separate chapters on OT narrative, Gospels, and Acts (as in Fee and Stuart and Duvall and Hays) would have been more to my liking, especially given Plummer's own awareness that

historical narrative constitutes about 60% of the biblical material (p. 191). Also, I find it odd that OT law is not given its own genre chapter in Part 3. Thankfully, the topic is at least broached in an earlier chapter, “Do All the Commands of the Bible Apply Today?” (chap. 19). As usual, teachers may need to provide supplemental lectures or resources to suit their own purposes.

Part 4 (chaps. 36–40) completes the book by addressing issues in recent discussion—eschatology; biblical criticism; speech act theory; theological interpretation; and other recent trends. I have yet to require this section for my course, but I do like the possibility of introducing my students to more advanced topics. These final chapters serve as a reminder to students that mature biblical interpretation is a lifelong task and an ongoing process for the church.

There are several good introductions on biblical interpretation available for the committed Christian, church leader, and college or seminary professor. In *40 Questions About Interpreting the Bible*, I have found one that serves my teaching ministry well. With Plummer’s help, students exit my course more confident in how to ask the right kind of questions, yet more humble in realizing the care (and prayer) it takes to “rightly handle the word of truth” (2 Tim 2:15).

Ken Turner
Bryan College, Dayton, TN

Where is God? Divine Absence in the Hebrew Bible. By Joel S. Burnett. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010, xvi + 287 pp., n.p.

Where is God? seeks to “captur[e] the Hebrew Bible’s balance of perspective” on the absence of God, wherein God’s absence is more commonly expressed than God’s presence (p. vii). Part I considers “relational aspects of divine absence” (p. 9), beginning with chapter 1 (“Knowing God in the Hebrew Bible”), which describes deities as relating with humans via “a relational reciprocity” (p. 11) analogous to human patronage. The house of the father forms society’s foundational unit and kinship bonds extend through covenant, the core of the divine-human relationship. Experiences of divine absence are articulated from within this patrimonial, familial frame of reference.

In chapter 2, Burnett examines seven biblical divine-absence names against their ancient Near Eastern background, arguing that they turn “the question of divine absence . . . into an affirmation of divine presence” by presenting “the name bearer[’s birth] as a divine response” (p. 42). Chapter 3 examines several models through which Israel understood its relationship to God to inform biblical perceptions of divine absence. Models examined include Israel as YHWH’s patrimonial holding, the royal Zion tradition, ancestral origins, the Exodus tradition, the concepts of covenant and law, and creation theology presenting YHWH as the conqueror of chaos.

Part II, “Boundaries of Divine Presence and Absence,” begins by setting forth a spatial approach through a consideration of “Cosmic and Terrestrial Realms” (chap. 4). Identifying three spheres in the cosmos—heaven, earth, and the netherworld—Burnett argues that the Bible “eschews Yahweh’s association with the abode . . . of the dead” (p. 66). God’s presence is strong at the cosmic center (the house, garden, and temple), while disorder threatens at the periphery, and God is often absent in the netherworld. Chapter 5 addresses divine absence in Wisdom Literature, which speaks to the individual within his/her social context centered on the household. Such is seen in the concern for founding a household in Proverbs, although speculative wisdom explores tensions between individuals and society. In Wisdom, the wise person seeks out a largely hidden

God with Lady Wisdom's aid, so that "the biblical Wisdom books seek not a logical solution to God's character, but God's presence" (p. 105). Traditional Wisdom responds to the question of divine absence with "optimism concerning the human ability to discern God's hidden presence" (p. 114), while speculative Wisdom challenges this optimism.

Chapter 6 surveys divine presence and absence in worship. Burnett sees cultic mourning as reflecting God's separateness from death, while the festal calendar "actualizes anew the experience of God's presence" (p. 123), and the sacred space of the temple and tabernacle secures God's presence for the community. Burnett argues here for a liturgical pattern turning the question of God's absence "into an affirmation of divine presence" (p. 134). Similarly, the lament psalms bring the worshipper from a feeling of divine absence in suffering to God's cosmic center of divine presence, the Jerusalem temple (emphasized in the Zion psalms). Viewing the destruction of the temple as divine judgment, the Psalter engenders a "movement from divine absence to divine presence" (p. 149). Moreover, according to Burnett, biblical worship consistently facilitates a pattern of movement from divine absence to presence.

Chapter 7 (Part III) addresses Jerusalem and the exile. The Deuteronomistic history attributes the exile to defiled worship, 1 and 2 Chronicles emphasize the Davidic line and depict the temple as central to Israel's unfolding history, and Ezra-Nehemiah carries forward the temple focus but deemphasizes the Davidic line (contra Haggai and Zechariah; cf. Ezekiel). All see the temple as the center of "God's dealings with Israel in history . . . [and] divine presence on earth" (p. 173). A brief concluding chapter summarizes the biblical authors' diverse reflections upon divine absence to depict a mysterious God who "freely chooses relationships with humankind" (p. 178).

Burnett is to be commended for tackling this difficult topic with such rigor and candor. Pastors, professors, and laypeople will find the topic especially relevant today when natural disasters, economic downturns, and political upheavals are leading many people to ask, "Where is God?" Burnett's work is also impressive for its combination of breadth and brevity; in this relatively short book, Burnett has managed to cover the vast sweep of the OT, many relevant ancient Near Eastern parallels, and pertinent secondary literature in a thorough and accessible fashion. Furthermore, Burnett has resisted the impulse to force all of this material into a simplistic monolithic message about divine absence; rather, he seeks to hear the distinct message of every text in its own right. Readers need to be aware that Burnett does not write from within the same confessional framework as that articulated in ETS, so many readers will part company with Burnett on several issues for confessional reasons. Nevertheless, readers ought not to peremptorily dismiss Burnett's insightful treatment of this relevant topic.

Even so, questions remain, and this review concludes with three brief observations. First, Burnett does not tend to distinguish between perceived divine absence and ontological divine absence. Such a distinction will be vital for moving beyond description to contemporary theology. Perhaps the problem humans face is not so much the absence of God as the inability to perceive the presence of God. Second, further distinctions could be made between such categories as divine absence, divine elusiveness, divine silence, divine abandonment, and divine passivity. For example, when many of the psalms inquire into the seeming absence of God (e.g. Psalms 13; 22; 74; 89), they are actually addressing God, expecting God to hear and respond and assuming some degree of divine presence. It would be more precise to describe these lament psalms as expressing divine abandonment or perhaps divine hiddenness rather than an unqualified divine absence. Third, while Burnett successfully highlights some of the shortcomings of Terrence Fretheim's scheme of "structural divine presence" (pp. 60–63, discussing *The Suffering of God: An Old Testament Perspective* [Fortress, 1984] and *God and World in the Old Testament: A Relational Theology of Creation* [Abingdon, 2005]), Fretheim's view, as Burnett articulates it, is still worth considering. It seems to me that Fretheim's

construal of “varying degrees of intensification” could be integrated with Burnett’s structural observations to great effect.

These points of disagreement notwithstanding, this reviewer found the book *Where is God?* challenging and engaging. I recommend it for anyone interested in grappling with the question of divine absence.

Hubert J. Keener
Rockford, IL

The Messianic Hope: Is the Hebrew Bible Really Messianic? By Michael Rydelnik. Nashville: B & H, 2010, 210 pp., \$13.99.

Michael Rydelnik is a professor of Hebrew Studies at the Moody Bible Institute, Chicago, and is the featured “Bible Answer Man” on the Moody Radio Broadcast. His new book *The Messianic Hope* neatly summarizes compelling arguments for messianic interpretations for several OT passages.

Writing from an evangelical perspective, Rydelnik holds that the order of the original Hebrew canon reflects the earliest understanding of those texts. He begins by appealing for a hearing from the broader scholarly community (p. xv). Evangelicalism alone should not bar consideration nor negate one’s logic. Next, he challenges evangelical views that minimize the messianic content of the Hebrew Bible (pp. 3–7). This he attributes to an uncritical acceptance of the broader scholarly community’s consensus without sufficient reflection on their presuppositions. The author also cites the disregard by many evangelicals of the risen Lord’s own summation of the OT Scripture on the road to Emmaus (pp. 1, 84–85). That summation (Luke 24:44) lays the foundation for the Hebrew Bible, pointing to Christ, his sufferings, and resurrection. Exegeting the Scriptures apart from it, Rydelnik argues, dismisses implications of biblical inerrancy or authority, lacks a systematic approach, and encourages reluctance in designating OT passages as direct messianic prophecies.

Rydelnik also dispatches claims that OT prophets would not recognize Christ as the subject of their writings (pp. 88–90). The awareness of OT writers about whom they wrote is gleaned from 1 Pet 1:10–12. The prophet’s inquiries related to when their prophecies would be fulfilled and who the historical referent was, not whether their meaning was messianic.

Rydelnik deals with notions that the NT’s application of OT texts to Christ was due to a presupposed conviction of his identity (pp. 47, 95–96). He demonstrates how those convictions were derived from the OT text (pp. 97–111). He also shows that messianic expectations did not grow out of the post-biblical Hellenistic age, as scholars believe, but were foundational from the beginning (pp. 25–27). Rydelnik’s work is not exhaustive, but sufficient for his premise. He limits a detailed examination of texts to Deut 18:15–19; 34:10–12; Num 24:7–9; Gen 3:15; Isa 7:14; and Psalm 110. Chapters on the last three provide examples from the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings (pp. 129–84).

Rydelnik’s book shows that anti-messianic biases plagued the transmission of the Masoretic text (used today in most translations) by documenting the agenda of its custodians in the sixth to tenth centuries AD (pp. 35–36). That agenda was to eradicate the text’s central message in revealing a coming Messiah. It sought to deny the unavoidable implication that only Jesus of Nazareth qualified. Hence, numerous emendations occurred in passages with messianic referents (pp. 36–46). In some places, a Hebrew letter was inserted. However, with the introduction of pointing (10th cent. AD) to designate vowels, such extremes were no longer required (p. 35). Pointing could radically

change a word's meaning and interpretation, explaining the widely divergent variety of sources for any texts with messianic referents.

The basic starting point is with Gen 3:15. Here, the promised offspring of Eve and subsequent genealogies that show us who he is are crucial for a correct understanding of the rest of the Bible. Rydelnik describes the extraordinary lengths non-Christian writers would go to for alternative interpretations (pp. 131–34). Another example, 2 Sam 23:1–7, refers to the Messiah—not to David, as the Masoretic version reads (and hence, almost all English translations). This has enormous implications for everything David wrote in the Psalms (pp. 39–41). Most NT citations of the OT are from the Greek Septuagint (LXX). Still, the LXX is not generally used to shed light on questionable OT versions. In fact, in the passage in question, the LXX version is not even cited in the footnotes of the 1984 Stuttgartensia edition of *Biblia Hebraica*.

Perhaps nowhere are efforts at alteration more obvious than with Ps 22:17. The psalm's first verse was quoted by Jesus from the cross, and portrays an intimate account of the crucifixion. The Masoretic version has the hands and feet of the one being portrayed as though they were “as a lion” where the Septuagint's clear meaning is they were “pierced.” That the latter account is more faithful, as well as the only coherent one, is confirmed by a recently excavated Hebrew version, from the Wadi Seiyal, dated to the first century AD. In it, the LXX is fully supported (pp. 44–46).

Another example of scribal contortions is in Jacob's last prophecy (Gen 49:10). The Masoretes have, “The scepter shall not depart from Judah nor the law giver from between his feet until Shiloh comes.” Shiloh here is a transliteration of the Hebrew, using this word as a name. The LXX, Syriac, and Targum have “The scepter shall not depart from Judah nor the law giver from between his feet until he comes unto whom it belongs.” Rydelnik again musters support for the LXX through intertextual associations and Akkadian precedents (pp. 49–52).

In admonishing against seductive tendencies that favor anti-messianic interpretations, Rydelnik notes an increasing preference for the less forceful term of promise over prophecy (p. 23). While outlining four paradigms of messianic prophecies in the OT, he cites several current evangelical publications that reject the idea that direct messianic prophecies are found in the Hebrew Bible (pp. 95–111). He also examines the popular medieval Jewish commentator Rashi (pp. 112–28).

Our author has accomplished his objective with considerable force. This book is an important tool for both scholars and pastors and would even benefit those unfamiliar with theological jargon. It will be interesting to see the responses of future commentators.

Kimon Nicolaidese
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield IL

Joshua. By J. Gordon McConville and Stephen N. Williams. The Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010, xii + 257 pp., \$20.00 paper.

The Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary (THOTC) is a new series with a focus on both theological exegesis and theological reflection. With the Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible, this is the second project of its kind in recent years, which testifies to a renewed interest for theological interpretation of the Scriptures. The present commentary comprises a relatively short commentary of the book of Joshua by McConville (pp. 13–92) and several chapters devoted to theological reflection written by each author, with short responses (pp. 95–235).

In keeping with the style of the series, the commentary is not a verse-by-verse analysis but a paragraph-by-paragraph theological reading. The advantage of this method is that it allows the commentator to highlight the main point of each pericope and emphasize its theological significance. McConville points out particularly well the tension pervading the book between the overall success of the conquest and the nevertheless incomplete possession of the land. The other side of the coin is a temptation for the author not to engage deeply with the exegetical study of the text when preparing the commentary. In the present case, the knowledge of matters such as textual criticism, archaeology, and topography is obviously secondhand and the author is dependent on previous books (e.g. Richard Hess's commentary).

Broadly speaking, the bibliography is light (to mention but one regrettable omission: Richard S. Hess, Gerald A. Klingbeil, and Paul J. Ray, eds., *Critical Issues in Early Israelite History* [BBRS 3; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2008]). Does a *theological* focus necessarily involve neglecting to consult the *exegetical* literature when preparing a commentary? Are there no theological insights to collect from at least structural or narrative criticism studies of the text? Likewise and surprisingly, only a few references to ancient authors appear in the entire book. Was there no theological reflection on Joshua in antiquity, or is it here considered as negligible? (See, e.g. Katell Berthelot, "Philo of Alexandria and the Conquest of Canaan," *JSJ* 38 [2001] 39–56, to mention but one recent study of an ancient Jewish author dealing with the killing of the Canaanites.)

The following chapter, by S. N. Williams, deals with such issues as "Theological Horizons"; "The Question of the Land"; "The Question of Genocide"; "Idolatry"; "Covenant"; and "God of Miracle and Mystery." The discussion of the first two points is really worth reading. For example, the author insightfully points out the significance of the Levites, whose inheritance is the Lord (Josh 13:33–34): "The Levites are a reminder that inheritance in land matters only if that which is greater than land is inherited by those who inherit it" (p. 107). With regard to the fate of the Canaanites, Williams emphasizes the fact that we may wrongly picture the Canaanites as innocent people, and comes relatively close to the idea of a divine judgment (pp. 111–12, but see p. 118). He also analyzes Joshua's violence as "a form of counter violence" and a testimony of God's hatred of violence (p. 112), and identifies the main reason for the killing of natives as being their contagious idolatry (pp. 113–14). Finally, he explains his own approach: "If God commands violence, it is part of a whole concessionary scheme of operation, an accommodation to the fact of rampant evil which he detests but has not abolished" (p. 121). In contrast to these interesting pages, the rest of the chapter consists in theological discussions of various themes from a general perspective, often far removed from Joshua itself.

In the next chapter ("Joshua and Biblical Theology"), McConville provides a helpful survey of the themes the book of Joshua shares with other biblical books from Genesis-Kings. He then explains his own view of the problem of the killing of the Canaanites: "Israel's war on Canaan in Joshua is part of a comprehensive, cosmic war between God and the powers of evil, within which human evil has an integral part" (p. 195). He finds support for this in the crossing of the sea (cf. the Canaanite God Yam), the appearance of "the commander of the Lord's army" in Josh 5:15 and in the ritualized and non-human taking of Jericho (p. 196). In a "response to Gordon McConville," S. N. Williams affirms his general agreement to this rather unconvincing analysis, and focuses on hermeneutical considerations in interpreting the OT in light of the NT. This seems partially beside the point here, although Williams's vigorous reaffirmation of the legitimacy of a properly Christian reading of the OT is highly appreciable (pp. 202–4).

Then, Williams ("How to Read Joshua Today") insists on the importance of the historicity of at least a core in the narrative of the conquest, remarking that anyone who really believes in Christ's resurrection should be open to accept astonishing things in the OT (pp. 211–13). McConville's response on this subject lacks precision. He ad-

vocates a less thorough connection between historicity and truth, close to a relativistic approach: "Parts of the Old Testament's 'historical books' may not be factual in the way that modern history is normally required to be" (p. 234). So are there several ways of "being factual"? Surely, the biblical books do not record history as modern handbooks, but it remains to be proved that ancient Israelites were unable to make a difference between facts and fiction, and between normal events and miracles.

Overall, most of the second part could probably have been written independently of the first, where the authors frequently did not resist the temptation to choose a few peculiar themes in Joshua and discuss them freely from their own theological points of view, rather than trying, at least at first, to follow more closely the theological agenda of the book itself as it is expressed in the literary form of its 24 chapters. That said, this book contains many insightful remarks, and although they are mixed with lengthy and less relevant discussions (sometimes far from the point in what is still called a "commentary"), they justify consulting this book for theological reflection on Joshua.

Matthieu Richelle
Faculté Libre de Théologie Evangélique,
Vaux-sur-Seine, France

1 Samuel. By Francesca Aran Murphy. Brazos Theological Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2010, xx + 299 pp., \$34.99.

According to the series preface, "The Brazos Theological Commentary advances on 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. xii). Consequently, the series employs theologians as commentators rather than biblical scholars. This is the context within which the present volume on 1 Samuel was written. Within these parameters, Francesca Aran Murphy has produced a thoughtful, stimulating commentary.

In her introduction, Murphy sets forth several guiding principles. Foremost, she picks up on Augustine's theological perspective that the book (as the first of the four part *Regnorum* [or "Kingdoms"]) served both as history of the Israelite monarchy as well as a prophecy of the kingdom of God (p. xix). While different scribes may have recorded the various episodes, the book we have was the product of a craftsman, both historian and prophet, whom she calls the author. As prophet, he "put his historical gifts at the service of the church" (p. xx). It is primarily through this prophetic lens that Murphy views the various episodes recorded.

In her discussion of the text, Murphy draws on a variety of sources throughout church history, ranging from the Church fathers to modern commentators. Her familiarity with this entire range brings together a rich variety of perspectives that would be especially helpful to someone preaching through this book. For that purpose, the episodic organization of the commentary (as opposed to a chapter and verse analysis) is quite helpful in that it emphasizes the drama as 1 Samuel takes the reader from the birth of Samuel, the last judge, through the transition to Saul's kingship, his rejection by God, his conflict with David his anointed replacement, and finally Saul's death. Further, Murphy gives a thoughtful, sympathetic portrayal of each individual, showing all as very human with their own strengths and weaknesses. This seems to be one of the best features of the book.

While the commentary focuses on the forest rather than the trees, at times Murphy homes in on a specific "tree," but with mixed results. Someone looking for clarification

on specific details of the text, especially nuances of a phrase or the meaning of a word, will need to consult other sources. While some of the matters are rather incidental (such as confusing slingshots and slings [e.g. p. 71] and asserting without explanation that Saul's water jug was bronze [p. 245]), others are items she uses to make significant theological points. Two few examples follow.

First, while discussing Hannah's relationship with Elkanah, Murphy explores in some depth the intricacies of the relationships between Elkanah and his two wives. She addresses especially the significance the phrase "a double portion" (NASB, NIV, ESV, NRSV) in 1 Sam 1:5. Murphy opts for the older RSV translation "a single portion," following Origen and the LXX, claiming this reflects Hannah's cultural isolation since she did not have children (pp. 6–8). However, Murphy ignores the crucial *ki* clause, "for he loved Hannah." If her explanation of the single portion is correct, then Elkanah also isolated Hannah because he loved her.

Second, when discussing Eli, she asserts that the Benjaminites were Israel's "crack troops" (apparently based on Judg 20:16, which observes that 700 left-handers of the 26,000 Benjaminite troops were expert slingers). She then concludes that because the messenger bringing the news of Israel's defeat was a Benjaminite, this in itself informed the original reader that the "army [wa]s a write-off" (p. 39).

What is more, there are several places where the reader is left questioning Murphy's word choice or how she derived specific points from the text. We will cite just three. First, in the case of the plague on the Philistines after they took the ark, she asserts that the "narrator describes a plague of genital warts" (p. 44). Later, she goes with the more conventional "hemorrhoids" but states that it is a "translator's guess" (p. 48).

Second, there is the issue of Abigail, the wife of Nabal. David's conflict with Nabal occurred some time after his wife Michal helped him escape Saul by putting the *teraphim* in the bed and letting him down through the window (1 Sam 19:11–13; v. 11 calls her David's wife). When Murphy introduces this subject, she asserts that David was "[s]till betrothed" (i.e. engaged) to Michal when he got his second wife Abigail (pp. 151–52). Coupled with this, Murphy declares that when Abigail went out to meet David, she "[rode] with 'five pretty damsels'" (p. 274), citing Joseph Heller's fictional account of David.

In the third case, Murphy comments on David's visit to Ahimelech the priest at Nob, where David procured bread and was given Goliath's sword. Murphy states, "Like many a purveyor of relics ever since, [Ahimelech] even seems to have a stock of 'Goliath swords' in the hold and gives one to Saul [22:10]" (p. 222). The text indicates this verse to be a quote of Doeg the Edomite as he related to Saul what Ahimelech had done for David.

Nonetheless, the book does have thoughtful theological insights. Discussing Saul's presentation to Israel as king (1 Samuel 10), Murphy notes how many critics have one-sided views of God. Seeing that Israel's God is transcendent, they then "equate transcendence with frozen immobility" (p. 95). Her in-depth analysis of Saul's visit to the witch of Endor is thought provoking (pp. 253–71) although she does seem to attribute the actual calling up of Samuel to the witch. Perhaps the most thoughtful is her validation of the historicity of the events. She states, "The tradition of the church regards these books as historical. . . . Once one starts to conceive of 1 Samuel as drawing on evidential witness with regard to historical facts, one may consequently draw from it some evidential conclusions about the God of which it speaks" (p. 275).

Despite some weaknesses in terms of the details, this is a worthwhile commentary on 1 Samuel. Anyone preaching on Samuel or studying Israel's united kingdom will find it a helpful resource.

Michael A. Harbin
Taylor University, Upland, IN

The Psalms as Christian Worship: A Historical Commentary. By Bruce K. Waltke and James M. Houston with Erika Moore. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010, xii + 626 pp., \$28.00 paper.

The book's initial prologue explains that it is a collaboration between Bruce Waltke and James Houston. There are two main sections to the book: "Survey of History of Interpretation of the Book of Psalms" (pp. 19–112) and "Commentary on Selected Psalms" (pp. 115–572). Houston wrote the work on the history of interpretation and Waltke wrote the commentary on particular psalms. Erika Moore contributed the chapter on the psalter's history during the Second Temple period and also was responsible for the glossary and indices.

In the first major section of the book, there is a chapter on the psalter's history during the Second Temple period, which is focused on Jewish interpretation. The second chapter surveys the Christian interpretation of the psalms up to the present time. Chapter 3 contrasts historical biblical criticism, which is viewed quite negatively, with "accredited exegesis," which is the method utilized by Waltke in his later commentary on selected psalms.

What does Waltke mean by "accredited exegesis"? He says that it involves "an integrated threefold approach to the interpretation of Scripture: prayerful and devotional to hear the voice of God; trustful and sympathetic to hear the voice of the author; and scientific to hear the voice of the text" (p. 4). This stands in contrast to historical biblical criticism, which he describes as lacking concern about faith issues. He describes his method as the "grammatico-historical approach." He argues for the "plain sense" of Scripture and not allegory. He does think typological interpretation is appropriate in some cases.

The authors have provided interpretations of thirteen selected psalms (Psalms 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 15, 16, 19, 22, 23, 51, 110, 139), which are intended to be representative. Each chapter begins with a history of Christian interpretation of each psalm, followed by a verse-by-verse commentary. The history of interpretation begins with the early Church fathers (sometimes with NT interpreters when psalms are used in the NT) and often ends with the Protestant reformers of the sixteenth century (e.g. Psalms 1, 2, 3, 4, 15, 51, 110). Pride of place often goes to John Calvin and his "plain meaning" method of exegesis. When modern interpreters are mentioned such as for Psalm 19, they are often treated negatively in comparison to earlier interpreters.

In the exegetical sections, there first is a translation of the psalm, followed by an introduction of issues related to structure, form criticism, poetic analysis, and thematic concerns, followed by a lengthy and detailed verse-by-verse commentary. Detailed footnotes provide background for the meaning of words and grammatical relations of the words in verses; also included are references to key scholarly debates on such matters.

There is much in his commentary that is helpful. Certainly one must pay attention to words and their meanings and syntax of groups of words. However, sometimes too much can be read into the meaning of words in particular contexts by drawing upon their variant usages elsewhere. One also needs to see how words make up whole texts. Here more attention to structure and poetry and images that connect larger units of a psalm together would have been helpful. Because of the criticism of many modern methods of study, resources for addressing these issues such as in form criticism, structural analysis, and literary analysis have been overlooked.

This exegesis is also problematic because it can so easily lead to a proof-texting of particular verses. When every word is so full of meaning and significance, one can preach a whole sermon on a verse without even noticing the place of that verse in the larger structure of the text. A preacher might easily look for such golden nuggets in the

commentary by Waltke. Even if Waltke would not intend his commentary to be used that way, too often that is what happens. The issue is the question of the meaning of a text and where that meaning lies—in the individual words or verses as separate entities or in the whole text of a psalm.

There is much of interest in the sections on the interpretation of the psalms as a whole and particular psalms throughout history. They provide many examples of ways in which the psalms have enriched the devotional lives of individuals and groups throughout the centuries. There is little question that the psalms are still capable of providing much nourishment today.

While issues related to the interpretation of biblical texts and the exegesis of particular texts are both relevant and useful, it does not seem the two parts are well integrated here. It is not obvious that a history of interpretation leads one to “accredited exegesis.” Why is any method of exegesis better than another? Second, it is not evident that specific aspects of earlier interpretation of individual psalms have influenced Waltke all that greatly. He quotes more from modern biblical critics than from ancient interpreters, in spite of his criticism of historical biblical criticism.

One might wonder why two separate books were not written—one that focused on the history of interpretation and one that served as a traditional commentary on selected psalms of the Bible. The two are placed side by side in this book, but it is not clear how one should relate the two parts. It might mean that Waltke sees himself in a long line of tradition of exegesis and that he builds upon and works upon the work of others. However, there is a problem here, since the Protestant reformers were rather critical of much earlier interpretation and particularly the allegorical reading of Scripture. Still, of course, one might say that one gets two books for the price of one.

The book is aimed to provide contemporary churches with resources for praise and worship. The authors state their objective on page 2: “Our basic concerns in this book are to enrich the daily life of the contemporary Christian and to deepen the church’s community worship in hearing God’s voice both through an accredited exegesis of the Psalms and through the believing response of the church.” The authors have brought together both some of the best of exegetical work on the psalms and the insights of interpretive work throughout the centuries to confront modern readers with the riches of the psalms for worship and praise.

Who is the audience of this book? Even though there is a helpful glossary at the end of the book, it is likely that lay people will find this book difficult. The exegetical comments of Waltke are particularly dense. While many scholarly discussions are embedded in lengthy footnotes, the text seems aimed more at scholars than church people. One might note, for example, Waltke’s statement on page 165: “Semantic pertinence demands understanding that the antecedent of the first person plural pronoun ‘us’ is the world rulers and that the antecedent of the third masculine ‘their’ is I AM and his anointed.”

For evangelical scholars who find much of the work of historical biblical criticism problematic, this work presents a refreshing alternative. It affirms the Davidic authorship of the psalms, accepts NT Christological reading of the psalms as appropriate, and affirms the ongoing Christian reading of the psalms in later church history. It continues the model of “plain exegesis” found particularly in John Calvin. It selectively draws upon contemporary scholarship for information that is relevant for a Christian reading of the psalm. It provides a detailed word-by-word and verse by verse commentary. Finally, it pulls one into an encounter with the Hebrew text that lies beneath the translations.

Stephen A. Reed
Jamestown College, Jamestown, ND

Beyond the Qumran Community: The Sectarian Movement of the Dead Sea Scrolls. By John J. Collins. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010, xii + 266 pp., \$25.00 paper.

With the full release and publication of the Dead Sea Scrolls, John J. Collins re-examines "the narrowly defined question of the nature of the communities described in the scrolls" (p. 11). The book consists of five chapters. In chapter 1, "The New Covenant" (pp. 12–51), Collins seeks to understand the motivation for making and keeping the new covenant. In the *Damascus Rule*, he finds the articulation of a movement focused on the strict observance of the Torah, though without historical details. He suggests that the movement existed before the Teacher of Righteousness emerged and that earlier stages of the movement may be reflected in texts such as *Jubilees* and the *Temple Scroll*. Collins refutes the idea that "sons of Zadok" was a genealogical designation for the members of the Qumran community, the idea that the community arose as a result of a dispute over the high priesthood, and other ill-founded ideas that have become widely accepted.

Chapter 2, "The Yahad" (pp. 52–87), explores the *Community Rule*, also known as the *Manual of Discipline*, which is the basis of many popular perceptions of the "Qumran community." Collins considers its relationship to the *Damascus Rule* and examines select issues related to the life of the community, such as admission procedures, property, marriage and family, attitude to the cult, and others. He also discusses the *Rule of the Congregation*. He concludes that there is clearly a relationship between the *Damascus Rule* and the *Community Rule* and that they do not attest to two different sects, although he does believe that the former governed an order practicing marriage while the latter provided the rule for celibates. They both reflect a heightened quest for holiness that is based on the idea that life in the community provides a substitute for the temple cult. While the two rules have their differences, Collins attributes these to a family-based movement and a celibate movement existing in tandem, rather than to schism.

In chapter 3, "The Historical Context" (pp. 88–121), Collins considers the milieu in which the "new covenant" community was founded. The consensus has been that the Teacher of Righteousness should be placed in the mid-second century. Collins reconsiders the pillars on which this consensus was based, including the 390 years mentioned in CD 1, the idea that the usurpation of the high priesthood by the Maccabees was a decisive factor in the formation of the sect, historical allusions, the *Pesharim* as historical sources, and other issues. He concludes that the movement did not arise because of a dispute over the high priesthood but as a result of a distinctive interpretation of the Mosaic law and that this likely occurred toward the end of the second century BC.

Chapter 4, "The Essenes" (pp. 122–65), studies the still-controversial identification of the new covenant community of the scrolls with the Essenes. Collins examines the sources, including Philo, Pliny, and Josephus (pp. 124–42), and then considers whether their descriptions of the Essenes correspond with those of the scrolls. In this vein, he compares the location of the site, the description of the communal life, the process of admission, description of multiple settlements, social structure and leadership, oaths, offerings, celibacy, religious beliefs, and messianism and apocalypticism. He concludes that "the reasons for identifying the Essenes with the *yahad* remain substantial" (p. 156). This chapter concludes with two appendices, one on the name "Essene" (pp. 156–60) and the other on the Therapeutae (pp. 160–65).

In Chapter 5, "The Site of Qumran" (pp. 166–208), Collins reviews the data about the archaeology of the site. He notes that early explorers thought that the site was probably a fortress, which was also the initial assessment of Roland de Vaux, the site's excavator (p. 167). He considers de Vaux's stratigraphy of the site and reviews recent alternative interpretations. He argues that "the existence of ten *miqva'ot* in an area

no larger than an acre is the strongest archaeological reason for defining Qumran as a religious site" (p. 205). It does not make sense that a military garrison would have so many pools, and Collins concludes that Magen and Peleg's theory that they were pools for the collection of clay for pottery "lacks support and plausibility." One possible problem with the interpretation of the site as a sectarian settlement is the discovery of a toilet in Locus 51, since the *War Scroll* and the *Temple Scroll* insist that latrines be situated either 2,000 or 3,000 cubits outside the camp. Collins suggests that "it is possible that the sect, for all its idealism, made provision for an emergency, in which case the toilet might be preferable to the alternatives" (p. 206). He also concludes that, based on the proximity of the caves to the site and the similarity of the pottery at both locations, "it is counterintuitive to deny that the scrolls are related to the site." The site of Qumran seems to Collins to have clearly been one settlement of the *yahad*, which "was not an isolated monastic community, as has sometimes been imagined, but was part of a religious association spread widely throughout the land" (p. 208).

An epilogue (pp. 209–14) summarizes the conclusions reached in each chapter, followed by an extensive bibliography (pp. 215–49). Indices of modern authors (pp. 250–57), ancient names and sobriquets (pp. 258–59), and Scripture and other ancient sources (pp. 260–66) follow. The book contains eleven helpful maps, diagrams, and photographs, located between chapters 3 and 4. The volume as a whole is comprised of careful analysis, but it is written in a way that will make it accessible to scholars, students, and even the general public. For anyone who is interested in the Dead Sea Scrolls, Judaism at the turn of the era, and early Christianity, *Beyond the Qumran Community* is a must-read.

Ralph K. Hawkins
Kentucky Christian University, Grayson, KY

The Greek Imperative Mood in the New Testament: A Cognitive and Communicative Approach. By Joseph D. Fantin. Studies in Biblical Greek 12. New York: Peter Lang, 2010, xvi + 406 pp., \$91.95.

The Studies in Biblical Greek series has provided the Greek student with a number of helpful volumes, most of them originating as dissertations. The newest volume in this series, volume 12, makes a helpful contribution to the discussion of the imperative mood, addressing questions that have not been adequately considered in previous NT studies. This work was originally a dissertation submitted at Dallas Theological Seminary in 2003. The bibliography has been updated with the addition of about a dozen and a half more recent sources and a reference index added, but the content does not appear to be significantly changed from the original edition. The post-dissertation sources are only included in footnotes, usually without comment; there is no interaction with their content in the body of the work.

Fantin argues that the imperative has been neglected and deserves more careful study, especially in light of the digital resources available today. His purpose is to delineate the semantic and pragmatic values of the imperative mood (i.e. the morphological form of the verb). This is in contrast to imperative statements that may use other grammatical forms to express imperatival ideas. This is not a study that rigidly applies or defends any one linguistic theory, but is a grammatical study that gleans linguistic insights from Lamb's neuro-cognitive stratificational linguistics along with relevance theory (Sperber and Wilson).

The book begins with a lengthy discussion of linguistic issues and methodology in chapter 1. Here Fantin's linguistic background (he has an MA in linguistics from Michigan State) is evident. He discusses a wide range of general linguistic topics including synchronic versus diachronic analysis, descriptive versus prescriptive method, and relational networks. Within the relational network, Fantin focuses primarily on the morphemic and sememic strata: what does the Greek imperative morphological form mean (semantics) and how does it function in texts (pragmatics)?

The second chapter charts the course of the study of the Greek imperative in NT studies, limited almost exclusively to the 20th century. After a brief survey of formal definitions of the mood, Fantin summarizes typical taxonomies of the various uses of the imperative mood (command, request, permission, prohibition, etc.). The debate regarding prohibitions ("do not begin" versus "stop") is treated next. Concluding the chapter (and comprising a large portion of it) is a critique of speech act theory, an approach that Fantin judges to have minimal value for his study. (He appears to be generally pessimistic about its value in other areas as well, noting that there are "serious problems with SAT itself" [p. 106]—yet he also states that "it is not without value" [p. 110].)

Two questions form the focus of the third chapter: "1. What is the meaning of the imperative mood? and 2. Why did the author use the imperative in a particular instance?" (p. 121; i.e. the semantics and pragmatics of the imperative mood). The semantic question is dealt with in chapter 3, full development of the pragmatic aspects is held until chapter 4. As to semantics, Fantin begins with Wallace's definition and concludes that it is "a volitional directive" (p. 134). From that starting point he says that "this study will proceed with this assumption and will attempt to demonstrate this meaning from within the text" (p. 134). Then follows two major sections in which NT data is discussed. In the first a selection of passages used in the standard grammars to illustrate the varied usage of the imperative is given, classified as command, request, permission, condition, or prohibition. (Both of the last two categories are judged to be misleading.) The majority of these examples (51 of 67) come from Wallace's grammar. The second section presents slightly more than 100 verses from the Synoptics in which imperative constructions in one Gospel are represented with a different grammatical form (e.g. future indicative or aorist subjunctive) in one of the others. (A few of these are not valid parallels, but most are legitimate.) Fantin concludes that the imperative mood is "stronger" and more prominent than the other moods, even compared with parallel constructions that do not use an imperative.

The last major chapter is the longest in the book. Here the pragmatic usage of the imperative is examined. It is at this point that Fantin employs considerations from his linguistic models, inquiring regarding such matters as social status, politeness, event-sequence, and grammatical person in an attempt to establish new criteria for the force of various imperatives. *Force* describes "directness relative to the lexemic meaning of the verb" (p. 201). There appear to be only two grades of force: strong and weak. All imperatives are considered to have strong force unless the factors noted suggest a weak force. In addition imperatives are also classified in terms of benefit and event-sequence (i.e. a multidimensional paradigm is proposed). This results, for example, in classification summaries such as: "the most common imperative is strongly-forced, addressee-benefiting, and event-initiating" (p. 205). This is taken to be the unmarked use of the imperative. The central part of the chapter addresses various "politeness strategies" that may be employed to weaken or deflect the strong force of the imperative. These include some lexical factors, use of an introductory verb of asking, shift to third person, and terms of honor, each of which may work out slightly differently depending on the rank of the persons involved. One of the more useful sections in chapter 4 is the discussion of third person imperatives; this is perhaps Fantin's most

significant contribution, though it is primarily a development of Boyer's article published nearly 25 years ago. The final portion of the chapter evaluates what have been called conditional imperatives. Fantin concludes that conditionality is not an attribute or use of the imperative, but that the imperative may be used in a statement that is conditional at the clause level.

Given that there has been little attention given to the imperative, this study forms a helpful contribution. Though the particular classification system proposed may not prove overly useful, the factors involved are significant and need to be incorporated. Traditional treatments of the imperative in the grammars have generally recognized various pragmatic uses of this mood, but have rarely given any guidelines as to how these uses may be determined. Fantin's work provides a good beginning point for a more nuanced evaluation of such factors. The third person imperative has often been oversimplified, especially in first-year grammars. The explanation commonly given there (an indirect command to a third party) is actually the least common use. Recognizing, as Fantin demonstrates, that it much more frequently functions as an indirect *second-person* command is a significant improvement. Likewise, addressing imperatives used in conditional statements in terms of clausal phenomena rather than a particular use of the imperative is a welcome improvement.

There are, however, a number of factors that detract from an otherwise good piece of work. There are numerous errata in the book, mostly incorrect English grammar (e.g. "this seem likely," p. 26; see also pp. 85, 108, 127, 265, 150, 226, 259), spelling mistakes ("wether," p. 174), and an occasional factual error (e.g. the LXX data on p. 222 is incorrect: there *are* imperative forms of $\theta\epsilon\omega\rho\acute{\epsilon}\omega$, 2 Macc 7:17; 14:13, see also 4 Macc 5:13). There is too much material that is irrelevant to the thesis—and the author often acknowledges that a point he has just made "is not very helpful." This sort of thing is found in many dissertations when the student is determined to include everything he has found on a subject, but should have been omitted from the published form. Similarly, there is a lot of redundancy, often acknowledged as such (e.g. "I know this sounds redundant," p. 307; see also p. 248 n. 121) and an overuse of qualifications and digressions. Some sections may be valid, but are not particularly helpful (e.g. the discussion of benefit, pp. 258–65). There is some inconsistency in numbering or the enumeration of statements (e.g. p. 232 refers to two factors, but three are listed).

The database employed (626 out of 1,636 imperatives in the NT) is never justified beyond stating that "imperatives from all authors and literary genres will be considered" (p. 67). The list of passages used (p. 68) consists of scattered chapters from 10 NT books (e.g. Matthew 1–5, 10–13; 1 Timothy 2, 4, 6) and all the imperatives from 10 other books (e.g. Romans and Hebrews)—but why these chapters from these books? Why these imperatives and why only these? We are not told. The set selected constitutes 38% of the potential NT data. In some cases this results in conclusions regarding particular uses of the imperative being based on a very small dataset—yet he criticizes other studies for using too small a database (p. 228)! My impression is that the topic was too broad and the database too small for an American dissertation project.

A significant omission is a discussion of how his conclusions interface with recent study in verbal aspect. This is particularly important since previous studies have typically focused on the significance of the present versus aorist forms of the imperative in terms of force and/or markedness. Yet Fantin says that "the issue of tenses of the imperative will not be discussed beyond an introductory summary of recent work and where they directly contribute to this work's analysis. This is an area in which most work has been done recently and there is no need to revisit the issue at length here" (p. 67). True, the work need not be redone, but some adjudication and integration would seem to be essential.

Despite some of the problems noted, the work is a helpful treatment in selected areas (particularly third person imperatives and conditional imperatives) and deserves a place on the shelves of a theological library. The price probably precludes its purchase by most individuals.

Rodney J. Decker

Baptist Bible Seminary, Clarks Summit, PA

Interpreting Gospel Narratives: Scenes, People, and Theology. By Timothy Wiarda. Nashville: B & H, 2010, viii + 245 pp., \$24.99 paper.

This volume by Timothy Wiarda is “about interpreting the testimony to Jesus given to us in the Gospels . . . for those who teach and preach from the Gospels” (p. 2). The book seeks to offer three things: (1) a how-to book on the exegesis of Gospel texts; (2) an introduction to methodological questions related specifically to the Gospels; and (3) a special focus on four narrative issues, including characterization, the role of descriptive details in narrative texts, the relationship of theology and story, and questions related to the episodic nature of the Gospels. Wiarda begins with four assumptions common to Gospel studies today: (1) Markan priority; (2) the evangelists’ use of sources (Luke 1:1–4); (3) the selection, ordering, and shaping of these sources for theological and pastoral means; and (4) the assumption that the evangelists not only depicted the events of the time of Jesus, but had an eye to the needs of communities of their own day. These assumptions place Wiarda’s work in the mainstream of evangelical Gospel scholarship.

Chapter 1 is a study of characterization in the Gospels and particularly how *attention to detail* informs our understanding of Gospel characters. Wiarda examines four types of Gospel character portrayal: (1) the depiction of a moment of human experience; (2) the brief story of inward change; (3) consistent characterization; and (4) the story thread. In each case, he shows how attention to detail in characterization brings out important themes that may be otherwise missed. For example, in the account of the healing of the leper in Luke 5:12–16, commentators generally emphasize the role of the episode in demonstrating Jesus’ sovereign power to heal. While this is important, Wiarda points out how specific details (the leper’s posture, the description of the extent of the disease, Jesus’ touch) highlight Jesus’ compassion for the man.

Chapter 2 examines the relationship between story and theology, and more specifically, how theology is communicated through narrative. As throughout the volume, Wiarda teaches through exegesis, examining the manner in which theology emerges in five narrative texts (John 20:10–18; Mark 6:30–44; Acts 1:12–26; Luke 19:1–10; Mark 1:16–39). In the account of the replacement of Judas in Acts 1:12–26, for example, Wiarda develops something of a formula for discerning theology in narrative: Plot and Characterization + Emphasis + Ideological Point of View = Theology. Against those who claim that the choice of Matthias was a mistake and that Paul should have been the twelfth apostle, Wiarda rightly points out that Luke certainly did not view it this way. The actions of the apostles are portrayed positively throughout: Peter and the disciples obey Jesus by staying in Jerusalem; they pray in preparation for choosing Judas’s replacement; they are united; they base their selection on Scripture; their qualifications for apostleship are in line with Luke’s own view. Theology emerges through narrative analysis.

Chapter 3 deals with narrative interpretations that move beyond the surface-level reading of the text, including symbolic/allegorical reading, thematic words, OT allusions

and intra-Gospel allusions. In general, Wiarda expresses caution in these approaches and encourages greater focus on the surface-level reading of the text. For example, while OT allusions are important to the thematic development of the story, there can be a tendency to “lift text elements out of their narrative contexts” and in this way “lose touch with the scene and story” (p. 126).

Chapter 4 returns to the topic of characterization. Wiarda asserts that while popular preachers tend to overemphasize the degree to which Gospel narratives focus on individuals, scholars and commentators tend to underestimate the significance of individual characters. The chapter therefore calls for a more balanced approach. The purpose of the Gospels is first and foremost Christological, teaching us about the person and work of Jesus rather than providing us with moral examples and isolated stories about God’s blessings on individuals. Yet they also focus on discipleship, and this aspect is too often neglected in the commentaries. Wiarda examines a variety of narrative texts, each time showing both Christological and exemplary features of the text. In his last example (Mark 8:27–33), Wiarda seeks to show that the characterization of Peter as a representative character for all the disciples can be overstated and that his function as an individual character is also important for the theology of the Gospel.

Throughout this volume, Wiarda deals primarily with individual Gospel episodes. In chapter 5, he considers how these episodes relate to the larger Gospel narratives. Again, balance is the order of the day. Those who prepare sermons and lessons must beware isolating individual units from their larger narrative contexts. Scholars and commentators, on the other hand, must resist the temptation to impose an overall interpretive grid onto their treatment of individual episodes: “A Gospel’s small stories can easily be misread or their voices hushed under the sway of a particular whole-Gospel conception” (p. 162). Wiarda deals in turn with thematically grouped episodes, recurring themes, narrative analogies, and various forms of interconnection.

Chapter 6 concludes the volume with a number of hermeneutical reflections, again presented in the context of the exegesis of various Gospel texts. Wiarda’s two main assertions are given by this point in the book: (1) faithful exposition of the Gospels is vital for the health and growth of the church; and (2) good exegesis provides the necessary foundation for faithful exposition (p. 194). Here he challenges, on the one hand, the notion held in some popular circles that exegesis and exposition have little to do with the advancement of the kingdom, and, on the other hand, the view of some academics that the historical meaning of the text is not a valid or helpful goal for interpretation. The first three sections of this chapter deal with the Holy Spirit’s role in the interpretive process, the fourth deals with reading the Gospels theologically in the context of the message of Scripture as a whole, and the fifth with levels of intentionality in an author’s mind and the implications of this for Gospel interpretation and application.

There is little to criticize in Wiarda’s work and much to commend. The greatest strength (and one that will make this volume particularly helpful for students) is that Wiarda teaches by example and illustration. The volume is chock full of helpful narrative analysis of Gospel texts. Anyone who questions the usefulness (indeed, necessity) of narrative criticism for evangelical Gospel studies will have those doubts assuaged by the author’s many exegetical samples.

One small criticism is a tendency to downplay the thrust of the larger narrative in search of individual themes. For example, in the account of the feeding of the five thousand in Mark, Wiarda argues that the portrayal of the disciples is not as negative as is sometimes suggested and that their desire to send the crowd away may well be motivated by genuine sympathy. In short, the episode is not only meant to show Jesus’ messianic power and status, but also to demonstrate how Jesus provides for the *disciples* so that *they* can meet the needs of the crowds (p. 58). While this may be a legitimate (though minor) point, it could encourage the common tendency of preach-

ers to miss the overall salvation-historical thrust of the passage when searching for personal applications. Wiarda's attention to detail provides many helpful insights, but one must be cautious not to miss the forest for the trees (a tendency against which Wiarda himself frequently warns).

Minor criticism aside, the volume is an excellent example of the actual practice of narrative analysis. Wiarda's exegesis is sound and his conclusions are balanced, cautious, and judicious. He frequently couches his language with statements of possibility rather than certainty. In addition, those who find themselves preaching in the churches as well as writing for the academy will find here a wealth of helpful expositional insights. The volume would also serve as an excellent supplementary text for courses in Gospels, hermeneutics, or homiletics—a practical guide for students being introduced to the technical terminology and methodological complexities of narrative analysis, illustrating how the method works in the real-life exegesis and exposition of the Word.

Mark L. Strauss

Bethel Seminary San Diego, San Diego, CA

The Christ of the Miracle Stories: Portrait through Encounter. By Wendy J. Cotter. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010, xxvi + 293 pp., \$29.99 paper.

Wendy Cotter, associate professor of Scripture at Loyola College Chicago, has produced an excellent work that is at the same time scholarly, readable, and offers some raw material for faith. She displays competence in a wide array of approaches, from lexical analysis to form, source, and redaction criticism to text criticism to more reader-centered approaches. She always engages these methods, however, in light of comparative literature from antiquity, trying to reconstruct how the accounts' first auditors would have heard them. This is where, I believe, her exegetical skill shines most brightly.

She opens by challenging some traditional critical approaches to miracle stories that neglect the portrayal of Christ implicit in these accounts. Bultmann and Dibelius doubted that the Gospel miracle accounts revealed much about Jesus beyond his power; Dibelius viewed many of them as "tales." Comparing other concrete ancient narrative forms, Cotter argues that, to the contrary, these accounts differ from the lengthier category of ancient tales. Instead they function more like brief ancient anecdotes.

Their focus is thus not merely praising Jesus' power, but also providing further characterization and models for behavior. In contrast to more explicit teaching segments in the Gospels, the miracle stories illustrate how Jesus related to ordinary petitioners, whether for themselves or others. Cotter seeks to articulate how these narratives portray Jesus in his encounter with petitioners. The accounts are about miracles, to be sure, but are also about how Jesus engages people in need, exemplifying in concrete ways his compassion toward concrete people.

Although disclaiming a focus on historical Jesus research here, Cotter's interest is not just in the stories in the current Gospels, but in their earliest available form. She thus focuses on one miracle account from Q and seven from Mark, where she seeks to isolate pre-Markan elements. She observes distinctive vocabulary in different sources. Those of us who find Q and Markan priority probable will appreciate many of these arguments; readers not persuaded of these theses will demur at these points. Of greater concern for more readers, discerning Mark's redaction of his sources can be a speculative exercise. Cotter recognizes that limitation, but does work to identify patterns in Mark's shaping of the material. Again, some will demur at times. At one point,

challenging some questionable scholarly predecessors, she argues that a controversy story has been inserted into a miracle story. Yet while such composition methods were possible (ancient rhetorical handbooks explicitly allow such editing), narrative critics more interested in the text's cohesiveness will likely find it at best hypothetical.

Nevertheless, even those scholars least optimistic about source- (and hence redaction-) critical concerns will find the book quite valuable. Cotter's treatment of the background material is so rich and her insights on how ancient readers would approach the accounts to learn about Christ so intriguing that the many new perspectives she offers will stimulate fresh observations. Granted, scholars will not always agree with the perspectives she brings, but she is a fresh dialogue partner with fresh ideas, offering something beyond the many well-worn debates and clichés of scholarship.

Gracious to a fault, Cotter interacts with a range of scholars fairly and kindly. In the sometimes cutthroat world of academia, her avoidance of polemic is refreshing. She interacts respectfully with a wide range of scholars, including evangelical scholars such as Craig Blomberg, Robert Gundry, and Ben Witherington, even if Bultmann's dominant place in critical discussions of NT miracles has invited more attention in her treatment. This observation is not meant to imply that her interest here is a survey of previous scholarship on miracles. For example, among other writers on miracles, Paul Achtemeier appears a number of times, but Gerd Theissen and Howard Clark Kee only rarely. Barry Blackburn's articles and Blomberg's work specifically on miracles do not appear. Yet Cotter also barely cites herself, despite her own significant prior contribution to scholarship on Gospel miracles; it is not her purpose to review all the secondary literature on miracle stories (even hundreds of works exist). Such an approach would have produced a very different book. It remains clear, however, that Cotter knows the field thoroughly. For example, she employs the history of scholarship in evaluating modern theories, which often draw on earlier scholars (such as Lightfoot and Strauss) without awareness of the insufficient information or flawed premises from which those earlier scholars worked.

What I personally find more striking, as I noted at the outset, is Cotter's handling of the ancient setting of the miracle stories. Many scholars derive their knowledge of the NT milieu primarily from secondary literature (often secondary literature in NT studies); some look up the primary sources others cite, and some simply depend on others' conclusions. Cotter is one of the rarer scholars who knows the ancient literature firsthand. She is cognizant of secondary literature, but far more impressive is her command of classical sources. She makes good use of secondary literature in classics (e.g. on the Roman army or Roman women) and displays even more extensive knowledge of the primary sources. She has provided many of these regarding wonder stories in her earlier work, not least in her sourcebook for ancient miracle accounts, *Miracles in Greco-Roman Antiquity: A Sourcebook for the Study of New Testament Miracle Stories* (London/New York: Routledge, 1999).

She does not simply provide ancient sources, however; she judiciously deploys them in ways relevant to helping us understand the meaning of the Gospel stories. In a way that only someone with a sensitivity to ancient sources can provide, she knows how to ask the right questions to illumine the biblical accounts. For example, ancient passages about spiritual blindness help confirm the intelligibility of the link between physical blindness and the disciples' spiritual obtuseness that scholars often find in Mark 8:17–25. She elaborates on what ancient sources reveal about the centurion who came to Jesus; ancient views about the physical conditions narrated; the social isolation of lepers; the sort of behavior most ancient auditors would expect from a Syrophoenician woman; and so forth. Most of the insights she offers here will be new and should prove valuable for commentators and others working with these texts.

One of the most enlightening discussions involves archaeological evidence regarding the strength of the roof on which the paralytic's friends stood and through which they dug to get him to Jesus. Jesus' concern for the man's need challenges the priori-

ties of contemporaries who would first be complaining about the destruction of private property. Observing her provision of such useful information is not meant to claim that readers will deem every point equally plausible; for example, it is questionable whether the account of lowering the paralytic would have reminded ancient auditors of lowering a corpse into a tomb, no matter how ill the paralytic was. (We would not, for example, compare the boldness of young men letting themselves down with ropes in a very different setting in *Josephus War* 1.651.) However, most comparisons are sober.

Focusing on how ancient hearers would have understood the character of Jesus in these texts, Cotter avoids a dichotomy between some modern reader-centered approaches that neglect the ancient context and a purely historical approach that neglects literary and rhetorical observations. For example, she shows how ancient auditors would have expected the Syrophoenician woman to react to Jesus angrily; her humble response instead persuades Jesus, and he is characterized as listening to her argument and accepting it as right. One may agree or disagree with this interpretation (many interpreters suspect that Jesus was testing her from the start, as God apparently sometimes did with petitioners in the Hebrew Bible). Either way, however, Cotter's approach engages the text and its ancient context carefully enough that it invites us to a higher level of engagement with the text. When we disagree (elsewhere, for example, some will question whether the father was partly responsible for the demonized boy's vulnerability to his affliction), we will end up doing so in closer dialogue with the text.

Cotter's focus on the accounts' characterization of Jesus is historically appropriate for the Gospels (biographies were, after all, *about* their subjects) and yet also fruitful for Christian readers today as we approach the texts theologically and devotionally. She writes of course as an exegete rather than as a theologian in the narrower sense, but what she writes is of direct interest and service to a theological reading of the accounts. While employing all the tools of critical scholarship, in the final analysis, she reads the biblical accounts as *Scripture*. Her approach that is at once both historical and literary allows her to do so without weakening either interest.

The Jesus that emerges from her characterizations is one who relates to petitioners personally, who considers their requests and weaknesses and enters into dialogue with them—a Jesus who is gentle and lowly in heart. Even when Jesus comes walking on the sea in a sign that ancients would understand as a display of divinity, he stops to respond to the disciples' fear and spends the rest of the voyage in the boat with them. Cotter eloquently contrasts this Jesus with other models of power with whom ancient auditors were familiar. Cotter's use of categories of virtues evident in Plutarch's biographies may draw from a less Jewish and more elite circle than Mark's own immediate milieu, but it at least comes closer than purely modern labels would. Even here, some of the particular constellation of virtues to which she appeals parallel characteristics of Jesus that she appears to discover inductively in the accounts.

The petitioners themselves are typically bold and sometimes rude in ways that ancient contemporaries would have found intolerable, but Jesus hears the deeper need and suffering expressed in these forms and he models compassion. Whereas Jesus regularly challenges the disciples' unbelief in Mark, he responds to the sometimes unorthodox, bold approach of petitioners as faith. Mark's narratives thus challenge more cautious and socially acceptable approaches to suffering, like those of the disciples, and point to Jesus as a model of compassion toward those in need. This is careful historical work devoted to honoring Christ. When the reader has sifted through the careful analysis, there is much here that will be valuable not only for biblical scholarship but also for theology, preaching, and prayer.

Craig S. Keener

Palmer Theological Seminary, Wynnewood, PA

Mark. By William C. Placher. *Belief: A Theological Commentary on the Bible*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010, xiii + 272 pp., \$29.95.

William C. Placher's commentary on the Gospel of Mark is the first volume in Westminster John Knox's series *Belief: A Theological Commentary on the Bible*. Each volume in the series will be authored by a theologian who "will seek to explain the theological importance of the texts for the church today, using the biblical scholarship as needed for such explication" (p. x). The authors "share Karl Barth's concern that, insofar as their usefulness to pastors goes, most modern commentaries are 'no commentary at all, but merely the first step toward a commentary'" (p. ix). So, the series hopes to offer commentaries that move beyond "matters of form, authorship, historical setting, social context, and philology—the very issues that are often of primary concern to critical biblical scholars" (p. x).

This series will contribute to the movement in contemporary scholarship for the theological interpretation of Scripture. As such, *Belief* is a welcome addition to the other theological commentary series currently on offer, including the Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible and Eerdmans's Two Horizons commentary series. The volumes in the *Belief* series will begin with a chapter on the contemporary relevance of the biblical book under consideration and then a passage-by-passage commentary on the entirety of the biblical text. If Placher's first volume of the series is indicative of the quality of all the commentaries, then the series will be a wonderful success.

Placher's commentary on Mark, like all of his writing, is marked by clear expression, judicious navigation of the relevant scholarship, and humor. This commentary is *fun to read*—something not often said of biblical commentaries. At many points, his illuminating comments open up new insights into the meaning of a passage. At others, he takes the clear meaning of a passage and draws out its implications with respect to an important theological or social issue aimed toward helping the reader inhabit the gospel more faithfully. He regularly points out the political implications of the gospel—indeed the reader is never allowed to stray from an important observation early in the book that "the reign or kingdom of God . . . would have evoked political and social change, not just inner spiritual transformation. . . . What Jesus is beginning is the transformation of the world" (p. 35). The commentary is textually faithful; Placher regularly notes the nuance of the Greek words used and takes note of significant scholarly disagreements about the original text. Coordinately, Placher brings a wealth of theological learning to his reading of these texts.

The diversity of sources Placher references to inform, support, or clarify his reading of Mark is impressive. One important component of the movement for theological interpretation is the recovery of interpretive insights from our theological forebears, and throughout this commentary one encounters the reflections of Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Origen, Cyprian, Athanasius, Hilary of Poitiers, Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa, Jerome, John Chrysostom, Augustine, Leo the Great, Gregory the Great, the Venerable Bede, Gregory Palamas, Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Wesley, and many others. Modern theologians are also present; one also regularly encounters Karl Barth, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Abraham Heschel, Alexander Schmemmann, Jürgen Moltmann, Wolfhart Pannenberg, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, and the like. Ample references are made to biblical scholars, such as Joachim Jeremias, Morna Hooker, and Eugene Boring, and philosophers, such as Martin Buber, Thomas Kuhn, Paul Ricoeur, Jacques Derrida, and Richard Swinburne. Perhaps the most surprising (and, indeed, very welcome) group of references are to those outside these academic circles, such as Feodor Dostoevsky, Emily Dickinson, and Flannery O'Connor.

Organizationally, the book begins with a chapter on the contemporary relevance of Mark. Then, Placher moves directly into biblical commentary. Placher's commentary

is occasionally interrupted by offset sections titled "Further Reflections." The further reflections allow Placher to bring his considerable theological expertise to bear on matters that arise from the commentary. For example, in these sections he addresses the Trinity, the meaning of the reign of God (which Placher prefers to "kingdom of God"), how to interpret Jesus' miracles, Jesus' liberating actions toward those considered unclean, and how Jesus' death might be interpreted as a ransom for humanity. There is plenty of theological reflection in the commentary sections also. For example, he reflects on the church's reception of Mark's teaching in the history of interpretation of issues such as Jesus' deity and humanity, the nature of faith, and Jesus' expression of the limits of his own knowledge in Mark 13:32. There is no conclusion to the book; rather, the book ends with the commentary on Mark 16:1–8. The publisher notes that a "personal epilogue" was intended for the volume, but that Placher did not complete the writing of the epilogue before his untimely death in 2008 (p. vii). Knowing Placher's affection for Mark, it is unfortunate that his personal epilogue is missing. Yet as the publisher also notes, the book's ending is fitting in that it concludes as does the Gospel of Mark—somewhat uncomfortably—"without a sense of final closure" (p. vii).

The juxtaposition of three of Placher's observations is useful for showing how it is that he navigates the political terrain. First, commenting on Jesus' curing of the Gerasene demoniac and the fate of the pigs into which Jesus allowed the demons to flee (Mark 5:1–20), Placher notes that "[a] good many readers today tend to pass over the joy of the cured lunatic and worry about the farmers who lost their swine, one more case of how much our priorities can differ from those of Jesus" (p. 81). Second, regarding those considered unclean in Jewish culture, Placher concludes: "Jesus will have none of it. He literally reaches out to touch those whose touch is supposed to render unclean, and power flows in the opposite direction: they do not pollute—he cleanses them, and thereby raises the question of whether they were 'polluted' in the first place" (p. 88). Third, with respect to Jesus's statement "Who are my mother and my brothers? . . . Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother" (Mark 3:31–35), Placher highlights the brutality of Jesus's response to his family. His family comes to see him and he ignores them completely. Placher comments: "Particularly in a culture that emphasized the importance of the family as much as traditional Judaism did, this would have been a shocking remark. Jesus is here no defender of traditional family values" (p. 64). Placher's commentary perceptively exposes the ways the Gospel of Mark challenges us to reinterpret the world. Jesus reconfigures the way we imagine the shape love and justice should take.

This reconfiguration overthrows our assumptions about God's resources. So, in the context of Mark 5:21–43 Placher asserts: "It is characteristic of the reign Jesus is bringing in that Jairus and his daughter have not lost just because the hemorrhaging woman won" (p. 84). God's reign does not put one over against another; where God reigns there is plenty for all. Yet, the fact that it is *God's* reign means that it will be surprising even in its generosity. God's reign does not reflect the politics that seek to ensure the world's vision of prosperity. In fact, God's reign subverts this vision.

Good theological commentary opens up fresh perspectives on the biblical text by drawing fruitful connections between one text and another and between the suggestive material in a biblical text and the beliefs and practices of the church. Its intention is to free us to hear the text and to enjoy it in the fullest way. So, at times Placher allows two different readings of one text to stand side-by-side; if both readings are faithful to the text and spiritually advantageous there is no need to choose one over the other. At other times, he allows Mark's ambiguity to stand without drawing a firm conclusion about a text's meaning.

In a good theological commentary, example after example appears of the kind of theological connections one should be making when reading Scripture. It is informative,

but it is also an invitation into a way of wisdom. Placher's commentary helped me make new connections in and with the Gospel of Mark, and some of these were not explicitly developed in his text. For example, in the context of Jesus's healing of the leper in Mark 1:40–45, I had not before noticed that Jesus suffers in the place of the leper. According to Lev 13:45–46, a leper "shall live alone; his dwelling shall be outside the camp." Immediately after the leper is cured, "Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in lonely places" (Mark 1:45). Theological commentary is never intended as a final word but is rather a timely reconsideration of the biblical text and its message to us in this moment. Placher's book brims with insights toward this end and with the wisdom acquired from a career of deep theological study.

Ryan Peterson
Cedarville University, Cedarville, OH

Geography and the Ascension Narrative in Acts. By Matthew Sleeman. SNTSMS 146. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, xi + 300 pp., \$102.00.

This revision of Matthew Sleeman's second doctoral dissertation (University of London, 2007) applies to the reading of the book of Acts some of the geographical principles elucidated in his first dissertation, "The Geography of Citizenship Strategies in a Rural South Australian Aboriginal Community, 1940–1993" (University of Cambridge, 1996). In so doing, this work resides at the intersection of three scholarly fields: Christology, narrative criticism, and geography. Although the initiative for interfacing geography and theology has come largely from theologians (e.g. the 2000–2005 AAR/SBL seminar on "Constructions of Ancient Space"), Sleeman comes to biblical studies as a geographer, and he wants to contribute here a more robust "spatialised reading of Acts" over against various reductionistic renderings of geography in Lukan studies (p. 38). As indicated in the title of the volume, Sleeman sees the ascension narrative in Acts as the key to understanding Luke's presentation of space, and he seeks to illuminate this with theories of space from the discipline of human geography.

In part 1, Sleeman gives specific attention to recent ascension scholarship (chap. 1) and offers an apologetic for his particular "ascension geography" approach to Acts (chap. 2). He builds on the ascension-related works of Mikeal Parsons (1987) and Arie Zwiep (1997), on the narrative-critical work of Matthew Skinner (2003), and on the human-geography studies of Edward Soja (1989 and 1996). To recognize the importance of spatial readings of narrative is to recognize that, rather than recede in submission to temporal and material features of the text, places themselves become actors in the story and not merely locations for action (cf. pp. 41, 63). Sleeman does not want to replace historical readings of the text with spatial readings; rather, he seeks to understand better the intention of the text by using both historical and spatial analyses (cf. pp. 50, 140). Thus, applying narrative and geography concerns to the ascension narrative in Acts, Sleeman observes that the spatial dimensions of the ascension of Jesus serve a longer lasting purpose that affects the rest of the narrative of Acts. More specifically, the ascension account in Acts 1 should not be read as a "departure" of Jesus that renders him absent and therefore inactive in the rest of the narrative: "[R]ather than instituting a passive absentee Christology, Acts continues to construe Jesus' post-ascension character as influencing the production of earthly space(s) through numerous means" (pp. 51–52).

Table 2.1 (p. 43) provides a helpful chart displaying a taxonomy for understanding different spatial perspectives. With a clear preference for Edward Soja's labels, Sleeman outlines a three-part schema: (1) physical space, descriptive of the empirical

dimension of experience, is called “firstspace”; (2) mental space, descriptive of the theoretical dimension of perception, is called “secondspace”; (3) social space, descriptive of the creative dimension of the imagination, is called “thirdspace.” It is this schema—particularly the “thirdspace” dimension—that lies behind Sleeman’s exegesis in part 2 of the book.

He outlines “five horizons” of his study (pp. 51–56): (1) he assumes a high degree of geographical coherence in Luke’s work; (2) the various ways geography can be referenced both complicates and broadens a geographical reading of a text; (3) a narrative-geographical reading of Acts uncovers multiple and even competing spatialities that should become subject to the Christ-centered worldview that dominates Acts; (4) there are intratextual features (within Luke-Acts) and intertextual features (within the biblical canon) to understanding space in Acts; and (5) there is a “down-to-earth” applicability to understanding Jesus’ ascension for its “geography” in the narrative of Acts. Thus, for Sleeman, the ascension narrative has a “determinative role in ordering space within Acts” (p. 63).

Luke writes, argues Sleeman, with a theological emphasis of a change to “heavenly Christo-centrism” (p. 59). Jesus remains an important character in the narrative of Acts, and yet Luke emphasizes Jesus’ location in heaven—not as an absence from the story but as an important re-orientation of the reader’s thinking. This means that the ascension account in Acts 1:9–11 should be factored into thinking about Acts’s geographical agenda—which is often limited more simplistically to Acts 1:8 (“witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth”; cf. p. 206). Rather than reading Acts as oriented around Jerusalem, the ascension narrative requires a reading of Acts as oriented “under a Christological heaven” (pp. 79–80).

In part 2, Sleeman applies his theory in a specialised reading of Acts 1:1–11:18. Jesus is not absent from the action in Acts; rather, Jesus is active in Acts from his strategic place in heaven. Sleeman dedicates chapters to Acts 1:1–26 (chap. 3), Acts 2:1–6:7 (chap. 4), Acts 6:8–8:3 (chap. 5), Acts 8:4–9:31 (chap. 6), and Acts 9:32–11:18 (chap. 7). He ceases his investigation of Acts at 11:18 since the significant narrative references to “heaven” (οὐρανός) in Acts cease there. “This distribution suggests that if the narrative is structured according to ascension geography, this should be apparent by 11:18” (p. 60).

Throughout this volume, Sleeman offers some insightful proposals for solving exegetical questions in Acts (e.g. the role of “heaven” in Acts 2, the halting of the phrase “signs and wonders” after Acts 15, a geographical explanation for the Spirit’s Samaritan delay in Acts 8, whether the Ethiopian eunuch or Cornelius is the first Gentile convert, etc.), but these are not always offered very accessibly. Particularly appreciated are the insightful observations of irony and true Lukan intratextuality (e.g. the comments on Gamaliel on pp. 128–30 and the connections between the post-Stephen persecution and Acts 1:8 on pp. 169–70).

Nevertheless, many times Sleeman’s spatial reading is more of an assertion placed upon the text than an argument supported from the text. While he clearly understands that words like “place” have multiple uses (cf. p. 79), it is unclear whether Sleeman has adequately wrestled through the issue of metaphor, and it seems that he can be given to spatial overstatement. For example, while certainly the geography of Samaria is significant on several levels in Acts 8, the idea of a more specific “Simonian geography” with regard to Simon Magus is not convincing (pp. 178–85). His overuse of spatial and geographical terms in metaphorical circumstances might distract the reader from the central thesis (e.g. “This is ironic space” instead of “This is ironic” on p. 182 and referring to the Simon’s motives as “his own egocentric geography of power” on p. 183). If everything is geography and space, then the claim loses its meaning and impact.

Pervasive charges of various Lukan scholars being “historicists” and giving in to “historicism” as if it were somehow offensive to read a historical text with historical

methodologies seems unbecoming, especially since Sleeman says he does not want to replace historical readings. One wonders if Sleeman can be charged with “spatialism” as the tragic error of his reading method. While he does an excellent job of locating his work within Lukan scholarship and interacts with many, Sleeman has a tendency to borrow their wording with constant quoting, which can have deleterious effects on the readability of his own ideas. Indeed, the readability of the volume proves to be a bit dense throughout, particularly for those not initiated in the subject matter and methodologies of narrative theology and human geography (esp. the differentiations in the three-dimension spatiality taken from Soja). Offsetting this is the excellent and readable “Synthesis and Prospect” section (pp. 57–60) between parts 1 and 2.

Despite these difficulties, Sleeman’s work is an appreciable challenge to read Acts with a more specifically Christological center rather than a mere theocentric momentum. The book will not be groundbreaking in and of itself (particularly because of its accessibility troubles, but also because of its narrow focus), but it should have a lasting affect on future Acts commentaries—particularly with reference to Acts 1:1–11:18. The book represents an important work on the integration of theology and geography, and scholars interested in advancing narrative-critical approaches to Scripture will do well to pay attention to this volume. More broadly still, if scholars will overcome the difficult reading and engage spatial concerns in other genres, this volume may also have an impact on wider biblical research.

Douglas S. Huffman

Talbot School of Theology at Biola University, La Mirada, CA

The Living Paul: An Introduction to the Apostle’s Life and Thought. By Anthony C. Thiselton. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2009, x + 190 pp., \$20.00 paper.

With a landscape in Pauline studies that is constantly changing, Anthony Thiselton, well known for his work in hermeneutical studies, has contributed to the field with this concise introduction to the life of Paul. He provides an overview of Paul’s life, mission, and thought that, on the one hand, is easy to read while, on the other, interacts with the latest research on Paul.

In chapters 1 and 2, he presents significant obstacles to the study of Paul. In chapter 1, he addresses those who see Paul as developing a different set of beliefs and doctrines than Christ. After surveying the historical development of this position by Ritschl, Harnack, Vermes, Crosson, Funk, and others, he concludes that it is a false divide. The fulfillment of Jewish expectation is a central theme for both Jesus and Paul and finds its expression in the concept of transforming grace and love, respect for women, relationships, and care for the weak. In chapter 2, picking up on the criticism of Weiss that there is too great a divide between Paul’s concept of the new life in Christ and real life for the average Christian, Thiselton argues for an apocalyptic approach to these “two orders.” By this he means that it is possible, indeed reality, for the Christian to live in both the old and the new simultaneously. The new creation has broken into the world through Christ and coexists with the old (p. 15).

Chapters 3 and 4 provide a historical recounting of Paul’s life and ministry. Thiselton weaves the Acts account into each of Paul’s experiences and resulting epistles in order to surface a coherent historical journey. His uncritical use of the book of Acts and his use of the deutero-Pauline letters is refreshing in that technical language is submerged in order to bring out a Paul who is warm, relational, and alive; something that is often lost in Pauline introductions.

In chapters 5–7, Thiselton addresses Paul's trinitarian theology, but he locates its origin in Paul's Christology from which all of Paul's theology flows. Chapter 5 begins with Paul's understanding of Christ. Thiselton notes that Paul's use of titles arises more from practical experience than theological perspective. Paul's favorite title "Lord" has many nuances to its meaning, but it is most clearly understood in contrast to the terms "servant" and "slave." Simply put, "Paul sees Christ as the most generous, loving, and kind of all masters or *lords* at whose disposal it was possible to be" (p. 39). Yet, Jesus was declared Lord by God through his resurrection from the dead at which time he was also enthroned as messianic king. For Thiselton, this core confession is grounded in a reality that includes both an existential and an ontological aspect. The use of titles reveals a complex understanding of Jesus that includes both his divinity and his humanity. According to chapters 6 and 7, Paul's understandings of God and the Spirit both grow as his knowledge of Christ is increasing. Through Christ, God becomes more knowable and approachable. However, as with Christ, Paul's view of the Trinity is grounded in experience. For example, it is the Spirit that helps Christians in their prayers (Rom 8:26). For Thiselton, it is the narrative of Jesus Christ that forms Paul's foundation for understanding the Trinity.

In chapters 8–10, Thiselton deals with Paul's view of humanity, but again from the perspective of the work of Christ. It is Paul's Christology that forms the foundation of his entire theology. For example, according to chapter 8, while Paul does not develop a "coherent view of humanity," he does argue that it is through Christ that God brings humanity into existence (Col 1:17). This reveals that God's purposes regarding humanity are rooted in his love as expressed through Christ. Similarly, in chapter 9 Thiselton points out that the problem of human sin and human alienation is solved only through the work of Christ. Paul is concerned more with the corporate state of humanity, and therefore sin is seen as a state of alienation and bondage that humanity cannot resolve. It is the Holy Spirit, on the basis of Christ's work, who accomplishes what humanity cannot. What is more, in chapter 10 Thiselton deals specifically with the work of Christ on behalf of humanity. At this point the cross becomes central to what Christ has accomplished. This is captured in the two images of debt and redemption. The cancellation of debt and redemption from slavery to sin form the basis for understanding true reconciliation, the "putting right of a relationship of estrangement or hostility" (p. 88). This reconciliation is what transfers the Christian to being "in Christ." Thiselton argues that this is both an identity in which the Christian is a new creature and a status in which the Christian lives out a new relationship as an individual and in the church.

In chapter 11, Thiselton tackles the current and significant topic of justification. It is at this point that Thiselton demonstrates the most interaction with scholarship, especially around key terms and the New Perspective. For those unfamiliar with the debate, this chapter could be overwhelming. Regardless, Thiselton characteristically demonstrates sensitivity as he weaves his way through the varying positions and allows key scholars to frame the discussion. He concludes that justification means being "in Christ" and that it is imputed. However, he also agrees with Wright that it necessarily includes being in right relation with God and, thus, is incomplete without incorporating the ethical dimensions.

In chapters 12–16, Thiselton wraps up his introduction by allowing Paul to speak into the traditional areas of ethics. In chapter 12 Thiselton argues for a communal emphasis in Paul that is consistent with OT theology. This is captured by the body of Christ imagery and spiritual gifting. Thus the church is an institution that exists for God, the gospel, and the world, rather than being an institution unto itself. In chapters 13 and 14 he deals with the ministry of the word in service, baptism, and communion all of which are centered in community. Even his minor discussion of the role of women is framed by the concept of collaborative service. Baptism is seen as

allegiance to Christ and communion as remembrance of Christ's accomplishments. In chapter 15, Thiselton argues that the Christian lifestyle is inseparably connected to formation within the Christian community. As such, love serves as the motivation behind why Christians live in community and glorify the Lord through mutual service. In chapter 16, Thiselton argues that Paul is not as concerned about the destiny of the individual as he is "the cosmic events of the resurrection, the last judgment, and the *Parousia* of Christ" (p. 135). These are not events of the remote future, but each has profound implications for the present.

Finally, in chapter 17 Thiselton introduces the impact of postmodernism on Pauline theology and summarizes the viewpoints of the major proponents. This chapter is somewhat technical for the novice, but does provide a framework for approaching this growing issue. He concludes that "the 'wisdom' of the cross will outlive postmodernism in all its forms, and Paul's voice will continue to live" (p. 162).

Thiselton's introduction is significant for several reasons. While, at one level, it is a summary of decades of study and work, at the same time it is very readable. He brings Paul to life in ways that are often absent in Pauline studies; Paul becomes a real person. The book is intended for all who are interested in Paul and in developing a basic understanding of who he is, and in this regard Thiselton has accomplished his purpose. It is highly recommended for scholars, pastors, and students who are working in this area and who desire a current scholarly, yet readable and understandable, approach.

James M. Howard

Denver Seminary, Littleton, CO

American Pathways University, Denver, CO

Paul and Scripture: Studying the New Testament Use of the Old Testament. By Steve Moyise. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010, viii + 151 pp., \$21.99 paper.

The sheer amount of scholarship on Paul's use of the OT makes it difficult for students to know where to begin in entering the conversation. Because of his prolific scholarship in this area, Steve Moyise is well positioned to provide a concise and readable introduction to this subject.

Moyise sets the stage (Introduction) by briefly summarizing Paul's background as a Pharisee, his Damascus Road experience, and his subsequent career as a missionary, pastor, and theologian. From there he identifies several challenges connected to Paul's use of Scripture such as language (Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic), the scope of the canon, and the use of introductory formulas.

The next seven chapters are organized based on Paul's use of different portions of the OT. Paul makes extensive use of the creation stories of Genesis 1–3 (chap. 1), with a particular emphasis on the relationship between Adam and Christ. Moyise focuses on 1 Corinthians 15, where Paul incorporates several citations and allusions to Genesis 1–2 to defend the bodily resurrection of Christ and his followers. Paul's discussion of the Fall in Rom 5:12–21 is based on typology, with the connection between Adam and Christ being that "one act has had universal effects" (p. 25). Moyise concludes by admitting that Paul's Adam-Christ typology has exerted influence on his Christology, but is not the dominant influence.

Moyise next treats Paul's use of the Abraham stories (chap. 2), suggesting that they are "arguably the most important texts for Paul" (p. 31). After noting that Jewish tradition tended to honor Abraham for his law-keeping and faithfulness, Moyise distinguishes Paul's approach. He uses Gen 15:6 to claim that the original promise made

to Abraham included the Gentiles and has been fulfilled in the death and resurrection of Christ (Gal 3:6–14). Rather than presenting Abraham as a model of faithfulness, Paul portrays him as a sinner who needed forgiveness and whose faith mirrored that of believers (Romans 4). Because Abraham was justified before he was circumcised, Gentiles need not undergo the knife to be right with God. Paul also contrasts Abraham's two sons Isaac and Ishmael to distinguish between children of promise and children of the flesh (Rom 9:6–18; Gal 4:21–31). Moyise suggests that Paul's reading of the Abraham stories was driven by his encounter with Christ and his commission to take the gospel to the Gentiles.

Chapter 3 addresses Paul and Moses. Paul argues that Moses' interaction with Pharaoh displays God's hardening (Rom 9:14–18), and his judgment on Israel in the wilderness warns believers not to repeat their rebellion (1 Corinthians 8–10). While on the one hand Paul can contrast his own ministry and the new covenant with that of Moses and the old covenant (2 Cor 3:1–18), he can also summon Moses as a witness to the righteousness that comes from faith (Rom 10:5–13). These observations lead Moyise to conclude that "Moses is an ambiguous figure for Paul" (p. 59).

In chapter 4, Moyise tackles "Paul and the Law." After briefly describing pre-New Perspective approaches to the question, Moyise summarizes the contributions of Sanders and Dunn before asserting that what unites the New Perspective is opposition to the "Lutheran view" that "imposes on Paul—and Jesus—a fundamental dichotomy between 'believing' and 'doing'" (p. 64). This sets up the contention that justification is based on Christ's faithfulness (Rom 1:17; Gal 2:16). Moyise does note some dissenting voices by devoting space to the views of Francis Watson, Hans Hübner, and Heikki Räisänen. Moyise refuses to resolve the issue himself; he is content to permit the reader to adjudicate.

The next two chapters cover Paul's use of the prophets. Chapter 5 focuses on "Israel and the Gentiles." Paul finds the gospel proclaimed in the prophets with regularity, especially in Isaiah (cf. Rom 10:1–21). In addition, Paul finds in the prophets crucial subjects such as Gentile inclusion (Romans 9–11; Galatians 3–4), current Jewish unbelief (Romans 9–11), and the future salvation of Israel (Romans 11). In chapter 6, Moyise highlights Paul's use of the prophets to explain the life of the Christian community. Topics treated here include faith, boasting in the Lord, spiritual discernment, use of tongues and prophecy in worship, purity and separation, resurrection, confession and worship of God/Christ, and Paul's own vocation.

When it comes to Paul's use of the Writings (chap. 7), the emphasis falls on the Psalms. Moyise categorizes Paul's use under headings similar to those used to discuss his handling of the prophets: gospel proclamation, inclusion of the Gentiles, Jewish unbelief, future salvation, and Paul's vocation and issues in the church. Paul's limited use of Proverbs and Job is also briefly summarized. Moyise draws two conclusions: (1) although Paul uses wisdom themes from Job and Proverbs, he is just as likely to find them in Psalms and Isaiah; (2) the majority of Paul's use of the Psalms falls into the same categories as his use of the prophets.

In the final chapter (chap. 8), Moyise surveys modern approaches to Paul's use of Scripture using three broad categories. The intertextual approach (Richard Hays, Timothy Berkley) emphasizes the original context of the passage used to highlight the larger matrix of associated meanings. The narrative approach (Tom Wright, Ross Wagner, Sylvia Keesmaat, Francis Watson) is similar, but emphasizes "not so much the *local* context" of the original passage, but "the *narrative* framework to which it belongs" (p. 111). The rhetorical approach (Christopher Stanley, John Paul Heil) explores what Paul does with the original text to persuade his audience. The chapter concludes by indicating ongoing issues among scholars such as the role one's view of Scripture plays in evaluating Paul's use of Scripture, whether Paul's methods are normative for us today, and the significance of the differences between Paul's culture and ours.

The most notable strength of this book is the combination of brevity with scope. At merely 125 pages of text, *Paul and Scripture* is the ideal length to introduce students to the field. Despite the brevity Moyise covers a large number of texts and organizes them into manageable categories. In each chapter there are helpful inset text boxes and/or charts that explain key concepts or provide important background information. In a similar vein, Moyise supplies three appendices (Paul's quotations from Isaiah, index of Paul's quotations, extracts from the Dead Sea Scrolls) to supplement his presentation.

There are, however, at least four areas that might have been improved. First, there are times where his focus on quotations actually underestimates the significance of Paul's use of Scripture. While Moyise acknowledges the presence and value of allusions and echoes, when he provides statistics that seek to quantify Paul's use of Scripture, the focus is exclusively on quotations. As a result, one might miss that Paul's use of Isaiah extends well beyond the twenty-three quotations. Second, at times one may question Moyise's choice of interlocutors. In his discussion of opponents of the New Perspective, one finds only Francis Watson; why not mention Westerholm, Schreiner, Carson, Seifrid, Moo, or Silva? Given the extensive exchange between Moyise and Greg Beale on various issues related to the study of the OT in the NT, it is surprising that Beale is not mentioned once, even in the endnotes. Third, Moyise's presentation of the three main modern approaches to the issue may give the impression that the various scholars named fall neatly into one approach, when the truth is (as Moyise obviously knows) some of the scholars mentioned employ more than one of the approaches. Fourth, the select bibliography could have been expanded, including a reference to the Paul and Scripture project and its online bibliography, to help students go further into the field.

These concerns notwithstanding, Moyise has produced a solid introduction to Paul's use of Scripture. As such, it will be useful to those looking for a basic introduction to the subject, while recognizing that it may need supplementing at points.

Matthew S. Harmon

Grace Theological Seminary, Winona Lake, IN

Entrusted with the Gospel: Paul's Theology in the Pastoral Epistles. Edited by Andreas J. Köstenberger and Terry L. Wilder. Nashville: B & H, 2010, xi + 340 pp., \$19.99 paper.

This book of twelve essays represents an evangelical "state of the union" address concerning the interpretation of the Pastoral Epistles. Work on the Pastoral Epistles has flourished in recent years, but critical scholars continue to ignore the work of their evangelical counterparts (p. vii). This book helpfully and skillfully takes the individual strands of significant evangelical scholarship on the Pastorals and weaves them together into one volume. The twelve topics/chapters of the book produce a panoramic vision of the Pastorals viewed from different angles: hermeneutical and exegetical challenges (chap. 1), authorship (chap. 2), the purpose and stewardship theme (chap. 3), cohesion and structure (chap. 4), doctrine of God (chap. 5), Christology (chap. 6), soteriology (chap. 7), ecclesiology (chap. 8), use of Scripture (chap. 9), ethics (chap. 10), mission (chap. 11), and the Pastorals in recent study (chap. 12).

The first four chapters address introductory issues. Andreas Köstenberger opens the book by introducing some of the Pastoral Epistles' unique interpretive challenges. In chapter 2, Terry Wilder explores one of these issues in more detail as he tackles the prickly problem of pseudonymity. He thoroughly surveys the varied proposals about authorship like pseudonymity, authenticity, the fragmentary hypothesis, or newer

proposals such as allonymity (pp. 37–44). Wilder fiercely defends the authenticity of the Pastorals by in effect adopting the approach that says the best defense is a good offense. Perhaps the most creative defense of authenticity comes in seeing that a consistent use of the principles that lead one to regard the Pastorals as pseudonymous would lead to the same conclusion for a letter like Philippians, which most regard as authentic. This situation suggests that these means of assessment are fundamentally flawed (pp. 29–34). Chapters 3 through 4 examine the purpose and structure of the Pastorals. Alan Tomlinson discusses purpose by interacting extensively with the idea that the Pastorals are primarily *ad hoc* documents exclusively addressed to a particular set of circumstances. Paul's use of stewardship and household language demonstrate that the apostle intends for the Pastorals to serve and guide the church "as a whole in perpetuity" (p. 53). Chapter 4 moves beyond considerations of purpose to the important issue of literary structure. Ray Van Neste stridently opposes the idea that the Pastorals are prime examples of incoherent and disorganized thought. He surveys suggestive examples of literary forms (pp. 89–90), symmetry (pp. 91–96), and transitional devices (pp. 96–104) that bolster the conclusion that the Pastorals represent cohesive literary documents characterized by a careful flow of thought.

Chapters 5 through 8 unpack the theological dimensions of the Pastorals in terms of the theology proper, Christology, soteriology, and ecclesiology. In chapter 5, Greg Couser examines the thought of the Pastorals in relation to the doctrine of God and challenges the conclusion that the author of the Pastorals was not a real theologian or a sub-par theologian at best. He shows that the Pastorals are not only theologically rich in content, but in context they serve to correct the doctrinal distortions of the false teachers and inform the household instructions (p. 108). In chapter 6, Daniel Akin inductively surveys the Pastorals for their approach to Christology while observing that it is not an isolated concept, but one that relates organically to doctrines like the Trinity, soteriology, and eschatology. Akin shows that Paul stresses the deity (divine titles, prerogatives, and attributes), humanity, and Lordship of Jesus, while also highlighting that Jesus has come and will come again (eschatology; pp. 151–52). George Wieland deals deftly with the concept of soteriology in the Pastorals in chapter 7. He notes the high occurrence of salvation terms throughout the Pastorals as a whole, but he also shows that Paul used soteriology in diverse contextual ways. Soteriology has a "polemical edge" in 1 Timothy, a "paraenetic" thrust stressing eschatological reward in 2 Timothy, and an identity-shaping role in Titus (p. 171). In chapter 8, Benjamin Merkle argues that the church is not only "the center of God's mission," but also "the center of Paul's words to Timothy and Titus" (p. 198). In his balanced discussion of the roles of Timothy and Titus and the offices of elders and deacons, he makes the case that Paul uses the terms "elder" and "overseer" interchangeably in contrast to the concept of a "monarchical bishop," while deacons serve the practical needs of the church and thus free up the elders to accomplish their main task of shepherding and teaching. He strikes a balance with regard to Timothy and Titus by treating them not as monarchical bishops on the one hand nor mere elders on the other hand, but as Paul's "apostolic delegates" who serve the church with Paul's authority (p. 198).

Chapters 9–12 fit together somewhat loosely as important topics that add to the overall picture of the Pastorals. In chapter 9, Paul Wolfe attacks the idea that the Pastorals give evidence of a secondary, less direct engagement with the Scriptures. Wolfe counters this conclusion by highlighting how the Pastorals frequently (more OT citations than the prison epistles or 1 and 2 Thessalonians), uniquely (focus is not on fulfillment), and directly engage the OT Scriptures. In chapter 10, Thorvald Madsen considers the ethics of the Pastoral Epistles and compares them to the ethical content of Paul's major epistles. Despite the unique tone of the Pastorals, they agree with the ethics of the major epistles in "logic" and "content" so that the similarities are more

impressive than the differences (p. 238). In chapter 11, Chiao Ek Ho argues that the Pastorals share the same missionary outlook and posture as Paul's other major epistles (p. 264). Finally, chapter 12 features a snapshot of the Pastorals in recent study. I. Howard Marshall masterfully surveys recent study on the Pastorals culled from his many articles and book reviews published elsewhere on the topic.

This volume has much to commend it. First, it excels as "one-stop shopping" on the interpretation of the Pastoral Epistles, which will benefit researchers, instructors, and students alike. For example, exegesis classes on the Pastorals often utilize a commentary as a required textbook for detailed discussions of exegetical and syntactical issues. Few students, however, walk away from an exegesis class with an up-to-date awareness of the state of scholarship. This book would serve as a superb supplementary textbook for use as a book review or a concise introduction to various topics. Second, the essays have a logical flow that enhances the effectiveness of the individual essays. For example, chapter 10 on ethics talks about the indicative preceding the imperative. By this point in the book, the indicative structure of who God is and what he has done in Christ (chaps. 5–7) has prepared the reader to grasp the indicative/imperative structure of ethics (chap. 10). Third, the editors have done an excellent job in assigning these chapters. Most of the contributors have written a dissertation on these topics (mostly at the University of Aberdeen) or have published on the Pastorals. They model sustained evangelical engagement with the work of critical scholarship without compromising evangelical convictions.

One should also briefly mention a couple of weaknesses. First, books of essays by different authors often suffer from imbalance in terms of the quality of the individual essays. This book is no different. Some chapters sparkle while others have solid information but fail to arrest the attention of the reader. Second, some repetition exists throughout the essays on issues such as authorship. One could argue, however, that authenticity needs repeated affirmation in light of the "critical consensus" that the letters are not authentic letters of Paul.

These weaknesses are somewhat minor (and somewhat expected in an edited volume) and did not dampen my overall enthusiasm for this book. Evangelical scholarship should shine with a rigorous quality that makes it extremely difficult to dismiss if given an honest and fair hearing. Liberal scholarship frequently dismisses evangelical scholarship without a fair hearing, but that does not mean that we should follow suit.

The collective labors of critical scholarship have cast a large shadow over the Pastoral Epistles. The result is that a large question mark hovers over these letters and their canonical value. The chapters in this book read like a breath of fresh air, because they continually assert the ongoing relevance and value of the Pastoral Epistles. This volume seeks to remove the muzzle from the mouth of the Pastorals so that the church will once again hear and obey the "sound words" (2 Tim 1:13) they speak.

Jason C. Meyer
Bethlehem College and Seminary, Minneapolis, MN

The Letter to the Hebrews. By Peter T. O'Brien. PNTC. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010, xxxiii + 596 pp., \$50.00.

As a two-time contributor to the Pillar commentary series, first on *The Letter to the Ephesians* (1999) and now on *The Letter to the Hebrews* (2010), O'Brien has once again achieved the editor's goal for the series: "The writers of this series," according to D. A. Carson, "aim for an evenhanded openness to the text that is the best kind of 'objectiv-

ity' of all" (p. xi). O'Brien interacts evenhandedly with important issues without, as Carson desires, "getting mired in undue technical detail." After the prefaces from the editor and author, a list of abbreviations, and select bibliography (xi–xxxiii), O'Brien's commentary divides into two parts: an introduction (pp. 1–43) and the commentary proper (pp. 44–541), with subject, author, Scripture, and extrabiblical indexes closing out the volume (pp. 542–96).

Within forty-three pages, O'Brien tackles the typical introductory issues for Hebrews: authorship and canonicity (pp. 2–8), the situation of the recipients (pp. 9–13), destination (pp. 14–15), date (pp. 15–20), genre (pp. 20–22), structure (pp. 22–34), purpose (pp. 35–36), the first-century world (pp. 36–40), and Christian origins (pp. 40–43). With one exception, O'Brien's conclusions are in concord with most recently published evangelical commentaries concerning date, authorship, genre, destination, and situation. Thus, O'Brien believes that sometime between AD 60 and 70 an unknown author (most commentators today argue for Apollos) wrote this sermon-like letter to a group of Jewish Christians in Rome "in danger of returning to a 'reliance on the cultic structures of the old covenant'" (p. 13).

Of some significance, O'Brien rejects Ernst Käsemann's proposal in *The Wandering People of God* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984) that suggests the conceptual background of Hebrews was pre-Christian Gnosticism. More importantly, however, he rejects the lingering idea that Hebrews should be read against the background of Philo, Alexandria, and Platonism. This view was initially argued quite definitively by Spicq in *L'Épître aux Hébreux* (2 vols.; Paris: Gabalda, 1952–53)—a view Spicq himself later rejected once the Dead Sea Scrolls were published (see "L'Épître aux Hébreux: Apollos, Jean-Baptiste, les Hellénistes et Qumran," *Revue de Qumran* [1959])—and yet a view Luke Timothy Johnson has again recently expressed in *Hebrews: A Commentary* (NTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006). "Philo chose to develop certain themes Platonically," argues O'Brien, "while the author of Hebrews, influenced by Jewish apocalyptic (deriving from the OT) and primitive Christian tradition, chose to develop them eschatologically" (p. 37). Nevertheless, O'Brien is sensitive to the current debate concerning both the presence and function of apocalyptic elements in Hebrews, while taking into account the numerous elements of Greco-Roman language and rhetoric and interpretation of OT in Greek.

With minor variations, O'Brien follows George H. Guthrie's text-linguistic structure or discourse analysis (*The Structure of Hebrews* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998]) and thereby divides the Book of Hebrews into nine sections: God's final word to us in his Son, 1:1–4 (pp. 44–63); the position of the Son in relation to that of angels, 1:5–2:18 (pp. 63–124); fix your attention on Jesus—a warning against unbelief—a promise of entering God's rest, 3:1–4:13 (pp. 125–79); since we have a great high priest, let us hold fast and draw near, 4:14–16 (pp. 179–86); the Son's appointment as unique high priest, 5:1–7:28 (pp. 187–285); the superior offering of the appointed high priest, 8:1–10:18 (pp. 286–360); since we have access to God through Christ's sacrifice, let us draw near and hold fast, 10:19–25 (pp. 360–71); a call to perseverance and faith, 10:26–12:29 (pp. 371–501); and concluding exhortations, final prayers, and greetings, 13:1–25 (pp. 502–41). In this sense, O'Brien differs little with William L. Lane (*Hebrews 1–8* and *Hebrews 9–13* [WBC; Dallas: Word, 1991]). Nevertheless, O'Brien underscores two summary statements in Heb 4:14–16 ("since we have a great high priest, let us hold fast and draw near") and 10:19–25 ("since we have access to God through Christ's sacrifice, let us draw near and hold fast"). It is self-evident throughout his commentary that O'Brien considers these two statements to be major turning points in the book and that Heb 5:1–10:18 is "the main theological exposition" of the book (p. 34).

Of particular import, however, is O'Brien's handling of the warning passages in Hebrews. For O'Brien, there are five warning passages: "Warning: Do Not Reject the

Word Spoken through God's Son" (2:1–4); "Warning: Avoid Israel's Example of Unbelief" (3:7–19); "Warning and Encouragement: The Peril of Apostasy" (5:11–6:12); "A Warning against Apostasy and a Summons to Perseverance" (10:26–39); and "A Final Warning: Do not Reject the One Who Speaks" (12:25–29). Of these five warnings, the latter four are clearly concerned, according to O'Brien, with "apostasy" (pp. 146–47, 224–25, 373–82, 492–94). Yet, how does O'Brien understand the outcome of "apostasy" in comparison to others? Whereas David Allen proposes Luke warns against "apostasy" that ends in the loss of reward (*Hebrews* [NAC; Nashville: B & H, 2010] and Gareth L. Cockerill suggests the unknown author warns against "apostasy" that ends in losing one's salvation (*The Epistle to the Hebrews* [NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, forthcoming), O'Brien supports the idea that "apostasy" means the readers never understood nor possessed the salvific message. To proceed in returning to Judaism, to turn away from the gospel message, or to abandon the Christian community is to assign to them, avers O'Brien, "a redemptive effectiveness that they never possessed and simultaneously to depreciate the exclusive significance of Christ's sacrifice" (p. 13). Thus for O'Brien, the author "hammers home repeatedly the importance of faithful endurance in order to reach the eternal rest in the heavenly city" (p. 35).

It would be inappropriate to stress the brevity of O'Brien's handling of any one of the multitude of issues that plague the Book of Hebrews. To the contrary, O'Brien majors on the majors in a manner that keeps a contemporary reader focused to the task at hand: What does the author of Hebrews say (as O'Brien understands the text)? Regrettably, the commentary just ends at Heb 13:25. An artfully crafted précis for this ancient sermon would have made for a nearly perfect commentary. Instead there is no closure to the commentary. Yet, my above-mentioned regret may have been beyond O'Brien's control.

Despite the fact that O'Brien follows Guthrie's text-linguistic structure with nine divisions, the editor of the series presents O'Brien's commentary by the Book of Hebrews' thirteen chapters, which both disrupts and often times detracts from O'Brien's literary analysis. For instance, "Hebrews 1" (pp. 44–80) and "Hebrews 2" (pp. 81–124) stand as individual chapters for the commentary. Yet according to O'Brien's literary analysis a reader might expect a chapter entitled "God's Final Word to Us in His Son (Heb 1:1–4)" with a chapter break and then the start of a new chapter entitled "The Position of the Son in Relation to that of Angels (Heb 1:5–2:18)." Rather than interact with the Book of Hebrews rhetorically according to O'Brien's literary divisions, readers do so according to the book's thirteen chapters. The reader would have been better served had O'Brien's literary divisions been pursued.

Nevertheless, O'Brien's presentation is exceptional. All Greek and overly critical discussions are reserved for footnotes, and thereby the presentation provides for an enjoyable read that is uninterrupted by technical discussion. Of all the critical commentaries I have read on the Book of Hebrews, O'Brien's is well thought out, well written, and without question preeminent.

Herbert W. Bateman IV
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, TX

I & II Peter and Jude: A Commentary. By Lewis R. Donelson. NTL. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010, xxiii + 301 pp., \$39.95.

Lewis R. Donelson's commentary on the Petrine Epistles and Jude makes a useful study companion through the complexities of these short but important epistles

of the NT. One particular useful feature is the predictable layout of the commentary that makes it easy to access comments on a particular issue. Each book begins with a brief overview of essential introductory matters and a structural outline. This is then followed by commentary on each thought unit of the book starting with an introduction of the main theme(s) and literary structure, an original translation with notes on textual-critical, syntactical, and selected philological matters, a verse-by-verse exposition, and, finally, a short summary of the passage. The work concludes with indices for ancient sources and subjects.

Especially praiseworthy are Donelson's skills as both an exegete (he is the Ruth A. Campbell Professor of New Testament Studies at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary) and a writer able to communicate lucidly his findings. These can be seen in his consistent pursuit of tracing the arguments in each passage from clues in the immediate and broader biblical context, while adeptly addressing historical, syntactical, and literary issues as needed. As a result, the reader is consistently challenged to reexamine the text itself to consider how all the various aspects of the biblical author's thought hold together. One example worth mentioning is his treatment of the notorious difficulties of 1 Pet 3:18–22. Though naturally tying this passage to *1 Enoch* and other Jewish literature (from which he bases his interpretation), his arguments center almost entirely around the relation of each phrase to the other, to the rest of 1 Peter, and also to other parts of the NT. In this way, he is able to guide his reader carefully through a text-driven exposition of this bewildering passage in only five and half pages (pp. 110–16).

In spite of the noteworthy characteristics of this commentary, certain aspects of Donelson's positions will no doubt satisfy some readers and be questioned by others. I will list just a few examples:

(1) Donelson supports pseudonymous authorship for all three epistles and situates them between the end of the first century AD and the middle of the second. First Peter is dated to the time of the Roman emperor Domitian (AD 85–95), though he views the suffering mentioned not as “instigated by authorities” but “by concerned neighbors” (p. 13). Thus the “sojourner” and “alien” status of these Gentile believers plays out on a relational level and describes their “metaphorical” status as living in the society “in a compromised social position” (pp. 10–11). Jude he dates between AD 80 and 110 and 2 Peter sometime between AD 120 and 150. As these dates suggest, he gives priority to Jude with reference to its literary relationship with 2 Peter, something he not only emphasizes in his exegesis of both books but also in the placement of Jude before 2 Peter in the sequence of the commentary.

(2) At times Donelson tends to remain vague on certain details of the text. For example, in commenting on the “triad of ‘praise and glory and honor’” in 1 Pet 1:7, he refrains from a detailed explanation, commenting that, “In this context, these terms cannot be precisely defined because they are evoking events and realities beyond the reach of theology” (p. 33). Though on the one hand this comment indicates a sense of humility toward the text, on the other hand it almost feels like he gives up too soon. Surely other passages on reward in the NT could shine some further light here. Elsewhere, after a discussion of the exact identity of “Lord” in Jude 14–15, he concludes by writing, “In the theology of Jude, it does not seem to matter whether it is God or Jesus who acts as judge. What matters is that judgment occurs” (p. 191). Once again, his restraint is admirable. One wonders, however, if the biblical author intended for the term to remain indecipherable. A little more concerning is his decision to understand *telos* in 1 Pet 1:9 as both “being on the way” and “a sense of being finished” (p. 36). While the idea of “already and not yet” could be understood from this passage, it seems too much for this one word to bear, especially in light of the hope expressed in 1 Pet 1:8 for seeing Jesus.

(3) In spite of his already noted ability to provide compact, text-based exegesis, on a number of occasions this brevity leads to expositions of the text that are unsatisfactory in their relationship to the broader literature. While the reasoning for this may lie in the attempt to keep the commentary at the 300-page mark, the problem is that Donelson only seldom provides his readers with further references to deepen their understanding of his own positions or pursue other interpretive options (there are only 52 footnotes in the entire work). A few brief examples should suffice.

In the already mentioned discussion of 1 Pet 3:18–22, Donelson completely ignores the interpretation that this passage refers to Christ preaching through Noah to those who perished in the flood. Admittedly, this is by no means a majority view. In light, however, of the controversial nature of this passage, it does deserve a mention if nothing else than to raise awareness of a contemporary position. A more pronounced example is his wide-reaching claim in Jude 1:6 that “Jude does not simply cite *1 Enoch* as authoritative: Jude sees the world through the theology of *1 Enoch*” (p. 179). While Donelson’s perspective could certainly be the case, Jude’s citation of non-canonical literature is a central difficulty of this book and one that needs either further explanation or references to allow the reader not familiar with this discussion the chance to explore other views. This problem is even more pronounced in his treatment of the next verse in Jude. Here he concludes that the “sexual sin of the cities (Sodom and Gomorrah)” in Jude 7 “is not homosexuality” but “that the men of Sodom and Gomorrah . . . desired the flesh of angels” (p. 180). In spite of his arguments from the context, the fact that Donelson provides no further evidence or sources for or against this interpretation leaves his readers, especially in light of the emotionally charged nature of this issue, empty-handed.

While this compact exegetical nature of the discussion certainly more than achieves one of the goals of the New Testament Library series to “offer . . . a theologically perceptive exposition of the biblical text,” it leaves one wondering who the intended readership for this well-researched and well-written commentary is. Donelson’s pervasive use of text-critical and syntactical terminologies along with historical references, seem to assume a solid theological background from his readers. This would seem to exclude the casual reader. Though pastors will no doubt benefit from the exegetical insights into these biblical texts, the virtual lack of contemporary application make this commentary less attractive than other options on the market. The lack, however, of references and detailed arguments already mentioned further limit the usefulness of this commentary for theological students and scholars who may want to trace his findings within the train of contemporary research. In short, the ideal reader would seem to be a theologically educated person not primarily interested in a reference work, but in a well-crafted discussion through the biblical text. Interestingly, Donelson appears to allude to this purpose in the preface when he writes, “Perhaps the primary task of any commentary is simply to share with others a few moments of this wonderful conversation about the Bible.” This commentary would, therefore, seem to be most suited as a helpful (and enjoyable) supplement to any theological library already containing more comprehensive treatments of these biblical books.

Markus T. Klausli
Akademie für Weltmission/CIU-Korntal, Korntal, Germany

Apocalypse and Allegiance: Worship, Politics, and Devotion in the Book of Revelation.
By J. Nelson Kraybill. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2010, 224 pp., \$21.99 paper.

In *Apocalypse and Allegiance*, J. Nelson Kraybill provides students of Revelation with a brilliant, historically grounded, and innovative introduction to the meaning and ongoing significance of John’s Apocalypse. Kraybill is currently the lead pastor at

Prairie Street Mennonite Church in Elkhart, Indiana, and he previously served as the president of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Indiana (1997–2009). Previous publications on Revelation include his doctoral dissertation from Union Theological Seminary entitled *Imperial Cult and Commerce in John's Apocalypse* (JSNTSup 132; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996) and various articles.

In the introduction, Kraybill notes that Revelation “is not a catalog of predictions about events that would take place two thousand years later,” but rather “a projector that casts archetypal images of good and evil onto a cosmic screen” that speak first to realities of the first century and then to every subsequent generation (p. 15). He identifies the central political reality in the late first century as the Roman empire and its “divine” emperors: “The pressing issue for John’s readers was how Christians, who gave their highest loyalty to Jesus, should conduct themselves in a world where economic and political structures assumed that everyone would worship the emperor” (p. 15).

Kraybill is quite innovative in his presentation. Being convinced that most modern readers are not aware of the pervasive pressure exerted upon first-century believers to worship the emperor, he begins in chapters 2–4 by discussing Revelation 12–13. He does not discuss the letters to the seven churches (Revelation 2–3) until chapter 10. This order of presentation disrupts the literary flow of Revelation’s text in order to emphasize its “historical and theological landscape” (p. 22). Each chapter abounds with brilliant photographs of ancient coins, temples, altars, and cities in order to illustrate the historical situation of John and the churches he addressed. In addition, each chapter concludes with questions for reflection and a short account of ways that Christians throughout history have lived the vision of Revelation. Kraybill writes as a confessional scholar whose focus throughout is on worship “with the conviction that study of John’s Apocalypse should inspire devotion to the God made known in Jesus today” (p. 22).

In chapter 1 (Revelation 1), Kraybill covers issues of historical introduction. John, probably not the apostle, wrote to seven real historical churches at the end of the first century (pp. 29–31). He also spends several pages discussing how Charles Sanders Peirce’s sign theory, dividing signs into the three categories of icons, indexes, and symbols, can help interpret Revelation (pp. 34–37). He proceeds to use the language of sign theory throughout the book.

In chapters 2–4 (Revelation 12–13), Kraybill identifies the first beast as the Roman empire and the second beast as “a web of emperor-worship institutions that orchestrated allegiance to Rome in John’s day” (p. 53). These chapters contain helpful discussions of the early Christian apocalyptic worldview, the role of Daniel in shaping this worldview, the growth of emperor worship in the Roman empire, the depravity of Rome and its emperors (illustrated by Nero), and the significance of Governor Pliny’s questioning of Christians around AD 112. It is likely that John used gematria in order to indict Nero with the number 666 (pp. 65–67).

In chapter 5 (Revelation 4), Kraybill contrasts God’s throne with the courts of Caligula and Nero and discusses the Jewish revolt and its aftermath. Worship is essential for Christians to resist the powers of death today (p. 95). In chapter 6 (Revelation 5–6), Kraybill discusses John’s Christology and the opening of the seven seals. John’s lamb Christology conveys a *Christus Victor* view of salvation instead of a substitutionary view of Jesus’ death (p. 101): “[F]ollowers of Jesus receive power through his victorious presence to live changed lives” (p. 101).

In chapter 7 (Revelation 7–11), Kraybill argues that God’s seal likely represents baptism (pp. 109–12). The worship of God by all tribes, peoples, and languages (Rev 7:9) is contrasted with similar claims made by Rome (pp. 116–17). Kraybill argues that God’s judgments in Revelation are redemptive rather than punitive, designed to turn human hearts toward God (p. 120). Redemption, however, is not an end in itself, but must result in worship (p. 121). In chapter 8 (Revelation 15–17), Kraybill provides seven perspectives for understanding the violence in Revelation. The last three are that “the

counsel for actual Christian behavior is nonviolence,” Revelation must be read “*in the context of the entire Bible,*” and the “*controlling metaphor . . . for the entire vision at Patmos is the slain lamb*” (p. 135, italics his).

In chapter 9 (Revelation 18–19), Kraybill argues that Revelation “focuses on structural evil—in this case, vast networks of commerce and politics warped by greed, violence, and blasphemous ideology” (pp. 153–54). Every person will either worship empire or God. In chapter 10 (Revelation 2–3), Kraybill discusses the letters to the seven churches. The letters emphasize repentance and the need for both faith and faithfulness. Kraybill argues that because conduct is factored so large in the final judgment, the seven letters put an accent on action (p. 166). He attempts to resolve the apparent tension between how Paul and John viewed engagement with pagan society by discussing their different chronological contexts (pp. 163–64). The millennium simply indicates that “evil someday will suffer utter defeat, and followers of the Lamb will receive honor” (p. 165).

In chapter 11 (Revelation 11; 20–22), Kraybill proposes that we understand the arrival of the new Jerusalem progressively. It began to arrive in John’s day, continues arriving in our day as God restores the world, and will fully arrive with complete restoration when Christ returns (p. 176). Worship “becomes the central means by which God orients individuals and congregations toward God’s future” (p. 179). In chapter 12, Kraybill concludes the book with further reflections from Revelation on Christian worship and its life-changing results.

Every reader will, of course, find points of interpretive disagreement. It does not seem likely that the New Jerusalem is progressively descending throughout human history (p. 176), or that God’s seal (Rev 7:3) represents baptism (pp. 109–12). Kraybill seems to overemphasize the importance of nonviolent resistance in Revelation (pp. 51, 86–87, 101, 121, 135), particularly by arguing that *hypomonē* (endurance) “connotes sustained nonviolent resistance” (p. 135; cf. the similar emphasis by scholars such as Loren Johns and Brian Blount). To be sure, Revelation seems to assume nonviolent resistance (p. 121), but John never explicitly argues for it, defends it, or exhorts believers to it. There is no historical or textual indication that violent resistance to Rome, government officials, or hostile neighbors was a temptation or option for believers in the seven churches John addressed in Asia Minor. It was not part of the rhetorical or historical exigence and was therefore not likely part of John’s rhetorical goals in writing Revelation. Finally, the praiseworthy emphasis on Revelation’s historical context often leaves little room for discussion of its canonical context and use of the OT.

In contrast to these minor critiques, there is much to commend in this brief introduction. Kraybill’s sketch of the historical background, based on primary sources, is unmatched for its relevance and accessibility. It is concise without being superficial. The text is eminently readable and easily holds the reader’s attention. The structure of the book innovatively highlights the historical background necessary for accurate interpretation. Finally, Kraybill is intensely practical throughout, calling God’s people to faithful obedience, witness, and most of all, worship. He has produced a book that will profit pastors, church members, beginning students, and seasoned scholars.

Alexander E. Stewart
Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, NC

Christ as Creator: Origins of a New Testament Doctrine. By Sean M. McDonough. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009, xi + 294 pp., \$120.00.

The confession that Christ played a role in creation was widespread in the early church (1 Cor 8:6; Col 1:15–20; John 1:1–3; Heb 1:2). This confession, embedded in early

Christian worship, was so well established that it is not argued in the NT, it is simply assumed. McDonough's goal is to reconstruct the theological framework within which such a confession could be made (p. 2).

The starting point for the doctrine that Christ is the agent of creation (his *Schöpfungsmittlerschaft*) is to be found in what the first-century church remembered about Jesus. An over-reading of Philo, with a relative neglect of the stories about Jesus, was a fault in prior work, so Hegermann, Weiss, and Cox (pp. 4–7). McDonough also rejects the explanatory value typically given to Wisdom speculation (p. 10). Instead, the doctrine of Christ's role in creation was developed as the first believers reflected on the memories of Jesus in light of the OT. This was primarily carried out within a messianic matrix. Linguistic and conceptual parallels from the broader first-century religious context, where appropriated, were intended to serve this messianic confession.

The author fleshes out his argument beginning with an exploration of the Gospel stories (chap. 2). The "memories of Jesus" that exhibit Christ's power over creation include mighty works, wonders, signs/healings, exorcisms, and nature miracles. Theological reflection on these memories led the Gospel writers to embed a "creation theology" in their introductions. This is clear in John, and possibly Matthew, and arguably present though less evident in Mark and Luke (pp. 19–22).

Jesus' nature miracles not only exhibit Jesus' power over the created order but echo OT texts concerning God's rule over creation (pp. 24–26). Jesus calms the sea; the Lord God rules over the sea (Ps 89:8–9). Jesus walks on the water; God "walks on the sea as if it were dry land" (Job 9:8). Jesus feeds the crowd; God spreads a table in the wilderness (Ps 78:19). The Gospel authors do not make the connections explicit; but reflection on Scripture would lead the church to associate Jesus with the work of creation.

In a similar fashion, McDonough looks at Jesus' healings and exorcisms (pp. 26–32). McDonough treats John's stories separately, focusing on the turning of water into wine, the healing of the man born blind, and the raising of Lazarus. John's theology is more explicit, but the theological movement is arguably the same: there are memories of the events from the story of Jesus, then there is theological reflection in light of the OT, and finally comes John's prologue with its explicit affirmation of Christ as creator (pp. 33–36).

Chapter 3 develops the connection between recreation and creation, which serves as the theological bridge from Jesus' redemptive power over creation to his involvement in the original creation. The redemptive and creative themes are intertwined in the central NT texts on Christ's *Schöpfungsmittlerschaft*. This paradigmatic move from redemption to creation would make sense to the early Christian writers; it was already clearly established in the OT (pp. 49–53) and was a commonplace in the broader religious thought of antiquity (pp. 53–64).

McDonough provides the last major link to his thesis in chapter 4 where he develops the matrix within which the doctrine of Christ's role in creation emerged—the category of messiah. While previous investigations played lip service to the messianic context, they were more interested in Wisdom speculation or Hellenistic philosophy. The NT doctrine on Jesus' role in creation emerged within a messianic matrix of reflection (p. 64). The key texts on Jesus' role in creation have a messianic focus (pp. 66–71). The other OT images for God's agency in creation (word, wisdom, and Spirit) were all understood to be possessed by the messiah (pp. 72–85).

Finally, McDonough argues that the "image" and "glory" of God are comprehensive scriptural categories related to God and creation, and he teases out how these are applied to the messiah (pp. 86–94).

McDonough draws four important conclusions: (1) Labeling creation texts as "Wisdom Christology" is inappropriate, since there are many contributory streams of thought (word, Spirit, glory, image). (2) A precise account of the process of early

Christological creation thought is unattainable. (3) The personal appearance of Jesus as messiah was not an empty box, but rather radically reshapes the antecedent models for agents of creation. (4) Creation as the beginning of messianic dominion provides a suitable account of Christ's role (pp. 94–96).

Chapters 5 and 6 are helpful treatments of Hellenistic “prepositional” theology and of Philo. These chapters provide useful introductions to the issues and clearly show how Hellenistic philosophy and the Jewish-Hellenistic mix found in Philo differ from the early church's messianic interests.

With this interpretive background in place, chapters 7–10 examine the primary texts for Christ's role in creation (1 Cor 8:6; Col 1:15–20; John 1:1–3; Heb 1:2). There is much here of exegetical value. The concise but well-crafted summary of his findings on Colossians 1 nicely illustrates the fruit of his approach (pp. 188–91).

McDonough concludes his work by casting “a fleeting glance at the dogmatic implications of Jesus' role in creation” (p. 236). He offers a sampling from six theologians: Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and Athanasius from the early centuries, and then Pannenberg, Moltmann, and Barth as three German-language representatives from the modern period.

This book is admirably clear and largely compelling. Researchers into Christian origins arguably move in the right direction when they turn from Greco-Roman religion and philosophy to the first-century Jewish context (Hengel, Meyer, N. T. Wright) and then from this Second Temple milieu to focus on the early church's memories and experiences of Jesus (Bauckham, Dunn). McDonough has contributed to this salutary trajectory. The book models how to situate ancient Near Eastern texts, Hellenistic philosophy, wisdom theology, the teachings of Philo, the Qumran material, as well as Rabbinic writings in relationship to early Christology, and at the same directs students to “the intuitively sensible starting point” (p. 19)—the memories of Jesus.

What calls for further attention, both at the end of McDonough's theological journey as well as at the beginning, relates to his treatment of Jesus as “the Son of God.” In two of the four texts that speak of Christ's agency in creation, the subject is explicitly “the Son” (Col 1:15–20; cf. 1:13; Heb 1:1–4). In John's prologue the subject is “the Word,” which is expressly identified in verses 14 (cf. v. 18) as “the Son.” Only in 1 Cor 8:6 does the text link the title “Christ” explicitly with the agency of creation, and here it is “one Lord, Jesus Christ,”—yet even here this is set in the *Shema*-like confession that speaks of one God, “the Father.” In his discussion of these texts, McDonough consistently shifts the subject from “Son” to “Messiah.” The focus on the “messianic matrix” for the origin of Christ's *Schöpfungsmittlerschaft* is correct, but to bring these texts into sharper focus the Son-language needs to be more adequately explained. Why was Christian theology already explicitly highlighting the messiah as “Son of God” in these early creation texts? Foregrounding this aspect of the “messianic matrix” would benefit the transition to dogmatics that McDonough helpfully explores in his last chapter.

McDonough admirably argues for “the memories of Jesus” as the starting point for the doctrine and agrees that the “divine sonship” motif is traceable to the teachings of Jesus. Yet he decides not to press this motif (pp. 40–41; though see the intriguing footnote on p. 41, n. 37). Exploring the “intermediate exegetical and theological moves” (p. 41) that might have contributed to the development of the doctrine of the Christ's role in creation as *God's Son* merit further attention and would have strengthened an already fine monograph.

Daniel Ebert
Cedarville University, Cedarville, OH

The Future of Christian Theology. By David F. Ford. Blackwell Manifestos. Wiley-Blackwell: Oxford, 2011, xiv + 239 pp., \$34.95.

Ten years ago, in the second volume of the Blackwell Manifestos series entitled *The Future of Christianity*, Alistair McGrath lamented the “disillusionment with academic theology” and pleaded for organic theologians rooted in particular communities to seek practical wisdom. Now, almost thirty volumes later in the same series, David Ford, Professor of Divinity at the University of Cambridge and Director of the Cambridge Inter-Faith Programme, explores the future of Christian theology more directly and proposes several ways to overcome and prevent continued disillusionment.

First, Christian theology must seek after wisdom. In several previous monographs, Ford developed an extensive theology of wisdom, but in chapter 1 of this book, he distills these insights into four elements of theological wisdom and creativity: retrieval, engagement, thinking, and expression. A wise and creative theologian draws from past sources in imaginative ways, but also engages with contemporary situations in the church and the world. And although theological wisdom requires imaginative and innovative thinking, equally important is wise and creative expression. Theology will engender greater wisdom when it is expressed more creatively, utilizing multiple genres and moods. Ford believes theological wisdom is increasingly important given the proliferation of global Christianity, the spread of education, and the dialogue between theology and other disciplines. This opening chapter corresponds to a growing and welcome emphasis on wisdom in contemporary Christian theology, but I found myself wondering at the outset how Ford would articulate the criteria for theological wisdom. Fortunately, he addresses this question in the next chapter in terms of the dynamic interplay between wisdom of intensity and wisdom of extensity, the former determining boundaries and the latter keeping us open to potentialities and ramifications. Because this explanation lacks practical examples, however, this proposal seems idealistic and leaves readers longing for more concrete suggestions. Although in subsequent chapter Ford addresses some areas in which intensive and extensive wisdom exist in dynamic interplay, a general paucity of particular examples weakens an otherwise strong argument.

Second, in order to have a future, Christian theology must be dramatic. When Ford speaks of “drama in Bible, theology, and life” (chap. 2) or “a dramatic code of twenty-first century theology” (chap. 3), he is referring to theology that is narrational, emplotted, embodied, eventful, conflictual, dialogical, comprehensive yet involving, social, and engaging. Like Hans Urs von Balthasar in his five-volume *Theo-Drama*, Ford distinguishes a dramatic approach from an epic or lyric approach. On the one hand, epic theology is objective, authoritative, comprehensive, coherent, and abstract; lyric theology, on the other hand, is subjective, pluralistic, partial, fragmented, and concrete. Ford does not intend dramatic theology to transcend the epic and lyric, but as a form of theology embracing both epic and lyrics dimensions. Theology is the work of people inextricably involved in the theodrama yet still able to make observations about the theodrama as a whole. Theologians do not work from an exterior, epic position, but they are also not limited to interior, lyric expression. Thus, dramatic theology exists in the interplay of critical and creative wisdom, because theology concerned merely with boundaries and criterion becomes depressingly epic, whereas theology solely preoccupied with fresh expressions and relevance makes it manically lyric. Ford argues that a dramatic balance is best maintained by keeping theology oriented toward the everyday and in conversation with a variety of disciplines and traditions. And, most importantly, dramatic theology requires performance, never content with only epic explanation or lyric expression.

A few comments on Ford’s use of the dramatic model throughout this book are necessary before progressing. For one, it is important to situate his use of this model

within the larger dramatic and theatrical turn in Christian thought over the last several decades. In the wake of Balthasar's *Theo-Drama*, a host of theologians and ethicists began employing dramatic and theatrical metaphors to emphasize the participatory, practical, provisional, communal, contextual, and creative nature of Christian theology and ethics, including evangelical theologians such as Kevin Vanhoozer (*The Drama of Doctrine*) and Michael Horton (*Covenant and Eschatology: The Divine Drama*). In doing so, however, many of these scholars have carelessly and ignorantly employed dramatic and theatrical terminology, concepts, and practices in service of their theological and ethical agendas. For example, given that "drama" is a text-centered term, referring to a genre of literature intended for public performance, it seems odd that "dramatic" is the term of choice for theologians most concerned about improvisational performance without a script (such as Samuel Wells's book *Improvisation: The Drama of Christian Ethics*). Consequently, it may be more fitting for theologians such as Ford to refer to "theatrical theology" instead of "dramatic theology," or possibly to employ both phrases when appropriate while recognizing the unique connotations of both. Indeed, being more precise with dramatic and theological terminology is one way in which Ford could demonstrate the interdisciplinary dialogue he advocates throughout this book. In sum, Ford's dramatic model is promising on many levels, but employing a more thoroughly theatrical model and attending more carefully to theatrical concepts and practices—such as improvisation—would enhance his overall project and proposals.

Third, the optative is the optimal mood for Christian theology. In chapter 4, Ford observes how most traditional theology utilizes indicative and imperative moods to articulate truths to believe or commands to obey. In addition, liberal theology often exists in the interrogative mood, endlessly asking questions and seeking new possibilities of expression. Although Ford does not make the connection, one can easily see how indicative and imperative moods are most natural to epic theologies, whereas interrogative and subjunctive moods are easily paired with lyric theologies. He does indicate, however, that the Bible contains every mood, and likewise theology should never be dominated by a single mood. That being said, there is a leading mood—the optative, the mood of desire—because theology is done in the midst of a drama, while we are "journeying toward our goal"; consequently, desire is the most fitting mood "because of the immensity of God, who is endlessly rich in love, wisdom, and all perfections, and therefore our desire too can be endless" (p. 81). More than any chapter in the book, this one struck me as the wisest and most creative, expressing most clearly Ford's commitment to wise and creative thinking and expression. In short, his argument is that theology should be more like prayer. I find it slightly ironic, however, that Ford's book is not written more consistently in an optative and prayerful mood. Perhaps this would have been the most effective way to write a manifesto on the future of theology.

Fourth, Christian theology must be thoroughly covenantal and relational. By this, Ford is not advocating in chapter 5 a covenant theology as advanced by some Reformed theologians, but rather the covenantal and relational matrix in which theology occurs. All theology is accomplished within committed relationships, both with God and other people, and these relationships are most evident in our worship. In fact, Ford shows how worship contains all the elements of wise and creative theology articulated in the first chapter, whether retrieval, engagement, thinking, or expression. Beyond the primacy of worship, however, Ford recognizes the centrality of conversations and friendships in the task of theology. Theology is not an ivory tower exercise, but a collegial and conversational activity within the drama of interpersonal relationships. We know this to be true most poignantly from the memoirs of theologians, such as Stanley Hauerwas's recent *Hannah's Child*, where he confesses that friendships are what made and kept

him a theologian. Ford reminds us that at the heart of friendship is “costly and truthful sharing” (p. 102), sharing our whole lives in pursuit of collective wisdom. This means that all theology is autobiographical, intensely personal, and oriented toward the everyday. Again, it would have been refreshing to see more of these characteristics modeled in this book itself, giving us a glimpse at what conversations and friendships have most influenced David Ford. That said, we have to realize that this book is more a prescription for how theology should be pursued rather than theology proper, so I look forward to seeing Ford model his proposed commitments in future work.

Fifth, Christian theology must challenge the church to pursue dramatic interaction with society. Ford demonstrates this point in chapter 6 through two case studies: the theology and practice of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and the place of the church in democratic civil societies. Bonhoeffer shows us how to be fully Christian in society without capitulating to either radicalism or compromise. This is a matter of constant discernment in interaction with a variety of people, situations, and institutions, but it is ultimately a matter of formation and fitting participation in the theodrama, not quandary ethics. Theology does not provide answers for every situation, but it does form us to make wise and creative decisions that are fitting to the triune God, Scripture, the church, and particular situations. Ford summarizes this position as a one of “constant improvisation in the Spirit in the church for the good of humanity” (p. 117). It is implied, but Ford probably should have mentioned more explicitly, that improvisation does not entail boundless spontaneity, but free and creative action within liberating constraints. Although Ford’s proposal for dramatic interaction between church and society is beneficial as a whole, his case studies to do traffic in particulars. For example, he suggests that theology should provide rationale for pluralism, encourage ecclesial involvement with other institutions, and guide correspondence between Christian confession and conduct, but he gives few practical illustrations of these points. For this reason, this chapter leaves a little to be desired, but still gives the reader plenty to digest.

Sixth, Christian theology will be enriched by practicing inter-faith dialogue. In chapter 7, Ford interacts primarily with two significant inter-faith documents: the Jewish *Dabru Emet* (2000) and the Muslim *A Common Word* (2007). He maintains that both these documents represent genuinely dramatic dialogue because they recognize the “humanly irreconcilable differences” between these religions and Christianity while celebrating commonalities and pursuing collegial engagement. For example, *Dabru Emet* encourages Jews and Christian to reread Scripture together, reconsider how these encounters with Scripture affect mutual understanding, and then embed this new understanding in concrete practices and postures toward one another. Likewise, *A Common Word* emphasizes the loving and compassionate core of both Islam and Christianity, calling adherents of both religions to demonstrate these characteristics in their interaction with the world and each other. Ford’s own “Muscat Manifesto” echoes these themes, pleading for “partnerships of difference” between religions, leading to a shared pursuit of civil wisdom for the purpose of engagement with and care for the entire world. I wonder, however, if these statements are really as “dramatic” as Ford maintains. Are they really recognizing essential differences by asserting these religions worship the same God? And if there is disagreement on this fundamental point, how does that change the drama? Can dramatic dialogue exist in dynamic interplay with missional engagement? I think Ford is correct in stating that Christians should grow in their understanding of and partnership with adherents of other religions, but I differ with Ford in situating these partnerships within the context of an overarching Christian mission. I agree that Christians need to enter the “drama of mutual hospitality” in obedience to the Great Commandment, but we do so within the context of obeying the Great Commission.

Seventh, Christian theology should link with religious studies rather than remaining a cloistered discipline. Ford argues in chapter 8 that when Christian theology is conducted in isolation from religious studies and other academic disciplines, it fails to form minds and lives for fitting participation in social dramas. In order to remedy the isolation of theology, therefore, Ford recommends strategic links between research universities and seminaries or other theological schools, providing options to exchange classes and credits for the purpose of holistic learning. In addition, to address the bifurcation between theology and religious studies within universities, Ford suggests a fusion of these disciplines, which he claims will encourage the harmonization of a threefold responsibility to academic institutions, society, and the church. Ford sees an encouraging trend toward integration in the UK, but in the US he observes few links between theology and religious studies, due in large part to the history of separation between church and state. Thus, state schools demean “subjective” theology and private schools demean “secular” religious studies, and never the twain shall meet. But what would happen if they did meet? By expanding the cast in our educational dramas, would engagement be too complex and difficult to sustain? Ford recognizes it would be difficult but views these difficulties as ultimately advantageous in promoting a more robust, socially enriching education. No doubt Ford is correct that some theology departments, perhaps in largely evangelical institutions, are guilty of separating themselves from “secular” disciplines. But some will rightly question whether creating another discipline—Theology and Religious Studies—is an appropriately dramatic way forward. Although greater collaboration and engagement across disciplines would be beneficial, the key would be to accomplish this dialogue without sacrificing the institutional and confessional differences that make true dialogue possible.

Eighth, the Christian theologian is not a master, but an apprentice. I have always thought that those graduating from seminaries should receive an Apprenticeship of Divinity degree rather than a Masters of Divinity, and in chapter 9 Ford delineates a similar vision. The main feature of the apprenticed theologian is receptivity: responsible alertness in the Spirit to Jesus, Scripture, tradition, teachers, the church, culture, and particular situations. In other words, theology is a discipline accomplished through the attitudes and acts of prayer and service. Good theology is radically attentive to the other, most of all the triune Other who has revealed himself in Scripture. In fact, Ford devotes the ninth and final chapter to biblical receptivity, proposing that the theologian-apprentice reads the Bible theologically as canonical Christian Scripture while also paying attention to the Bible as literature, history, and other human dimensions. As a result, he suggests several maxims for biblical interpretation resonating with evangelical priorities (unity of Testaments, Scripture interpreting Scripture, priority of plain sense in its literary variety, personal engagement) and indicating that faithful interpretation arises only when we realize our role in the theodrama under the Spirit’s guidance. The multi-dimensional receptivity required of every theologian, with Spirit-illuminated biblical receptivity at its core, is the means to develop improvisational wisdom in theodramatic performance.

Overall, David Ford offers a compelling vision to ensure the healthy future of Christian theology. His appeal for wise, dramatic, communal, relational, dialogical, receptive, improvisational, biblical, Spirit-filled, and desire-full theology is one that theologians of all traditions can embrace. Not all theologians, however, will be able to endorse every suggestion he makes for moving theology forward, particularly when inter-faith dialogue loses its missional orientation. Regarding style, the book was clearly written and enjoyable to read, but it would have been refreshing to see Ford demonstrate more fully his own appeal for a prayerful theology rooted in the concrete realities of daily living. Nevertheless, this book no doubt deserves the name “manifesto,” articulating a

challenging and imaginative vision for Christian theologians seeking to display faithful, improvisational wisdom in a complex world.

Wesley Vander Lugt
University of St Andrews, St Andrews, Scotland

Tempted for Us: Theological Models and the Practical Relevance of Christ's Impeccability and Temptation. Paternoster Theological Monographs. By John E. McKinley. Cumbria, UK: Paternoster, 2009, xxii + 319 pp., \$30.39.

John E. McKinley, assistant professor of systematic theology at Talbot School of Theology, seeks in this revision of his doctoral dissertation to probe the question: how can Jesus, as a divine-human person, who as God was unable to sin, have been truly tempted? Or more precisely, how can the temptations of Christ be relevant to Christian believers, when a proper implication of Holy Scripture is that, as God, Jesus could not commit sin?

The architecture of the book is solid, beginning with biblical exegesis as the basis of theological statement. McKinley then sorts out nine Christological models from the patristic to the modern period. The book concludes with his synthesis and answers.

Unlike most Christologies since World War II, McKinley's is refreshingly orthodox; indeed, the questions he asks only arise in a theologically orthodox setting. With Christ as true God and true human being, was there a diminution of the characteristics of either his divine nature or his human nature? McKinley denies this, stoutly maintaining Chalcedonian orthodoxy throughout the book. Is there a difference between Jesus' actual sinlessness, as recorded and taught by the NT, and an inability to sin? Yes—McKinley affirms that Jesus was actually sinless and *non posse peccare*. Central in the author's explanatory project is to seek to work out the implications of Jesus' true and complete humanity. McKinley (affirming Constantinople III) is therefore unhappy with proposals from the modern period that deny a human will in Christ (Forsyth, Mackintosh, Hawthorne). What about kenotic solutions? Does Scripture maintain that in his incarnation the eternal Son divested himself of divine attributes? McKinley says no—Jesus remained unchangeably good and holy in his divine nature during his humiliation.

A premise of the whole project is that Jesus' experience must be like that of believers in all respects if NT encouragements drawn from his temptations are to be relevant to us. For example, we are to copy Jesus' refusal to sin (1 Pet 2:21–24); accordingly, unless his knowledge and experience of temptation is identical to our own, he cannot be a "credible and relevant" pattern for us who, unlike Jesus, are not immune to sin (p. 6). McKinley is resolute that the assertion of Jesus' deity as the source of his victory over temptation (as found in Augustine, for example) places Jesus' exemplary life on a plane beyond imitation. The assertion of Christ's deity as the source of his sinlessness is always at the back of McKinley's mind as the fly that spoils the Christology. Here the author has pastoral concerns in mind: believers may stumble rather than be comforted by this kind of explanation. It is "unreasonable," neither "credible" nor "relevant" to us (p. 6).

The book's chapters on biblical teaching cover all relevant NT evidence. Scripture narrates Jesus' temptations at each of the critical moments of his earthly ministry, especially Gethsemane. They are stressed in the book of Hebrews especially, as reassurance that the exalted Christ sympathizes with believers tempted to apostasy. His human struggle and success constituted Jesus as a compassionate high priest in his

exalted state. Christ in his humiliation shared the (not sinful) human weakness and frailties that are a source of temptation for believers (Heb 2:17–18); nevertheless, Jesus remained supremely sinless. Paul, too, stresses that Christ remained sinless, not only as an example, but for another important soteriological reason: Christ was the last Adam, and as such he was accomplishing an obedience that would be imputed as righteousness to believers.

The NT does not answer the question *how* Jesus avoided sin, McKinley avers. What is clear is that no biblical text appeals to his divine power or divine nature as an answer to the problem of “how?” Instead Scripture presents the ministry of the Holy Spirit to Jesus as integral to his sinlessness.

There is trouble lurking here, however. Because Scripture itself does not sort out the solution and is, in fact, subject to varying solutions, McKinley proposes that theological analysis can resolve what remains unclear in Scripture. One wonders what role Scripture will have in such a resolution. Will Scripture, by “good and necessary consequence” (*Westminster Confession of Faith* 1.6), be the norm of the solutions, or will we be working outside the realm of revelation? (To his credit, the author is wary of this danger; see p. 235.) More specifically to Christology, will McKinley consider Jesus’ human nature one-sidedly, in abstraction from his incarnation as the divine Son?

McKinley finds nine models in theology that deal with the temptable/impeccable problem. These he evaluates in the largest portion of the book, finding a mixed bag of solutions. There is much valuable material here that must be passed by. He tilts toward the Reformers (Luther and Calvin) because of their careful account of the human experience of Christ (without denying his divine nature) and away from models that stress Jesus’ divine nature as a solution. He especially admires Calvin’s account of the Son’s self-limitation of divine power, allowing his temptations, because, Calvin says, this is a matter of the hiddenness, or eclipse, of divine power. God the Son did not lose his powers, but willingly “withheld the exercise of his powers through the flesh to which he was fully joined” (p. 179; citing David Willis, *Calvin’s Catholic Christology* [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1966], 80).

In modern non-kenotic Christology, McKinley finally finds satisfaction, especially in his modification of Morris’s “two-minds” Christology (pp. 229–31; Thomas V. Morris, *The Logic of God Incarnate* [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986]). It is that “Jesus remained impeccable, and he was fully tempted because his full knowledge of his inability to sin was veiled from his consciousness as a man.” In other words, he was “impeccable by psychological restriction.” Here the assumption is that true temptation requires that a person not know “I cannot sin.” (Jesus need not have believed a falsehood, by the way, just not known the whole truth about himself.) This position McKinley finds consistent with Chalcedon, because the latter posits two minds (divine and human) in the incarnate Son. He is somewhat wary of Morris’s formula because it depends on analogy with other human experience, not on scriptural affirmations. It is worthwhile, though, because it offers a defense to the critics of Chalcedon.

How might Jesus’ human knowledge, or perhaps certainty, of his impeccability have been limited? McKinley gives this job to the Holy Spirit. He suggests that the Spirit ministered to Christ in his humanity in such a way as to prevent him knowing, humanly, that he was unable to sin.

At this point I become extremely skeptical. First, it simply is not the case that Jesus’ certainty was inversely related to his ability to be tempted. Here we need not speculate about the relation of Jesus’ divine consciousness to his human consciousness (more on this below). Take Jesus’ faith in the OT Scriptures, for example. Those Scriptures make it quite clear that Jesus would succeed in his mission to save God’s people (e.g. Isa 42:1–4; 49:4–8; 52:13–53:12). This success entailed that his self-of-

fering be sinless (e.g. 1 Pet 1:19; 2:22–23; 3:18, cf. Isa 53:7–12; John 1:29). We know that Jesus believed these promises, relied on them, and understood himself to have fulfilled them (e.g. Matt 26:55–56; Luke 22:37). It is sin to disbelieve God's Word. We may not suppose then, that Jesus' certainty of the truth of God's Word ever wavered (although we readily agree that the Holy Spirit ministered to the Son in his humanity, strengthening him and reminding him of the Word). Of course, neither can we suppose that Jesus' certainty precluded his being tempted to disbelieve or disobey, for in the face of temptation, despite his certainty of the fulfillment of prophecy, he still must obey God's call to suffer. It was "necessary for the Christ to suffer these things" in history, and he did (cf. Luke 24:26). To suppose that true temptation implies some lack of certainty or knowledge is akin to arguing that God's sovereign control makes human willing superfluous (a false antithesis which McKinley acknowledges to be such in other connections). Just as divine sovereignty does not imply that humans are not responsible for their choices, so Jesus' knowledge of his impeccability did not lessen his obligation to obey at each point. Nor did it lessen the stress on his human frailty occasioned by the Father's call to suffering obedience. Such a notion of [the limitation of] knowledge severs knowing from being, whereas Scripture holds these together (Eph 4:17–18). Jesus was pure in heart; he knew as the pure man. He obeyed with all his heart and mind.

Second, McKinley's proposal that the Holy Spirit limited Jesus' human knowing is unacceptable to orthodox Christology. This is his statement: ". . . the Holy Spirit fulfilled a role in the hypostatic union as a bond and boundary to maintain the integrity of each nature as they are fully possessed and expressed by the Son of God. . . . [T]he dual life of Christ, one person in two natures simultaneously, was managed by the Holy Spirit's role to bond and regulate the hypostatic union of God incarnate" (pp. 290–91).

Why would we suppose the integrity of the two natures in Christ needs to be maintained or managed? This affirmation highlights a tendency throughout the book to think of the hypostatic union abstractly, rather than concretely, the perspective essential to maintaining an orthodox position.

The hypostatic union was not the combination of two natures to make one person, but one person taking on another nature and remaining the same person, the second person of the Holy Trinity; in other words, Christ is not a combination of natures abstractly considered. This means that theologically we are not able simply to reason about each of the natures in the abstract and combine our conclusions. Jesus' humanity was never a human person apart from union with the Son; the two distinct natures in him never acted separately. Only the Son acted (and ever acts). We are thus limited to the concrete, and biblically revealed, person of the God-man. This is one reason McKinley's final position does not satisfy. It is not based adequately on the exegesis of Scripture, which is our only source of knowledge of the God-man.

McKinley goes on to suppose that the Spirit acted as a "fire wall" to "limit a flow from Jesus' deity to his humanity, and thus preserve his dual life" (p. 292). Here McKinley (unwittingly?) embraces the Lutheran notion of a communication of properties from one nature to the other in the incarnate Christ. Much as McKinley admires Calvin's veiling of the deity in Christ's flesh (and affirms the so-called extra-Calvinisticum), Calvin would have had none of this. (Consideration of the debate between Reformed and Lutheran on the communication of properties would have benefited this book immensely.) Jesus' humanity did not need to be protected by the Spirit from receipt of omniscience. Human beings are incapable of omniscience, because they are not God. This is no less true of Jesus' human nature, although the incarnate Christ, as person, is omniscient (John 21:17). We will simply have to live with the paradoxes created by the union of God and man in one person, or run afoul of biblical teaching.

Strikingly, the NT does not find a problem with Jesus' temptations. It does not seek to show the relevance of Jesus' temptations for us by relating Jesus' impeccability to his temptability. Questions of the metaphysics of the incarnation are proper, and the Bible does address them. But the NT writers do not struggle to express the relevance of Jesus' temptations. Instead, they stress Jesus' actual, historical sinlessness as his qualification to save us now. He was punished in our place as the one who knew no sin (2 Cor 5:21). Abiding in him, believers are freed from the dominating power of sin (1 John 3:5; cf. 1 Pet 2:22–24). The exalted Christ carries with him the memory of his sufferings so that he can help those who are tempted (Heb 2:18). It is the exalted, glorified Christ, who is able to save completely just because he is “holy, harmless, undefiled, separated from sinners” (Heb 7:24–28). The credibility and relevance of his temptations and victory rest on divine testimony with all its mystery, not on our ability to explain the relation between the two natures at the level of Jesus' consciousness. (Cf. John Murray's statement, “. . . it may not be possible for us to give adequate expression in our formulae, and particularly in the formula of Chalcedon, to all that is involved in our Lord's humanness;” *Collected Writings of John Murray* [Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1977] 2:137).

McKinley shows that the struggles of theologians to answer the questions of Christ's temptability and his impeccability have produced many false starts. It is no wonder. The answers, as far as there are answers, are already written in Holy Scripture. McKinley's attention to Christ's true humanity and to the rich ministry of the Holy Spirit to him (and I would add, now *from* him), are vital directions to be followed in the study both of Christology and soteriology. He would have done better to follow these, without eclipsing the reality of Christ's one personality.

Surely the mystery of godliness, “God manifest in the flesh,” is so great that we must be limited by Scripture's statements along with what are good and necessary consequences of them. That, as much as anything, is part of the scandal of the cross today, when much theology (though happily, *not* McKinley's) wishes to have a Christ “from below.” Christ was tempted for us, and he obeyed for us, thank God.

Howard Griffith

Reformed Theological Seminary, Washington, DC

Love that Rescues: God's Fatherly Love in the Practice of Church Discipline. By Eric J. Bargerhuff. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2010, ix + 210 pp., \$20.00 paper.

Eric Bargerhuff (PhD, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School) is the senior pastor of Clearwater Community Church in Dunedin, FL, and has written on what he believes to be a relatively neglected topic in both academic publications and church practice, namely, church discipline. This work, which is Bargerhuff's published dissertation, seeks to guide readers toward a greater understanding and application of this important ecclesiological practice through historical, exegetical, and theological analysis.

Chapter 1 serves as an introduction to the overall structure of the book, and it is here that Bargerhuff declares his unique contribution in rightly understanding church discipline. He begins by lamenting the seeming gap that exists between the church and the academy. This work seeks to bridge that gap in relation to this particular topic, and it does so by showing the link from a proper theology of God to the way in which the church will then think and live. One aspect of God's character is his love that, when properly understood, leads inevitably to the practice of a “fatherly” discipline within

the church. Bargerhuff states as his thesis, "The church, as an embodiment of Christ empowered by the Holy Spirit, is authorized and obliged to exercise discipline as an expression of God's 'fatherly' love toward the company of his redeemed children. When the church fails to do so, it is withholding one of God's prescribed actions for the church whereby he embodies his forgiveness, grace, and love" (p. 9). In essence, the author seeks to stress the point that discipline is not retributive in nature but rather loving, remedial, and restorative.

The second chapter delves into several historical figures from various periods of church history dealing expressly with their views on the nature of church discipline. Bargerhuff begins with Augustine, a Latin Church father who dealt with several controversial issues and groups, including the Donatists. Bargerhuff notes that Augustine viewed church discipline as temporal chastisement, but remedial and corrective in its purpose. However, Augustine's viewpoint on this matter is complicated in that he affirmed the union of church and state, which made the practice of discipline a civil affair, not merely ecclesial. Bargerhuff also cites the Anabaptists, particularly Menno Simons, as helpful models of discipline within the church. The Anabaptists were a group that tightly linked discipleship to the idea of discipline, and thus Bargerhuff notes some extremes in their zeal for a pure church; still, many from this group sought to discipline in a loving and restorative manner. The third figure surveyed is John Calvin who, like Augustine, lived in an era where the church and state were conjoined but who nonetheless labored to practice discipline in moderation with a gentle spirit for the restoration of the sinner. The final person cited in this brief historical analysis is Friedrich Schleiermacher. He took an altogether different approach from the ones noted previously, focusing on the unity of the church and religious experience to the detriment of God's holiness and the purity of the church. In summary, though Bargerhuff cites from various points in church history, he believes there is an overarching theme regarding the nature and purpose of church discipline: Discipline, at its heart, is an act of love that seeks to win back the sinner and protect the church from harm.

After noting several historical figures that conceive of church discipline as a loving act in its very nature and purpose, Bargerhuff transitions into the exegetical warrant for his thesis, beginning with the OT. He acknowledges that one cannot be comprehensive of the entire Bible when studying a topic of this nature; thus, he seeks to utilize several OT test cases of divine discipline. First, he refers to Israel's discipline as outlined in Deuteronomy 8. The nation of Israel is in covenant relationship with God, and as such is subject to his discipline, though it will be an instructive and remedial discipline for his people. Next, king David is considered, specifically in the context of 2 Samuel 7. Here a covenant is made, and part of this covenant includes divine discipline should David, or the line of kings to come from him, disobey God and his word. Uzziah is noted as a specific individual who experienced God's discipline for his disobedience. Finally, Bargerhuff cites from Job, Psalms, and Proverbs in demonstrating that discipline can be both communal and individualistic in nature. From this survey he concludes: "Discipline in the Old Testament is depicted both as a medium for instruction and training as well as punitive chastisement and judgment upon sinfulness" (p. 76). He rightly notes the trajectory this idea of discipline in the OT takes toward the atoning sacrifice of Jesus (more on that in a later chapter) and affirms that whether one's discipline is temporary and instructive or a final and decisive judgment is dependent on whether or not one is living in covenant relationship with God.

Chapter 4 builds upon the data culled in the previous chapter and looks specifically at the metaphor of God as "father" in the OT and how this factors into the issue of discipline. Fatherhood language is found in each of the passages commented on in the previous chapter, and though it is not a metaphor used frequently in a linguistic

sense, it holds great importance in tracing God's work throughout salvation history. God is a father to his people, and as such he disciplines them in a way that demonstrates his steadfast love and works to sanctify them so that their full adoption will eventually be accomplished. Bargerhuff helpfully demonstrates this reality from Hebrews 12, a passage that speaks explicitly regarding the fatherly love of God shown through discipline, which functions alongside of his redemptive-historical purposes to gather a people to himself.

Bargerhuff then takes a somewhat unexpected turn in the fifth chapter as he directs his attention to penal substitutionary atonement and its relationship to church discipline. This connection is brilliantly made as he demonstrates how the punitive side of God's punishment for his people was stayed in the OT and done away with completely in the NT, specifically through the death and resurrection of Jesus. Bargerhuff deftly works his way through various controversies surrounding the penal substitutionary model of the atonement, showing that one cannot embrace God's love without also embracing his wrath. After signifying the validity of this model of the atonement, Bargerhuff states, by implication of Christ's work on the cross, "insofar as church discipline is charged with dealing with sin and error in the church, its nature and purpose is not punitive retribution, but is rather instructional, remedial, restorative, and reconciliatory" (p. 134). At the cross, retribution for sins of God's people was carried out, which means that church discipline is not a punishment but should be seen as God's grace extended in a restorative manner.

Chapter 6, which is the longest section in the book, serves as a culmination of the author's exegetical/theological endeavors as he moves into key texts regarding church discipline in the NT. Bargerhuff focuses specifically on two of the more well-known passages on discipline (Matt 18:15–20; 1 Cor 5:1–13) and also gives helpful insights from an additional text dealing with God's response to churches who refuse to exercise loving discipline (1 Cor 11:17–34). The issue of "the keys," highlighted in Matthew 16:19 and 18:17, is helpfully commented upon, giving readers an acute awareness of the seriousness this practice entails, knowing that a church's judgment has already been ratified in heaven. As with the previous chapters, stress is laid upon the fact that discipline is a loving procedure enacted by the church, which is acting under God's authority for the hopeful restoration of the sinner and the purification of the community.

The final chapter of this work summarizes the overarching thesis and briefly sketches the previous chapters to show the line of argument taken in defending that thesis. The author concludes with several implications of this study that, though brief, are eminently helpful from both a theological and practical vantage point.

This work is a refreshing reminder of the necessity and the benefits of church discipline, and it contains a great number of strengths that should readily be lauded. Bargerhuff helpfully overcomes preconceived cultural notions of church discipline being an act of intolerant punishment, instead demonstrating that discipline is God showing a desire to forgive, restore, and rescue in a loving way. Bargerhuff also highlights several important tangential items—though they are certainly related to his primary topic—such as gender issues in relation to the fatherhood of God, the effect of postmodernism on biblical interpretation, and the necessity of penal substitution in light of recent arguments against this particular model of the atonement. While not his main focus, each of these items has received ample discussion in recent days, and Bargerhuff rightly touches on them in a way that is not exhaustive though genuinely helpful. Finally, he successfully bridges a real gap between church and academy by writing a work that delves into serious scholarly issues while also exhorting pastors and churches to apply rightly the truth of God as it relates to discipline within the church.

Overall, I believe Bargerhuff's thesis to be absolutely correct, and he does an excellent job laying out his case that church discipline is a fatherly love intended to rescue the sinner. I would, however, note three criticisms of the author's work that, while remarkably minor in comparison to the overall strength of the book, should be considered. First, Bargerhuff cites several Church fathers (Clement of Rome, Cyril of Jerusalem, Athanasius, and Augustine) as being proponents of the penal substitutionary view of the atonement. While I am certainly an advocate of penal substitution and believe it to be the primary model of the atonement, as does Bargerhuff, I would be a bit more cautious here in using the Church fathers in this sense. This has been a point of controversy for some time among theologians due to the fact that atonement models developed throughout church history and substitution was one of several prominent models of the atonement in the early church. Accordingly, though Bargerhuff cites Demarest's work, *The Cross and Salvation*, and alludes to his historical treatment of penal substitution including several of the Church fathers (p. 115, n. 7), it would be helpful to see some brief primary source work here to defend his claim.

A second point needing further clarification is Bargerhuff's view regarding the soteriological status of those who are put out of the church. In referring to the last step of church discipline explicated in Matthew 18, he avers, "The unrepentant one is turning his or her back on God's mercy, falling away from grace by not responding to God's forgiving hand reached out to him or her by means of the confrontation process outlined in Matthew 18" (p. 136). He goes on to offer, "In saying that they are falling away from grace, I am not suggesting that a true believer could lose his or her salvation and the inheritance that can never perish, spoil, or fade, kept in heaven for him or her (1 Pet 1:4). . . . My point is that the unrepentant one is rejecting the blessing of the grace of God (cf. Gal 5:4), and in so doing is straining and grieving the fellowship he or she has with God" (p. 136, n. 68). While I agree with Bargerhuff that a true believer will not lose his or her salvation, I am left wondering what he means by "straining" one's fellowship with God. Is an excommunicated person who never comes to repentance simply straining his or her relationship with God, or is there something more going on here in a soteriological sense? While loss of salvation is not possible, is exclusion from the church body a declarative sign of the excommunicated person's apparent unbelief and need for repentance and faith in Jesus? While I believe Bargerhuff would affirm these sentiments, as seems to be the case in other sections of the book (e.g. pp. 150–51), it would be helpful if this idea were nuanced a bit more carefully.

Finally, and this relates to the previous critique, it seems that Bargerhuff is so intent on stressing the fact that church discipline is remedial, instructive, loving, and restorative, that the idea of judgment coming through excommunication receives short shrift. Certainly no one enjoys speaking of judgment and excommunication, but it does appear that Scripture speaks of a person undergoing exclusion from a local church as being considered a "tax collector" (Matt 18:17), and an "evil person" (1 Cor 5:13); as such, this last step of church discipline appears to be eschatological in nature. Excommunication is a declarative sign in the present of God's future and final judgment, should the person not repent of sin and believe in Jesus for salvation (1 Cor 5:5). Churches must do this humbly under the authority of Jesus, knowing they are fallible, but they must strive for faithfulness in this action. I believe Bargerhuff would agree with this assessment (e.g. pp. 150–53); still, I would like to see this aspect worked more readily into the overall development of the book.

These critiques aside, I heartily recommend this book for those who desire to gain a more accurate conception of biblical church discipline. As previously stated, Bargerhuff has succeeded in traversing the typical gap that exists between church and academy, and as such scholars and pastors alike should read this book. Churches will also benefit

as they see the thread of God's fatherly love exercised through discipline as a prominent theme that runs throughout the biblical canon. It is my hope that the words of this book will be heeded and applied in order that local churches might consistently show loving discipline for the glory of God's name and the good of his people.

Jeremy M. Kimble
Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, NC

Defending Constantine: The Twilight of an Empire and the Dawn of Christendom.
By Peter J. Leithart. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2010, xiv + 359 pp., \$27.00 paper.

One of the most controversial interpretive issues in the history of Christianity is the nature of the relationship between the church and Constantine. Following the so-called Edict of Milan of AD 313, the church went from a persecuted sect to the favored religion of the Roman Empire due to the power and political influence of this self-proclaimed Christian ruler. Moreover, within a decade or shortly thereafter, the faith became publicly dominant in a culture whose rulers just a few years prior were intent on its destruction. But what did the church gain and lose in this so-called bargain? Was the Empire "Christianized" as a result of Constantine's conversion, or did the church prostitute herself to the state in the new arrangement?

Since the time of the Reformation, an enormous amount of ink has been spilled by innumerable scholars and churchmen in an effort to answer these and related questions. One of the most prominent to do so in the twentieth century was the Mennonite theologian, John Howard Yoder. He saw the Constantinian Revolution as a paradigmatic expression of the church's unfortunate tendency to carelessly co-operate with the powers of the world and thus "fall" from her calling as a radical, counter-cultural community. One of the more specific ways Yoder localized this "fall" was the church's adoption of violence during and after the Constantinian era. In his view, this was a wholesale lapse from the church's prior practice of pacifism. And while Yoder seemingly minimized the role of Constantine in this process by stressing the church's apostasy, he constantly mentioned him by name and centered much of his own theological scholarship in this part of Christian history. Consequently, his consistent promotion of the term "Constantinian," as representative of the church's fatal decline into worldliness, became an enormously influential intellectual construct that every contemporary theologian and church historian has been forced to interact with.

Peter J. Leithart is perhaps the most recent to do so. In this refreshingly honest work, Leithart not only provides a surprisingly accessible biography of Constantine but also a spirited work of theological engagement. As he notes early on, nearly everything about Constantine is disputed, so he takes pains to review the most recent historical scholarship and paint a portrait that moves beyond past characterizations—and caricatures—of the man. Leithart does not negate Constantine's personal character flaws or his onerous complicity in the death of numerous family members, nor does he sidestep the usual—and crucial—questions of the Emperor's relationship to the church and his motivations for acting as he did. What he provides is a fascinating composite of an exceptionally gifted general cum shrewd political animal who became a genuine Christian. With this as a major foundation of his thesis, Leithart drives home in a variety of ways the point that Constantine's conversion literally changed numerous religious and cultural practices in the Empire. These changes in turn facilitated a transformation of the political ethos originally based on the violent arrogance of *Romanitas*. Over

time, this new ethos shaped the development of church history during the era of late antiquity as well as provided the cultural and political framework for the creation of Christendom in the medieval era.

The biographical aspect of the book takes up the majority of space, but as Leithart progresses he begins to move past Constantine's life to engage Yoder and his disciples on the whole subject of Constantinianism. This polemical approach is intentionally theological in nature and substance. Leithart tries to show not only that Yoder misinterpreted most of the early fourth century but that the edifice of his Anabaptist ecclesiology was built on the sand of some serious misconceptions. He uses the history of the early church to do this, scoring point after point against Yoder all along the way. Following all that, Leithart wraps up with a short section on Constantine's value as a model for current political practice by the church. Lest any readers of this review think that he ends with a call for the establishment of a Christian theocracy, let me disabuse them of that notion; Leithart does not walk down that path. Instead, he tries to leverage his book as a contribution of classical orthodoxy that does not merely inform but also provides its own inherent account of social and political life.

How successful is Leithart in accomplishing this objective in a little under 400 pages? I would say very much so. His academic research and knowledge of the most recent scholarship on Constantine is impressive. Someone whose specific expertise covers Constantine and the church of the early fourth century may disagree, but it appears that Leithart has uncovered and used almost every source relevant to his topic. He summarizes these in neat fashion and is not afraid to take a stand on biographical issues related to Constantine's early life, his role and work as Emperor, and his relationship to the church. Even more specifically, especially for those whose knowledge of the later Empire is limited, this book provides an insightful commentary on the history of the last decades of the third century and the first decade of the fourth, the motivations behind the Diocletian persecution, and the reasons why it failed despite its severity. Moreover, Leithart provides a clear explanation of Constantine's rise to prominence amid the confusing complexities of the power struggle between various generals and himself, and how Constantine eventually came to rule alone.

Perhaps the best chapter is the fourth where Leithart sets the stage for the religious impact of Constantine's reign by focusing on his conversion. He walks thru the evidence, addresses the various sources, engages the historiography, and concludes (accurately, in my view) that the Emperor should be taken at his own word as a Christian. This interpretation is substantially supported by the evidence of Constantine's reign, post-AD 312. Leithart details how the Emperor could not keep himself from preaching, either at court or through public declarations that favored his new found faith; that he became the enemy of heretics; that he cleared public space for the construction of numerous, large churches; that he sought to rebuild Jerusalem; and that he was determined to secure the unity of a church fractured first by the Donatists and then by the Arians. As Leithart notes, Constantine was not just a Christian but a *missional* Christian determined to see people come to know the Savior.

Although the fourth chapter may be the best, the last (fourteenth) is the most important in terms of his overall thesis. Here Leithart does his best to prove that, in both the short term and over the long haul, Constantine was a not a curse but a blessing to the church and its calling to win the world for Christ. He uses the metaphor of baptism to make the point that Constantine caused a fundamental shift for the good when he publically favored the faith. The most important aspect of this was his emphatic termination of sacrifice throughout the Empire. All ancient societies were built on the belief that to gain the favor of the gods, there must be a sacrifice of blood offered to them. Rome was a pre-eminent example of this. Prior to Constantine, public sacrifice to

the pantheon and then to the Emperor was part and parcel of *Romanitas*. This was the flash point of conflict between Rome and the early church, because Christians refused to worship anyone but Jesus. But when Constantine first made Christianity legal and then the favored religion of the Empire, sacrifice in the traditional sense began to come to an end. As Leithart notes, "with Constantine the Roman Empire became officially a desacrificial polity" (p. 328). The first Christian Emperor may not have been able to entirely expunge sacrifice, but he certainly succeeded in displacing it to the margins and dark corners where, over time, it atrophied into insignificance.

Both theologically and politically, this was a public recognition that a new and different polity had taken over. This polity originated in Jerusalem with the first Christians but by the early fourth century it was the major cultural competitor to *Romanitas*. Constantine's conversion and his subsequent actions intentionally removed *Romanitas* and replaced it with the civic center of the church. In Leithart's view Constantine did so because he recognized the superiority of the Eucharistic *civitas* as a community of justice and peace. And while he could not have predicted the eventual rise of the medieval world, Constantine's explicit welcome of the ecclesial city into the heart of his earthly Empire helped to facilitate it. While this development was never perfect and had numerous fits, failures, and starts, it was ultimately a positive move. Like all earthly empires, Rome was bound to fall, yet some semblance of culture continued on after AD 410. Directly aided by the church, this newly evolving medieval society blossomed over time into what we now label as western civilization.

In the last few pages, Leithart turns once again to Yoder but this time in a positive direction. He readily acknowledges that on many things, Yoder was correct, not the least of which was Yoder's view that Jesus did have a social ethic, that the "nature-grace dichotomy" that is the foundation of traditional political theology is wrong, and that the only true polity is that of the church because it is the only one that does justice to the worship of God. At the heart of Leithart's disagreement with Yoder is the latter's belief that Constantine betrayed Christ by refusing to sheath his sword for the non-violence of the Savior. It is here that we encounter Leithart's vigorous assertion that the Bible is, in many ways, a story of war and that God is the ultimate Warrior. Seeking to make a direct connection between the two Testaments, he quickly gives a bird's eye view of Scripture in order to affirm his interpretative framework, then lands on Augustinian thought to reinforce his view. In Leithart's opinion, the early church was not a pacifist community, nor is there any kind of Marcionite division between the Old and New Testaments. Moreover, the church has always had a mandate from its Lord to teach and tell rulers to govern in a Christ-like fashion. In order to make this concrete, Leithart provides a number of specific examples of what this looks like in a de-sacrificial political order. If the contemporary church lived out this reality, modern governments and their leaders would, in the author's words, "get an earful of the politics of Jesus" (p. 339).

Obviously a book with such a controversial focus and breadth of analysis will provide some areas for critique. In my opinion, one problematic area is Leithart's subtle tendency to downplay Constantine's failings at both the personal and political levels. It is not too extreme to say that Constantine could be a ruthless megalomaniac. He was a superb military man, a first rate administration, and notoriously autocratic by nature. The combination of these, merged with his enormous power, sometimes made Constantine a vicious opponent, as both his enemies and family members often discovered to their own demise. Successful military and political figures often have to be ruthless to accomplish their objectives, but this posture has never aligned well with the Sermon on the Mount. Moreover, Constantine's hope that Christianity would unify his Empire was undermined from the start by the already fractured relationships between different groups in the church, be they Donatists or Arians. He did his best to overcome these factions and bring unity, but the subsequent history of the fourth century shows that his efforts fell far short of his goal.

In addition, I have some serious questions about Leithart's understanding that the Bible's main message is one of war and that God has commissioned his servants to physically and spiritually prosecute his conflicts. Leithart is certainly right that the OT teaches the ban of God and that it contains militaristic language. It is further true that, at times, Yahweh is described as a "man of war." But the dominant theme of Scripture seems to be far more about God's gracious redemption of humanity and his creation than anything else. Whether one states this as the "mission of God" noted by Christopher Wright, the "kingdom of God" popularized by G. E. Ladd, or the "covenants of God" as articulated by some of the Reformers, it appears that war takes a distant backseat to these more prominent themes.

A third but less serious weakness also needs to be noted. Leithart attempts to unpack his own theological framework near the end of this book and to show how Constantine's baptism of the Empire fits into that; unfortunately, this all-too-important topic is given short shrift. Perhaps this underdevelopment was due to editorial constraints on the size of the book or some other unmentioned factor, but it limited Leithart's ability to develop out in detail his own theological paradigm. Perhaps an additional volume along these lines is already in the works. If so I, for one, would eagerly welcome it.

Undoubtedly other criticisms will come from the disciples of Yoder who certainly will attempt to find elements to quibble about, if not argue over, for years to come. Despite Leithart's clear effort to state where he both agrees and disagrees with Yoder, such icons as the latter are not so easily critiqued or dispelled. And, as I noted above, Leithart's emphasis on the military language of Scripture will certainly raise some howls of protest. I expect that we will also hear from scholars and theologians in other Christian traditions as well.

For those of us in the evangelical camp, *Defending Constantine* is going to stir up some spirited discussion, if not outright controversy, among those on both the left and the right. Some will haggle over Leithart's interpretation of Constantine and his motives for Christianizing the Empire, as well as his take on some of the key players at the time such as Eusebius of Caesarea and Athanasius. Others will almost certainly ask about the validity of using history to "do" theology in the manner of Leithart's understanding of Constantine's baptism of the Empire. And specialists in both historical and systematic theology will want to debate Leithart's theological framework and how he interprets Yoder, as well as his historical critique of the Anabaptist emphasis on pacifism. But overall, this work is an engaging piece of scholarship that raises a number of crucial historical, theological, and ecclesiastical issues. In my opinion, it needs to be read, digested, thought about, and argued over so that we might better discern God's perspective on the tenuous relationship between church and state. In the twenty-first century, there may be no more important issue for Christians all across the political spectrum to wrestle through than this one.

Scott Wenig
Denver Seminary, Littleton, CO

Jonathan Edwards' Social Augustinian Trinitarianism in Historical and Contemporary Perspectives. Gorgias Studies in Philosophy and Theology 2. By Steven M. Studebaker. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2008, xii + 301pp., \$143.75.

Few ideas have fueled more misreadings of past trinitarian theologians than the mistaken assumption that the West prioritized the divine essence while the East prioritized the three divine persons. In *Jonathan Edwards' Social Augustinian Trinitarianism*, Steven Studebaker, assistant professor of systematic and historical theology

at McMaster Divinity College, argues that this assumption also fuels misreadings of Jonathan Edwards's trinitarian theology and contends that Edwards's trinitarian theology stands in continuity with the Augustinian mutual love tradition. This book represents a revision of his dissertation completed at Marquette University.

In the first chapter, Studebaker surveys the history of interpretation of Edwards's trinitarian theology. This history can be divided into two periods: 1851 to 1912 (representatives including Horace Bushnell, Oliver Holmes, Egbert Smyth, Edwards Park, Alexander Allen, George Fisher, and B. B. Warfield) and 1962 to present (Herbert Richardson, Krister Sairsingh, and Amy Plantinga Pauw). Several factors provide an important context for the early period of interpretation: the rise of Unitarianism, the emergence of a post-Cartesian theory of personhood, and Schleiermacher's religious epistemology. An important feature of the contemporary period is a tendency to read Edwards's trinitarian theology through the lens of the "threeness-oneness" paradigm (e.g. Sairsingh and Plantinga Pauw). Through critical engagement with these interpreters of Edwards's trinitarian theology, Studebaker argues that his survey reveals a widespread tendency of scholars to "use Edwards as a resource to validate their current theological views" (p. 64). These interpreters misread Edwards precisely because they ignore (or misrepresent) the "historical-theological context" of his theology.

In the second chapter, Studebaker shows how Edwards's trinitarian thought is misinterpreted when it is read through the lens of the "threeness-oneness" paradigm. According to this influential paradigm, Western trinitarian thought (exemplified by Augustine) prioritized divine unity and likened the Trinity to a single mind (psychological model) whereas Eastern trinitarian theology (exemplified by the Cappadocians) prioritized the divine persons and used "social" analogies to illustrate the Trinity. After tracing the history of this paradigm and explaining why it is flawed, Studebaker critically engages Amy Plantinga Pauw as her work represents the most thorough application of the threeness-oneness paradigm to the interpretation of Edwards's trinitarian theology. Reading Edwards through this paradigm, Plantinga Pauw wrongly concludes that Edwards employs two models of the Trinity: a psychological model and a social model. In contrast, Studebaker insists that Edwards consistently uses one model: the "Augustinian mutual love model" (p. 102) and that his use of "social" language can be accounted for within the context of the Augustinian model. Because the threeness-oneness paradigm is deeply flawed, it is "invalid for interpreting Edwards' trinitarianism" (p. 106) and should be discarded.

The Augustinian mutual love tradition is the subject of chapter three. Studebaker argues that the mutual love tradition (exemplified by Augustine, Aquinas, and Bonaventure) provides a key historical-theological context for Edwards's trinitarianism. The purpose of this chapter is to outline the salient features of this tradition. The mutual love model teaches that "the Father from eternity generated the Son and that the Holy Spirit proceeds and subsists as the mutual love of the Father for the Son and of the Son for the Father" (p. 110). Five elements characterize the mutual love model: (1) use of the mind to illustrate the immanent Trinity; (2) the Father as the source of divinity; (3) the generation of the Son as an act of intellection; (4) the procession of the Holy Spirit corresponding to the highest exercise of the will (i.e. love); and (5) a close correspondence between the immanent Trinity and the economic Trinity. Studebaker traces these five themes through Augustine, Aquinas, Richard of St. Victor, and Bonaventure.

Having identified the key characteristics of the mutual love tradition, Studebaker argues in chapter four that Edwards's trinitarian theology should be seen as a substantive expression of this tradition, as it embodies the five characteristics outlined above. Implicitly, this chapter also advances his critique of Amy Plantinga Pauw's reading of Edwards. That the divine nature is self-communicative may represent "Edwards' most

fundamental theological conviction" (p. 136). Studebaker insists that the Augustinian mutual love tradition provides the theological context for Edwards's explication of the self-communicative nature of God. Like Augustine, Aquinas, and Bonaventure, Edwards believed there are two emanations in the Godhead: one according to intellect (Son) and the other according to will (Holy Spirit). Furthermore, like these theologians, the human soul (with its two fundamental capacities of understanding and will) is one of Edwards's primary sources for illustrating the Trinity. Studebaker carefully explores Edwards's understanding of the soul, arguing that he embraced both "Augustinian voluntarism" and "intellectualism." Three elements of Edwards's psychology have crucial parallels to his trinitarian thought: (1) the ontological unity of the faculties of the soul (the soul is a simple entity with two powers, understanding and will); (2) the functional unity between understanding and will; and (3) the operative distinction between understanding and will. For example, Edwards's explanation of immanent processions and subsistent relations within the Trinity assumes the operative distinction between understanding and will. Operations of the soul also provide categories for distinguishing the divine persons: the Father is the self-subsisting mind, the Son is the subsisting word generated by an act of understanding, and the Holy Spirit is the subsisting love proceeding by will. Edwards uses three categories to speak about the Father: "self-subsistence," "God absolutely considered," and "fountainhead of the Godhead" (pp. 167–70). Although he uses several terms to describe the subsistence of the Son, Edwards's most important concept is that of the Son as "perfect idea of reflection" (p. 185). As Studebaker explains, the Son subsists "as the terminal product of the eternal act of the divine understanding" (p. 186). Edwards describes the subsistence of the Holy Spirit in three categories: "disposition of the Godhead," "act of the divine essence," and (most frequently) "the love of God" (p. 191). The Holy Spirit subsists as the mutual love of the Father and the Son, and it is in the latter context that social themes emerge in his theology. Edwards's use of social language, however, must be clearly distinguished from "the three-subject trinitarian society of [contemporary] social trinitarianism" (p. 197). Like Augustine and Aquinas, Edwards closely links procession and mission such that the economic Trinity is a "repetition" of the immanent Trinity. For example, the Holy Spirit pours out God's love *ad extra* because he subsists *ad intra* as the mutual love of the Father and Son. Moreover, the economic order of operation reflects the immanent order in which the divine persons subsist.

Although continuity exists with the Augustinian mutual love tradition, several features of Edwards's theology are problematic according to Studebaker: (1) his use of mind, understanding, and will as an analogy for the Trinity (as this analogy does not illustrate Father, Son, Holy Spirit but God, Son, Holy Spirit and undermines the equality of the divine persons); (2) his account of the communicative nature of divine goodness (which seems to make God incomplete without creation); and (3) his account of the "new" subordination of the Spirit to the Son in the covenant of redemption (which Studebaker argues is unnecessary).

A proper historical-theological contextualization of Edwards's trinitarian theology will focus on not only his relationship to the mutual love tradition but also his relationship to eighteenth-century trinitarian controversies. Edwards's relationship to these controversies is the subject of chapter five. He offers strong rational arguments for the Trinity which reflect awareness of and engagement with early-Enlightenment debates. Interestingly, Edwards's arguments *precede* the emergence of trinitarian controversies in New England (c. 1750); accordingly, Studebaker explains that Edwards's arguments should be viewed as a response to the "Trinitarian Controversy" in England (c. 1690 to 1720), particularly two aspects of it: debates between trinitarians and Deists, and debates among trinitarians. Edwards's arguments against Deists have two aims:

defending the rationality of the Trinity, and exposing problems with the Deist conception of God. His account of the “communicative nature of goodness” (drawing on the Augustinian mutual love model) plays a key role in accomplishing both purposes: The communicative nature of God requires a plurality of persons (his rational argument for the Trinity), and the deistic God cannot be infinitely good because no genuine communication of love is possible *without* a plurality of divine persons. One central issue in this controversy was the nature of the divine persons. In responding to Deists, some trinitarians presented the divine persons as three centers of consciousness (applying a Cartesian notion of personhood to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit); others presented the divine persons in a more traditional way as a subsistence of a rational nature. Although Edwards’s trinitarian theology reflects inconsistent appeal to both notions of personhood (traditional and Cartesian), “his overriding concept is that a divine person is a subsistence of the divine nature” (p. 254), reflecting his continuity with the Augustinian tradition.

Jonathan Edwards’ Social Augustinian Trinitarianism is carefully researched, methodically argued, and well written. It makes at least three contributions to contemporary trinitarian scholarship. First, Studebaker rightly argues that the threeness-oneness paradigm (owing to the influence of de Régnon) must be abandoned. Not only does he offer a compelling critique of this misguided paradigm, but he also shows how it fuels contemporary misreadings of Edwards’s trinitarian theology (e.g. Amy Plantinga Pauw). Further argument against this paradigm comes indirectly through his exposition of the “mutual love tradition” and its “social” dimensions. No doubt some readers will find themselves perplexed by the juxtaposition of the words “social” and “Augustinian” in the title to his book, but Studebaker shows how these realities cohere in ways that provide further warrant for abandoning the threeness-oneness paradigm.

Second, Studebaker makes an important contribution to the growing trinitarian scholarship on Jonathan Edwards. Against the grain of contemporary scholarship, he makes a strong case for Edwards’s continuity with the “Augustinian” mutual love tradition by showing how Edwards incorporates the five core elements of this tradition—albeit with his own creative refinements. (Although Augustine may be the progenitor of the mutual love tradition, much of the theology to which Edwards appeals emerges in theologians like Aquinas and Bonaventure. Thus, “Augustinian” in the title stands not so much for the teachings of the bishop of Hippo but for the medieval tradition that builds on him.) Studebaker also does a great job exploring the reciprocal relation that exists between Edwards’s trinitarian theology and his psychology of the soul. Along the way, he identifies tensions and problems in Edwards’s trinitarian theology (e.g. his use of mind, understanding, and will as an image of the Trinity).

Finally, Studebaker makes an important methodological contribution by highlighting the importance of offering a historical-theological reading of Edwards and demonstrating the problems with systematic-theological readings which attempt to “contextualize” someone like Edwards by considering how his theology relates to the threeness-oneness paradigm. Studebaker himself does a great job exploring the historical-theological context of key elements of Edwards’s trinitarian theology.

Those who are firmly committed to the threeness-oneness paradigm will probably find it difficult to embrace many of Studebaker’s conclusions. Perhaps the gracious and irenic tone of this book will help persuade some of them. The limitations of this book are minor. Although he does a great job providing an overview of Augustine’s trinitarian theology and showing how the threeness-oneness paradigm misrepresents Augustine, Studebaker’s case against this paradigm could be further strengthened by providing a detailed exposition of one or more of the Cappadocians in order to show how it misrepresents their theology as well. Some exposition of Gregory of Nyssa can be found

in footnotes (e.g. p. 76, n. 27) and brief references. One of Studebaker's central claims is that Edwards does not employ two trinitarian models (social and psychological) but one (the Augustinian mutual love model). While he makes a strong case that Edwards's trinitarian theology can be seen as an expression of the mutual love tradition, I experienced occasional tension as a reader between his claims about Edwards's commitment to this *single* model and his observations about Edwards's trinitarian innovations. Some of this reality simply reflects tensions in the "Augustinian" tradition itself. For example, in offering rational arguments for the triunity of God, Edwards clearly breaks with Aquinas (who denies that the triunity of God can be known apart from revelation) but stands in continuity with someone like Richard of St. Victor. One place I would like to have seen Studebaker explore Edwards's continuity with the Augustinian tradition further is in relation to his claim that Edwards combined "economic subordination" with "ontological equality" (p. 204) in his account of the covenant of redemption. If all Edwards means is that the order of economic operation reflects the order of subsistence (Father-Son-Holy Spirit), then this claim is perfectly consistent with the Augustinian tradition, but "subordination" (a term Edwards himself uses) is a poor choice to describe this reality. Edwards, however, appears at points to be suggesting more than this, and his use of the term "subordination" in Miscellany 1062 is both complex and ambiguous. How, for example, do Edwards's claims about subordination in the trinitarian economy relate to the consistent affirmation of the Augustinian tradition that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit enact a single agency in the economy of salvation? Studebaker does link this discussion to the mutual love tradition by citing it as an example of the close relation that exists for Edwards between the economic Trinity and the immanent Trinity (a legitimate observation), but he does not explore the continuity of Edwards's claims about "subordination" with the Augustinian tradition.

Edwards's trinitarian theology has not only garnered scholarly attention but also popular interest through the writings of individuals like John Piper. *Jonathan Edwards' Social Augustinian Trinitarianism* makes an important contribution to scholarship on Jonathan Edwards and should be read by everyone who is interested in Edwards's trinitarian thought. Historians of trinitarian doctrine will find this book helpful as well. It could serve as a text in a doctoral seminar on the Trinity and individual chapters could be useful in courses tracing the history of trinitarian doctrine.

Keith E. Johnson
Reformed Theological Seminary, Orlando, FL