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BOOK REVIEWS

God's Kingdom Through God's Covenant: A Concise Biblical Theology. By Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015, 300 pp., $19.99 paper.

Peter Gentry and Stephen Wellum's new volume offers a refreshing and innovative guide to the study of the biblical covenant (God's covenant) relating to God's kingdom in light of a biblical-theological hermeneutic. The work contrasts in this regard with Michael Horton's *God of Promise: Introducing Covenant Theology* (Baker, 2006) and Craig A. Blaising and Darrell Bock's *Progressive Dispensationalism* (Baker, 2000).

Gentry and Wellum treat the biblical covenant as a foundation for interpreting biblical theology and its systematic implications. This presupposition seems to preclude both dispensational and covenant theologies from properly understanding the biblical covenant and its implications. This paperback, a somewhat condensed version of the authors' larger related volume (Crossway, 2012), attempts to present a proper biblical replacement for shortcomings of dispensational and covenant theologies.

The authors assert that "the covenants are at the heart of the narrative plot structure" (p. 52) and call their approach "kingdom through covenant" or "progressive covenantalism" (p. 19). In light of this approach, this book provides an outcome of interaction with biblical exegesis, theology, and systematic theology (p. 11), which provides a provocative and insightful way to understand redemptive history and emphasize the role of new covenant work of Christ (p. 263).

This book is divided into three sections. In the first section, "Introduction," the authors discuss the importance of biblical covenant, the difference between dispensationalism and covenant theology, and hermeneutical issues. In the second section, "Exposition of the Biblical Covenant," the authors apply their hermeneutical approaches to the key covenant texts of the OT. This section consists of nine chapters that introduce the covenant in the Bible and the ANE, and then provide the exegetical argumentation on the biblical covenants related to Creation in Genesis 1–3, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and the new covenant in Jesus. The final section, "Theological Integration," articulates kingdom through covenant as a biblical-theological summary.

It is noteworthy that Gentry distinguishes two phrases—"to cut a covenant" and "to establish (confirm) a covenant"—as initiation and fulfillment (p. 257). This is an insightful proposition in that this thesis is ~~a~~ similar to the proposition of "believe" in Genesis 12 and 15 as initiation and sanctification in a progressive faith. However, in my judgment, it is not necessary to divide unconditional and conditional covenants as in extrabiblical materials because biblical covenants contain both aspects. The biblical covenants should be viewed as being both unconditional and conditional in that God cuts a covenant with the Israelites unconditionally but

he also places demands on the Israelites in the contents of covenants. The authors' statement, viewing the biblical covenants as either unconditional or conditional, does not fit into the traditional categories of the biblical covenants.

The body of the book is based on the key OT covenant texts and offers exegetical argumentation. Gentry argues that the Mosaic covenant, the Decalogue, and the ceremonial law are no longer binding for Christians (pp. 167–68). However, the reader must notice that there are three kinds of laws: civic, ceremonial, and moral. In light of their forms, although civic and ceremonial laws as a whole are no longer binding for Christians, their spiritual and normative functions with theological implications are still valid today. As part of moral (normative) law, the Decalogue is, of course, valid forever.

The authors assert that Paul's statement in Rom 4:13 demonstrates that Abraham did not understand the land promise as referring only to a specific geographic location, but as a promise that ultimately would encompass the entire created order. My response to this idea is that Acts 7:3–4 makes clear that God appeared to Abraham while he was still in Mesopotamia before he lived in Haran and said to him, "Leave your country and your people, and go to the land I will show you." For this reason, Abraham left the land of the Chaldeans and settled in Haran. After the death of his father, God sent him to this land of promise.

Gentry and Wellum commit the same type of hermeneutical error and excess that they rightly point out in dispensational and covenantal theologies. Rather than uncovering its realities, the authors merely perpetuate the typological trajectory of the Western literary tradition. For example, the biblical theme of Israel and land should be considered as a concrete reality rather than as typology, which is the hermeneutical position advocated by the authors.

The strength of this book on the interpretation of the key OT texts is that the authors utilize the MT and the LXX for alternative interpretations where the authors bring critical scholarship and offer a wealth of exegetical studies on the covenant texts. They also provide a hermeneutical key to understanding redemptive history and the structure of the meta-narrative of the Bible built on the covenant canonically. However, the authors utilize a grammatical-historical approach and a comparative method with the ANE texts rather than a redemptive-historical approach to biblical interpretation.

This point of view has both positive and negative aspects. Wellum wrote parts 1 and 3 as an overview and summary. Gentry wrote part 2, providing the expository basis for this volume. The partnership of an OT scholar and a systematic theologian presents quite a challenge in trying to synthesize a new covenant theology. The authors need to develop more exegetical interactions with the NT to help their argument, which is a weakness in this book.

In my judgment, this book serves as a useful supplement in understanding how God's kingdom is an essential theme and a hermeneutical lens in the OT, how God's kingdom is working through his covenant, and how it integrates two topics into a new covenant theology in a broad picture. The reviewer recommends this

book as a textbook for a biblical theological course in a seminary as well as a reference book for pastors to actualize a new covenant theology in their local churches for our contractual relationship with God.

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Reading the Word of God in the Presence of God: A Handbook for Biblical Interpretation. By Vern S. Poythress. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016, 463 pp., $35.00 paper.

A good book captures its thesis in its title. Vern Poythress's *Reading the Word of God in the Presence of God* is just such a book. If the Bible is the word of God to humanity, then engaging it is never merely a reading exercise but a matter of faithfulness that results in communion with the living God. And if said God is triune, then it is expected that his means of communication would bear Trinitarian characteristics. This is what Poythress denotes by reading God's word in his presence. Thus, this "handbook" is not just a how-to guide (though there is plenty of that); rather, it comes with *a metaphysical justification*—grounded in the nature of God—*for each step/principle* in the interpretive process. Language itself (all reality for that matter) has its roots in God's Trinitarian nature, and God's way of communicating "displays the glory of his Trinitarian nature … most especially in the language that he himself uses as he speaks to us in the Bible. It is beautiful; it is wise with infinite wisdom" (p. 192).

For Poythress, such beauty is experienced in reading the Bible when we attend to perspectival triads. Here every step in the interpretive process can be viewed from three perspectives, "each of which includes/presupposes /implies/points to the others" (p. 68). To demonstrate this Poythress draws much on John Frame's perspectivalism (see especially *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God* [P&R, 1987] and *The Doctrine of the Word of God* [P&R, 2010]) and illustrates with triads from several arenas, his favorite being the particle-wave-field triad. In that triad various interpretive steps can be viewed from three interlocking perspectives: (1) a *particle* perspective where each text is a whole and discrete unit, distinct from other texts as their own whole discrete units; (2) a *wave* perspective where the passages of the Bible relate on a continuum of motion heading to fulfillment in Christ; and (3) a *field* perspective where common theological topics traverse the Bible. Yet no one of these perspectives is alone but each "includes/presupposes /implies/points to the others." And thus these perspectives "mirror aspects of Trinitarian coinherence" (p. 68), and "in contemplating a triad of perspectives, we interact with a display of the character of God" (p. 69).

A very specific example is necessary at this point. Poythress states that "*every passage* in the OT, indeed every verse, is forward-pointing" (p. 240; italics his) and particularly to Christ. In many passages this is easy to observe—but "*every passage*"? Well, some foreshadow Christ in a *particular historical episode*, which corresponds to the *particle* perspective: the event as a single unified whole predicts Christ (one thinks of Solomon building the temple). More easily observed, some simply *predict*,

and they correspond to the *wave* perspective as "[a] prediction made at one time points forward through intermediate times to the time of fulfillment" (p. 236). Still other texts demonstrate a *general pattern* of wisdom and righteousness that invites continual reflection throughout the ages but preeminently applies to Christ the perfect man who "represents what all humanity ought to be" (p. 234). This corresponds to the *field* perspective: recurring and connected principles throughout time and Scripture. Yet none of these perspectives is independent but "each implies the others" (p. 235). The episodes in and of themselves both predict and give specific illustrations of the patterns; the predictions both occur in time and point to specific episodes in the future; while the patterns move forward to their climax in Christ. So each perspective has something of the other perspectives in it, and equally points to the other perspectives.

Now we can go farther. Let us return to the *particle* perspective of the *particular historical episode* since it is the "most challenging … because it is less obvious *how* a particular event in the Old Testament points forward to Christ" (p. 238; italics original). It too has another perspectival triad within it to consider! Each episode relates to Christ through ordinary analogies (particle perspective as correspondences to Christ are drawn from individual texts), types (wave perspective as visibly related copies and patterns press toward climactic realization in Christ), and the preparatory nature of history (field perspective as the general layout of God's providence primes the world to receive Christ). And again, all of these are themselves perspectives on the others in so far as the preparation is experienced through analogies and types.

Poythress provides this sort of explanation for every step—complete with a unique Trinitarian perspectival rationale for every step—in the long interpretive process. And, as above, some of the specific perspectives on a step will themselves also have other perspectival triads embedded in them. In fact, the entire book reads like watching someone open up an accordion little by little. The interpretive steps start out simple, and quickly expand in their sophistication as each initially simple step is developed through (sometimes several) perspectival triads—from considerations of observation, context, history, linguistics, discourse, genre, redemptive-history (as illustrated above), application, and more. Each has a perspectival triad that demonstrates the Trinitarian nature of the text and brings the reader into the Trinitarian presence of God. Throughout the work, Poythress uses one text to view all these interwoven perspectives: 1 Sam 22:1–2.

The book's strengths are many. Poythress is clear, deeply theological, summarizes often, provides consistent examples, and reminds us that reading the Bible depends not so much on our methods as on God's mercy. I believe its most appropriate audience is seminary students but the book should equally benefit pastors and scholars who have not recently contemplated *how* they read and interpret. It is easy to fall into bad habits; Poythress makes us reflect on what we take for granted and what we overlook—namely, the Bible as an expression of who God is.

At the same time, readers will surely have two growing concerns as they progress through Poythress's explanations. First, can it really be that *every* element of the text and *every* step/principle in our reading the Bible come to us in perspectival

triads? It seems a little too clean when even matters of text criticism and dual authorship are viewed through a perspectival triad. (That's right—the Bible's *dual* authorship has *three* perspectives through which to be considered.) Second, is interpretation really so complex? Who can possibly manage all the steps/principles—each with its own triad—for every single passage of the Bible? For my part, I counted 36 triads in all!

Regarding the second question, Poythress has well anticipated this overwhelming sensation and admits that "such a complex and detailed outline may seem intimidating" (p. 308). But he reminds us we will never exhaust the opportunities any one passage has for communion with the living God (so it is supposed to be a little inhibiting). Albeit, a reader can still learn, still commune with God, by taking but one interpretive step—that is, attending to only one of the triads. Then, of course, the more steps the better. In other words, exhaustive exegesis is never really the goal. Again, communion with God is; hence the title *Reading the Word of God in the Presence of God.* These humbling reflections notwithstanding, "the principles expressed in the outline are significant as a *tacit background of knowledge* when we read an individual text" (p. 309, italics original).

In regard to the first quandary, Poythress nowhere addresses such head on. The entire book, however, is an apologetic for a functional commitment to the truth that "all the Bible is the *covenantal* word of God" (p. 32; emphasis original) where "God is present and speaks to us through what we read" (p. 47). Therefore, if the speaking covenantal God is triune, how could his covenantal speech be anything other than Trinitarian? Clearly Poythress wants us to commit to that and shows us how we can.

In sum, Poythress has not only provided a thorough handbook for biblical interpretation, but metaphysically grounds how we read in the nature of the God who gave us this word. In so doing, he has made a real contribution to evangelical hermeneutics. The book should have a long shelf life.

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Devotions on the Hebrew Bible: 54 Reflections to Inspire & Instruct. Edited by Milton Eng and Lee M. Fields. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015, 186 pp., $16.99 paper.

The value of teaching Hebrew to seminary and Bible college students is under constant challenge. Therefore, anything that furthers this cause is always welcome to those who work in it. A book entitled *Devotions on the Hebrew Bible* needs to meet two challenges: provide insights beyond what a careful reading of the English translation does, and be devotional. This book, for the most part, meets that challenge.

The fifty-four two-to-three-page expositions in the book come from thirty-eight different scholars. All of the canonical books are represented, the pieces being ordered in the Hebrew canonical sequence. A chart of the "Arrangement of Old Testament Books" (p. 11), however, switches the actual positions of "Writings" and "Prophets" in that canon. It is not possible within the scope of this review to

interact with each of the 54 expository pieces; rather, I will merely highlight aspects of the work.

The MT for each passage is laid out alongside an English version (sometimes chosen as foil). The line division of the Hebrew is not always guided by syntax (pp. 21, 27, 50, 71, 111). Meaningful interaction with grammar is limited in this collection. The opening piece by Buth (on the use of the *wəqaṭal* verb in Gen 15:6), however, is an exception. Noteworthy treatment of grammar is also present in discussions by Fields (Lev 18:4), Van Pelt (Judg 3:9), and Beckman (Isa 30:18). Stovell's discussions of Ezek 34:16 and Hag 1:9 and Fields's work on Hab 2:4 give attention to the Hebrew word order. Webster (Zeph 3:17) addresses text-critical detail in addition to grammar.

The majority of contributions are focused solely on words. Some enhance this with a treatment of word play. The following have useful treatments of lexical semantics: Gane (Num 17:23), Webster (Deut 6:4–9), Dallaire (Deut 7:14a and Ps 128:1), Schwab (Josh 2:18), Verbrugge (Isa 5:7), Leung Lai (Isa 21:11–12), Noonan (Isa 53:3–5), Mangano (Mic 1:9), Williams (Nah 1:8a; 3:19c), Erickson (Job 42:7b), Putnam (Prov 25:15), Waltke (Prov 30:1), Eng (Dan 1:5), and Boda (Neh 7:5a).

Several pieces focus on the relevance of a phrase or word within the larger context. The Hebrew helps one to appreciate Schwab's intriguing suggestions regarding 2 Kgs 5:14. In other cases, the role of the original language is perhaps to make the reader to slow down and note things—see Beyer (1 Sam 17:1), Chisholm (2 Sam 11:15), and Hill (Zech 6:11–12). A few contributors, it appears, did not have much need for Hebrew: Schultz (Joel 2:13–14a), Fudge (Jonah 1:5, 9, 16), and Block (Obad 21)!

The collection is not without defect. The "devotional" is missing from the pieces on 1 Sam 17:1 and Mic 1:9. Some contributors merely pivot from a word or idea in the passage to the NT for application: Wegner (1 Kgs 3:25–26), Williams (Jer 25:15, 26b and Nah 1:8a; 3:19c). Sun draws significance from the "literal meaning" (a fallacy) of the root *ntn* (p. 74) despite its well-attested idiomatic usage. Fudge's deductions based on the chiastic structuring of Jonah 1:4–16 seem to miss the irony throughout the passage and the book, drawing perhaps the opposite of the intended conclusion. Vogt wrongly infers that the use of verbless clauses is for present tense (p. 144). Lim's suggestion that אֶהְיֶה in Hos 1:9 is a word play by allusion to Exod 3:14 (p. 83) may belong with readings that see all occurrences of ἐγώ εἰμι in the words of Jesus similarly. Eng places too much emphasis on the singular of the verbs in the Decalogue (p. 25) to infer the personal ethical dimension. How does this differ then from the *Shema*, where the second person singular subject is Israel? And are plural imperatives (cf. Isa 1:16–20) less personal? Hill fails to note that the imperatival mood of the *wəqaṭal* forms in Zech 6:11 (p. 114) is not an independent property but dependent on the leading verb in verse 10 (and extends also beyond the verse). Konkel incorrectly places the conditionality of the clauses in 2 Chr 7:14 with the conjunction on the *wəyiqṭol* form(s) and not the הֵן at the beginning of verse 13. Lastly, Longman incorrectly sees "ever-increasing evil" in the movement from "wicked" to "sinners" to "mockers" in Ps 1:1. The clear progression in that verse is the verbal sequence walk-stand-sit. A "progression" from

"wicked" to "sinners" is not demonstrable. Two pieces give unique, tendentious interpretations. Despite the assonance and alliteration, Reuben's "stuttering, stammering, or blubbering" in Gen 37:30b (p. 18) is probably imagined. Van Pelt's distinction of the meanings of *dod* and *dodim* in the Song of Songs (pp. 145–47) appeals to cognate languages without demonstrating a number-dependent distinction there and inadequately attends to the special uses of the Hebrew plural ending.

These criticisms notwithstanding, the book is recommended for those with working knowledge of Hebrew. It will only take one so far in increasing appreciation for the workings of Hebrew but it will keep one in it.

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Do We Need the NT? Letting the OT Speak for Itself. By John Goldingay. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2015, 183 pp., $22.00 paper.

Christians have often pondered the relationship between the OT and NT. Some have thought that perhaps the NT replaces—or supersedes—the OT or that the NT somehow completes the OT. The relationship has been, at times, tenuous and contentious. In his book *Do We Need the NT?* John Goldingay ponders this relationship, especially with the intent of allowing the OT (which he refers to as "First Testament") to speak for itself. And, of course, Goldingay believes that we need the NT. But the question that remains is: In what way?

In some ways, there are no real surprises in this book since Goldingay makes a compelling case for the value of the OT as a "stand-alone" document. For many, this is a long-awaited and much-needed confirmation. In other ways, each chapter does offer surprises for the reader, who may have been (unconsciously) assuming different things about how the OT relates to the NT. Think for a moment how Christians can purchase a stand-alone NT with the obligatory Psalms and Proverbs bundled at the end. Such publication "anomalies," I think Goldingay would contend, is what his book attempts to address. How about just a stand-alone OT with nothing bundled at the end?

Goldingay's book has nine nicely-crafted chapters (the origins of which were mostly academic presentations). The first one provides the reader a general overview of eight different but related topics: salvation, narrative, mission, theology, resurrection hope, promise and fulfillment, spirituality, and ethics. The goal is to see if the First Testament is "enough." Chapters 2–9 then expound upon these same topics.

What Goldingay contends in his first chapter is that the First Testament does not necessarily complete the NT in the traditional way many Christian interpreters have argued. He asserts, "My argument is that the execution and the resurrection were indeed the logical end term of a stance that God has been taking through First Testament times, so that the First Testament story does give an entirely adequate account of who God is and of the basis for relating to God" (pp. 13–14). I had to read this sentence several times. I resonate with the latter part of Goldingay's ob-

servation—that the OT does offer an adequate account of who God is and provides an adequate basis for that relationship. What is (still) a bit murky to me, is the observation that an "execution and the resurrection"—which are the hallmarks of the life and ministry of Jesus in the NT—were the "logical end term" in the OT.

There were a couple of chapters I spent the most time musing about; in the first one I found my mind wandering a bit. In "The Grand Narrative and the Middle Narratives," Goldingay maintains that it is important to understand the relationship between what some have called the "grand narrative" (vis-à-vis N. T. Wright, among others) and what some (mostly from Lyotard) refer to as "middle narratives"—namely, smaller stories nestled within the larger story. The problem with adopting merely the "grand narrative" approach is that often the important, smaller OT stories get overlooked. I understand the premise, but found it difficult to follow some of Goldingay's ways of constructing what actually constitutes "middle narratives" in the OT and NT. Granted, there is some arbitrariness, I believe, to what any interpreter purports to be a "middle narrative;" yet, it may also be a deficiency of my understanding of literary theory.

The other chapter that offers the most value for the reader is the final one; however, it also is the one I think will also engender most criticism. In "Theological Interpretation: Don't Be Christ-Centered, Don't be Trinitarian, Don't be Constrained by the Rule of Faith," Goldingay argues that many Christian interpreters have misread (overreached?) the relationship between the OT and NT. One way is the notion that Christians should read the OT with a "Christ-centered" or "Christocentric" lens. Goldingay counters this notion with arguing it must read theologically: "It might be argued that the entirety of the New Testament's theological interpretation is in some sense Christological, but it is not christocentric" (p. 161). This may seem, however, like a distinction without a difference. For example, an interpreter can understand that the OT is in essence "*all about Christ*"; yet, that interpreter can still allow the OT documents to speak in their particular historical and theological milieu. In other words, a "Christocentric" hermeneutic can also actually be a close Christological reading of the texts in their historical context. In my opinion, it is a "both/and" proposition, rather than an "either/or." Oddly, I do not think Goldingay would necessarily disagree with my observation, but to critique the difference between an "Christological" and "Christocentric" interpretation might be unnecessary.

Not everyone will agree with some of Goldingay's conclusions; yet, his tome is a breath of fresh air. It is well-written, thoughtful, and thought-provoking and should be required reading for those preaching and teaching. I once met a pastor who made what he thought was a laudatory comment: "I never preach from the Old Testament since I want to bring people to Jesus." Goldingay's book is the necessary prescription for this theological life-threatening illness.

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The Image of God in the Garden of Eden: The Creation of Humankind in Genesis 2:5–3:24 in Light of the mīs pî pīt pî and wpt-r Rituals of Mesopotamia and Ancient Egypt. By Catherine L. McDowell. Siphrut 15. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2015, x + 245 pp., $47.50.

Scholars have long wrestled with the meaning of the image of God in the first chapters of the book of Genesis. *The Image of God in the Garden of Eden* by Catherine L. McDowell explores authorial intention in describing the creation of humans in the image of God in Gen 1:26–27. This sets the stage for an examination of the description of the creation of humans in Gen 2:5–3:24, which also portrays humanity as created in the image of God, despite the absence of the terms "image" and "likeness." To support this thesis, McDowell uses the comparative method to highlight parallels between the Babylonian *mīs pî pīt pî* and Egyptian *wpt-r* divine image animation rituals and the creation of humanity in Gen 2:5–3:24, arguing that these similarities implicitly present "the idea that the first man was, on some level, an 'image of God'" (p. 2). The book also sets out to examine the historical and theological relationship between Gen 1:1–2:4a and 2:4b–3:24 while also contributing to the discussion about the role and relevance of ANE comparative studies to the interpretation of the biblical text.

McDowell's work is a revision of her 2009 Ph.D. dissertation at Harvard University, though without a lengthy literature review. Instead, she includes helpful discussions of influential studies at key points in the book. The introduction sets out the goals of the study, a brief review of previous scholarship, and a justification of the inquiry, including the use of a comparative methodology.

The second chapter analyzes the literary structure of Gen 2:5–3:24. McDowell argues that the Eden narrative begins in Gen 2:5, with the *toledoth* formula in Gen 2:4 serving as both the conclusion to the creation story in Gen 1:1–2:3 as well as the introduction to 2:5–3:24. The literary arrangement of Gen 2:5–3:24 is divided into three parts (2:5–17; 2:18–25; 3:1–24), with each part containing a "problem-solution" structure, except for the final part, which contains a "problem-solution-problem" schema that ends with the expulsion of the human pair from the garden (3:23–24). The significance of the literary structure of Gen 2:5–3:24 plays a relatively minor role in the development of the overall thesis, and while McDowell notes some parallels between the opening of the human pair's eyes (3:5, 7), their becoming like God (3:5, 22), and ANE divine image animation rituals, these observations could just as easily have been added to her fourth chapter that examines the parallels between Gen 2:5–3:24 and ANE animation rituals.

The third chapter of the book describes the Mesopotamian *mīs pî pīt pî* and Egyptian *wpt-r* rituals in detail. For those unfamiliar with the rituals, McDowell provides a brief précis of the ceremonies, complete with helpful summary charts. McDowell argues that the Mesopotamian *mīs pî* (mouth-washing) and *pīt pî* (mouth-opening) ceremonies used to animate Mesopotamian divine images were actually one ritual. Contrary to previous studies, however, McDowell maintains that the Mesopotamian *mīs pî pīt pî* and Egyptian *wpt-r* rituals included both manufacturing and birthing components that brought the divine image to life. McDowell

notes similarities and differences between the ceremonies and demonstrates her careful application of the comparative method, presenting the possibility of a historical relationship between the *mīs pî pīt pî* and *wpt-r* rituals, but wisely opines that without more specific evidence, the two rituals "reflect a similar solution to the problem … of how to create a divine manifestation" (p. 115).

Previous examinations of *ṣelem* and *dəmut* in Gen 1:26–27 have tended to conclude that these terms are synonymous and emphasize one primary quality of human beings. McDowell, however, ably argues that these expressions depict the relationship between God and humanity in terms of three characteristics: kinship with God, kingly rule over creation, and humanity as a living, cult-like "image" of God's presence. All three aspects of the image of God are also evident in Gen 2:5–3:24, she posits, though kinship is only expressed at the human level (2:23–24), which makes for a strained thematic relationship between the two narratives, and the installation of the man as royal gardener (2:15) is implicit at best.

McDowell's study of ANE animation rituals shows that the greatest similarity with Gen 2:5–3:24 lies in the emphasis upon humans as "images" of God, particularly in terms of four features: the establishment of the garden of Eden, the installation of Adam in the garden, the nakedness of Adam and Eve, and the opening of their eyes (p. 142). The strongest link between the Eden narrative and ANE animation rituals is their common garden setting and the animation of images by divinity (cf. Gen 2:7). Unlike ANE stories, however, where humanity is created and then sent to dwell in cities, "the creation and then placement of the first human in a sacred (temple-) garden is unparalleled among human creation stories," indicating that "humans were created to reside with God in the most sacred place" (p. 176). The observation that the line of Seth continues to reside near the presence of God east of Eden, while the rebellious line of Cain leaves God's presence to dwell in cities (Gen 4:17), could strengthen McDowell's argument here. Other parallels, however, are not as convincing. For example, McDowell argues that, like animated ANE statues, the author of Gen 2:5–3:24 understood Adam and Eve as crowned with Yahweh's glory, as suggested by Ps 8:6 (cf. Exod 34:29–35) and early interpretive history. The realization of their nakedness implies the loss of this glory. But if the writer of Gen 2:5–3:24 intends to play off of ANE animation rituals, he curiously misses an opportunity to highlight the possession (and loss) of glory here and the loss of nakedness is associated with shame and fear (2:25; 3:10), not a loss of glory.

Before a final summation and conclusion, McDowell examines the thorny question of the date, authorship, and relationship of the creation stories in Genesis. After carefully weighing the evidence, McDowell concludes that the Eden narrative was written, at least in part, to explain the reference to the image of God in Gen 1:26–27, though no definitive conclusions about dating are reached, and some *JETS* readers may balk at her use of source-critical categories.

McDowell's stimulating and innovative work will push the discussion about methodology and the interpretation of the early chapters of Genesis in new directions. Not all of the parallels she draws between Genesis and ANE divine statue animation rituals are equally convincing but she has drawn together evidence that

cannot be ignored and that provides fresh interpretive and theological insights for those wrestling with the meaning of the creation of humanity in the image of God.

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"Too Much to Grasp": Exodus 3:13–15 and the Reality of God. By Andrea D. Saner. Journal of Theological Interpretation Supplements 11. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2015, xv + 266 pp., $34.95 paper.

This work is a recent release of the Journal of Theological Interpretation Supplement series. As part of this series, Exod 3:13–15 is considered through a theological interpretative lens and incorporates areas of theological exegesis, hermeneutics, canonical criticism, and interpretative tradition. The book is a revised version of Saner's Ph.D. dissertation supervised by Professor Walter Moberly of Durham University. The title *Too Much to Grasp* is notably a quote from Augustine's comments on Exod 3:13–15.

Exodus 3:13–15 is perhaps one of the most considered passages in Scripture, and Saner endeavors specifically to demonstrate its importance as related to a Trinitarian comprehension of God through "sustained" dialogue with "Christian tradition" and biblical exegesis (pp. 3–4). Consequently, this work (and presumably the series) is a sample in marshaling both exegetical and theological efforts towards a comprehensive academic interpretation and may be of particular interest for those interested in the academic process of braiding the domains of theology and exegesis together.

The layout of the book is organized neatly into two main parts totaling five chapters. Part 1 is titled "Clearing the Ground for Theological Interpretation of Exodus 3:13–15." Here Saner labors to posit the need for her study. At the outset she offers a summary of scholarship from the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries that followed two approaches in tracing both the genesis of the Tetragrammaton and the relationship between אהוה רשׁא אהוה and יהוה. The first approach was focused on etymology and the second on the development and growth of Israel's religion (Yahwhism) from Canaanite peoples. Saner asserts that findings from these approaches "often result in neglect of the explanation presented in Exod 3:14, which is considered vague, purposefully elusive, or meaningless" (p. 14). Though there may be some merit to her summary, Saner's statement is too restricted and overplayed or at least underdeveloped. The well-known article by William Brownlee ("The Ineffable Name of God," *BASOR,* 226 [1977]: 39–46) is a good example (though not the only one) of an etymological analysis that also asserts a specific and meaningful explanation of Moses's encounter in this passage and asserts something about who God is. Brownlee concludes that "what [the Hebrews] needed to overcome their despair was the assurance that they had a God who could make things happen, who could bring to pass the promises He had made to them through Moses…. In the etymology given here, it is God's redeeming presence of which the

Bible speaks" (p. 45). This is certainly not to say Saner's study has no place, only that it risks claiming to fill a void that is not as large as portrayed.

Saner continues on to open a new direction toward comprehending Exod 3:13–15. Her effort begins with Brevard Childs and the canonical approach, is supplemented by Hans Frei's idea of "the literal sense," and includes an examination of Augustine's commentary on Exod 3:13–15. (According to Saner, Augustine advocates reading it in light of Christian Scripture.) Saner interacts with these works to construct her own methodology that leads her to assert that YHWH's self-disclosure in Exod 3:13–15 is the self-disclosure of God who is knowable but cannot be fully grasped. He is the God "whom Christians know as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit" (p. 105). Saner's analyses and arguments throughout Part 1 come about arduously. However, Saner provides multiple summary sections that serve the reader in distilling down the main arguments.

The bulk of Part 2 comprises the exegetical work to compound the results of Part 1. At times I found there to be too much reliance upon the work of others as opposed to a distinct focus upon the biblical text itself. To be fair, the author clearly states that she intended to "draw on resources from recent Old Testament scholarship" and to interact with these "conversation partners" (p. 109), but the effect is sometimes one that feels like a presentation of scholarly positions rather than a fresh, thorough examination of the biblical data that advances to certain theological conclusions.

Of the chapters comprising the second part of the book, the third chapter is of particular benefit as it seeks to set Exod 3:13–15 in its comprehensive context. The upshot here is Saner's conclusion that the divine name YHWH as used throughout Exodus and particularly in 3:13–15 reveals a God "who is known through (but not reduced to) God's action in delivering Israel from slavery in Egypt and establishing a covenant with them. This text suggests that God is free and faithful such that God cannot be limited to the categories of created being but rather exceeds these" (p. 109). It is somewhat surprising that Exodus 19 was not considered, in light of it portraying the theophanic presence of Yahweh (at Sinai), which literally discloses his identity and simultaneously demonstrates that this identity exceeds the capacity of humans to perceive fully. This would have been a fruitful incorporation to Saner's work.

The fifth and final chapter is titled "Exodus 3:13–15 and Trinitarian Doctrine" and is where the exegetical work comes back around to a primarily theological conclusion. That conclusion (at which, for the most part, Saner arrived earlier in the book) is that Exod 3:13–15 should be read as a Trinitarian passage premised on the fact that all the OT has God as its "'ascriptive subject' … known to Christians as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Thus, the Hebrew Bible is a resource for Trinitarian theology" (p. 229). Of course, that both the OT and NT have God as the ascriptive subject renders this conclusion easy to accept in the final analysis. However, Saner wisely anticipates that some may consider this to be anachronistic. She addresses this by emphasizing that her conclusion merely reflects the legitimacy of placing individual passages with their unique features into the meta-narrative of salvation history (p. 233). Most will not argue against this, but when reading a passage exe-

getically, one may rightly insist that placing any given passage into the meta-narrative of salvation history should happen towards the end of the exegetical process. Situating a passage in the broad biblical storyline prematurely may blunt our sensitivity to initially grasping the more basic, but crucial features of a passage as it appears at a particular stage in revelation. In other words, much depends on the goal of the reading being applied.

In *Too Much to Grasp*, Saner demonstrates effectively how Exod 3:13–15 is a key reading to perceive of the self-revealing God who is at once knowable and transcendent. She is to be commended for offering a detailed study that reflects a broad academic ability. The few criticisms above do not delegitimize her overall thrust to read Exod 3:13–15 in view of Christian doctrine.

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Ruth: A Discourse Analysis of the Hebrew Bible. By Daniel I. Block. Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the OT 8. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015, 304 pp., $32.99.

This new commentary series and volume on the book of Ruth has been greatly anticipated. Daniel I. Block (Gunther H. Knoedler Professor of OT, Wheaton College), general editor of the ZECOT series, writes a commentary on Ruth (and Obadiah), which represents the best of current evangelical scholarship, with its careful attention to the "flow and argument of the biblical text" (p. 9). Block published a commentary on Ruth in 1999, but here brings fresh insight and engages more than a dozen new monographs. Block's new Ruth commentary, like the other contributions in the ZECOT series, sets out "not only to inquire what the message of the biblical author was, but also what strategies they used to impress their message on their hearers' ears … since biblical texts were written to be heard" (p. 9). In order to hear the biblical authors' messages rather than readers' agendas, by understanding "not only what the text says, but also how it says it" (p. 10), the writers of the ZECOT series use discourse analysis of the biblical text, which examines the text primarily at the paragraph level, while still considering the micro and macro levels of the book: "The primary goal of this commentary series is to help serious students of Scripture, as well as those charged with preaching and teaching the Word of God, to hear the messages of Scripture as biblical authors intended them to be heard" (p. 9). Block's commentary on Ruth examines the biblical author's rhetorical method in order to develop the book's message that "the King is coming."

The commentary itself is arranged accessibly, beginning with a "Series Introduction" (pp. 9–12) that explains the literary discourse method. Here, further discussion of the application of the method, especially as it relates to other approaches to literary analysis such as text-linguistics and the speech-act theory it briefly uses, would have been helpful in clarifying the distinctiveness of the series' approach within biblical studies. Following the "Series Introduction" and a translation of Ruth, an introductory chapter addresses issues of date, authorship, genre, literary style, canonical position, and theological message. This chapter is effective in situat-

ing the book of Ruth in a number of relevant contexts and introduces the reader to the discussions that will follow. Block then provides an outline of the book as a dramatized short story in four acts. The introduction, conclusion, and each scene of the story are then analyzed by considering the following: (1) Main Idea of the Passage; (2) Literary Context; (3) Translation and Exegetical Outline; (4) Structure and Literary Form; and (5) Explanation of the Text; (6) Canonical and Practical Significance (p. 11). Through this form, the commentary takes the reader through the message of the drama of Ruth, the story of the choices of a widowed Israelite mother-in-law and her widowed Moabite daughter-in-law as they move together through the landscape of Moab to Israel, through emptiness to fullness, and through punishment to blessing. Their return to Bethlehem ("land of bread"), where divine *ḥesed* operates in a righteous man for redemption, is woven into the larger story of hope for an anointed king for Israel and the whole world.

As with most commentaries, major theological themes are highlighted throughout; here they are discussed in terms of how the style and structure of the book develop these themes by paying attention to its discourse linguistic features. Block's theological rigor is evident throughout this volume. In most places the method he uses enables the reader to focus on Ruth's deep theological contribution to the OT. Block introduces readers to the profound theological and ideological message in Ruth that is evident in his discussion on the book's portrayal of God (pp. 48, 50–51, 157–62), Torah righteousness (pp. 51–55), the power of blessing, transformation, redemptive promise (pp. 244–49), and many other themes traced throughout the book.

However, some theological reflections seem to go beyond the scope of the text. In his "Messianic Significance of Ruth" section (pp. 55–57), Block notes the rejection of Moabites from the assembly of YHWH (Deut 23:4–7). The acceptance of Ruth in the covenant community "demonstrates that being a true 'Jew' is not merely a matter of blood and descent and external ritual (Rom 2:25–29). She may have been Moabite by birth and heritage, but when she cast her lot with YHWH and his people, she became a true 'Israelite,' perhaps more so than any female Israelite in history (cf. Ruth 2[*sic*]:11; Prov 31:10)" (p. 57). I appreciate the point raised by Block that Ruth was integrated into the people of God and into the hope she represents for Gentiles. The grafting in of Ruth the Moabite is a remarkable picture of inclusion into God's covenant community. However, the text consistently refers to Ruth as a Moabite (cf. p. 105 n. 118, where Block observes that she is identified six times as the "Moabite" and twice as "from the field of Moab"), rather than as a true "Jew" or true "Israelite" even after her speech of identification with Naomi and her God (Ruth 1:16, 17). Ruth, as a righteous Gentile in the line of King David, demonstrates divine *ḥesed* and redemption before and after the monarchy, for Israel and the nations.

Overall, Block's commentary accomplishes its stated goal. The introduction and format of the commentary help the reader view the book of Ruth as a whole and to hear the presentation of the narrator's central theme—"the providential hand of God in preserving Israel's royal line during the dark days of the judges" (p. 57) compositionally played out in four acts (pp. 58, 263–71). Block does a skillful

job in using discourse analysis to elucidate the biblical author's theological message of hope through *ḥesed* and redemption, experienced in the drama by Naomi and Ruth, and by Israel and the nations as the characters in Ruth provide genetic and spiritual background for the beloved Messiah.

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A Commentary on 1 & 2 Chronicles. By Eugene H. Merrill. Kregel Exegetical Library. Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2015, 637 pp., $39.99.

With his *Commentary on 1 & 2 Chronicles*, Eugene Merrill has added to an already prolific portfolio that has served evangelical scholarship and the church by providing materials that exposit the biblical text with clarity. This volume will take its place as a valuable resource for those wishing to have a greater grasp on this oft-ignored book.

The commentary begins with a typical introduction that addresses issues such as the title, text-critical issues, the literary sources, and a survey of a few major studies on the book. However, Merrill's major areas of emphasis are (1) the historical and cultural setting of the book in which he provides a detailed retelling of the events of the post-exilic time; and (2) the theology of the book. With the former, Merrill establishes the setting the Chronicler is addressing with the book. This is an important setting in that "a certain 'rewriting' or at least 'revisionism' of DH and other earlier historical writings was essential in order to view that history from the standpoint of the Chronicler's *Sitz im Leben*" (52). The latter builds on Merrill's already published works on the theology of the OT. Thus, he frames the theology around three themes: (1) the house of David, particularly Chronicles' focus on "his historical and eschatological reign" (p. 61); (2) the renewed covenant, demonstrated in the more favorable account of the Davidic covenant in 1 Chronicles 17; and (3) the restored temple. After this introductory material, Merrill proceeds through the book, presenting a section of the book of Chronicles with running translation (NIV), limited textual notes, and exposition. At the end of each large section (e.g. 1 Chr 15:1–21:30, a section entitled "The Exploits of David"), he summarizes the theological findings and at times provides an excursus on a pertinent topic (e.g. "Excursus 5: David and Royal Sonship").

Those who will find this volume the most beneficial are pastors and students looking for an exposition of the full text of Chronicles along with deeper explanations on some passages. Constrained by the confines of a single volume, Merrill's text will not answer every textual question readers of the Hebrew Bible will ask, nor will it provide extended interaction with recent scholarship on the many interpretive issues that arise with a close reading of Chronicles. The commentary will, however, demonstrate the exegetical approach of a conservative OT scholar that has spent a lifetime honing his craft. This will include at least some text-critical observations, where each English translation is followed by some notes about alternative readings, as well as semantic considerations pertinent to the exposition. Thus, the

reader of the commentary will find applied a simple, straightforward hermeneutic that takes seriously the work of the Holy Spirit superintending the writing process of the book. This volume will demonstrate for the student and preacher the results of a historical-grammatical interpretation/reading of the book. This type of reading strives to show the historical accuracy of the genealogies and narratives, as well as the importance of the ancient culture behind these stories and events.

One of the most helpful aspects of Merrill's commentary is his consistent interaction with the intertextual phenomena of the text. Not only does he provide the parallel passages for easy reference (such as between Kings and Chronicles), he also seeks to show how they compare. Again, space seems not to allow a full treatment of each of these, but at times he has obviously worked hard to describe how the texts interact (as with 1 Chronicles 16 over against Psalm 105). Merrill's attention to intertextuality also extends to the theological background of the prophets, as for example, when he comments on the book's ending with the decree of Cyrus. He states that the Chronicler "was certainly familiar with these writings [i.e. the Twelve] … and he constructed upon them his own theology of hope" (p. 613). The theological foundation of the Torah, the Prophets, and the rest of the Writings (including Ezra-Nehemiah) is assumed throughout the commentary.

The same constraint of space may also be what makes this volume less useful for the more serious reader of the Hebrew Bible. Humbly, this reviewer would like to point out what may be a few shortcomings of the book for a more scholarly audience. First, there is little explanation of the significance of text-critical notes; despite being listed, the reader will struggle to discern whether or how Merrill thinks they are important.

Second, surprisingly, there are multiple examples of interpretive issues upon which one would expect to receive more detail and scholarly interaction. An example of this would be 1 Chronicles 21 and the issues that surround the accounts of David's census in Samuel versus Chronicles. Merrill provides a possible resolution, but the one looking for a more specific explanation will have to go to secondary literature on the subject. The reader of the commentary, then, will often be confronted with a conservative explanation for a textual or interpretive difficulty, but will be somewhat unsure of how Merrill came to the conclusion.

Third, the commentary does not employ some of the techniques characteristic of more recent literary approaches to biblical narrative in that the reader will not encounter discussions of plot, irony, characterization, and the like. Moreover, at times, I was left wondering how Merrill would read larger portions of text together. While some of his expositional comments came with headings and discussions of the whole, which give the reader a sense of where his commentary was headed, some sections seemed like a running commentary that had little to bind it together, giving the feeling of incompleteness. An example might be the exegesis and exposition of the hymn of 1 Chronicles 16. Merrill walks carefully through each line of the hymn, pointing out the relationship to the Psalms to which it relates as well as the poetic character of the verse. However, there is little to answer the question of how it relates to the context, the poem's role in the book, or what contemporary scholarship says about the hymn. Generally, OT scholars will be disappointed that

there is not more interaction with German commentaries and contemporary scholarship.

Furthermore, a great enhancement to the volume would have been to include a fresh translation by a capable scholar with his translation notes instead of simply quoting the NIV. Also, the text of the volume itself could have been cleaned up with a closer editing process. There are a number of errors both with the English (e.g., p. 307 with a misplaced line break; "males" instead of "makes" on p. 619) as well as the Hebrew texts, especially spacing (e.g., pp. 63, 67, 185, 250). Moreover, two excursuses are provided that have virtually the same material (Excursuses 6 and 7, both of which deal with holy war). There seems to be no good reason why both are included.

Despite these criticisms, this reviewer found the volume helpful and encouraging, particularly in Merrill's concern to demonstrate how Chronicles continues to be applicable to a contemporary audience. Many a reader will find Merrill's work to be a helpful addition to his or her library of commentaries, especially considering the scarcity of quality commentaries on Chronicles. Perhaps Merrill's work will spur another generation of evangelical scholars to continue a close reading of the inspired text.

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How to Read Job. By John H. Walton and Tremper Longman III. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2015, 208 pp., $20.00 paper.

In 1988, Tremper Longman III wrote a book *How to Read the Psalms.* Since then he has completed similar works book on Proverbs, Genesis, and Exodus, and now John Walton joins Longman for such a work on the book of Job.

How to Read Job is a literary and thematic approach to the book of Job and not a verse-by-verse commentary. Part 1 of the book addresses the issues of reading Job as literature while parts 2 and 3 deal with the various themes. The authors present an overall picture of God, Satan, Job, Job's advisors, Job's advocate, Behemoth and Leviathan, retribution, theodicy, the afterlife, the cosmos, and suffering as presented in the book of Job. The fourth section of the book is entitled "Reading Job as a Christian" and addresses issues of Christian interpretation and application for today's reader. Each chapter also ends with generally two to six reflection questions to further guide readers in developing their own thoughts about the topics Job presents.

The authors lay out their basic premise to approaching the book of Job in the first paragraph of their book. Job has trials, but he is not on trial; rather, it is God's policies that are on trial. From this, they then contend that the book is not primarily about Job but about God and about the reasons for righteousness rather than the reasons for suffering. Their final foundational premise is that "the topic of wisdom plays a central role in the book" (p. 13).

In addition to the modern literary and thematic approach, the authors also skillfully weave in the literary context of the ANE. Though many cultures created their own works of literature to address the issues of the pious sufferer, the authors contend that "the answers that the book eventually offers transcend anything that was proposed in the ancient Near East and would have been truly inconceivable without the revolutionary concept of God that developed in Israel" (p. 25). After a careful analysis of the underlying symbiotic relationship that existed between the people of the ANE and their gods, Walton and Longman find it difficult to accept the idea held by many other Job scholars that the author of Job borrowed from the surrounding literature of the day. They contend that any similarity that may exist is not due to borrowing but to the author engaging in debate against the prominent views of the day (p. 32).

Certain items within the book will invoke great debate in certain Christian circles. Chapter 4 is entitled, "Is Job a Real Person?" The authors contend that this book is wisdom literature and not historical literature, and therefore, the book is concerned with truth coming from a genre like a parable and is not necessarily rooted in truth coming from historical events. The authors contend that *real* types of people and places are used in the Parable of the Good Samaritan just as the names of real people and places appear in the book of Job. The problem with this parallel is that the parable uses anonymous people and places while Job uses actual names of people and places.

Another topic sure to invoke debate in certain Christian circles is found in chapter 9. Here the authors address the topic of Job 19:25 where Job affirms, "I know that my Redeemer lives." The authors contend that this cannot be a reference to Jesus and should not be interpreted this way. They state that "Job is looking for vindication and not justification," and "vindication is emphatically *not* something that Jesus provides" (p. 78, italics original). They pick up the topic again in chapter 17 and note that Jesus does not fit the role described in Job.

A third point of debate will surely arise over the identity of Behemoth and Leviathan. The authors ultimately identify these creatures as mythological chaos creatures and not a hippopotamus, crocodile, or dinosaur. The authors are concerned with the literary nature of these creatures and not their zoological identity. The authors associate Job with Behemoth and God with Leviathan. William Brown (*Character in Crisis: A Fresh Approach to the Wisdom Literature of the OT* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996], 93, 94, 99, 103–7) presents a good case that Job is pictured as both Behemoth and Leviathan.

This book is very easy to read and provides a great introduction to the basic themes, ideas, and issues surrounding the book of Job. Having read this book, the reader will be ready to take on the task of reading a verse-by-verse commentary on Job. The book will also invoke a number of great discussions around this ancient story.

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Psalms 1–50. By Ellen T. Charry. Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2015, xxvi + 271 pp., $29.99.

Ellen Charry, the Margaret W. Harmon Professor of Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary, has written a theological commentary on the Psalms. Uniquely qualified to write a theological commentary, Charry has published *By the Renewing of Your Minds: The Pastoral Function of Christian Doctrine* (Oxford University Press, 1999) and *God and the Art of Happiness* (Eerdmans, 2010), two substantial works of theology.

In the commentary on Psalms 1–50, Charry aims to uncover the theological intent of the Psalms, primarily identified in terms of theodicy (p. xix). She proceeds first by detailing the canonical context and themes of a psalm, then by discussing its structure and dynamics. Finally, she discusses a psalm's theological pedagogy. Her theological pedagogy section is not quite the same thing as application. Instead, Charry provides theological instruction, teaching readers how to appropriate Scripture for themselves theologically.

The author intends to uncover the theology of the Book of Psalms "on its own terms" (p. xxi). Given how Charry understands her stated aims, *Psalms 1–50* accomplishes the goal she set for it. Although the work succeeds in this way, Charry's purpose oddly contrasts with the Brazos series's confessional stance, and she uses an unhelpful inclusive approach to the theology of the Psalms.

Charry knows exactly what she wants to do with her commentary, but her approach appears to conflict with the confessional approach of the Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible. In the series preface, R. R. Reno states that commentators were chosen due to their "expertise in using the Christian doctrinal tradition," and "[Commentators] are qualified by virtue of the doctrinal formation of their mental habits, for it is the conceit of this series of biblical commentaries that theological training in the Nicene tradition prepares one for biblical interpretation" (p. xii).

In contrast, Charry rejects the Nicene tradition as lens through which to read the Psalms: "I do not interpret through a Nicene screen that relocates the Psalter in a Christian framework; these poems speak their own theological convictions and are honored for their integrity, contrary as that may sometimes be to later theological presuppositions" (p. xix). The Brazos Commentary series is ecumenical and has an open approach to interpretive method, but Charry appears to be odds with the

series's Nicene foundation. This makes Charry an odd choice for a commentator in the Brazos series.

Scholarly, theological study of the Bible should engage with various traditions and sources. Such engagement adds richness to academic writing. For Charry, whose goal is to interpret the Psalter's theology in its own terms, different traditions and broad scholarship should aid in that goal. The problem is that Charry often uses later theological traditions even when they do not agree with the text in its own terms, making their inclusion in the commentary unhelpful or at the very least, unnecessary.

Charry includes the reception of Jewish and Christian literature, but these two traditions read the Psalms differently. For example, Charry notes that *Midrash on Psalms* sees Psalm 22 as related to Esther, while she relates that Christians read Psalm 22 as about Christ. In this case, Charry ignores the Jewish tradition as an interpretive help, and she charges the Christian tradition of using Psalm 22 "to better understand Jesus, not the psalm" (p. 108). In other words, Psalm 22 is not about Jesus, Matthew and Mark's use of Psalm 22 do not determine the meaning of Psalm 22, and a Christian reading does not help one understand the psalm itself. Charry's disconnect with a Christian reading of the Psalms is clearer in Psalm 16 where she dissociates with exegetes who follow Acts 2:25–28 in reading Acts 16 with Christ as the speaker (p. 74). One may get the impression that Charry at times quotes Jewish and Christian traditions out of duty to the Brazos series's aims but not because they clarify the meaning of the text.

Evangelical interpreters will find Charry's disagreement with the Christian tradition and the NT's reading of the Psalms unacceptable. The unity of the Bible, based on inspiration, demands that NT readings of the Psalms take priority of place. Charry, however, only sometimes disagrees with the Christian tradition, and other aspects of her work will benefit evangelical readers.

One beneficial aspect is Charry's focus on the theological content of the Psalms in contrast to other commentaries that highlight fine details of language and history. Her choice of subject matter makes this commentary an attractive tool for preachers and those interested in Christian spirituality.

Additionally, Charry helpfully shows how the Psalter's canonical context creates theological meaning. For example, Charry observes of Psalm 8: "Read in the context of the psalms that precede it, Psalm 8 pushes forward out into the world, away from self-preoccupation and anxiety, in order to explore and adore creation in God's name" (p. 44). The author models how an interpreter can use the insights of canonical study of the Psalms for pastorally beneficial study.

In conclusion, I commend Charry's commentary for pastors, teachers, and those interested in Christian spirituality. While imperfect and evangelically unacceptable in certain places, Charry's work uniquely contributes to the commentary literature on the Psalms. She focuses on the theology of the Psalms rather than their historical-grammatical context, as many other commentaries do.

The commentary thus fills a theological gap within the body of commentary literature on the Psalms.

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Interpreting the Prophetic Books: An Exegetical Handbook. Gary V. Smith. Handbooks for OT Exegesis. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2014, 214 pp., $22.99 paper.

Anyone who has done serious study of the OT Prophets has seen the name Gary Smith regularly, which is an indication of his acknowledged expertise in that area of scholarship. This work is no different. If genre can be assigned to biblical publications, this is not so much a "what-is" book as much as it is a "how-to." Yet, the former option also is deeply imbedded in this publication.

Smith's approach was somewhat determined for him in that the book is part of a series (Handbooks for Old Testament Exegesis, edited by David M. Howard Jr.) highly praised for its excellence in bringing together the latest critical approaches to biblical literature as well as solid suggestions as to how to interpret, proclaim, and apply it in a variety of settings. The series is certainly not impaired by the inclusion of this volume, comparable in quality as it is to the other works; in fact, it is one of the best in the series.

After dealing at length and depth with the prophets as literature in general, but specifically as a unique kind of literature, Smith treats each of the fifteen canonical prophets (plus Jeremiah's Lamentations) in their canonical order (though some biblical theologians might suggest a chronological sequence). He does revert to chronological order in Section 3 ("Preparing for Interpretation," 85–112) and logically so, given the process of progressive revelation and changing context for each prophet. The prophets were not just—or even primarily—predictors of the future. They lived in historical time and space and were called in each case to minister then and there. With that in view, Smith locates the major themes of each within their historical and cultural contexts; offers appropriate suggestions for the interpretation of each since they differ in many respects; discusses interpretive issues relevant especially to prophetic literature in general; and, finally, proposes practical ways of preaching and teaching the several books and making them heuristically significant and germane to everyday life. Especially helpful are the numerous charts, tables, and, not least, excellent bibliographies following each of the prophetic books.

The pastor and/or preacher will find Section 5 particularly helpful because of the many homiletical outlines that provide models of how texts ought to be accessed for proclamation. Examples include Hag 1:2–15; Isa 31:1–9; 55:1–13; Jer 23:1–8; and Obad 1–21. More important are the steps that lead up to such analyses. The author guides the reader through the following steps: "Getting Oriented" (to the text), under which he lists such apparently obvious (but commonly neglected) things as (1) reading the text; (2) defining the setting; and (3) appreciating the literary context. Next follows "Developing a Descriptive Outline: Shaping the Presentation" with (1) a thematic outline; (2) descriptive outline; (3) identifying the main

idea; and (4) introduction and illustrations. Finally, there is "Reflecting on the Application," done by (1) making it fit the audience; (2) making it theological and practical; and (3) calling for a change in thinking and action.

In sum, this brief but potent treatment of the prophetic literature is a jewel worth "selling what you have" to purchase it.

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"See and Read All These Words": The Concept of the Written in the Book of Jeremiah. By Chad L. Eggleston. Siphrut 18. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns: 2016, xiii + 194 pp., $44.50.

In his book, Chad Eggleston explores how writing functions in the book of Jeremiah (MT), and the ways that writing expands our conceptions of authority and prophecy in Israel. The volume is a published Ph.D. dissertation completed recently at Duke University under the supervision of Ellen Davis.

Eggleston's focus is theological. He observes that God himself is portrayed as a writer in Jeremiah, which generates explicitly theological questions: "How is YHWH described as part of the act of writing, and what part does writing play in ancient Israelite religion?" (p. 9). Nevertheless, it seems his interest in theology is subservient to a historical interest: he brings the theological perspective in order to fill out our understanding of "the sociohistocial situation in which and for which writing was employed" in ancient Israel (p. 44).

The seed of this work is Eggleston's observation that the book of Jeremiah, unlike any other prophetic book, dedicates a surprising amount of space to narrating the book's own textualization. We hear repeatedly of scrolls and letters being written (e.g. 25:13; 29:1; 51:60), of scribes and audiences (29:29; 45:1), and even the dramatic account of Jeremiah and Baruch's scroll (36:1–32). Eggleston evaluates these texts and others like them in Jeremiah, and concludes that "the book of Jeremiah provides a history of its own inscription as a means of authorizing itself as the true and sacred word of YHWH" (p. 6). He develops this thesis under the three headings of writer, text, and audience.

With regard to writers in Jeremiah, Eggleston first considers scribes. Their portrayal is largely positive. In the case of Baruch, they are even considered valid recipients of a divine word (45:1–5). For Eggleston, the texts where scribes come to the fore show that scribes should be considered authorized conveyers of divine words (cf. 36:4, where Baruch writes *all* that Jeremiah dictates to him, implying that there has been no corruption in Baruch's work).

Next, Eggleston considers prophets themselves as writers. In several cases, Jeremiah is said to write, with no accompanying note that he utilized a scribe. Eggleston recognizes that a scribe may be tacitly at work in these cases, but urges that the prophet himself should still be considered a writer.

In one of the most interesting sections of the book, Eggleston considers YHWH as a writer. He surveys ANE and OT cases of divine writing, among which

are God's direct inscription of the tablets at Sinai and the mysterious book of destinies. Then he turns to instances of divine writing in Jeremiah, including 17:1, 13 and 22:30. Most interesting is God's writing his law on the hearts of his restored people (31:33). Putting this statement alongside 17:1, Jeremiah considers human beings to be "palimpsests, with YHWH the only scribe able to erase their sin and replace it with something new (17:10)" (p. 92).

In the next chapter, Eggleston considers how texts are perceived in Jeremiah. He notes four primary characteristics of texts in Jeremiah, and treats each one in turn: increasing independence, ability to span spatial and temporal distances, simultaneous fragility and durability, and presence in both mundane and divine realms.

Finally, Eggleston discusses how audiences of *texts* are portrayed in Jeremiah. He makes the fascinating observation that while some audiences are very specific and contemporary (e.g. the exilic community in Babylon, Jer 29:1), at other times the audience is ambiguous, or far off in the future (see Jer 30:3; 32:14, both of which foresee texts speaking to a people restored from exile). In this way there is "a temporal loosening of the prophetic text to speak not only to an initial generation but to many subsequent ones" (p. 151).

Jeremiah portrays a complicated picture of prophetic communication, involving both textualization and the oral performance of that textualization. For Eggleston, the texts of Jeremiah were explicitly written that they may be read aloud, especially in a context of worship.

Several provocative conclusions emerge from Eggleston's work. First, if texts are composed by prophets and scribes as authoritative divine words, they are "an incipient form of scripture" (p. 168), and therefore one cannot conceive of canonization as a process of taking pre-existing, non-authoritative texts and enshrining them as divine. Second, the portrayal of scribes, the prophet, and YHWH himself as writers of authoritative texts implies that the book of Jeremiah does not view itself as emerging from the inspired prophet alone—as is suggested by conservative evangelicalism—but rather one must make room for some concept of "inspired redactors."

Eggleston's work is well organized and clearly written; however, I have a few questions and critiques. First, it seems that authorization is too thin an explanatory matrix for textualization in Jeremiah. Sometimes a text is foregrounded because of its longevity (32:14), or for other reasons.

Second, if authorization is so central, Eggleston does not do enough to explain the thorniest problem of textualizing an authoritative word: if human intermediaries (prophet and scribe) "can and do get in the way of divine communication" (as he notes, p. 30), how does the book of Jeremiah deal with this problem? Especially when 8:8 speaks of the "lying pen of the scribes," one wonders whether the issue of false and true prophecy (cf. 23:9–40; 28:1–17) would provide an explanation internal to the book for how to see through this issue.

Third and finally, there are several places where Eggleston's argumentation is weak: the scribe's liberty to change words is not really demonstrated (p. 68), YHWH as a writer was not well demonstrated for any text besides 31:33, and the

suggestion that a prophet himself writes when an intermediary is not explicitly mentioned seems shaky, since often intermediaries are elided.

Nevertheless, Christian interpreters who hold the Bible as inerrant have much to consider here, especially given the complicated process of prophetic communication and also the ways in which *even at the moment of textualization* biblical texts envision future audiences (cf. Rom 15:4; 1 Cor 10:11; 1 Pet 1:10–12).

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Severe Compassion: The Gospel According to Nahum. By Gregory D. Cook. The Gospel according to the OT. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2016, 238 pp., $14.99 paper.

At first glance the title of this commentary on Nahum will strike the reader as an odd juxtaposition of terms. However, the author takes his title from the Hebrew words of the prophet's name, "Nahum of Elkosh" (pp. 213–14). He emphasizes that the message of the prophet is one of God's compassion for his children. While at times that compassion may take the form of severe judgment, God nevertheless acts for the benefit of those he judges; he aims to bring them back to himself. Gregory Cook, a former pastor, takes this little-read prophetic book so full of woe and reminds his readers of God's love. Along the way, he weaves in helpful insights from his pastoral ministry that serve to strengthen his readers' spiritual lives.

The aim of the series in which this book is published, The Gospel according to the OT, is to focus the reader's attention on Christ as he is revealed in the Hebrew Bible. Clearly this is easier to do in some books than others. Where direct prophecies about Christ are many and plain, there are few hermeneutical hoops to jump through and little hermeneutical explanation necessary. Few evangelicals reject the suggestion that Isaiah 53 refers to the ministry of Christ in some way, for instance. On the other hand, where direct prophecy is lacking, seeing and validating prophetic connections can be more difficult; thus it is incumbent upon communicators who believe they see a connection to lay bare precisely why a link should be made.

Nahum is not a book laden with obvious prophecies about Christ; therefore, it would it would have been helpful for Cook to address issues of hermeneutics up front and to explain how he intends to validate what he sees. For example, in his discussion of Nah 1:8, Cook notes that the prophet says God will "pursue his enemies into darkness" (p. 41). He concludes that "this statement prophesies the physical darkness at the crucifixion, but also Jesus' descent into hell" (p. 41). In the explanation that follows, Cook suggests that Nahum is alluding to a Mesopotamian myth, The Descent of Ishtar, in which the goddess transcends her usual realm to enter the realm of the underworld. He reasons that "Nahum promises that God will go to any length to hunt down his rivals and punish them" (p. 43). Cook suggests Jesus would have read this and "understood that Nahum's prophecy of pursuing enemies into darkness apply [*sic*] to him as well" (p. 43).

This is not a traditional technical commentary. At the beginning of the book Cook includes a brief explanation about the author, his audience, and the poetic devices the prophet used in his writing: brevity, wordplay, allusion. The book, however, omits a section which gathers discussions about standard introductory matters in one place choosing instead to integrate them into the body as it is relevant to the passage under examination. Cook discusses the reliability of the text of Nahum in the context of the acrostic in 1:2–8 (p. 49). The date of the book is examined in the context of 1:12 (p. 72). Where it is relevant, Cook interacts with critical scholarship and opinion. For example, he addresses the disputes over the identity of Huzzab in 2:7 (p. 118), and he answers Judith Sander's critique of God as a rapist in 3:5–7 (p. 168).

The reality of Assyrian hegemony in the ANE forms the historical background for Nahum, and Cook does a good job introducing what is likely to be unfamiliar historical material to his readers. This is important because one of the main themes in this book is revenge, specifically God's vengeance against a nation that has oppressed Israel. Understanding the enemy is critical to appreciating Yahweh's actions.

The body of the commentary offers little by way of textual criticism or interaction with other commentaries, but that is not its purpose. Instead, Cook aims to draw his reader's focus to Christ and to strengthen their love and devotion to him. This is a refreshingly worthy goal for a commentary indeed. To that end, the book weaves practical, spiritual challenges throughout its pages and includes reflective questions that focus on spiritual growth and development at the end of each chapter.

Cook does an admirable job showing how the message of Nahum continues to be relevant in the twenty-first century. He discusses issues like revenge (p. 10), spiritual warfare and the Christian life (pp. 95–96), money (p. 121), human trafficking (p. 153), and more. These are not topics that usually make an appearance in a commentary on an OT prophetic book.

That said, while these discussions are helpful, at times they overshadow Cook's examination of the text of Nahum itself. It is almost as if he uses the text as a springboard for the conversation he really wants to have. As an example, the fall of the city of Nineveh in Nahum 2 is often discussed in the context of historical background details that validate Nahum's prophetic descriptions. Cook instead focuses on how "the greatest military power that the world had ever seen gives way before one of God's servants" (p. 97). After a discussion that takes his readers back to the Tower of Babel rebellion in Genesis 11 and forward to Daniel 2, he concludes, "The rock that demolished the kingdoms of the world was Christ" (p. 97). What follows are fourteen pages of helpful material on the weapons of spiritual warfare (humility, prayer, fasting, the Holy Spirit, and Scripture reading). The challenge with this type of exegesis is that while it includes helpful discussion, it is hard to understand how it is an interpretation of the book of Nahum.

Since Cook's hermeneutical principles are less than clear, perhaps because he depends on interpreting prophetic allusion to make his Christ-focused connections, his conclusions can be hard to validate. This is unfortunate because his spiritual

insights are solid. Furthermore, he is to be commended for striving to see Christ in Nahum. The apostle Luke wrote that Jesus mined the Scripture for its testimonies about himself (Luke 24:22–27). Therefore it is not unfair for students of the Bible to dig where Christ dug and to strive to see what he saw there. It would have been helpful to many, however, if he had elucidated his hermeneutical method more clearly beforehand. Non-technical readers may struggle to decide which allusions are valid and which are idiosyncratic.

No commentary can do everything. Often commentaries that are devotional tend to be weak on exegesis. Technical commentaries rarely address questions that afflict or could strengthen the soul. Cook's work is a blend of a careful explanation of Nahum against its historical background with a focus on Christ.

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The Book of Zechariah. By Mark J. Boda. The New International Commentary on the OT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016, xxiii + 911 pp., $58.00.

Mark Boda is Professor of OT at McMaster Divinity College and professor on the faculty of theology at McMaster University. He has authored numerous books and articles, including commentaries on Judges, Haggai and Zechariah, and 1–2 Chronicles. His work in Zechariah began as a seminary student when he studied the book under Raymond Dillard, professor of OT at Westminster Theological Seminary until Dillard's death in 1993. In those days, Boda also preached from the book of Zechariah to the church he pastored in Philadelphia.

As is common for volumes in the NICOT, Boda provides a fresh translation of the book. He also includes numerous helpful notes concerning Hebrew grammar and textual variants. This commentary series refers to Hebrew letters and words via transliteration. However, Boda regularly discusses Hebrew morphology and syntax, referring to phrases like *matres lectionis* and the various stems of the Hebrew verb without definition. Therefore, since a knowledge of Hebrew is necessary to understand the commentary fully, one wonders why the editors decided against using Hebrew script.

Scholars have long debated the unity of Zechariah and its relationship to the book of Malachi. Boda concludes that the book of Zechariah is a unified composition. In his view, chapters 9–11 and 12–14 appear to have different sources of origin, yet "they have been drawn together into a unified literary collection" (p. 23; cf. p. 28). He notes the common introductory formula used in 9:1, 12:1, and Mal 1:1, but also notes the differences between those literary units and concludes they had different origins. He concludes that both Malachi and Haggai were integrated with Zechariah at an early stage by the same persons responsible for the final redaction of Zechariah. Then, the "Haggai-Malachi corpus" was placed into the Book of the Twelve (p. 31).

For readers of Zechariah who are looking for help in understanding the historical context of the book, Boda's work will be a gem. In the book's introduction

section, the historical overview is a bit disjointed at times, lurching back and forth chronologically. Also, at times readers may question Boda's apparent certainty about cause and effect relationships between known events in Persian history and events described in the biblical text. For example, can it be demonstrated that the Jewish emphasis on the Law reflected in Zechariah 5 is the result of Darius's encouragement (p. 13)? However, Boda is especially helpful when he uses historical information in the commentary sections to illuminate the meaning of the text, and his historical reviews will be fascinating to students of the Bible and students of history.

In recent decades, scholars have produced an impressive body of literature analyzing the Second Temple period sociologically, economically, politically, literarily, and religiously. A good example is T&T Clark's "Library of Second Temple Studies," with almost ninety volumes exploring the literature of that period. Commentators on literature dating to that period (which Zechariah does) should be conversant with both the primary sources and their recent interpreters. Boda interacts extensively with both types of works and consistently demonstrates he has read them with sensitivity and understanding. Hence, readers of his commentary will be introduced to some of the unique features of the Persian period and they will find references to numerous sources for further study.

Boda's work also reflects significant knowledge of ancient Near Eastern myths and their symbols. For readers interested in such myths, Boda's reviews and references will hold great interest. Boda's research on terminological and ideological connections between the myths and Zechariah is thorough. However, Boda refers to ancient Near Eastern narratives and their symbolic language so frequently to explicate Zechariah's symbols that readers may wonder if Zechariah really knew the language of the myths as well as Boda. The historical question of how Zechariah gained knowledge of mythic language, if he gained such knowledge at all, is not answered. A reader might even get the impression that the author(s) of Zechariah adopted both the language and ideology of the myths uncritically. An explanation of how common symbols were adapted to Yahwistic theology seems missing. The final compiler(s) of Zechariah may be unknown, but they must have been orthodox Yahwists. Therefore, even Zechariah's symbols that seem to be part of a common ancient Near Eastern stock would have carried different meanings or applications for them. Boda could have made such distinctions more clear.

This commentary seems to have been written for advanced students of the Bible and ancient Near Eastern literature. Explanations of some basic theological issues are lacking. For example, two mountains appear in Zechariah's eighth vision (6:1–8). Boda writes that "this space is related to the residence of Yahweh" (p. 361). But is it, and if so, how? As evidence for his assertion, Boda refers to several ancient Near Eastern myths, summarizing, "Mountains are regularly associated with the residence of deities throughout the ancient world" (p. 361). As for OT evidence, he refers to Zion and Sinai as parallel to ancient Near Eastern literature, without discussing the possibility that such mountains may be interpreted symbolically, especially in light of references in the OT to Yahweh's ubiquitous presence with his people and the association of his presence with the tabernacle and temple. So on

the one hand, readers should appreciate and enjoy Boda's explanations of similar symbols in Ancient Near Eastern literature. On the other hand, readers could understandably ask several questions about the relationship between such literature and Zechariah. For example, did other prophets not deliver polemics against such myths? What would Elijah or Hosea say about a whole-cloth adoption of pagan symbols? Was Zechariah even aware of the contents of pagan myths? If so, how did he become familiar with them, and what was the nature of his borrowing? Moreover, how exactly is Yahweh present with his people? This final question is a basic and important question in biblical theology. Yet Boda, who is an expert biblical theologian, does not answer it. Even a few explanatory sentences, or merely a denial that Zechariah adopted pagan ideology, would seem to be helpful here.

The question that could be raised at this point is, "Since Zechariah was describing visions, shouldn't it be understood that all the details of the visions are meant to be interpreted symbolically." That implies another question. Did the visions happen to Zechariah as events, or did Zechariah write *as if* they had happened in order to use symbolic language to communicate theological truth to the returned exiles in Judah? Readers of Zechariah may ask such a question, but it goes unanswered in this commentary.

Another strength of this commentary is its contribution to the literary study of Zechariah. Boda gives attention to the literary structure of every part of the book. He analyzes literary art judiciously, avoiding dogmatism about possible complex structures. The word studies in the commentary are also helpful. Boda helps readers to see the semantic range of terms by providing thorough examples of the uses of terms in the OT and in cognate languages. Boda also compares Zechariah's vision reports with those in Amos, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, carefully noting both the introductory formulae and the contents of the prophetic visions in the Bible.

The "General Editor's Preface" for this commentary series states that its volumes pay "particular attention to … theological themes, and implications for the life of faith today" (p. xiv). Such features appear to be more prominent in some volumes. In the Zechariah volume, comments on the place of texts in redemption history and references to the contemporary significance of texts are rare. For example, Boda does not mention Matthew's use of Zech 9:9 in Matt 21:5. The "Index of Scripture and Other Ancient Literature" lists more references to Ugaritic tablets and intertestamental words than to the NT (p. 911). And when is "that day," the recurring phrase in Zechariah 12–14? Readers will not find a discussion of a biblical theology regarding days of redemption and judgment in salvation history. Instead, "that day" is only "an undisclosed future time" (p. 686). This is surprising since the author is more than capable to address theological themes and issues of application (see his *After God's Own Heart: The Gospel According to David* [P&R, 2007]). In light of Boda's significant contributions in this commentary, the absence of such features should not be seen as weaknesses, but only the result of decisions regarding what to include in this volume. Boda's work is an outstanding contribution to the study

of Zechariah and should be regarded as indispensable for anyone looking for a critical commentary written from an evangelical perspective.

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Divine Honours for the Caesars: The First Christians' Responses. By Bruce W. Winter. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015, x + 338 pp., $35.00 paper.

Bruce Winter, the former warden of Tyndale House in Cambridge, purposes "to examine the New Testament *corpus* to see if there is evidence of the first Christians facing the challenge of divine honours needed to be given to the Caesars and the ways in which they coped" (p. ix). His book will benefit both ancient historians and biblical specialists by advancing scholarship on the interplay between Roman culture and early Christianity. The volume is dedicated to E. A. Judge (p. x) and stands in his line of historically-informed NT background work.

The impetus of the study is the increasing awareness among ancient historians that the imperial cults spread more rapidly both in the East and West than previously assumed: "Emperor worship was from the first an institution of great importance to provincial communities" (p. 2). In the Roman world, there was no dichotomy between the religious and the political (p. 59). The imperial cults were "woven into the very fabric of the life of the city," including official inscriptions, statuary plinths, and minted coins (pp. 23, 92). Related cultic activities led not only to temple construction but also affected public holidays, festivals, and sporting activities. Non-participation would not go unnoticed.

Caesar Augustus was praised with religiously-laden terminology, as inscriptions spoke of the "good news" of his coming as "the savior of the common race of men," bringing peace, restoration, and transformation (pp. 37, 40). Emperors were lavished with divine titles, such as "god," "son of a god," "son of the divine," "lord," "savior of the world," "savior of humanity," and "god manifest" (p. 61). The provincial and civic bestowment of imperial honors played a diplomatic role, especially when conferred by embassies and delegations (p. 77). The emperor was expected to stage a protest against "honors equal to the gods," leading to a dance of protocol. An "unwritten convention" required the emperor to refuse the offer to build a temple in his honor, but "this refusal was not taken at face value" (p. 91). Cities that secured imperial favors would be rewarded with special privileges (p. 59).

Such honorific language and activity caused an inherent tension and "ideological clash" for Jews and Christians (p. 37). In particular, "it is clear that Christians in the first century could not at the same time and in all good conscience use divine titles both of Jesus and of any emperor, reigning or deceased" (p. 63). For their part, Jews adopted, adapted, and abstained from the cultic honors (pp. 94–123). Jewish leaders negotiated with the Roman authorities by offering an alternative to imperial worship—a daily sacrifice *for* (not *to*) the emperor, asking God for imperial safety. This compromise allowed Jews to express their political loyalty without idolatrous compromise.

Part 2 of the volume examines imperial cultic activities and the resulting Christian responses by locality, including chapters on Athens, Achaea, Corinth, Galatia, Thessalonica, and Asia Minor. By focusing upon specific geographical settings, Winter is able to contextualize and particularize the discussions. Along the way, he shares interpretive insights that should be of interest to biblical scholars. The "Areopagus" of Acts 17 is identified as an official meeting place in the agora rather than the traditional site of "Mars Hill" (pp. 142–43), and Paul's ἀπολογία reflects the conventional language of introducing new gods to Athens (p. 146). "When the wording in Acts 17:19–20 is examined within the forensic semantic domain, the case of first-century jurisdiction of the Council of the Areopagus over this matter is established and coalesces with other external evidence" (p. 148).

Imperial veneration was "alive and well" in Corinth when Paul established a church there (p. 167). Winter explains "the so-called gods in heaven and on earth" (1 Cor 8:5) as a reference to "deified emperors and living members of the imperial family, including women" (pp. 211–12). Moreover, he interprets the use of δαιμονίοις and δαιμονίων in 1 Cor 10:20 as references to the *genii* of emperors (pp. 217–21). In support, he cites Tertullian, *Apol.* 32: "Do you not know that *genius* is a name for *daemon*, or in the diminutive *daemonium*?" (pp. 219–20). Tertullian, *Spect.* 13 might also have been of interest. Winter does not interact with the relevant materials in Deut 32:17, Ps 106:37, Athenagoras's *Leg.* 26–27, and Tertullian's *Apol.* 22–23—a lineage of texts depicting sacrifices to idols as sacrifices to demons.

Concerning the Galatian audience, Winter perhaps overstates his case by approving Stephen Mitchell's conclusion that "there is virtually nothing to be said for the north Galatian theory" (p. 227 n. 4). Winter argues that the historical situation involved Christian converts being allured back to Jewish practices, for the sake of exemption from imperial cultic activities: "If all Gentile Christians could be persuaded to become Jews, then this would protect all Diaspora Christians in the province from any possible breach of Roman law" (p. 243; cf. p. 228). According to Winter's reading, "certain Christians mounted arguments specifically aimed at persuading all male Gentile Christians that it was absolutely essential for them to undergo this rite in order to be in right standing with the authorities in the province of Galatia" (p. 240; cf. Gal 6:12). Could one reflect, however, the *theological* dispute in Galatians by at least including, "and in order to be in right standing with *God*"?

Chapters 11 and 12 examine Hebrews and Revelation. Winter provides an intriguing explanation of Heb 10:25 that the readers were neglecting corporate meetings because of a Roman legal prohibition applied to weekly worship (p. 276). He works with a late 60s date for Revelation (pp. 289–94) and considers the allusions to persecution within a Neronic context: "The recent execution of fellow Christians in Rome in A.D. 64 had created a legal precedent for the Caesar's vice-gerent in the province of Asia, hence the urgent exhortation not to commit apostasy by capitulating to imperial cultic stipulations" (p. 305).

Winter masterfully weaves together literary, archaeological, epigraphic, and numismatic evidence. Interacting with early Christian materials outside the NT, he discusses relevant materials in Tertullian (pp. 1, 92, 184, 213, 220) and Clement of Alexandria (pp. 151–52). Yet, while he describes Jews bestowing "honours that

were appropriate to their faith but never contrary to it" (p. 113), he does not discuss the analogous Christian materials in *1 Clem.* 60.4–61.1, Polycarp's *Phil.* 12.3, Justin's *Apol.* 17, Theophilus's *Autol.* 1.11, and the *Acts of Cyprian* 2 (cf. also Tertullian, *Apol.* 30, 39). More surprisingly, the volume never interacts with the relevant materials in 1 Tim 2:1–7, Titus 3:1–3, and 1 Pet 2:14–15, in spite of Winter's own pertinent chapter in *Seek the Welfare of the City* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994). Like their Jewish counterparts, early Christians sought an amenable alternative of their own: exhortations to honor emperors and to pray regularly for them.

Although the "Modern Author" index (p. 324) lists "P. Bookidis" as appearing on p. 114, the name is not found there (or elsewhere); and the resources of p. 45 n. 68 do not appear in the bibliography or author index. Minor errors (in both ancient and modern languages) include χειοταςτο for an intended θειότατος (p. 35 n. 38), *Auguestae* for *Augustae* (p. 41), "Principates Gaius, Claudius and Nero" for "Principates of Gaius, Claudius and Nero" (pp. 59 n. 34, 320), Ἀπεοπαγίτης for Ἀρεοπαγίτης (p. 158), "on behalf Gaius" for "on behalf of Gaius" (p. 178), "Potopoulos" for "Fotopoulos" (pp. 198, 317), "Penteateric" for "Penteteric" (p. 199), Cριστοῦ for Χριστοῦ (p. 228), περιτμηνθῆναι for περιτμηθῆναι (p. 239), "Clàssicos" and "Classicos" for "Clássicos" (pp. 247, 322), υὶὸν for υἱὸν (p. 255), "A. R. N. Sherwin-White" for "A. N. Sherwin-White" (pp. 258, 320), ἀποδεικνύςτα for ἀποδεικνύντα (p. 261), "Verhäktnisse" for "Verhältnisse" (p. 290 n. 13), ἕῖς for εἷς (p. 291, 296), "Epigraphia" and "Ephigraphia" for "Epigraphica" (pp. 139, 311), "Inscripft" for "Inschrift" (p. 313), "Prepuse" for "Prepuce" (p. 313), "Implikationeen" for "Implikationen" (p. 315), "Zeugnisee" for "Zeugnisse" (p. 315), "Acts du 1st Congres" for "Actes du Ier Congrès" (p. 322), "Lion" for "Lyon" (p. 322), and "*Felicitias*" for "*Felicitas*" (p. 323), as well as various missing punctuation marks and Greek accents.

Overall, the author has provided a well-researched and readable account of the diversity of Christian responses to the pervasive pressures of the imperial cults. Each chapter begins with a helpful summary that introduces and structures the material. The discussions are based upon evidences gleaned from both literary and non-literary sources. The experience of a seasoned scholar marks the work of Winter which neither falls back upon pedantic repetition nor springs forward into groundless speculation. The book stands as a *testimonium* to the *res gestae* of historical scholarship. Reflecting a few mortal imperfections, the volume nonetheless deserves to be duly praised and honored.

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A Commentary on the Manuscripts and Text of the NT. By Philip Wesley Comfort. Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2015, 443 pp., $29.99.

This work represents another volume by Comfort on the text of the NT and textual criticism written on a popular level. Users of this volume will recognize material found in his earlier works, especially his *Encountering the Manuscripts* (Nash-

ville: B&H Academic, 2005) and *NT Text and Translation Commentary* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2008), a fact that he acknowledges in his introduction to the present volume (p. 9). For example, the annotated list of NT manuscripts on pp. 45–123 is a revised version of that found on pp. 59–97 in *Encountering the Manuscripts*. Many of his comments on specific NT passages (pp. 127–413) are identical with those in his *NT Text and Translation Commentary*, except that they are now more concise and without any reference to modern English versions.

Comfort's work is similar to Bruce M. Metzger's famous *Textual Commentary on the NT* (London: United Bible Societies, 1971; 2nd ed., Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994) and Roger L. Omanson's popular version of it, *A Textual Guide to the Greek NT* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006). All three agree in arranging their discussions of variants by book, chapter, and verse(s). They differ in one major respect: Whereas both Metzger and Omanson's discussions of select variants employ a Greek font, Comfort uses only transliteration. In addition, in his headings Metzger only has the Greek text; Omanson follows the Greek text with an English translation. Comfort, on the other hand, only employs English translation in his discussion headings. Another significant difference among them is Comfort's repeated use of phrases like "the original wording" (which he begins using on the first page of his commentary proper; p. 128), "the original text" (p. 143), "this is the original wording …" (pp. 160, 178–79, 328, 352), "the original reading" (p. 189), or something similar. Metzger and Omanson will occasionally use a phrase with the adjective "original" as in "the original text" (in Metzger's comments on Matt 8:25) or "the original reading" (in both of their comments on Luke 3:32), but to a far lesser degree than Comfort. I actually like Comfort's emphasis on "the original text," a goal that I first encountered in his *Quest for the Original Text of the NT* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992) as a doctoral student at Harvard University, when I wished to know what the other side was saying in contrast to what I was hearing in class.

Perhaps the best way to gain a sense for Comfort's contribution to NT textual criticism in this volume is to compare his discussions of specific variants with those of Metzger and Omanson. For example, in the latter half of Matt 19:9, Comfort states that the textual evidence favors the inclusion of the clause "and the one marrying the divorced woman commits adultery," though he acknowledges that the parallel in Matt 5:32, where the text is firm, makes its inclusion here appear "suspect" (p. 159). Metzger and Omanson are more firm in their rejection of this clause as a "probable" addition to Matt 19:9. Comfort agrees with Metzger and Omanson in rejecting Mark 16:9–20 and John 7:53–8:11 as well as obvious expansions like John 5:4, Acts 8:37, and 1 John 5:7b–8. In regard to the doxology at the end of Romans (16:25–27), Comfort differs from them both when he accepts it as authentic with Paul but locates it at the end of chapter 15, with 𝔓46 as the lone witness to the original text. This instance is one of the few places where Comfort (pp. 310, 311–16) actually exceeds both Metzger and Omanson in the length of their comments on a textual problem. Then, however, he is silent and fails to even mention the textual variant at 2 Cor 5:3, where users of UBS3–5 and NA26–28 will find the paradoxical ἐκδυσάμενοι ("having taken off") in their text instead of ἐνδυσάμενοι ("having put on") found in the previous editions. Here Metzger voiced his disa-

greement with the rest of the committee that produced the UBS$^{3–4}$ and NA$^{26–27}$ by preferring the latter reading. Since modern English versions are divided over which wording to accept, I find it strange that Comfort never mentions this textual problem (his silence goes back to his first foray into textual criticism, *Early Manuscripts and Modern Translations of the NT* [Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1990], 148).

At Eph 1:1, Comfort sets forth five arguments for the omission of the words ἐν Ἐφέσῳ in a discussion that rivals Metzger's, with the exception that he fails to mention the possible connection with Marcion's "To the Laodiceans," a point that would have strengthened his fifth and final argument. In 1 Thess 2:7, Comfort is adamant that νήπιοι ("babies") represents "the original wording" (p. 355), even though this reading results in "a sudden shift of metaphor, from the apostles being like 'children' to them being like 'a nursing mother'" (p. 356). This is another place where Metzger lodges his opposition to the majority opinion, and this time Allen Wikgren joins him in his dissent. I find it surprising that neither of them remarks that elsewhere the apostle Paul only employs the term νήπιοι in an unflattering manner that always carries a clearly negative connotation (Rom 2:20; 1 Cor 3:1; 13:11 [5x]; Gal 4:1, 3; Eph 4:14), a fact that favors ἤπιοι ("gentle") as the initial reading in 1 Thess 2:7.

In his discussion of the variants at 2 Pet 3:10, Comfort shows no awareness of the new reading καὶ γῆ καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ ἔργα οὐχ εὑρεθήσεται ("the earth and its works will *not* be found") now adopted into the texts of both NA^{28} and UBS^{5}, which are based on the *Editio critica maior* (*ECM*) produced by the Institute for NT Textual Research at Münster, Germany, under the leadership of Holger Strutwolf. While this new reading is not found in any known Greek manuscript of 2 Peter, it is attested in some manuscripts of the Philoxenian Syriac Version, in all known manuscripts of the Sahidic Coptic Version, and apparently in another Coptic manuscript written in what is called "Dialect V" (abbreviated as "cv"). Regardless of one's opinion about this textual problem, it is the reading that users of the latest standard editions of the Greek NT will encounter. It should have been mentioned.

One feature that does not appear in either Metzger's or Omanson's commentary is the detailed attention that Comfort gives to the *nomina sacra* that appear in various NT manuscripts. Throughout his comments on various passages, Comfort notes the use of *nomina sacra* and abbreviations, and he devotes an entire appendix to their significance (pp. 419–43). While he presents his own theory as to their origin and their significance, he nowhere really engages with the work of other scholars in this area, like Ludwig Traube, Anton Paap, or Larry Hurtado. Perhaps this is the greatest weakness of his work: Comfort rarely lays his own proposals beside those of other scholars for comparison, so that we can evaluate them and appreciate their strengths. One can see behind his work an amazing amount of primary original research, but his references to secondary literature are often too few for the needs of scholars and advanced students.

Metzger wrote his *Textual Commentary* for scholars and advanced students. Omanson basically follows Metzger's conclusions but tries to simplify them for those who have no formal training in textual criticism but who are tasked with translating the Greek NT into a modern language. Comfort, on the other hand,

strikes out on his own path in an attempt to follow the textual evidence, but in his presentation he seems to target a popular audience. While the volume's physical dimensions are comparable to those of the UBS[5] and NA[28] editions, its treatment of textual issues and its use of transliteration normally presuppose a readership that cannot handle the Greek text. My fear is that a popular audience will favor the more expansive explanations in Comfort's *NT Text and Translation Commentary*, with its layout of 16 major English translations, while advanced students will want a more scholarly treatment of NT textual problems than what is furnished here.

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Fundamentals of NT Textual Criticism. By Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015, xvi + 202 pp., $22.00 paper.

Porter and Pitts have set out to create an entry-level textbook that equips the intermediate Greek student in the "fundamentals of textual criticism." The authors find existing introductions on NT textual criticism, such as Metzger and Ehrman's *The Text of the NT* (4th ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), too detailed for students (p. xiii). Their goal of simplifying and collecting such material into one convenient textbook is commendable. The book, however, while duplicating much that is available in standard introductions, fails to offer much unique content and is plagued by inaccuracies.

The authors follow a well-established pattern of beginning the book with theory and turning later to praxis. The focus of the first chapter is to clarify terminology by contrasting the "traditional model" of textual criticism, seen as a quest to establish the "original text" (see also p. 90 n. 2), with what they call the "sociohistorical model," that is, tracing the "transmission history of the text within various scribal traditions and communities, as a means of studying the social history of early Christianity" (p. 4). Porter and Pitts then argue that "reconstructing the original text must remain the principal aim of text-critical studies" (p. 6).

The second chapter discusses, somewhat tangentially to textual criticism, the canon of the NT. Porter and Pitts reject the widely accepted theory of a 4th-century establishment of the canon, finding it untenable that Christians would have recognized individual documents as sacred so many years before an authoritative list was ratified. In a lengthy discussion (pp. 21–24), the Muratorian Fragment is presented as the main evidence for an early establishment of the canon. This chapter, and the next, seem unnecessarily combative, more in the style of a journal article than an introductory text.

Chapter 3, "Materials and Methods of Classification," contains the most glaring errors and will therefore be discussed in more detail. Porter and Pitts describe the available witnesses to the NT as "over seventy-two hundred Greek manuscripts of various sizes and shapes representing different portions of the NT, in addition to hundreds of copies of various ancient versions or translations, and quotations of the NT in the early church fathers" (p. 33). Incredibly, they overstate the number

of Greek MSS by more than 1000, while the 10,000+ Old Latin and Vulgate MSS are not mentioned.

The authors upend the common theory that copying by dictation, when it occurred, would have been in a monastery setting. Their claim that Scripture was produced by dictation until the Byzantine period, at which time "the NT was copied by individual monks in monasteries, where the documents were copied instead of being written down on the basis of verbal dictation" (p. 37, see also p. 49) is not supported.

Misrepresentation of early scribal practices carries on to their claim that the original NT documents were written in scroll form (pp. 44, 46, see also p. 103). This is unlikely, as demonstrated by such scholars as Larry Hurtado (*The Earliest Christian Artifacts: Manuscripts and Christian Origins* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006], 43–94.) In addition, Porter and Pitts state (p. 45) that Christians "pioneered the invention of the codex," when in fact use of the codex predates the Christian writings.

The discussion of materials includes photos, though the size and clarity could be improved. Sadly, photos were not used in the section on writing styles and scribal alterations, where they would have been even more helpful. Rather than introducing the student to the majuscule of the early papyri, then biblical majuscule, then minuscule script, the authors provide Comfort and Barrett's four types of handwriting as if that list were representative of all ancient handwriting rather than of the earliest MSS only (pp. 46–48).

The presentation of minuscule MSS lacks nuance, implying that these later MSS are entirely Byzantine in textual complexion (pp. 47, 61, 104), though admitting that 1739 was likely copied from a 4th-century MS (p. 125). The highest praise Porter and Pitts can muster is that "the minuscule tradition of NT manuscripts, though late, does provide important confirmatory material for textual criticism when it supports or contradicts certain isolated readings" (p. 48). The brief discussion of ancient marginal aids contains several inaccuracies. For example, the authors erroneously claim that "explanations of difficult words" are found in the margins of MSS (p. 49).

At the end of chapter 3, Porter and Pitts provide statistics for NT MSS, apparently for apologetic reasons (p. 50–51). They catalog 128 papyri, 2,911 majuscules, 1,807 minuscules, and 2,381 lectionaries. In actual fact the recent figures are 136 papyri, 286 majuscules, 2,846 minuscules, and 2389 lectionaries. They then cite data to demonstrate the superiority of the evidence for the NT over that of other ancient documents. Though correct in essence, their point is marred by outdated figures. For example, Thucydides's *History* is said to have only 8 MSS, with the earliest being from AD 900, when there are over 90 MSS, including an Oxyrhynchus fragment that dates to the first century.

Chapter 4, which discusses "The Major Witnesses to the Text of the NT," is in general accurate and helpful, though it reproduces information that is less important than what is left out. Several misleading statements must be pointed out. For example, the authors state that the "standard eclectic text is based upon … Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, while the papyri have minimal influence because they are

fragmentary" (p. 57, see also pp. 59, 75). This is simply not true. Certainly, the two great codices are among the most important witnesses to the earliest form of the text, but the papyri are given equal, if not greater, consideration. In addition, Sinaiticus is classified as "Alexandrian" without mention of its partial "Western" tendencies. Only three minuscules are mentioned, plus Families 1 and 13, which Porter and Pitts problematically label as "Caesarean." The authors seem unaware of recent skepticism about text-types in general, and go on to inaccurately equate *text-types* with *textual families* (smaller groupings of closely related documents; see also pp. 106–7). Similar outdated or incorrect terminology reappears in the following chapters.

The discussion of "Text-Types" in chapter 5 is brief, often drawing from the previous chapter. A helpful section on the Byzantine "text-type" tackles the "theological assumption that God would have preserved his word specifically in the Byzantine church," which Porter and Pitts argue is "entirely unsubstantiated exegetically, historically, and rationally."

The discussion of the Caesarean "text-type" is dated. The authors acknowledge that recent scholarship questions the existence of a Caesarean text, but their reasons are the supposed lack of MSS and their late date (again linking age to value). Porter and Pitts erroneously claim that the Caesarean text-type was "identified by W. H. Farrar [*sic*]" in 1868, when in reality Ferrar worked only on Family 13, and Lake and Streeter developed the theory of a text connected to Caesarea. (See Stephen C. Carlson, "The Origin[s] of the 'Caesarean' Text" [paper presented at the annual meeting of the SBL, November 20, 2004], esp. 3–11, 18–22, available at https://www.academia.edu/5785525/Origin_s_of_the_Caesarean_Text.)

The bibliography for "Text-Types" is surprisingly sparse for a topic that has benefitted from important scholarship in recent years. Only five works are suggested, and only two are from the current century, one of which is by Porter. The work by Metzger and Ehrman, as well as that by D. C. Parker (*An Introduction to the NT Manuscripts and Their Texts* [Cambridge University Press, 2008]) are absent.

Chapter 6, "What Is a Textual Variant? Definitions and Boundaries," is a frustrating read. There is considerable redundancy and unnecessary complexity, making it difficult to follow. The terminology is apparently idiosyncratic to the authors' own linguistic approach to Greek and thus unnecessarily obscure to the outsider or beginner (see opentext.org, where Porter is a primary partner and Pitts is a research partner).

Chapters 7–10 cover methodology, beginning with a description of the strengths and weaknesses of approaches to the text, including stemmatic/genealogical, Byzantine/Majority, thoroughgoing and reasoned eclecticism, and the "single text model." The bibliography for the latter consists of two articles and a book by Porter. The single-text model advocates using one ancient text (Sinaiticus) that was "actually used and revised by various early Christian communities" (p. 96).

Chapters 8–10 contain a useful discussion on external and internal evidence. Because Porter and Pitts advocate for one authoritative MS, they emphasize external evidence. Internal evidence would apply only in cases where external does not yield a clear determination of the "original." A surprising amount of attention fo-

cuses on responses to Bart Ehrman's *Misquoting Jesus* (New York: Harper Collins, 2005). Chapter 11, entitled "Modern Critical Editions: A Brief History," hits the high points of the development of critical editions. Chapter 12 is "A Guide to the Text and Apparatus of the *UBSGNT*$^{4/5}$ and NA$^{27/28}$" Porter and Pitts claim that any differences between the two hand editions are "quite insignificant," that even the NA is "not for specialized text-critical work," and that Tischendorf's 8th edition is still the best choice (p. 146). They are skeptical about the value of recent changes in NA^{28} and UBS^{5} for the Catholic Epistles (see especially p. 17 n. 1). Though the description of the two editions is drawn mainly from their respective introductory chapters, it is beneficial to have it all in one place with explanations, such as a comparative chart on pp. 174–75.

The final chapter, "Text and Translation," though less relevant to a book on fundamentals of textual criticism, does provide a clear discussion of the textual basis for modern translations. The authors argue that texts such as the *pericope adulterae* and the ending of Mark should be moved to the footnotes rather than bracketed in the text. The section on translation theory is well done.

In the appendix (pp. 190–96), Porter and Pitts emphasize the importance of familiarity with MSS: "Too often text-critical work is reduced to merely consulting one of the textual commentaries …. This merely amounts to citing text-critical works and not doing fundamental textual criticism." They then offer information on how to view the MSS online. While the sentiment is true, it actually points out a weakness of the book. An early chapter introducing paleography, employing photographs and visual examples, would have started the student on the way to familiarity with the physical MSS. In addition to the resources supplied in the appendix, useful bibliographies are included at the end of each chapter, and discussions of differing opinions are footnoted. However, an index of topics at the end of the book would have been desirable.

The flaws of *Fundamentals of NT Textual Criticism* overwhelm the sections of the book that have value. Beyond the difficulties discussed above, the writing is inelegant and sometimes ungrammatical. There are frequent redundancies, even in the same paragraph. The intended audience appears to be postgraduate students since advanced knowledge is assumed and the text is often dense. Yet the authors explain elementary terms such as "codex" (p. 12 n. 3) or "Gnosticism" (p. 20), tell the reader that "scriptoria" is the plural for "scriptorium," and find it necessary to translate καί (p. 49).

Beyond correcting the factual mistakes, a better approach would have been to create a primer on textual criticism that refers the student to already existing resources, while devoting more space to paleography and visual knowledge of ancient handwriting, followed by a more thorough discussion of textual variation that makes use of the apparatuses of UBS and NA, followed by exercises to aid students in internalizing the material.

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Jesus and the Remains of His Day: Studies in Jesus and the Evidence of Material Culture. By Craig A. Evans. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2015, xxv + 302 pp., $44.95.

Evans, currently John Bisagno Distinguished Professor of Christian Origins at Houston Baptist University, is the author or editor of more than 70 books and numerous essays on a wide variety of topics including Jesus and Gospel studies, archaeology, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and biblical studies. Unlike his earlier *Jesus and His World: The Archaeological Evidence* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2012), which was written for non-experts, *Jesus and the Remains of His Day* is largely a collection of the author's own revised and updated scholarly essays that relate archaeology and Jesus studies. Three of the ten essays have not been previously published. Although largely written for fellow scholars, the book clearly explains technical terms and offers English translations of quotations in ancient or foreign languages and thus should be accessible to non-specialists.

Chapter 1 is titled "A Tale of Two Cities: What We Have Learned from Bethsaida and Magdala." Bethsaida is significant since three of the twelve disciples were from that locale and Jesus performed a number of miracles in the city. A detailed treatment of the names of the three disciples associated with Bethsaida (Andrew, Simon Peter, and Philip) cautiously suggests that Simon's nickname, "the Rock," may be related to his hometown since the original name of Bethsaida may have been Zer, a Hebrew term meaning "rocks." Evans briefly discusses the ten excavated synagogues that were probably in use prior to AD 70. The synagogue at the Magdala (Migdal I) excavation was built in the 20s, enlarged in the 40s, and destroyed by General Titus in AD 66–67. The Magdala stone found at the center of the synagogue has decorations that reflect temple themes and underscores the connection between the Galilean synagogue and the temple cultus in Jerusalem. The name "Mary Magdalene" associates this woman, who is repeatedly mentioned in the Gospels, with a city called Magdala. Evans follows J. E. Taylor in identifying Magdala as Migdal Nuniya ("Fish Tower"). Although he acknowledges dissent from scholars such as Richard Bauckham and Stefano De Luca, Evans doubts that the site being currently excavated as "Magdala" is actually first-century Magdala.

Chapter 2 is titled "A Boat, a House, and an Ossuary: What Can We Learn from the Artifacts?" After a brief discussion of the Capernaum synagogue, Evans focuses on the house in Capernaum reputed to have belonged to Peter. Evans tends to affirm this identification since ancient graffiti suggests that the residence later served as a house church. He doubts that the fishhooks found beneath the paving help identify Peter as the owner, and he contests the claim that Peter's name appears in the inscription on one dislodged stone. Evans also describes the Kinneret Boat, a small vessel recovered from the mud of the Galilean Sea that has been dated from 50 BC to AD 50 using carbon-14 tests and pottery finds. The vessel was capable of transporting about 15 people. Finally, Evans treats the James Ossuary. He argues that the Aramaic inscription "James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus" is authentic but that the identifications of the persons named in the inscription remain uncertain. If the inscription refers to James the Just, the ossuary would indi-

cate that James's family knew and spoke Aramaic, that James lived and died near Jerusalem, and that James received a Jewish burial.

Chapter 3 is titled "Caiaphas, Pilate, and Simon of Cyrene: The Literary and Archaeological Evidence." Abandoning reservations expressed in an earlier work, Evans believes that the ornate and well-preserved ossuary bearing the inscription Yehoseph bar Qaipha is indeed that of Joseph called Caiaphas whom the Gospels identify as the high priest who supervised Jesus's trial and who charged Jesus with blasphemy. The change of mind was prompted by new evidence, the recent discovery of an ossuary identifying Caiaphas as a priest. Coins minted during the administration of Pilate lack images of the emperor or legends assigning divine status to Caesar. This suggests that Pilate was sensitive to the convictions of his Jewish subjects. The Caesarea Maritima inscription confirms Pilate's role as prefect of Judea and apparently commemorates his rebuilding of the harbor there. The archaeological evidence suggests that Caiaphas and Pilate enjoyed lengthy terms in office and worked together cooperatively. Pilate occupied himself with major projects like the construction of the aqueduct in Jerusalem and the harbor at Caesarea Maritima and entrusted Caiaphas with handling Jewish matters. An ossuary found in the Kidron Valley in 1941 may refer to another character familiar to readers of the Passion narratives, Simon of Cyrene. Inscriptions on the ossuary twice refer to Alexander, son of Simon. A description of Alexander as a QRNYT on the lid of the ossuary may identify him as a Cyrenean. If the proposed translation of the description is correct, Evans concludes "we have a very interesting constellation that suggests that we may actually have the ossuary of the person mentioned in Mark's Gospel" (Mark 15:21).

Chapter 4, "'Have You Never Read?': Jesus and Literacy," responds to recent claims that Jesus was illiterate. Evans shows that the material evidence strongly supports the literacy of Jesus. Evans traces the evidence from the half million pages of text from Oxyrhynchus to the vast libraries of Alexandria and Ephesus to the ostraca of Masada. He emphasizes the importance of recent studies of graffiti in locations like Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Smyrna, which establish the literacy of the poorly-educated lower classes.

Chapter 5 is titled "Shout at the Devil: Jesus and Psalm 91 in the Light of Early Jewish Interpretation." Evans shows that 11Q11 confirms the suspicion of commentators that Psalm 91, quoted by Satan during the wilderness temptation, was understood in the time of Jesus as promising divine protection from demonic powers. The scroll contains three extracanonical exorcism psalms plus Psalm 91, which was apparently used for the same purpose.

Chapters 6, 7, 8, and 9 respectively treat hanging and crucifixion in Second Temple Israel, the burial of the executed in family tombs, the burial of Jesus, and the façade of the Talpiot tomb. Although Evans admits that the modern discipline of archaeology seldom seeks to prove historical claims, these chapters show how literature from antiquity and evidence from the material culture illuminate and support Gospel accounts of Jesus's passion and burial.

Chapter 10 is titled "The Talking Dead: Postmortem Beliefs in Pagan, Jewish, and Christian Epitaphs." Greeks and Romans generally believed that the soul con-

tinued its existence after physical death, but (contrary to Porter) did not hold to a belief in bodily resurrection. Christians and Jews generally did affirm bodily resurrection. Because most from these diverse backgrounds at least affirmed the soul's continuing existence, they believed the dead might speak to, haunt, or even possess the living, and many identified the demons that seized control of the living as the souls of the wicked dead. Greeks, Romans, and Jews affirmed the importance of remembering the dead and pacifying them.

Readers have come to expect from Evans careful, judicious, and thorough research. This book will not disappoint. It displays a rather stunning mastery of primary sources and an equally impressive command of important secondary sources that surpasses even what is apparent in his *Jesus and the Ossuaries* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2003). Although most of the essays in the book are republications of essays that appeared in various venues from 2005 to 2012 (not the "last twenty years" as one endorser mentioned), they have been thoroughly revised and updated and the documentation is surprisingly current. In a few cases, the revised essays express a change of opinion from the earlier essay since new evidence has come to light.

Although Evans is consistently fair in his handling of the evidence and exercises proper scholarly caution in expressing his views, this does not prevent him from bluntly accessing recent sensational claims that are more figments of a fertile imagination than reasoned conclusions drawn from careful evaluation of the evidence. He rightly insists that Jacobovici and Pellegrino's *The Jesus Family Tomb* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007) is "not serious historical scholarship or biblical archaeology; it is the fantasy we see in *The Da Vinci Code*." He derides M. Baigent's *The Jesus Papers* (New York: HarperCollins, 2006) as "one of the worst examples of pseudo-scholarship ever published." Any who have carefully evaluated the outlandish claims of these books will likely appreciate such candor.

In each chapter, Evans shows how the material evidence illuminates the NT and assists present-day readers of the Gospels in particular in stepping into Jesus's world so that they may read the text from the vantage point of the original readers. Thus the book should be relevant and interesting to specialists in a variety of fields including archaeology, biblical studies, historical Jesus research, and Christian apologetics. At a time when some academic texts are so costly that few individuals can purchase them, this excellent volume is reasonably priced, especially considering that this hardback contains 31 high quality color photographs that illustrate points made in the text.

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Jesus' Sermon on the Mount: Mandating a Better Righteousness. By Jack R. Lundbom. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015, xxxiii + 341 pp., $49.00 paper.

Jack Lundbom, a scholar known for his work on Jeremiah and the prophets in general (especially his massive three-volume commentary on Jeremiah in the

Anchor Yale Bible series), here offers an exposition of Jesus's most famous sermon. Lundbom begins with four introductory essays, in which, according to the introduction, he makes two points: (1) Matthew's Gospel and the Sermon on the Mount were meant to be *heard* more than to be *read*; therefore, one must be attentive to their rhetorical features; and (2) the teaching of Jesus is meant to be taken seriously as a pattern for life, especially in terms of the *Imitatio Dei*.

In chapter 1, "Rhetoric and Composition in Matthew," Lundbom reviews some basic issues regarding the structure of the Gospels in general, Matthew in particular, and the Sermon on the Mount. I especially liked the comparison of the beatitudes in Matthew 5 and the "curses" in Matthew 23. He makes no mention, however, of Davies and Allison's brilliant exposition in the first volume of their ICC commentary on Matthew (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988) or of Allison's updated discussion in *Studies in Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005; see chap. 10, "The Configuration of the Sermon on the Mount and Its Meaning," pp. 173–215). In chapter 2, "The New Covenant in Matthew," he reviews the concept of "covenant" in Scripture and concludes that the new covenant is more than a renewed Sinai covenant, and, as an eternal covenant, replaces the Sinai covenant. In chapter 3, "At What Elevation is Jesus' Sermon on the Mount?" he discusses how the sermon should be received: as law to be obeyed literally or as an impossible ideal to drive the believer to God's grace? Lundbom essentially answers, "Neither." The Sermon on the Mount, when properly understood, can and should be obeyed. To further make this point, he takes up three examples of teaching that have often been understood as impractical or impossible to obey: the teaching on anger (5:21–26); the teaching on non-retaliation (5:38–42); and the teaching on judging others (7:1–5). Lundbom understands the first passage to be not a prohibition of anger but a prohibition of behavior that provokes others to anger: "Jesus seems to be concerned primarily with behavior that makes others angry…. He is talking to people who knowingly and wrongfully provoke others to anger" (pp. 61, 63). So the prohibition is against provocative behavior, not anger. He understands the discussion of non-retaliation to be aimed at minor offenses and indignities; moreover, it is a general teaching, not "a hard and fast principle made to apply to every conceivable indignity and violence done to one, to one's family, or to one's country, many of which are infinitely more grave" (p. 66). The third difficult teaching is concerned with hypocrisy, not judging *per se*. In the final introductory essay, "*Imitatio Dei* in the Sermon on the Mount," he discusses the command in 5:48: "Be perfect." He surveys, in piecemeal fashion, the theme of divine imitation in the OT, Judaism, and Christian history, from Thomas à Kempis through the Reformers to Wesley and in Christian hymnody. He concludes that when Jesus said, "Be perfect," he meant that disciples should imitate God in their lives, and, though perfection is impossible, this is a thoroughly biblical, historical, and theological teaching that should be accepted. These introductory essays are important and often helpful but they sometimes lack focus and clarity, do not engage much with contemporary scholarship, and are sometimes inadequate in their conclusions.

After the introductory essays, Lundbom moves through the sermon, basically paragraph by paragraph. He peppers his comments with helpful quotations from

ancient sources. I found quotations from ANE literature, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Apocrypha, ancient Jewish sources, classical Greek sources, rabbinic sources, early church fathers, and prominent Christian interpreters and theologians (e.g. Luther, Calvin, Wesley, Kierkegaard). He even includes an appendix in which he provides brief biographies of these writers. At times Lundbom's commentary reads like a compendium of topical quotations thematically linked with Jesus's teaching. This is a helpful feature, but sometimes these quotations are listed with very little comment, and one may wonder what the purpose of the list is. Is it to demonstrate that Jesus's teaching was not unique or to show that Jesus's teaching was not out of step with ANE and contemporary teaching or to stimulate thinking on the topic in question?

Lundbom's prose is easy to read. This book would make an excellent volume to include along other more rigorous exegetical works on the Sermon on the Mount. He writes from a seasoned pastoral perspective. For instance, when discussing Jesus's teaching on lust (5:27–30), he helpfully distinguishes between thoughts that involve a conscious intention to commit adultery and "male fantasies which have no end in view and generally go nowhere" (p. 158). We might quibble with his idea that Jesus is not addressing the latter, but it is at least helpful to discuss the different "kinds" of thoughts we have.

Lundbom is much concerned to demonstrate that the Sermon on the Mount can and should be obeyed; but this concern sometimes leads to too much softening of Jesus's teaching. For example, he argues that, in 5:31–32, Jesus is not forbidding remarriage after divorce in general but rather remarriage after a divorce in which "a third party … is waiting in the background to destroy the marriage" (p. 164). In other words, Jesus is only forbidding remarriage in situations where a person divorces a spouse *in order to marry another*. This kind of hyper-specific understanding of Jesus's teaching misses the point, it seems to me, that a kingdom value is life-long marital faithfulness and stability. He also only treats the very difficult saying about the conditionality of divine forgiveness in 6:14–15 with a single benign sentence. Surely that saying needs more discussion than that!

At times, his work in OT rhetoric comes in handy. For example, he notes that the length of and shift to the second person in the final beatitude ("Blessed are you when people insult you") is not a later expansion "because both features in a series are well known moves in Hebrew rhetoric" (pp. 124–25). He also draws attention to the Semitic idiom in which a speaker or writer "juxtaposes two antithetical statements for the sole purpose of emphasizing the one appearing second" (p. 142); this helps explain Jesus's statement "I have not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it" (5:17).

This work is not intended to be the latest, most up-to-date, treatment of the Sermon on the Mount, interacting with all contemporary scholarship and theories. Rather, Lundbom, a seasoned biblical (OT) scholar with a wide frame of historical

reference and a deep church experience, offers to his readers his exegetical observations and collected relevant quotations about the Sermon on the Mount, and as such, I recommend it.

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Mark. By Darrell L. Bock. New Cambridge Bible Commentary. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015, xiv + 424 pp., $36.99 paper.

Darrell Bock is no stranger to commentary writing. Boasting three commentaries on the Gospel of Luke (including a two-volume work), one on Acts, and one on Mark, the author now adds another commentary on the second Gospel to his impressive stock. The volume is published in the New Cambridge Bible Commentary series, which is meant to continue the tradition and goals of the homonymous series popular in the 1960s. The purpose of the series is described in general terms: "to elucidate the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures for a wide range of intellectually curious individuals," utilizing the gains of recently developed methodologies to provide "a fresh look at biblical texts" (extract from website). The New Cambridge Bible Commentary series is therefore aimed at a broad audience, intentionally avoiding overly technical discourse. Bock's own goals align themselves well with that of the series: "to allow the reader quick access to the major issues that a passage raises," while pursuing "issues of meaning and historical background." The straightforward style makes the commentary somewhat distinctive. The reader desiring to cut through the overwhelming amount of information in bulkier commentaries will appreciate the clear approach and direct rhetoric.

The layout of the commentary reflects its minimalist basic aims—no tables, diagrams, or excursuses. Unfortunately a printing error (at least in the received copy) renders the running headers useless, given that throughout the entire commentary it retains the words "introduction to the Gospel." This is a considerable problem in a book designed as a reference work. Also unhelpful is the fact that specific verse references are only marked off by a discrete boldface, which, added to the aforementioned header problem, renders the task of finding more specific passages cumbersome. Another shortcoming is the lack of a detailed outline of the Gospel, which is only discernible in the different styles of headers separating each section in the running commentary. For those keen to follow the proposed literary structure of the Gospel and the summary titles of each passage, the brief and collapsed outline provided in the introduction is insufficient. Much more helpful is the compilation of scholarly work, which features a list of major commentaries (1966–2012) and a selection of articles, including a good number in German, divided by passage unit. The latter betrays an obvious predilection for historically oriented studies but is nevertheless a helpful tool for researchers. The list could improve only by including key monographs on specific Markan topics such as Christology, discipleship, messianic secret, etc.

The introduction is set out in scholarly fashion, beginning with a history of research covering seventeen commentaries on Mark (including his own previous work) as a way into the discussion of authorship, dating, and setting. The review is helpful for those interested in an overview of the treatments on these issues but is for the most part descriptive, offering little critical engagement with the works surveyed. Moreover, the lack of a summary analysis of trends and spectrum of opinions renders the report slightly flat and disconnected from the argument Bock himself wants to advance.

Bock's own introduction, however, is refreshing. Instead of the conventional prolegomena on standard issues, the author weaves questions such as authorship and audience into a well-argued defense of Mark's reliability as a source for the historical study of Jesus, including an overview of compelling arguments for Markan priority; a discussion and thorough defense of Petrine influence on the Gospel; and a case for the quality of the tradition embedded in it. It is in the latter that those concerned with the reliability of the Gospels tradition will find the most significant contribution of this volume. Drawing from his extensive knowledge of historical background, Bock makes a case for the historical reliability of Mark, based on its many points of contact with Judaism, such as the apocalyptic worldview, narration style, use of Scriptures and parables, and debate over purity. He then assesses the discrepancies in the calendar and pilgrimage journeys relative to the Gospel of John, following this with a discussion on archaeology and the problem of the Gospel's messianic ambiguity.

The question of the reliability of Mark set out in the introduction constantly remains in the background of the commentary. The approach will prove invaluable for those interested in issues related to the authenticity of the Jesus tradition. Readers will feast on the abundance of historical details presented in a straightforward style, which appropriately matches the directness of the Gospel. Even more mundane details like the material of the paralytic's pallet, the damage done to the roof in 2:1–12, and the shape of the rock at Jesus's tomb are mentioned, highlighting the historical referentiality of the account. Moreover, Bock's eye for historical issues fosters some solid treatments of difficult passages such as 7:1–23 and 8:27–30. In every passage, a plethora of primary source references are offered to illuminate the exegesis. The commentary also has substantial, albeit not overwhelming, discussions on grammatical and text-critical issues. In sum, its major contribution lies in its historical orientation.

From another angle, however, the commentary feels lopsided. For all its historical robustness, it fails to give sufficient attention to literary and theological issues. In addition, it seems that this deficit is not merely a matter of methodological preference but reflects the author's particular view on the nature of the second Gospel and, at the same time, the concern to establish its reliability as a historical source. In trying to establish Mark's proximity to the earliest traditions about Jesus and iron out what may be perceived as potential problems, Bock sometimes ends up muffling the evangelist's own voice. He considers it difficult to ascertain the evangelist's redactional moves and points to the primitivity of Mark's storytelling as a sign that its "traditional roots are old" instead of "reflecting the theology of his

own time." Consequently, the commentary does not sufficiently appreciate Mark's literary design and theological emphases. Little attention is given to literary context, the flow of the story, or the distinctive themes and features of the narrative. For example, in his assessment of 6:45–52, despite acknowledging the theme of the incomprehension of the disciples as important for Mark, Bock does not develop it much. Instead, he brings Matthew to bear on Mark in order to emphasize the eventual perception of the disciples. While the approach is valid from a canonical perspective, the fact that Mark leaves the incomprehension of the twelve reverberating so loudly here and in other parts of the narrative has been the subject of intense discussion over the past few decades and should have been better explored as a proper theme.

In addition, Bock's habit of using the other Gospels to aid his exposition is at times distracting, at others misleading. In discussing Jesus's temptation, Bock mentions Psalm 91 and argues that "there may be irony in Satan depicted as citing a text that would be applied for the protection from demons" (p. 118). The obvious problem is that Satan does not cite any Scripture in Mark's account. Bock therefore exegetes a parallel narrative as if it were part of Mark.

Thus, at various points Mark's distinctive features become either diluted as part of the tradition or downplayed by often unnecessary comparisons with the other canonical Gospels. While one may disagree on the precise function of some features, such as the emphasis on secrecy, the nuanced Christological portrayal, and the incomprehension of the disciples, they are important for a thorough understanding of the Gospel. To be sure, Bock does point to these issues in passing, but in general they seem to be treated as background noise. The author sees Mark as a "less developed theological reflection," which for him points to the purity of the tradition. This seems a *non sequitur*. One does not have to collapse Mark's terseness or even the quality of the tradition into a flatter reading of the Gospel. As many have suggested, perhaps Mark's ingenuity lies precisely in the way in which he manages to communicate his message while preserving the shape and essence of the tradition he received.

Perhaps these weaknesses are reflective of the methodology employed but, given that the series promises "a fresh look at biblical texts" by utilizing "the gains of recently developed methodologies," the result is slightly disappointing. On the other hand, the commentary does accomplish the author's ultimate purpose—to provide quick access to the major questions in Mark with a focus on historical background. It is indeed an invaluable resource for a prompt identification of the major historical issues in each passage.

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Conversion in Luke-Acts: Divine Action, Human Cognition, and the People of God. By Joel B. Green. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015, xii + 195 pp., $25.00 paper.

In *Conversion in Luke-Acts*, Joel Green provides an "exploration of Luke's narrative theology of conversion," using multiple interpretive lenses (p. 17). He depends primarily on cognitive science while also appealing to narrative criticism, lexical studies, postmodern geographical studies, and intertextuality. This book is an expansion of chapter 4 of his earlier book *Body, Soul, and Human Life: The Nature of Humanity in the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008). He notes that, despite the prominent role of repentance and conversion in Luke-Acts, the few works devoted to the topic are partial treatments (but then, so is Green's), and they have not achieved a consensus (pp. 3–5).

Green's ability to weave together multiple disciplines into a fresh argument on conversion in Luke-Acts, while demonstrating the value of interdisciplinary work, is commendable. To remedy the current trend in recent scholarship of emphasizing the social dimension of conversion at the expense of the psychological, Green believes that the cognitive sciences offer a "prophylactic" against these "shallow dualisms or polarities" (p. 13). He argues that conversion is a process, not an event, and that it is an embodied reality, not a mere assent to tenets of belief. Conversion in Luke-Acts is: (1) a journey (directional); (2) eschatological in orientation; (3) personal but not individual; (4) integral to community wherein transformation occurs; (5) Christologically focused; and (6) an interweaving of *both* human response *and* divine agency (pp. 162–63).

In chapter 1, "Questioning Conversion in Luke-Acts," Green critiques Nock's classic study, *Conversion* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1933), because it mediates the work of William James (1842–1910). As such, the current (distorted) view of conversion as resolving an inner, individual, subjective crisis, is traceable to James, though he admits that apart from Nock there are curiously few citations of his work (pp. 6–8).

His warrant for a cognitive approach is explained in chapter 2, "Conversion and Cognition": because our experience of God is embodied, cognitive science offers a way to study such experience (p. 19). The obvious limitation is that we are dealing with ancient texts, not living people (p. 23). Moreover, the reader must assume that Green presents a consensus view of cognitive studies and that such findings are applicable to first-century people and the Lukan narrative. According to Green, cognitive science demonstrates that religious experience (even "out of body experience") is *always* embodied. As it relates to conversion, he leans on the work of Jim Grigsby and David Stevens, who state, "We are … who we learn to be," and on Donald Hebb's rule, "neurons that fire together wire together" (pp. 40–41). Because the brain continually creates new neurons and neural pathways based on our experiences, cognitive science shows that "there can be no conversion that is not conversion of the self, understood in relationally extended, embodied, holistic terms" (p. 43). A provocative point for some readers is the claim that the soul is integral to the body; in other words, the body is not a shell for the soul as is commonly believed (pp. 28, 35, 37). Readers may consult *Body, Soul, and Human Life* for

his interpretation of texts that appear to presuppose an essential distinction between body and soul (e.g. Gen 2:7, Ezekiel 37).

In chapter 3, "Orienting Conversion," Green denies that one can identify a conversionary pattern in Luke-Acts, though he is comfortable in tracing "significant motifs" (pp. 45–49, 84). Before analyzing the text, he argues that repentance and conversion are equivalent. Confusion exists because we are talking about at least two Greek terms (μετανοέω, ἐπιστρέφω) through one Latin term (*converso*), which in turn has been appropriated into English, and because we define "conversion" with modern, not ancient content. Luke 3:1–14 is key to subsequent interpretation because it supplies the "presuppositional pools" that "[constrain] the possible meaning of what comes after" (p. 85). It also defines conversion in terms of embodied transformation. Since Luke situates John's ministry socio-politically, not geographically, the wilderness is "the venue of divine revelation and action" (p. 58). Preparing the way implies motion (i.e. "conversion as journey"), which necessitates both a change in thinking *and* behavior (pp. 62–69). Baptism is explainable on the basis that "abstract concepts like morality" are often grounded in physical actions such as washing (pp. 70–71). Thus John supposedly capitalizes on the people's desire to remove moral misdeeds via physical washing (p. 72). Green finds Pierre Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* useful for explaining "the embodied character of practices" that are key to "the conversionary life," wherein "covenant faithfulness takes the form of ethical comportment in social relations" (pp. 77, 82). On Green's reading, the crowds, tax collectors, and soldiers of Luke 3 function as exemplars of what conversionary life looks like (p. 84).

In chapter 4, "Texts and Metaphors," Peter's transformation (Luke 5:1–11) is said to play a "paradigmatic role." Yet, it is unclear how this is an example of an "autobiographical reconstruction," since it is presented in Luke's terms (pp. 89, 91). Next, Green argues that the disciples' obtuseness in Luke 9:44–45 and 18:31–34 is based on "faulty conceptual patterns," not lack of information (p. 94). This is finally resolved in Luke 24 and Acts 1–2 where Jesus serves as teacher, opens their eyes, and they receive the Holy Spirit (pp. 95–96). He speaks frequently of "the ongoing conversion of Peter" but never explains from what (or whom) to what (or whom). Turning to metaphors, he identifies three that illustrate "conversion as journey": (1) from darkness to light; (2) from crooked to straight; and (3) from outside to inside. Next, Green discusses Luke 5:27–32; 15:1–32; and 19:1–10, which deal with tax collectors, sinners, and the lost. He admits that none of these texts mentions repentance or conversion but insists that the "conversionary dispositions and/or behaviors" indicate that the concept is present (p. 113).

Following this logic, if conversion is journey, then one must continually be converting. If this is correct, then it is impossible to speak of pre- and post-conversion. While Green's focus is admittedly on Luke-Acts, would Luke, other ancient people, and other ancient texts comport with Green's findings? Would they eschew identifying a "convert" (a term that implies a past-tense line-crossing even if present behavior remains in view)? Did they distinguish between the actions of a convert and conversion? Supplementing the cognitive analysis with ancient evidence to support these claims would strengthen the argument. Whatever one con-

cludes regarding conversion in Luke-Acts should be transferable, at least in generalities, to any other ancient context.

Finally, in chapter 5, he examines texts related to "Community, Agency, and Apostasy" and finds "certain relatively stable elements" associated with conversion (p. 123). Acts 2:38 represents a "default pattern of expected response" because it is an "internal framing device" to which the reader will refer for any information lacking in subsequent accounts (i.e. Luke will not monotonously repeat every single conversionary detail previously provided). Acts 2:42–47 describes the new community as enacting conversion through teaching, fellowship, eating together, and prayer. For Green, "enacting conversion" is identical to "converting" because "conversion is journey." In what way, however, would this be any different than the activity of ancient voluntary associations that performed similar practices but were not considered communities of converts? Perhaps his answer would be that associations could fit within his understanding of conversion.

Regarding divine agency and human response, Green rightly points out that "either-or" thinking is inadequate, since both perspectives are represented in Scripture (p. 134). Luke emphasizes human response, but two texts highlight divine initiative: Acts 5:31 (Peter's response to the high priest) and 11:18 (repentance opening to the Gentiles). Nevertheless, he rightly notes that human response always presumes the context of divine initiative, just as divine initiative always presumes human response. Thus, in Luke-Acts, "conversion could never be reduced to a human endeavor or understood merely in terms of resocialization" (p. 142).

The explanatory power of Green's proposal is most trenchant in his analysis of deconversion, but it appears to depend on circular reasoning, that there are cases of "deconversion" when his view of conversion is accepted. The parable of the soils (Luke 8:4–8) frames the discussion of three specific cases: Judas Iscariot, Ananias and Sapphira, and Simon Magus. Reading these accounts in light of the parable is extremely enlightening. He is careful to note that cases of deconversion "signal not a divine failure but a human one" (p. 159).

Readers may be disappointed at the obvious omission of the role of the Holy Spirit in conversion. Apart from a handful of occurrences and the passing comments that the Spirit enables "inspired interpretation" and "the conversionary life," there is no substantial discussion (pp. 96, 132). The Spirit's absence might be due to the fact that cognitive science cannot measure the divine or that it might conclude that such influence is merely the construct of the mind. On another note, Green begins by observing (in critique of other studies) that "what one assumes conversion to be will determine what one looks for in the Lukan narrative and how one knows when one has found it" (p. 4, cf. p. 84). The reader will have to decide whether his contribution is able to escape the same shortcoming. Finally, where Green intends to define "conversion," he actually defines "converts" (pp. 87, 162–63). Readers interested in Luke-Acts, conversion, and/or cognitive studies will nonetheless find much value in this work.

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Unmanly Men: Refigurations of Masculinity in Luke-Acts. By Brittany E. Wilson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, xv + 341 pp., $74.00.

Questions of gender identity have entered biblical studies in recent years, initially through feminist readings of texts, and lately through considerations of masculine identity. This fine, insightful study reads Luke's portraits of four men in the context(s) of ancient understanding of the "manly man," both Greco-Roman and Jewish. It is yet another from the rich vein of revised doctoral theses supervised by Beverly Gaventa at Princeton Theological Seminary. Wilson is Assistant Professor of NT at Duke Divinity School.

After an introduction, the book is in three parts: (1) "Preliminary Sketches" of masculinity in Luke-Acts and the Greco-Roman world; (2) studies of two minor characters in Luke-Acts, Zechariah and the Ethiopian eunuch; and (3) studies of two major characters, Paul and Jesus, followed by a conclusion. The whole is a model of clear structure and flowing prose. The coverage of secondary literature is excellent (the bibliography is 36 pp. long); it was rare that I thought of something with which Wilson might have engaged.

The introduction points out that previous studies have not studied Lukan men *as men*, which involves questions of power and the relationships of men and women. Chapter 1 then sketches previous work, identifying Michel Foucault's *History of Sexuality* as highly influential on subsequent studies in many fields, including Classics and biblical studies. NT studies is something of a latecomer to the party, the first major work being *NT Masculinities*, edited by Stephen Moore (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003). It is thus unsurprising that there are few treatments of Luke-Acts as yet. Wilson draws four key pointers from what there is, that: Luke emphasizes "the boundary-crossing nature of the gospel" (p. 21); Luke presents masculinity in ways closer to Jewish texts than elite Greco-Roman texts; Luke locates true power with the Holy Spirit (and God and Jesus); and Luke's focus is the good news of Jesus, even when it conflicts with elite/imperial views. Wilson proffers as a working definition of "masculinity": "a configuration of historically located social and personal practices that fall within the larger realm of gender relations" (pp. 21–22). This definition avoids the trap of seeking a transcultural "essence" of masculinity, by recognising the locatedness of the ways humans practice gender.

Chapter 2 then surveys masculinity in the Greco-Roman world, including among Jews. She identifies three features of being a "manly man": such a man is socially elite and does not act like women; his bodily deportment is appropriate and he maintains his bodily boundaries; and he demonstrates power over others and self-control. Jewish (and Christian) authors often took these themes on board—infamously in *Gos. Thom.* 114, where Jesus says he will pray that Mary may become male so that she might enter the kingdom. However, they dissented when their scriptural texts portrayed masculinity otherwise, such as in Jewish rejection of male-male couplings, their lack of concern for physical beauty, and their practice of circumcision (which Greco-Roman writers saw as making Jewish men's sexual powers suspect).

Wilson then turns to the heart of her study, examining four Lukan men. Zechariah (chap. 3) is the first named man in the Third Gospel, and moves from being a man of relatively high status in Jewish society to being "unmanned" by being silenced and thereby losing power. His inability to speak reflects the relative silence of women, by definition of lower status than men. When Zechariah obediently confirms his son's name as "John," he recovers speech and is a man again, but now a man dependent on God—the Lukan reversal theme is enacted in his life, and standard understandings of masculinity are refigured. Jewish and Christian writers share the wider Greco-Roman view of the power of speech as vital to the exercise of power, although they place greater weight on the power of divine speech. Wilson explores silence and speech throughout Luke-Acts and argues cogently that silence and speech demonstrate the power of God, Jesus, and the Spirit.

The Ethiopian eunuch (chap. 4) is a liminal, ambiguous man. This outstanding chapter brings out the tension in his status as powerful (as an official of the queen) and yet impotent (because he is a eunuch). Wilson summarizes the status of eunuchs and Ethiopians in the ancient world, and argues that both his ethnicity and being a eunuch make him sexually ambiguous. Specifically, she spotlights the citation of the Isaianic servant passage (Acts 8:32–33); the quotation characterizes both Jesus and the eunuch as passive, with bodily penetrations and imperfections, lacking progeny, and failing to receive justice—both, in other words, are unmanly men. Jesus's power is exercised through his own weakness in human eyes. It is appropriate for the eunuch to be baptized as a follower of this Jesus. The eunuch is a character who "falls in between" categories of gender, ethnicity, and status, categories whose boundaries the gospel is crossing in Acts.

Paul (chap. 5) is also a man of relatively high status prior to encountering Jesus. Many scholars claim that Paul emerges as a "hero" in Acts who engages with elites and exhibits "manly man" characteristics. Wilson, by contrast, argues that Paul is "unmanned" by his blindness and humiliation on the Damascus road and that afterwards he is dependent on God and thus not in control in a "manly" way. Saul of Tarsus changes from being active, persecuting the church, to passive, led by the hand and waiting for someone to come to tell him what to do. His life becomes a life of acting under the Spirit's direction (e.g. 16:6–10—although such "direct" divine intervention is not the norm for Paul in Acts), and Luke characterizes him as God's "slave" (Acts 16:17; 20:19). Paul displays passions, such as anger and weeping, and suffers persecutions, rather than exhibiting self-control. The second and third tellings of the Damascus road story reinforce and intensify these themes on Paul's own lips. Thus, Jesus says that it hurts Paul to kick against the goads (Acts 26:14), characterizing Paul as an animal, not even human. Wilson summarizes: "For Luke, dependency—not self-control—is the necessary disposition of discipleship" (p. 189).

This brings us to Jesus (chap. 6), whose portrait has been in the background for the chapters so far. Again, Wilson swims against the tide of Lukan scholarship which portrays Jesus as in control and powerful, even in the passion narrative. According to this view, Jesus dies as a noble martyr in control of his passions. She argues, rather, that the Isaianic suffering servant traditions are central to Luke's

understanding of Jesus's mission and death; Jesus is a man called to suffer and die, to experience rejection in passivity, to have his bodily boundaries infringed, and he displays passions that bespeak lack of self-control. Yes, Jesus is "a *man* powerful in deed and word" (Luke 24:19), but he is not a manly man as generally understood. Jesus advocates and enacts avant-garde views of "family" in his own unusual birth and his creation of a "fictive family of God." A study of Luke 22–23 explores Jesus's unmanliness in the passion narrative, noting that crucifixion was an "unmanly" death, that Jesus's body was invaded and harmed, that Jesus shows un-self-controlled passions (e.g. as he prays on the Mount of Olives), and that he is mocked and humiliated. While she is clear that Luke utilizes elements of the "noble death" tradition, Wilson observes they are in a setting that places the emphasis elsewhere. Even after the resurrection, Luke signals that Jesus still bears the marks of his suffering (24:39–40), and in Acts cross and resurrection are tied together in the evangelistic speeches. She responds to the common claim that Luke lacks a theology of the cross: "It is not the case that Luke minimizes Jesus' crucifixion in favor of his resurrection. Luke instead holds both together, for both suffering and glory are key to Jesus' identity" (p. 238).

The conclusion draws the character studies together and identifies the implication that Luke is not (as is sometimes claimed) aiming at elites by portraying elite men who become believers. Rather Luke reshapes masculinity within his perspective on God's power, exercised by Jesus in weakness. Wilson closes by reflecting on Lukan masculinity today, a concern it is good to see amidst academic study. She explores Luke's portrait of God in relation to violence (recognizing that Luke portrays a God who acts violently and yet who absorbs violence on the cross and in the suffering of his people) and in relation to humans and their exercise of power (arguing that Luke "destabilizes" the cultural hierarchy of men over women). Power rests with God, not with humans, or men specifically: it is modelled and refigured by "God's powerless power" (p. 263). Some within the evangelical fold will find these implications challenging for their theory and practice of Christian ministry.

This is a fine book, well written and limpidly clear. We are in debt to Wilson for this exploration, which invites studies on further male characters in Luke-Acts and other early Christian narratives.

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John: A Commentary. By Marianne Meye Thompson. NT Library. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2015, xliv + 532 pp., $60.00.

The NT Library series offers commentaries on every book of the NT, as well as major aspects of NT studies. The series tries to balance critical engagement with the historical context of the biblical texts and with careful attention to the texts' literary design and theological nature. The commentary on the Gospel of John by Marianne Meye Thompson is an excellent contribution to this series and to the

study of John in particular. Thompson has a strong reputation as a Johannine scholar and exegete, and her exegesis shows decades of detailed study of the Fourth Gospel's historical context, narrative nature, and theological intention.

Thompson's methodology fits well with the series: a robust historical analysis with sensitivity to literary and theological issues. In the "Introduction" she locates John in relation to the other Gospels and works diligently to define its originating context. Yet Thompson is not fully confined by strictly historical-critical concerns. Fully aware of research on "the historical Jesus," Thompson speaks of "the inadequacy of historical reconstruction" (p. 9), which she argues is evident in the Gospel itself (e.g. 1:17). Thompson suggests that "undoubtedly John would have been puzzled by modern questions" (p. 9). Such a comment reflects her use of but not submission to a reading of the Gospel by means of its originating context. The reason for this is the unique and complex perspective the Gospel provides on Jesus and his life and ministry. The evangelist tells the story of Jesus in a manner that "rolls the results of what happened into the causes of those events and the substance of things that Jesus said and did, along with the witness of human beings and Scripture, into Jesus' self-declared identity" (pp. 9–10). Thompson is careful not to drive a wedge between John's history and theology, since in this Gospel they "converge, are mutually interpretive, and are impossible to disentangle" (p. 12). Thompson holds common positions regarding the authorship, date, and setting of the Gospel. She does not think "John" was one of the Twelve but is unwilling to present a more likely candidate, preferring to allow the several cryptic possibilities to exist without resolution. She also does not interpret the Gospel from a "Johannine community" perspective, even though she acknowledges that the Gospel would have been shaped by its originating context (p. 22). Such a position is a step away from a long-standing approach to the Gospels, especially John (see, e.g., the work of Martyn, Meeks, and Brown). Thompson believes the (unidentifiable) author of the Fourth Gospel wants to present the readers with a "narratively presented … witness" to the identity of Jesus—"who he was, what he did, and what that means" (p. 23). Any other interpretive agenda moves beyond the scope and intention of the Gospel itself.

The commentary proper is carefully handled, properly balanced, and full of exegetical insights. On page after page Thompson nicely and succinctly explains the details of the narrative with insights drawn from the historical context and literary dimensions of the text, directing the reader to see the theological insights the Gospel displays of Jesus's person and work. The commentary draws from the most important research on the Gospel, as well as several classical commentators (e.g. Augustine). There are also nine excurses that provide helpful summaries of larger issues or themes in John. Several aspects of Thompson's exegesis are worth commending. First, Thompson is one of the few commentators not to read the Gospel through the lens of the (so-called) Johannine community (as evidenced in her explanation of 9:22), even more, to read it as an intentional witness to the person and work of Christ. Such a reading is historical without the exegetical shackles of a complex historical reconstruction, assuming that the Gospel is an overtly theological account that is written for and easily received by the church. Second, Thomp-

son's exegesis is guided by a robust NT or biblical theology that locates the interpretive meaning of John within the full canon of Scripture. An example of this is when Thompson explains the notoriously difficult "Johannine Pentecost" in 20:22 by demanding that it be understood as a depiction or enactment of the new creation of this new humanity. Rather than merely focusing on the metaphysical event that transpired, Thompson rightly sees that "mission and identity are inseparable" (p. 421) and that this scene in John is speaking past the blowing of wind and those particular disciples to the mission of the church. Finally, Thompson exhibits great skill in explaining difficult and historical issues in John in a fair and yet succinct manner. This is evident in Thompson's exegesis of the Nicodemus dialogue in 3:1–15, especially where she interprets the symbolism of "night" and the nature of Nicodemus's intentions (see p. 78). This is not an easy task with such an exegetically demanding book. At times this approach feels like a weakness, since certain issues are not dealt with that maybe should have been or other issues are discussed without enough depth. Yet her approach does make the commentary manageable for the common user, the local pastor.

As difficult (and maybe subjective) as it is to offer some critical comments about Thompson's exegetical decisions, a few might prove helpful for placing this commentary among others and for the advancement of the ongoing study of the Fourth Gospel. To be fair, some of these comments are likely more driven by my own methodological biases or by the limitations of the commentary series. First, there are several difficult texts or verses where Thompson could have provided more analysis. As much as the brevity of this commentary's exegetical discussion makes it more useable and accessible, at times it seems to handicap interpretive explanations that the common reader would expect. For example, Jesus's rejection of his brothers' request to go to the feast and then his decision to go shortly thereafter in 7:8–10 needs further explanation. Thompson offers a helpful theological assessment of Jesus's actions but could have addressed further his intentions (p. 169). Another example would be Thompson's brief discussion of the symbolism of the donkey in 12:14–15. Thompson summarizes how the donkey is "sometimes understood" (p. 266), but she does not show clearly enough how those interpretive differences direct the meaning of the text or how she would interpret the symbolic action. In such cases Thompson seems to prefer to let the Gospel as a whole direct the meaning of a particular text, which in the case of the donkey is explained by 6:14–15, 10:11–30, and 12:1–8, which teach that Jesus is the King but will not seek the office by force or coercion. Finally, I am less convinced by some of Thompson's literary conclusions. For example, Thompson briefly argues that the prologue (1:1–18) is more loosely connected as an "introduction" and not as a formal "prologue" (pp. 25–26). One wonders if the thematic significance between 1:1–18 and the rest of the Gospel is not also functioning in a more directive manner. Thompson also suggests that the Gospel should follow the typical two-part division: book of signs and book of passions (p. 16). Yet Thompson never really lets this division have interpretive control, which causes me to wonder if such a division is either necessary or textually supported. In both cases, Thompson is cautious and balanced, but such assumptions do affect how the Gospel is interpreted.

One may think that there are enough commentaries in print, and maybe especially on the Gospel of John, but this commentary is a welcome addition. Thompson's grasp of the Fourth Gospel, its interpretive issues and its theology, makes this a must-read for any student of John. Thompson may not have dealt with all the scholarly issues the Gospel presents, but that is not her intention. While many commentaries focus more on historical or narrative-critical issues of the text, Thompson's approach is balanced and integrative. *John: A Commentary* is an excellent resource for a pastor, offering a thorough but manageable reading of the Gospel and its portrait of Jesus. It would also serve as an excellent textbook for undergraduate and seminary classes. Maybe more than the other Gospels, John is like a rich interconnected web that needs to be grasped as a whole for its parts to make sense. Thompson gets the whole; she understands the perspective of John. I highly recommend this commentary as an interpretive guide for both student and pastor.

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Becoming the Gospel: Paul, Participation, and Mission. By Michael J. Gorman. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015, x + 341 pp., $28.00 paper.

Becoming the Gospel is the third installment of a fortuitous trilogy that forms Gorman's attempt to explore Paul's theology and spirituality (pp. 2–3, 297). In the first monograph, *Cruciformity: Paul's Narrative Spirituality of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), Gorman suggests that Pauline churches were assemblies of "cruciformity" that possessed an essential "missionary character" (p. 3). In the second work, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God: Kenosis, Justification, and Theosis in Paul's Narrative Soteriology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), he argues that the theme of "cruciform existence" is linked to "participation in Christ" (p. 3). In the present work, Gorman ties these strands together by arguing that transformative participation in the life of God (i.e. theosis) is the Pauline means of advancing the gospel in the world (pp. 3–9, 61, 197, 261, 300). According to Gorman, Paul expected first-century Christians to embody (or become) the gospel in both word and deed by participating in God and thus becoming a living witness of the gospel (pp. 43, 44–49, 84, 109). The majority of the book attempts to explore the interrelated elements of transformative participation such as faith, hope, love, peace, and justice within a missional hermeneutic (pp. 11–15, 18, 301). Thus, the work is a "series of integrated forays into this important field of theological study, reflection and action" (p. 10) that functions as "a sort of Pauline theology for the (already-existing) holistic mission of the church" (pp. 14–15).

In the introduction Gorman indicates that *Becoming the Gospel* is a response to David Congdon, who, in an online review of *Inhabiting the Cruciform God*, argues that Gorman's description of theosis lodges a gap between "being" and "doing" and thus implies that one may participate in God without mission (pp. 3–4). In Congdon's view, Gorman's description of theosis is not ontologically capable of accounting for the necessity of both being and act (p. 4 n. 10). Gorman took this

challenge to heart, and *Becoming the Gospel* is his extended response. Indeed, this work is Gorman's attempt to demonstrate that in the Pauline corpus theosis "is the starting point of mission and is, in fact, its proper theological framework" (p. 4). Thus, the motif of "becoming the gospel" encapsulates the ontological elements of theosis (pp. 44–49, 299–300) and summarizes the central concern of Paul's missional agenda (pp. 15–20, 297–304).

Chapters 1 and 2 present the book's hermeneutical framework. Gorman argues that Paul should be read "missionally" in two ways: first, to discover what Paul's letters say about the *missio Dei* and the role that Paul and his churches were to have in this mission (chap. 1); second, to discover what implications Paul's vision of the *missio Dei* has for readers of Scripture today (chap. 2). In Gorman's view, for Paul, God's mission in the world is to bring salvation to the cosmos, and this salvation is best characterized as "participation" (pp. 23–36). Participation means benefiting from salvation and becoming an embodiment of this salvation for others (pp. 36–49). As for readers of Scripture today, Gorman argues that Paul's commitment to the *missio Dei* requires that a missional hermeneutic must be the governing lens through which the Pauline corpus is interpreted and applied (pp. 51–62).

Chapters 3–8 survey aspects of transformative participation in the Pauline corpus, and each chapter ends with a reflection on how the church can embody these virtues in contemporary practice. Chapter 3 examines the missional virtues of faith, hope, and love in 1 Thessalonians. Gorman argues that the Thessalonians received Paul's message of faith, hope, and love and that, as transformed followers of Jesus, they embodied this message in the midst of suffering (pp. 63–105). Chapter 4 focuses on the same virtues, but investigates them as components of Phil 2:6–11, a text that Gorman identifies as "Paul's master story" (pp. 106–9). He argues that this early Christian hymn depicting Jesus's sacrifice is a "missional Christology" that inspired the Philippians to embody the same faith, hope, and love modeled by Jesus (pp. 121–25).

Chapters 5–6 investigate the virtue of peace. In chapter 5, Gorman begins with a broad examination of peace in the OT and NT and then narrows his focus to Paul, paying particular attention to Romans. In the biblical record, Gorman broadly defines peace (or *shalom*), as both the absence of broken relationships and the establishment of wholeness (pp. 145–46). In Paul, peace is a gift from God, an ecclesial practice, a missional goal, and what the church becomes in the world (pp. 148–69). Chapter 6 considers peace in Ephesians. In Ephesians (which Gorman takes to be authentic [p. 183]), emphasis is placed on the church's role in effecting God's peace for humanity, and yet Gorman points out that the peace embodied by the church is an expression of the peace wrought by the triune God (pp. 181–82, 186–207).

Chapters 7–8 consider the missional virtue of justice. In chapter 7, Gorman examines the justice of God in 1 and 2 Corinthians, arguing that in the Corinthian letters justification and justice are linked (pp. 222–57). According to Gorman, when this observation is given due attention, a "theological and theocentric" view of social justice emerges (p. 213). To summarize: the goal of God's justice/justification is the creation of a transformed community that functions as God's restorative

presence in the world (pp. 257–58). Chapter 8 examines justice in Romans and argues that participation in God's justice and glory (or theosis) is the central theme of the letter (pp. 261, 264). For Gorman, Romans is a treatise on theosis, an "implicit invitation" to participate in God's plan to call both Jew and Gentile to "share in the justice/righteousness and glory of God" (p. 265). In a brief conclusion, Gorman revisits his thesis that Paul's letters are missional documents that invite transformative participation (pp. 297–305).

Becoming the Gospel fittingly brings attention to the interplay between mission and participation in the Pauline corpus. Particularly helpful in this regard is the summary of linguistic and theological features in Paul's letters that demonstrate a link between salvation, mission, and participation (pp. 26–36). In this tightly packed section, Gorman mounts a well-reasoned case that, for Paul, salvation implies active participation in the mission of God and that the interplay between these two features is a major component of Paul's thought and spirituality. Gorman's argument that the Thessalonians embodied the virtues of faith, hope, and love and that this embodiment is an act of mission, is, in my view, the most persuasive portion of the work (pp. 90–102). Here Gorman convincingly makes the case that participation is itself missional, and in this instance the thesis that theosis is capable of handling the ontological freight required of a missional hermeneutic receives its strongest support.

Gorman is right to assert that the themes of participation and mission are linked in the Pauline corpus, but at certain points the value of this link is pressed too far by either implying or explicitly affirming that theosis/participation is the center of Paul's theology (pp. 6, 8, 21, 26, 35 n. 23, 62). Furthermore, the claim that Paul's thought is dictated by a master story of theosis and that this master story is contained in Phil 2:6–11 is difficult to sustain (pp. 62, 106–24). There is evidence to suggest that Paul was influenced by any number of narratives or themes prior to his ministry. Nevertheless, there is no decisive evidence, either in Paul or otherwise, to support the assertion that *all* of Paul's thought is dominated by an overarching metanarrative, much less Phil 2:6–11. Granted, Gorman has argued that Phil 2:6–11 is Paul's master story elsewhere (cf. *Cruciformity*, pp. 75–94, 164–72, 278–80, 316–19), and in *Becoming the Gospel* Gorman's intention is not to defend Paul's master story per se but instead to consider its missional implications (p. 109). However, to insist on a totalizing narrative forces the data into a hermeneutical framework that the evidence does not support. Indeed, to use a missional hermeneutic as the seminal interpretive grid (p. 54) for Pauline interpretation leads to a misreading of certain texts and may also obscure features in Pauline literature that would otherwise be observed.

Despite these limitations, Gorman convincingly argues that participation and mission are interrelated themes in the Pauline corpus. Readers predisposed to appreciate the hermeneutical trend known as theological interpretation of Scripture, as well as scholars and practitioners within the discipline of missional hermeneutics, will find much to appreciate in Gorman's work. At a time when there is great diversity within these emerging interpretive movements, as well as a number of detrac-

tors, Gorman's call for a hermeneutical reset offers one additional perspective that should not be ignored.

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A Narrative Theology of the NT: Exploring the Metanarrative of Exile and Restoration. By Timo Eskola. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 350. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015, xviii + 477 pp., €139.00.

Until recently, biblical theologies were laid out pretty much according to the categories of systematics, although they might be divided first of all by testament, corpus, or author and only then according to topic or doctrine. With the advent of narrative theology, the topics tend to be quite different than in the past, as they are taken from the background stories or overarching metanarratives that are believed to have influenced the biblical authors. Eskola, Privatdozent at the University of Helsinki, has written by far the most erudite and helpful of the narrative theologies to date for NT study.

In short, Eskola argues that Sanders, Wright, and others are correct to see restoration eschatology as the key metanarrative behind the NT. In other words, the Israelites remain in exile, or at least have yet to experience the full restoration of what God wants them to be. This restoration will accompany the arrival of the Davidic messiah and will bless the remnant of Israel that responds positively to him. Jews and Gentiles now come to him entirely by faith and not by works of the Law or anything analogous to them.

Eskola does not attempt to treat all the major themes in every book or corpus of the NT. Instead, he defends the thesis that restoration eschatology is a significant theme, perhaps even the most significant theme, that unites a large portion of the NT, especially Jesus and Paul. He accepts much of the new perspective on first-century Judaism but argues that justification by faith in Jesus, who offered humanity a substitutionary atonement for the forgiveness of their sins, is not a theme to be pitted against restoration eschatology as an alternate "center" of NT thought. Rather, it is part and parcel of the larger metanarrative. Key questions about theodicy are answered en route: Jesus' vicarious sacrifice addresses the questions of God having left former sins unpunished and his people unredeemed (Rom 3:25). Throughout, Eskola highlights the key OT texts, along with non-canonical Second Temple Jewish literature, that afford the backdrop and inspiration for the major NT themes.

While a full-orbed work would stress discontinuity as well, Eskola focuses on the continuity among the various NT writers. No less than a dozen key themes unite Jesus and Paul: the fulfillment of time, gospel, tribulation, suffering, substitutionary sacrifice, bodily resurrection, enthronement on God's glorious throne, realization of restoration, ingathering of the nations, Christ's return, final judgment, and the restoration of Eden. Particularly important are the actions that revolve around God's heavenly throne, as Eskola argued in greater detail in his earlier WUNT of-

fering, *Messiah and the Throne: Jewish Merkabah Mysticism and Early Christian Exaltation Discourse* (WUNT 2/142; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001).

By placing each theme in a setting in the ongoing narrative of the people of Israel, Eskola simultaneously makes a case for the authenticity of elements of the life of the historical Jesus not often acknowledged by the various quests. He appropriately stresses the diversity of perspectives within Second Temple Judaism so that the NT authors take their place within that narrative, even while they push its limits with Jesus functioning in ways that can be ascribed only to Yahweh and with the Jewish and Gentile church together reflecting Israel's restoration. Six Christological narratives prove particularly important: the heavenly enthronement of the Davidic king, the prince of life who conquers death, the suffering servant who gives his offering, the eternal high priest who enters the heavenly Holy of Holies, the messianic judge on the judgment seat, and belief in the king of restoration.

The address of Stephen to the Sanhedrin, far from being an intrusion into the Acts' narrative, captures the key parts of the early Christian story: "All the promises to Abraham have been fulfilled. Moses' hope for a Savior has come true. And as David wanted to see the real temple of God, there is now an answer to this as well. Adapting Isaiah's words we can say that the eschatological sanctuary it [*sic*] is not a house made of stone but a temple of hearts. Proper faith in the Righteous One means circumcision of ears. And the true sign of the chosen people's membership is the circumcision of the Holy Spirit" (p. 245). The problem with the new perspective on Paul is not the characterization of a large swath of first-century Judaism as following covenantal nomism, but the fact that from Paul's perspective, the problem is not how Israel "stays in" the covenant but how they get back in, given their disobedience.

The rest of the NT receives very short shrift compared to Jesus and Paul. Hebrews highlights the creation of the heavenly temple, the letter of James addresses a community that celebrates the Jubilee, and 1 Peter depicts the heavenly priesthood—all three in twelve pages. The epistles of 2 Peter and Jude are ignored altogether. All the writings traditionally attributed to John receive eighteen pages, with Jesus as the new temple serving as the organizing motif.

The conception of this volume offers considerable promise for further study. It stresses intertestamental connections, makes sense of the dominant Israelite narrative of exile and restoration, offers fresh insights into numerous texts and themes, and is not beholden to standard historical-critical presuppositions or conclusions. It rejects unnecessary "either-or" arguments and combines the strengths of Reformation theology with the best insights of newer scholarship. As a result, justification still belongs to the center of Pauline soteriology but Paul "has played the righteousness of God against human righteousness. As the latter is defective, the former proves to be God's salvific action for the benefit of the ungodly" (p. 336). Yet it may be that a different integrating center than the heavenly throne is needed to bring the conception of Eskola's project to its most satisfying fulfillment.

Eskola interacts with evangelical, moderate, and liberal scholarship, taking account of all perspectives with the seriousness that they merit. Key American evangelicals who regularly appear include Beale, Schreiner, Hagner, Evans, and Wither-

ington. For English-language readers less familiar with what he calls the "new Tübingen school," he mediates to them the best of Michel, Hengel, Betz, Stuhlmacher, Schwemer, Avemarie, Riesner, and Ådna. As a Finn, Eskola appropriately responds to Räisänen and his charges of contradiction and incoherence in NT theology. For the same reason, one might have expected him to interact more with Holmén's "continuum" approach to the historical Jesus.

There are an inordinate number of typographical mistakes—misspellings that any English-language spellchecker would catch, reduplication of words or punctuation marks, missing words creating incoherent sentence fragments. This has been a problem before with English-language publications of Mohr Siebeck, though typically not to this degree. Perhaps the large number of meaty WUNT volumes published each year has something to do with this. Nevertheless, Eskola's work well repays careful study. As he acknowledges himself, he is not trying to write the last word on narrative theology but to further the conversation profitably. And that task he has succeeded in doing remarkably well.

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Christianity in the Making, vol. 3: *Neither Jew nor Greek: A Contested Identity*. By James D. G. Dunn. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015, xiv + 946 pp., $60.00.

James Dunn brings his *magnum opus* to a conclusion with the final volume of his *Christianity in the Making* series, which he began with *Jesus Remembered* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003). The series sketches the history of Christianity from Jesus's ministry to the later part of the second century. Christianity's shift from a Jewish sect to a distinct religious community drives these books. How did a Jewish movement evolve into something largely Gentile? Or better how did this category that was neither Jewish nor Gentile, a "third race"—*tertium genus* as Tertullian would call it—emerge by the end of the second century? *Jesus Remembered* investigated the earliest impact that Jesus made on his disciples. *Beginning from Jerusalem* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008) surveyed Christianity's first generation, culminating with the destruction of the temple in AD 70. *Neither Jew nor Greek* covers Christianity's second generation, from AD 70 to roughly 180. According to Dunn, the early Christian community defined itself along two fronts: a break from Judaism on the one hand and a defense against the infiltration of Gnosticism on the other. The Jewish and Gnostic debates occurring over 150 years shaped the church's identity. His work traces these lines.

Dunn breaks the book into five parts. The first part provides a helpful overview of the literary remains of Christianity after AD 70 through the second century. This section presents helpful introductory information (authorship, date of writing, provenance) for the documents written during this phase. Dunn maintains a standard division between the canonical documents of the NT and other second-century documents, not for theological reasons, but because this "subcanonical" writing is

"much poorer in quality than what became acknowledged as the canonical literature" (p. 182).

Dunn draws this distinction further in the second part of the book, which focuses on the Gospel material. After demonstrating how "gospel" shifted from referring to Jesus's life, death, and resurrection (cf. Rom 1:3–4; 1 Cor 1:23) to written Jesus stories, Dunn shows how each evangelist recalls the life of Christ. Dunn focuses on Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and *Thomas*. The unity of the Synoptic Gospels reflects the enduring impact that Jesus made on his first disciples. Nevertheless, the differences in each Synoptic account show how the Gospel writers recall Jesus in various ways to teach various lessons from the life of Christ. Both John and *Thomas* expand these early memories, providing fascinating results. On the surface, *Thomas* is closer to the Synoptic traditions than John; however, John's hermeneutical lens seems to come from Jesus. Dunn concludes that "John developed the Synoptic Jesus tradition as it were *from the inside*, expanding the meaning of the inherited Synoptic tradition, with a message still rooted in the Old Testament and still of immediate relevance to 'the Jews.' In contrast, *Thomas* worked on the early Jesus tradition more *from the outside*, drawing on it and adapting it to a very different understanding of the human situation and a very different understanding of the good news which humanity needed…. *Thomas*'s use of the early Jesus tradition is more like a hostile takeover, whereas John's is like an heir exploring the richness of the inheritance which had come to him from Jesus through the Jesus tradition" (pp. 403–4, emphasis original). The remainder of this section provides a survey of Jesus traditions in the second century, showing the ongoing interest in Jesus's life during this phase. Dunn argues that these Gospels follow similar lines as *Thomas* and move away from traditions established by Jesus in his ministry.

The third part of the book outlines the key tension points between Christianity and Judaism that brought a division between the two, or the "parting of the ways." Jesus's crucifixion and the early church's acceptance of Gentiles created stress, but the Jewish revolts—and Rome's subsequent response—forced a formal break. First, after the destruction of the temple, Rome forced all Jewish males to pay tax, the *Fiscus Judaicus*, as a penalty for the revolt. The tax distinguished Gentile believers from Jewish believers. The Jewish revolt under Simon ben Kosiba created a further division. Many Jews considered him to be the Messiah, placing significant pressure on Jewish Christians to renounce Jesus as Christ. From within Judaism these Jewish Christians were considered traitors. In the wake of the revolt, Rome expelled all Jews from Jerusalem, making the Jerusalem church wholly Gentile. The political climate forced Judaism to reform itself to rabbinic Judaism, excluding Christianity. At the same time, Christianity distinguished itself from Judaism. Dunn's survey of Jewish and Christian literature highlights this parting a little more. The earliest Christian documents were written by Jewish Christians, but second-century Christian writers defined Christianity against Judaism, culminating with the second-century claim that Judaism was not Christianity.

The fourth and fifth parts of the volume discuss the enduring images of Paul, Peter, and John, on through the second-century literature. After giving a short overview of the primary literature, Dunn shows how second-century authors used

these documents, shaping them into orthodoxy. For example, the post-Pauline documents that treat Paul (Acts, Ephesians, the Pastorals, and 2 Peter) smooth out the tension in Paul's writings. The second-century treatments of Paul pick up on this tension, both condemning him (Jewish believers) and heralding him as a hero (Marcion or Valentinus). Paul attempted to integrate the revelation of the resurrected Christ with what he knew from the OT. Tension is inevitable in such a complex theological system. Dunn concludes: "Marcion's Paulinism is the classic example of an aspect of and emphasis in a more complex system being abstracted from the system and pressed to an extreme" (p. 720). While Paul provided theological grist for the early church, Peter represents a direct link with Jesus himself. He most likely did not establish the first church in Rome, but what is significant is that the tradition describes him as much—specifically Matt 16:17–19 and Acts. Second-century writers remembered him as one who brought together the various positions within Christianity. Peter's theological influence may not have been as great as Paul's, but in regards to ecclesiology "he is without peer" (p. 754). Finally, Dunn argues that John represents a development in Christian thinking, particularly with regard to Christology. John's Logos Christology provides a way for Christian theology to define itself against the monotheism of the second-century rabbis. A key aspect of John's Christology is the humanity of Jesus—an affirmation that limited the Gnostic use of the Johannine literature.

Dunn rounds out the book with a chapter that summarizes his findings. The NT reflects diverse theological positions, but it is unified around the confession that Jesus is Christ. The canon is held together by the apostolic link of each author, creating a link to Jesus himself. However, the fact that the church adopted four versions of Jesus's life and ministry shows that they accepted this variety of expression. Dunn agrees with Käsemann: the NT does little to unify various groups. Rather it provides the grist by which the second-century writers (both orthodox and not) developed their own writing. Ultimately, it was the rule of faith—what the earliest Christians believed about Jesus—that created the boundary around the canon.

Neither Jew nor Greek provides a powerful look at the development of Christian thought from the earliest Christians to the end of the second century. By that time the trajectory of thought that led to Eusebius's *Historia Ecclesiastica* was set. Dunn's thesis, that second-century writers tended to develop caricatures of first-century writers, takes advantage of recent work on reception history. There is no doubt that later writers knocked off rough edges to fit NT characters within their scheme of Christianity, but this second-century image most likely blossomed out of the ministries and personalities of the first-century characters themselves. These second-century writers had limits to how they could portray these early Christian writers—limits placed on them by the first-century writers themselves.

Neither Jew nor Greek brings Dunn's *Christianity in the Making* to a conclusion. Much of the series is the culmination of Dunn's earlier projects: *Christology in the Making* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009) and the *Parting of the Ways* (2nd ed.; London: SCM, 2006). These earlier works give the framework for Dunn's work on Christian origins; however, *Christianity in the Making* is more thorough, particularly

when it comes to the sources. In this way, the series surpasses this earlier work. *Christianity in the Making* is the result of a lifetime of sustained research and thought. The series not only provides a thorough history of early Christianity for the reader, it provides a method for future analysis. Sadly, however, Dunn brings his writing career to an end with *Neither Jew nor Greek*. The next generation of NT scholarship owes Dunn a debt of gratitude, not only for this series but also for the number of questions that he has raised about Christian origins throughout his career.

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The New Evangelical Subordinationism? Perspectives on the Equality of God the Father and God the Son. Edited by Dennis W. Jowers and H. Wayne House. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2012, xxiv + 440 pp., $51.00 paper.

The Eternal Generation of the Son: Maintaining Orthodoxy in Trinitarian Theology. By Kevin Giles. Grand Rapids: IVP Academic, 2012, 270 pp., $24.00 paper.

It is a truism that the twentieth century witnessed a renewal of interest in the doctrine of the Trinity, especially through the writings of such theological luminaries as Karl Barth, Karl Rahner, and Jurgen Moltmann. Whether or not the particular interpretations of the Trinity offered by these and other contemporary theologians can be considered a revival of the doctrine as it was classically formulated in the Patristic, medieval, Reformation, and post-Reformation eras is another, more disputed matter (see, for example, the criticisms of the "revival" thesis in Stephen Holmes, *The Quest for the Trinity* [Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012]). Still, it is noteworthy that the doctrine of the Trinity cannot be ignored or sidelined in contemporary dogmatics. The Trinity is currently being given sustained attention and rigorous defense (or else, reformulation) and is even being infused with ecclesiological and socio-political significance.

Evangelicals have not missed out on this renewed interest in the Trinity (see, for example, the Trinitarian works of Millard Erickson, Kevin Giles, Robert Letham, Roger Olson and Christopher Hall, and Bruce Ware). One issue that has particularly animated evangelical theologians is the question of the Son's eternal relation to the Father—more specifically, whether or not the Son is eternally subordinate to the Father in role and function. Proponents of eternal functional subordination (hereafter, EFS) argue from both Scripture and tradition that what distinguishes the persons of the Trinity are relationships of authority and submission. The three persons are equal in being, sharing in the one divine essence, yet are distinct (even hierarchically ranked) in role and function. Opponents of EFS argue that this sharp distinction between function and ontology cannot be so easily maintained. They argue, also from Scripture and tradition, that relationships of authority and submission obtain only in the economy of salvation and cannot be read back into the immanent Trinity, where the three divine persons share equally in one power and authority. Some opponents of EFS, such as Kevin Giles, argue from the position of Nicene orthodoxy that the only distinctions that can be drawn between

the eternal divine persons are their relations of origin: the unbegotten Father, the eternally begotten Son, and the eternally proceeding Holy Spirit. Matters are complicated, however, by the fact that there are both proponents and critics of these traditional Trinitarian categories on both sides of the EFS debate. A further complication arises when one considers the role that gender debates have played in the EFS controversy. Some EFS proponents, such as Wayne Grudem and Bruce Ware, have argued that an equal-in-essence-distinct-in-function understanding of the Trinity grounds gender complementary in human relationships both in the home and in the church. But here also, the parties are not always divided along predictable lines: some opponents of EFS maintain gender complementarity and some proponents of EFS espouse gender egalitarianism.

Two books written by evangelicals highlight the major issues involved in these debates. Dennis Jowers and Wayne House's edited volume, *The New Evangelical Subordinationism? Perspectives on the Equality of God the Father and God the Son*, brings together a diverse array of essays (several previously published in other forums) that address the EFS debate from biblical, theological, historical, and pastoral perspectives. Kevin Giles's book, *The Eternal Generation of the Son: Maintaining Orthodoxy in Trinitarian Theology*, is focused more narrowly on its titular subject. Giles defends the eternal generation of the Son on biblical, historical, and theological grounds and argues that its rejection by some evangelicals marks a significant departure from Nicene orthodoxy. This review will summarize the contents and relative merits of both books and will conclude with some suggestions for the proverbial way forward, as evangelical theologians continue to reflect on the Trinitarian mystery at the heart of the Christian faith. Given the Evangelical Theological Society's 2016 annual meeting topic of the Trinity, these books are particularly important to consider.

The New Evangelical Subordinationism? (hereafter, *TNES*) consists of sixteen chapters that address various aspects of the EFS debate, ranging from linguistic concerns to pastoral matters. In the opening chapter, Philip Cary offers a polemical critique of the EFS position, suggesting that it is such a radical departure from orthodoxy that its proponents are in danger of becoming a separatist sect akin to the Mormons or Jehovah's Witnesses (chap. 1). Bruce Ware takes the opposite tack, arguing from Scripture and several Church Fathers that the persons of the Trinity are equal in essence but eternally distinct in role and function (chap. 2).

Chapter 3 introduces an interesting wrinkle to the story told thus far. Cary's opposition to EFS seems to go hand-in-hand with his gender egalitarianism, and Ware's support for EFS fits nicely with his gender complementarianism. Craig Keener, however, supports "a very broad range of women's ministry" and yet, like Ware, believes that eternal relations of authority and submission obtain in the immanent Trinity (p. 40). Keener argues from John 5:18 that the Son is the agent of the Father and does not presume equality with the Father. He then argues from 1 Corinthians 15:28 that the Son will be eternally submissive to the Father in the age to come.

Linda Belleville provides a detailed analysis of several Christological titles and concludes that attempts to read hierarchical structures into the eternal Godhead fail

to account for the deeply human and Davidic character of much of NT Christology (chap. 4).

In chapter 5, Denny Burk takes up a narrow but important grammatical concern, namely, the use of the articular infinitive in Philippians 2:6 (τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ). Burk argues, against the conventional view, that the article here does not function anaphorically, that is, it does not point back to the antecedent phrase "form of God" (μορφῇ θεοῦ). Instead, Burk sees the article serving the syntactical function of distinguishing the accusative object from the accusative complement (ἁρπαγμὸν, "a thing to be grasped"). The upshot of this grammatical study is that the phrase "equality with God" is not semantically equivalent to its supposed antecedent, "form of God." For Burk, this conclusion means that the phrase "equality with God" can be interpreted in functional rather than ontological terms: the Son does not possess functional equality with God, nor does he grasp after it (p. 103).

In chapter 6, Keith Johnson examines the Trinitarian theology of Augustine and explores how it bears upon the EFS debate. In Augustine's view, the divine persons *ad intra* are one in substance and can only be distinguished according to their relations of origin. The divine persons are also united *ad extra* (the unity of Trinitarian operations) but can be distinguished in terms of the economic missions (the sending of the Son and Spirit), which in some sense reflect their immanent relations. According to Johnson, Augustine's Trinitarianism cannot be co-opted by either side in the EFS debate. Against some EFS opponents, Augustine quite clearly affirms the eternal relations of origin as well as an irreversible ordering (*taxis*) of Trinitarian agency. But against some proponents of EFS, Augustine clearly affirms the unity of Trinitarian operations (even in the sending of the Son), and he never suggests that authority/submission structures constitute the eternal Trinitarian relations.

In chapter 7, House argues that the subordinationist position has a long and distinguished pedigree. He points to several important precedents for the EFS position, including Thomas Aquinas, John Calvin, Charles Hodge, and William G. T. Shedd. He also examines the apparent equivocation among opponents when it comes to the terms "power" and "authority." House argues that the Fathers clearly affirmed one divine power in the Godhead but that they were also comfortable distinguishing between authority and "rank" among the eternal divine persons. His essay concludes with a survey of patristic interpretations of John 14:28 ("My Father is greater than I") and 1 Corinthians 15:28 ("then the Son himself will be subjected to him").

Yudha Thianto, examines the Trinitarian theology of Joseph Bingham, an early eighteenth-century Anglian pastor and church historian (chap. 8). Bingham sought to acquit himself of Arian charges by pointing to the unity of the divine persons implicit in the baptismal formula of Matthew 28.

William David Spencer proposes "An Evangelical Statement on the Trinity" and a brief theological commentary on the paragraph-long statement (chap. 9). Spencer's statement affirms the unity of authority in the Godhead and denies that any person has "eternal primacy" over the others (p. 213).

Wayne Grudem attempts to demonstrate the EFS position from Scripture (chap. 10). Like Ware, Grudem affirms the submission/subordination of the Son before, during, and after his state of humiliation. Kevin Giles argues for a communal model of the Trinity, which eliminates any notion of subordination within the eternal life of God (chap. 11). According to Giles, the Son's eternal functional subordination, precisely because it is eternal and irreversible, would make him ontologically inferior to the Father. Michael Bird and Robert Shillaker suggest that Giles and other EFS opponents have confused the key Trinitarian terms: "person" and "nature"/"essence" (chap. 12). A subordination that takes place at the level of person need not imply a subordination of essence, a point that seems borne out by the traditional Reformed understanding of the covenant of redemption. Mary Veeneman sketches the Trinitarian theology of Karl Rahner and suggests some ways in which it might inform evangelical debates over the Trinity (chap. 13). Jack and Judith Balswick seek to provide a Trinitarian model for understanding unity and distinction within the marriage relationship (chap. 14). Scott Horrell proposes a "complementarian" model of the Trinity that seeks to incorporate the best of both sides in the EFS debate (chap. 15). Horrell rejects a distinction of authority among the Trinitarian persons, but maintains an eternal, voluntary distinction of functions. In the book's final chapter, Jowers offers a sustained philosophical argument against the possibility of EFS within a metaphysically simple God (chap. 16).

TNES suffers from weaknesses common to edited volumes. Its essays are uneven in terms of persuasiveness, cohesiveness, and relevance to the topic at hand. Volumes that present competing perspectives often run the risk of confirmation bias, with readers favoring their own presupposed conclusions and discounting competing perspectives. But Jowers and House have pulled together such a diverse array of perspectives that every reader should have their views challenged in some way. For example, proponents of EFS who cite Augustine in favor of their position will have to wrestle with Johnson's astute presentation of Augustine's nuanced perspective. On the other hand, opponents of EFS will have to account for the patristic interpretations of John 14:28, catalogued by House, which admitted some kind of ranking among the divine persons (though the quotes on 1 Corinthians 15:58 that House marshals are either inconclusive or else support an incarnational understanding of the Son's eternal submission to God).

Some chapters were more relevant to the EFS debate than others. Thianto's chapter is an interesting historical study, but it is not immediately apparent how it bears upon the contemporary debate (surely everyone in the EFS debate affirms the usage of the Trinitarian baptismal formula and its implications for the equality of the divine persons). Burk convincingly demonstrates his syntactical point, but it hardly necessitates his conclusion. The semantic equivalence of the two phrases in Philippians 2:6 ("form of God" and "equality with God") is not wholly dependent upon the anaphoric use of the articular infinitive; contextual and theological considerations must also be weighed. Veeneman's chapter offers a fascinating examination of Rahner's Trinitarian theology, but her suggested applications to the EFS debate at the end are underdeveloped.

As a whole, the volume seems a bit disjointed and disorganized. Some chapters are paired effectively. For example, Cary and Ware fit together well as opposing views, as did Grudem and Giles. But perhaps a topical arrangement (along biblical, historical, theological, and practical lines) could have provided a more cohesive organization for the book. Still, several chapters make important contributions to the EFS debate (Johnson's analysis of Augustine, Bird and Shillaker's discussion of the gender debate, Horrell's proposal for a "complementarian trinitarianism," and Jowers's treatment of divine simplicity stand out), and the volume as a whole rewards careful examination.

Giles's volume, *The Eternal Generation of the Son* (hereafter, *TEGS*) is, in a sense, more narrowly focused than *TNES*. Giles does not address the EFS debate per se. Instead, he focuses on an important theological tension that the EFS debate has exposed, namely, the tendency of some evangelicals to abandon the eternal relations of origin within the Godhead. Giles seeks to defend the eternal generation of the Son (and by implication the other relations of origin) from Scripture and the Christian tradition.

In Giles's first two chapters, he introduces the eternal generation (hereafter, EG) debate and lays out his theological methodology. He argues that "doing theology" involves more than simply appealing to various Bible verses that address a particular topic. Instead, the enterprise of evangelical theology involves appeal to Scripture, sensitivity to the Christian tradition (especially the Nicene and Reformation traditions), the theological interpretation of Scripture, and the careful construction of theological models that account for all of these sources. So, while Giles believes that a scriptural case can be made for EG, he does not believe that such a case can stand apart from appeal to tradition and theological considerations.

In chapter 3, Giles seeks to make his biblical case for EG. Opponents of EG, building on the semantic work of Dale Moody, often argue that EG is ruled out by a proper understanding of the Greek term *monogenēs*, which does not mean "only begotten," as some have mistakenly believed, but instead something closer to "one of kind" or "unique." Giles concedes the etymological point, but maintains that the patristic case for eternal generation was never built upon such a semantic error (especially since the Eastern Fathers spoke and wrote in Greek). Instead, the Fathers believed that the Son's uniqueness resides in his being eternally begotten, a concept they derived from the title "Son" applied to the eternal Second Person. Giles examines the patristic interpretation of passages such as Psalm 2:7 and Proverbs 8:25. Though the Fathers rejected the ontological subordinationism that the Arians read into these passages, they nonetheless understood these texts as expressing something true of the eternal relation between the Father and the Son. What distinguishes the Father and Son eternally is precisely this relation of origin: the Father is unbegotten, and the Son is eternally begotten of the Father. Giles closes this chapter with a brief discussion of the eternal procession of the Holy Spirit and of the *filioque* controversy.

Chapters 4 through 7 constitute a sustained historical survey of EG in the Christian tradition. Giles examines four successive phases: the early patristic period to Athanasius, the Cappadocians and the Nicene Creed, the medieval contributions

of Aquinas and Anselm, and the Reformation and post-Reformation tradition. The details of Giles's historical survey need not be recounted here. Suffice it say that his case is strong: the majority report in the post-Nicene Christian tradition is belief in the eternal relations of origin as the distinguishing properties in the immanent Trinity.

Chapters 8 and 9 address further questions that emerge from this biblical and historical belief in EG. In chapter 8, Giles poses the question, "Does the eternal generation of the Son imply or necessitate the eternal subordination of the Son?" It is here that the EG debate and EFS debate overlap. Giles notes, however, that the two debates do not map onto one another neatly. There are both EG affirmers and deniers on both sides of the EFS debate. As an EFS opponent, Giles predictably answers the question above negatively. EG does not imply subordinationism, either ontological or functional. In chapter 9, Giles considers whether there is a better way to ground the eternal distinction of Father and Son. After examining several possible alternatives, he concludes that the Nicene distinctions still provide the best way to account for all that Scripture says about the triune nature of God.

In chapter 10, Giles examines the fate of EG in contemporary theology. Some theologians, such T. F. Torrance, have continued to give the doctrine robust defense, but others, such as Robert Jenson and Wolfhart Pannenberg, have sought alternative accounts of inter-Trinitarian life. In the final chapter (chap. 11), Giles summarizes his biblical and historical case for EG and concludes with the text of the Nicene Creed.

Giles's book has several noteworthy features. First, he lays out a compelling vision for evangelical theological method. Simple proof-texting will not do when it comes to constructing theological models, especially when speculating about the eternal life of the Trinity. Instead, something approximating Giles's method seems necessary: an approach to "doing theology" that is grounded in the biblical revelation but deferent to the Christian tradition and attuned to the theological interpretation of Scripture. Second, Giles makes a convincing historical case for EG. Prior to the modern era, the eternal relations of origin were never seriously questioned within Christian orthodoxy. Departing from the tradition on a matter of such prominence should only be considered when all other biblical and theological alternatives have been exhausted. Third, Giles makes a plausible case for EG from Scripture itself. Not everyone will be convinced by his (or, more to the point, the tradition's) exegesis of Psalm 2:7, Proverbs 8:25, and the relevant texts from the Johannine literature, but a compelling case can be made that these and other texts at least point in the direction of something like eternal generation. The Son is eternally the Son. The Father is eternally the Father. These titles are not empty names, but point to something real about their eternal personal relations. As Giles argues, all the alternatives for understanding the eternal Trinitarian distinctions (such as the one provided by EFS) have trouble competing with the historic belief in the eternal relations of origin.

So where should evangelicals go from here? Is there a way beyond the impasse? Given the multi-faceted nature of the debate—involving, as it does, deeply held commitments about biblical interpretation, gender roles, the place of tradition

in theological method, and so forth—any kind of consensus seems unlikely. But surely evangelicalism will be most benefited from a conversation that is both charitable and challenging and a debate that recognizes our substantial areas of agreement without papering over our remaining areas of disagreement. With these considerations in mind, the following concerns seem to be most pressing as the debate continues.

Theological method: A foundational issue underlying the EFS debate is the question of theological method—how do we "do theology," especially in light of Scripture and tradition? What is the relation between biblical affirmations and theological constructions? Does the Bible provide us with a model of Trinitarian relations in a transparent and straightforward sense, or is the construction of theological models more characterized by second-order, doctrinal reflections in light of the Christian tradition? More specifically, what is the relationship between the picture of the Trinity we encounter in the economy of salvation and our reflections on the inner life of the eternally Triune God? As Jowers argues, the two parties in the EFS debate tend to be divided precisely along these methodological lines, with EFS proponents taking a more biblicist approach and EFS opponents more inclined "to consult the tradition of Christian reflection on these subjects in search of canons of interpretation that help make sense of the relevant text" (*TNES*, p. 411). These tendencies should not be over-emphasized because all sides are confessedly seeking to account for both biblical and traditional considerations. In any event, the questions of theological method (e.g. sources, authority, model building) loom large in these debates.

Church Fathers: A closely related question arises when we consider what kind of authority ought to be ascribed to tradition, especially to the ecumenical creeds and councils. Is it permissible (or wise) to dispense with creedal language (e.g. the language of eternal generation/procession)? Does the evangelical commitment to the formal principle of the Reformation, *sola Scriptura*, demand a reconsideration of creedal language in light of Scripture? Even if evangelicals can agree that tradition possesses a certain kind of authority in our theologies, the hard work of interpreting and applying the tradition still remains. It is also important to ask which voices from the past ought to be given the most weight in these debates. For example, should the Fathers of the second and third century, when subordinationist themes were more prevalent, be afforded the same authority as the pro-Nicene Fathers of the fourth century and beyond, when more mature Trinitarian reflection tended to downplay or denounce subordinationism? Few questions are more relevant for these debates than the place and interpretation of the Christian tradition and its relation to the foundational authority of Scripture.

Because the questions involved in these controversies were first raised and seriously debated in the first five centuries of the church, it seems incumbent upon evangelical theologians to be intimately acquainted with the writings of this period. The contemporary Trinitarian debates provide a good opportunity for evangelicals to rediscover the seminal place of the Fathers for Christian theology. A careful and critical reading of the Fathers, preferably in the original languages, seems prerequisite to serious engagement with these debates. Johnson's treatment of Augustine

and House's discussion of the history of interpretation of John 14:28 provide helpful models of this kind of theological retrieval.

Separation of issues: Making sense of the EFS debate demands the ability to make careful distinctions. First and foremost, as several contributors to these volumes argue, evangelicals desperately need to disentangle the EFS debate from contemporary debates over gender roles. While theologians on both sides might continue to explore the implications of their respective views for other areas of faith and practice, it seems best to separate the issues so as to give each the judicious consideration it deserves. As pointed out above, not all EFS proponents are complementarians and not all EFS opponents are egalitarians. Further, not all EFS proponents deny eternal generation and not all EFS opponents affirm it. Only by carefully unwinding the debates can we adequately consider the biblical and theological issues involved in each. This task is especially pressing given the *sui generis* nature of the immanent Trinity. Several contributors rightly voiced concerns over the tendency in contemporary theology to press the Trinity into the service of a particular sociological, economic, or ecclesiological program. As Karen Kilby has pointed out elsewhere, a healthy apophaticism regarding the inner life of God should caution us against these kinds of Trinitarian analogies (Karen Kilby, "Is an Apophatic Trinitarianism Possible?" *IJST* 12 [January 2010]: 65–77).

Charity: Finally, as several contributors also pointed out, there is a pressing need for charity in expressing disagreements in these debates. Sadly, the rhetoric on both sides can get too heated. Going forward it seems best to avoid language such as "heresy," "historical ignorance," "thoughtless prejudice," "without question," and so forth. Surely Keener's advice is sound: "We may dispute how central this question is, but salvation does not rise or fall on it, and therefore we are not free to treat those who differ on the matter as if they are not our brothers and sisters in Christ" (*TNES*, p. 54).

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A Free Corrector: Colin Gunton and the Legacy of Augustine. By Joshua McNall. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015, xii + 329 pp., $44.00 paper.

Colin E. Gunton, the late English systematic theologian, played a significant role in the revival of the doctrine of the Trinity in the twentieth century. Yet, Gunton is well known for his antagonism toward another Trinitarian theologian from an earlier era, Augustine. Significant debate has ensued over whether Gunton is fair in his critique of Augustine's thought and its subsequent influence on Western theology.

Weighing in on this debate, Joshua McNall explores Gunton's various critiques of Augustine in order to evaluate their merits. This is an expanded version of McNall's doctoral dissertation from the University of Manchester.

McNall's chapters divide into three sections. The first section (chaps. 1–4) examines various areas of Augustine's thought, such as creation, the Trinity, and dual-

ism, and identifies Gunton's specific charges against them. The second section (chaps. 5–8) moves to Augustine's "afterlife" in order to discern whether Augustine is "the Achilles' heel of all Western theology" (p. 27). The last section (chaps. 9–10) considers Irenaeus and the Cappadocians in light of another of Gunton's claims—that Augustine's failings not only contributed to later problems, but that he also "failed to appropriate the achievements of these theologians who preceded him" (p. 234).

In chapter 1, McNall seeks to uncover the roots of Gunton's "constructive doctrine of the Trinity," which derives from the unity of God's act and being in the divine economy (p. 5). McNall then introduces Gunton's charges against Augustine in his views of creation (dualism) and God (monism). In chapter 2, McNall explores the ways in which scholars (e.g. Steven Holmes, Bradley Green) have profoundly challenged Gunton's criticisms of Augustine. Nevertheless, McNall concludes that "Gunton's theological project is deserving of some further evaluation" (p. 50). This is McNall's basic stance throughout the volume: while Gunton's criticisms are often unfair and partial representations of Augustine's theology, they should not be quickly dismissed because they still possess significant merit.

In chapters 3 and 4, McNall delves further into Gunton's specific charges against Augustine. In chapter 3, he examines Gunton's charge of a monistic imbalance in Augustine's doctrine of the Trinity, while in chapter 4 he examines the putative damaging dualism in Augustine's concepts of time, matter, and triune mediation. McNall argues that Augustine's appropriation of divine simplicity is not "an indicator of monistic drift" (p. 91). However, he agrees with Gunton that "Augustine unwittingly contributed to certain imbalances within the subsequent tradition" (p. 92). Significantly, McNall acknowledges that Augustine's tendency to turn inwardly to look for the *vestigia trinitatis* has had a long and negative influence on Augustine's successors and may have contributed to a deep-seated dualism in Western theology.

In chapters 5 through 8, McNall turns to the successors of Augustine from the medieval through the modern era. McNall argues that some early medieval thinkers, like Boethius and Gregory the Great, failed to appropriate Augustine's theology despite their admiration for him. This trend continued into the high middle ages. Though thinkers from Anselm to Bonaventure continued to view the rational mind as the *vestigium trinitatis*, they also went beyond Augustine and reshaped his theology according to their own theological interests.

In chapter 6, McNall examines the late medieval period. While Gunton praised John Duns Scotus's concept of univocity against Augustine's ontic hierarchy, he found William of Ockham's idea of the divine will problematic because he "followed Augustine in explaining reality through an appeal to an apparently *arbitrary* and *monistic* will of God" (p. 171). McNall, however, rejects Gunton's charge on the grounds that Ockham's reading of Augustine was selective.

In chapter 7, McNall surveys the Reformation. On Luther, Gunton claims that Augustine's understanding of the Spirit as a mere link between the Father and the Son fostered individualism in Luther's theology. Similarly, Gunton charges that Luther's concept of justification shows that "the meaning of the justice of God . . .

came to be too closely tied to individual sin and forgiveness, too loosely to the cosmic and social dimensions" (p. 198). On Calvin, by contrast, Gunton points out that the notion of double predestination in Calvin's theology exemplifies Augustine's negative influence that gives priority to a monistic and arbitrary will of God over God's triune love.

Moving on to the modern era in chapter 8, McNall examines René Descartes, the father of modern Western philosophy. Gunton claims that Augustine stands between Plato and Descartes due to the similarity between Descartes's *Cogito, ergo sum* and Augustine's inward turn to find truth. While McNall rejects Gunton's claim that Augustine was the "'proto-modern' thinker," he agrees with Gunton that Descartes might have taken a cue from Augustine as to where to look for truth (p. 228). McNall argues that among all Gunton's charges against Augustine, the one against Augustine's inward turn "remains more viable" because it "proved influential in shaping certain modern tendencies [e.g., individualism and dualism]" (pp. 231–232).

In chapters 9 and 10, McNall looks to the time before Augustine to examine Irenaeus and the Cappadocian Fathers. He argues that Irenaeus's theology could have helped Augustine correct some of his imbalances (e.g. dualism and monistic view of God) because it offers alternatives in relation to created matter, the *imago Dei*, time, and mediation. But the Cappadocian Fathers, contrary to Gunton's claims, were not so different from Augustine in many areas of their theology. Like Augustine, the Cappadocians were cautious about applying a univocal definition to *hypostases*. Further, the Cappadocians saw the rational mind to be a place where the image of God is manifested. In the end, McNall arrives at a "split decision" regarding Gunton's assertions: his claims can be justified in the case of Irenaeus, yet fall short in the case of the Cappadocians (p. 278).

In the final chapter, McNall gives a brief summary of Gunton on Augustine and concludes that "Gunton was too 'free' in his correction of Augustine and his heirs," although Gunton's claims are justified in some areas of Augustine's theology (e.g. his inward turn; pp. 295–96).

McNall's work covers some of the same ground as the earlier work by Bradley Green, *Colin Gunton and the Failure of Augustine: The Theology of Colin Gunton in Light of Augustine*. Yet McNall goes further in looking at Augustine's predecessors and successors, while Green's work was limited to Augustine himself. The extended analysis is a strength of this volume. Further, his emphasis on the three main areas of Gunton's complaints against Augustine (dualism, monism, and the inward turn) keeps the study focused. In the end, many readers will agree with McNall that Gunton was too free in his corrections of Augustine.

One area that could have benefitted from greater emphasis is Gunton's justified criticism of Augustine's inward turn. This has surely had a significant impact and ongoing influence on Western theology. As Gunton observed, "Because God is triune, we must respond to him in a particular way, or rather set of ways, corresponding to the richness of his being" (*The Promise of Trinitarian Theology*, p. 4). If so, whether to turn inwardly (to the mind) or outwardly (to revelation) determines one's approach to God and God's relation to humanity and the rest of creation.

This, in my view, is the core of Gunton's argument against Augustine and deserves further investigation.

In summary, McNall has made a significant contribution to the debate over Gunton's evaluation of Augustine. This volume will serve scholars of Gunton's work, those interested in Augustine's influence, and historical and contemporary Trinitarian theology.

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Talking Doctrine: Mormons and Evangelicals in Conversation. Edited by Richard J. Mouw and Robert L. Millett. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015, 256 pp., $20.00 paper.

Richard J. Mouw and Robert L. Millett have been the two leading voices in a fifteen-year long dialogue that has taken place between Latter-day Saint and evangelical scholars. They have served to champion these dialogues in both of their respective communities by bringing together other scholars to engage in directed discussions about matters of theological commonalities and distinctions in an effort to garner mutual understanding. In their co-edited volume, they have attempted to put a capstone of sorts on the present context of these dialogues.

Talking Doctrine serves to summarize and report on the status of the dialogue that has taken place for the last several years between these two groups. Two institutions—Brigham Young University and Fuller Theological Seminary—dominate, but certainly do not exhaust, the participant list. *Talking Doctrine* is unique in the brief history of this dialogue because of the number of essayists and because of its attempt to share both the story of the dialogue itself while providing a window into its content. The book comes in the spirit of other volumes such as *How Wide the Divide?,* by Craig L. Blomberg and Stephen E. Robinson (1997); *Claiming Christ,* by Gerald R. McDermott and Robert L. Millett (2007); *Bridging the Divide*, by Robert L. Millett and Gregory C . V. Johnson (2007); and most recently the non-dialogical *Talking with Mormons* by Richard J. Mouw (2012).

The volume is edited by Mouw, former president of Fuller Theological Seminary, and Millett, professor emeritus of religious education at Brigham Young University. In addition to these two editors, the book has seventeen other contributors with some connection to the dialogue itself. The book is broken up into two large sections. The first deals with specific perspectives and discussions about the formal Mormon-evangelical dialogue that has taken place since 2000. This section consists of twelve different essays that reflect descriptively on the nature of the dialogue, cast vision prescriptively for particular views and particular textures of interfaith dialogue, and recount specific interpersonal experiences with individuated or corporate interfaith dialogue. The second section is comprised of a series of theological reflections that focus on issues that have been of specific interest in the dialogue and have risen to the surface as points of discussion and/or doctrinal distinction.

The participants in the dialogue, exemplified by the essayists in the volume, speak univocally to their affection and enjoyment through the challenging process of dialogue itself. Additionally, they speak to their heightened appreciation of those adherents on the other side of the discussions. Some were surprised by the views of others, while some found refreshment in the personal piety of those with disparate theologies. The volume tells, in different accounts, of the astonishment, discovery, and personal journey of many of the essayists throughout the prolonged conversational experience. It is a good window into an otherwise largely private affair that, given the role of its participants, has implications for public life. The weight and value of those implications will likely vary significantly depending upon the vantage point, interests, and history of readers.

The book is both an anthology of essays and an artifact of historical relations between two communities. Summarily, the first half of the book is largely a compendium of personal impressions. It provides a set of varying narratives both reflecting on the dialogue and highlighting its personal impact. The chapters include longstanding LDS and evangelical figures in the dialogue giving us a history, an overview, personal reflections, and personal hopes in several short chapters (chaps. 1–5)

Subsequently the chapters become more substantive in their orientation as they look at specifics of interfaith dialogue. Chapter 6, by Gerald McDermott, helpfully discusses what makes for interfaith dialogue. This is a lynchpin chapter that aids in evaluating aspects of the dialogue itself. This chapter seems a particularly important one for setting the trajectories of this volume.

The next few chapters seem oddly collocated. In chapter 7 Dennis Okholm reflects on what he learned about apologetic method and interpersonal engagement through the dialogues. Chapter 9 follows suit with Okholm's essay, as LDS scholar Rachel Cope calls for generosity and empathy to serve as leading value-drivers in interfaith dialogue.

Chapters 8 and 10 seem to fit better together from a thematic perspective because both deal with rooting theology in space and time. Chapter 8 deals with evangelicalism and Mormonism as historical faiths tied to events and places that form sacred spaces of remembrance and theological significance. However, a majority of the chapter's focus is given over to LDS history. Chapter 10 articulates the nature of religion as formal and folkish. In so doing, it rightly demonstrates that Mormonism is rooted in a type of tangible praxis through the experiential religious illustration of temple garments and LDS temple work.

In Chapter 11, BYU professor J. B. Haws shows the common ground that the two faiths have found in the public sphere. While the two may engage in critical theological dialogue, they share a common value structure that tends to press them toward a common direction in civic and political matters.

The most personal essay, chapter 12, forms a fitting conclusion to the section of personal reflections on the dialogue. It is a unique chapter with its author, Sarah Taylor, being a former BYU student who, at one and the same time, is an evangelical. She recounts her personal theological journey and transitions in her perspective on Mormons, Mormonism, and her own evangelicalism during her tenure.

The second half of the book is more theologically substantive. It takes up several issues that were put on the table over the fifteen years of dialogue. Five major issues—the nature of God, theological anthropology, grace, religious authority, and missiology—are covered over these nine chapters. The final chapter, written by Haws, is in keeping with his previous theme of religion in public life but concerns itself with Mormonism's public perception.

Craig Blomberg authors the thirteenth chapter in which he discusses the differences and commonalities between both communities in doctrinal matters relating to the Godhead. The essay tries to feel out the boundaries and flexibility of orthodoxy to see what room for discussion is available for both groups. Can evangelicals imagine a God in a body and still be orthodox? Is there more commonality than we might initially assume between the two communities? While at times Blomberg seems to press orthodoxy's flexibility to a place that calls for an ecclesiastical Gumby, his intent seems to be that of probing the boundaries and utilizing both LDS metaphysics and theology to explore the ideological space.

Chapters 14 through 16 continue a focus on the Godhead but purposefully focus on Trinitarianism. Christopher Hall talks about the Trinity in the eponymous chapter 14. His essay primarily explains the challenge of Trinitarian talk among two communities with distinct metaphysics. The Mormon material metaphysic makes dialogue about essential oneness a particular challenge to evangelicals.

Chapter 15, dealing with both a brief history of LDS doctrinal development on Trinitarianism and an expression of a LDS perspective on the issue, comes from Mormon scholar Brian Birch. He discusses how Mormonism's view relates to modalism and tritheism, introducing a concept of "divine investiture" wherein the Son takes on the invested and representative authority of the Father without operating out of the same essential nature. It further demonstrates the challenge of understanding between communities with disparate metaphysics.

The chapters devoted to Trinitarian issues conclude with Bill Heersink's chapter on Trinitarianism as a lived religious experience in the lives of both evangelicals and Mormons. He attempts to explain shared experiences with the three persons of the Godhead while dealing with the tensions produced by such experiences amidst distinct theological commitments.

Though separated in the volume, two chapters written by Mormon scholars deal with theological anthropology. Chapter 17 by Grant Underwood addresses issues in LDS theological anthropology ranging from Mormon materialist metaphysics to the LDS understanding of deification as theologically dependent on the metaphysical ontology of celestial parentage and eternal regressive "intelligences." Chapter 22 focuses on the LDS perspective of deification. Millett, in moderate contrast to Underwood, makes the case for parallels between the Eastern Orthodox doctrine of deification and the LDS version of it.

Camille Fronk Olson makes the case for a more progressive Mormon perspective of grace in chapter 18. A number of recent works in LDS theology have tried to find a greater place for grace. Olson attempts to break a polarization between the two communities wherein Mormons tend to see evangelicals adhering to

an easy-believism of sorts, and reciprocally evangelicals have little category for any Mormon talk of grace.

Chapters 19 and 20, by Milllett and Mouw, focus on the issue of authority. Millett's chapter, "Authority is Everything," emphasizes the importance of having an authoritative lineage to speak to doctrinal matters. What is unclear is why Joseph Smith's claim to authority should receive any more credence than anyone else's claim. Mouw's chapter follows and is an effort to minimize the divergence between the two communities regarding their respective loci of authority. He discusses the nature of revelation, both biblical and ongoing. His conclusion is that while we may disagree as to the identification of authority, we can discuss matters about the Word of God because both communities see in it a revelation about the Father and the Son.

In chapter 21, C. Douglas McConnell adds an outlying essay contrasting and comparing missionary methodology and evangelistic approaches between the two communities through observations gleaned from strategies employed in Papua New Guinea.

Finally, the volume concludes with a chapter ("Is Mormonism Biblical?") by BYU professor J. B. Haws. In a telling statement he concedes, "It might be worth repeating at this point that this advocating for the appropriateness of labeling Mormons 'biblical' is more concerned with questions of public perception and common ground than with technical theological classifications" (p. 212). He next admits this approach "will not satisfy all readers, especially informed ones" (p. 212). But isn't this problematic? It seems to bring into question the validity and even ethics of creating a perception that can't pass the test of knowledgeable people. Why then make the case for Mormonism as biblical if informed people will not consent to it?

In terms of assessment, the strengths of the book are that it touches on a wide range of issues and has a list of able contributors who represent stations ranging in expertise. Additionally, it summarizes and gives helpful insight into an historic conversation between evangelicals, largely (but not solely) associated with Fuller Seminary and Brigham Young University. Third, it is a great foundation for discussing relevant theological issues between the two communities. In that vein, it creates a lot of talking points and presents a range of doctrinal subjects. Fourth, it helps in the realm of theological discussion to remind us that friendship can form in the midst of differences. Finally, it highlights the fact that arriving at carefully articulated understandings among individuals does indeed matter. In that wise the volume succeeds at the level of individual academic friendship, which seems to be, at its most organic level, what the ongoing dialogue has been. We need continual reminders that disposition and warmth matter even amidst competing doctrinal claims.

The weaknesses of the book seem to be three. First, it only muddies what it seeks to make clear. If the goal is to clarify the issues at stake between Mormons and evangelicals by creating windows into issues discussed in the dialogues, then the book fails. It does so because there are so many different perspectives that readers leave perplexed by whether or not the two sides see their discussion as a

kind of in-house Christian conversation or a dialogue between people with different eternal destinies in view. For example, Heersink (chap. 16) makes a call for all who claim forgiveness and an experience with three persons of the Godhead to bond together in unity. He seems to see the discussion as happening between Christians. However, McConnell (chap. 21) employs missionary zeal and a longing to be a faithful gospel-witness in the midst of the dialogues, which implies an understanding that goes beyond friendship and cordiality into evangelism.

Second, pressing the boundaries in dialogue has its own nobility, yet faithfulness to represent each individual's tradition as normatively understood is an important value as well. I think here the book, at times, fails. An example of this comes in chapter 12 where Sarah Taylor explains her astonishment at the realization that her LDS friend could be fully a Christian and yet hold to the idea that God may have sinned. This type of assertion presses beyond traditional boundaries and ceases to have fidelity to the communities represented. Evangelical orthodoxy would not permit, regardless of whether Taylor permits, the notion that a Christian could viably assert that God was once a sinner. This idea places such a strain on what evangelicals have historically identified as "Christian" that it no longer can be said to be representative of that body's core theological convictions. No one bearing the label could assert it and remain in historical continuity with the tradition.

Third, while the book is a fun theological and, more narrowly, ecclesiological work, it misses having a definitive mark of relevance. This comes to light through the lenses established by Cory Willson in chapter 10. As he highlights the tactile experience of Mormonism as a lived religion through its mechanism of the temple, he helpfully articulates a distinction between formal and folk religion. Yet this articulation only serves, in the end, to highlight that the noise of the dialogue ends up being muted because it does not adequately speak to either the formal or folk aspects of either faith, and this is particularly true of Mormonism. The formal doctrines of Mormonism come from scriptures, documents, and pronouncements recognized as authoritative by those inhabiting the LDS apostolic office. None of these scholarly essays serve in that capacity. They may be an interpretive effort to inform formal religious aspects; however, given the hierarchical structure of LDS ecclesiastical authority and its modes of establishing authoritative revelation, this contribution seems largely irrelevant in terms of its practical influence.

Additionally, the LDS contributors are not at all indicative of the folk theological understandings of typical Mormons. In fact, many of the doctrinal boundaries and theological articulations would be entirely foreign to most people in the Sunday wards. This is not to suggest that these matters are not helpful and important to talk about. However, it is vital to recognize that Willson's two categories of formal and folk actually have more to do with one another than the third approach, academic/scholarly religion, has to do with either of the other two. As a result the dialogue can tend to come off more like a tempest in a teapot than an effective mode of interfaith engagement.

On the whole, the book serves as helpful and informative relic representing fifteen years of dialogue. It is also a helpful stimulant to the constant percolation of theological thoughts ebbing and flowing between the two communities. It fails,

however, at clearing the theological fog, and in some ways only adds more mist to an area already plagued by postmodernity's flare for perennial ambiguity.

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