

BOOK REVIEWS

The World's Oldest Alphabet: Hebrew as the Language of the Proto-Consonantal Script. By Douglas Petrovich, with a contribution by Sarah K. Doherty and introduction by Eugene H. Merrill. Jerusalem: Carta, 2016, xvi + 262 pp., \$84.00.

Douglas Petrovich has released a provocative and polarizing monograph concerning the world's oldest known alphabet. In 2017, Petrovich became the professor of biblical history and exegesis at The Bible Seminary in Katy, TX. Previously, he taught on ancient Egypt at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Canada. Petrovich and I work together in the excavation of Shiloh conducted by the Associates for Biblical Research.

Scholars tend to agree that the earliest attested alphabet belongs to the family of Semitic languages. They disagree, however, on the identity of that language. In this volume, Petrovich sets out to prove the language of the first alphabet was Hebrew—not Canaanite, Phoenician, or Ugaritic. (Hubert Grimme proposed the same thesis in his 1923 publication.) Petrovich updates the scholarship on the topic, offers solutions to the identity of the debated alphabetic letters, and generates better drawings in order to improve decipherment. To accomplish his goal, the author amasses an incredible amount of research from a vast range of disciplines.

The book targets an academic audience, although the author even hopes to reach “the non-specialist with no formal knowledge of Hebrew, ME [Middle Egyptian], or syllabics” (p. 12). For a popular summary of the book, the reader can view Petrovich's article, “Hebrew as the Language behind the World's First Alphabet?,” posted on the ASOR blog, *Ancient Near East Today*, in April of 2017 (<http://asorblog.org/2017/04/10/hebrew-language-behind-worlds-first-alphabet>).

After an introduction by Eugene Merrill, the volume presents four chapters: (1) “Background Matters to the Proto-Consonantal Inscriptions”; (2) “The Inscriptions of the Period of Egypt's Middle Kingdom”; (3) “The Inscriptions of the Period of Egypt's New Kingdom”; and (4) “Concluding Thoughts.” Petrovich created meticulous and attractive drawings of each inscription. The drawings use color coding and a reference system to facilitate comprehension. The back matter includes four appendixes, a list of abbreviations, a list of references, and a general index. Appendix 2 addresses “The Additional (Non-Original) Five Proto-Alphabetic Letters.” Appendix 3 features a word list for Middle Egyptian and the proto-consonantal script, and even includes conjectured words, such as רמת and נחלת (pp. 98, 232–33).

In his book, Petrovich treats sixteen inscriptions from four sites. Two of the sites occupy the southwest Sinai Peninsula (Serabit el-Khadim and Wadi Nasb) and the other two occupy Egypt proper (Wadi el-Hol and el-Lahun). Petrovich dates six of the inscriptions to Egypt's Middle Kingdom and ten inscriptions to the New Kingdom. The ten New Kingdom inscriptions all come from Serabit el-Khadim.

In dealing with the inscriptions, the author follows a fourfold procedure: (1) background to the inscription; (2) paleographic decipherment; (3) translation and orthography; and (4) potential historical value. This method of presentation enables the author to build his case step by step.

Petrovich offers three reasons in support of his thesis that the oldest alphabet is Hebrew (p. 191). First, the name “Hebrews” appears in the caption of Sinai 115, which possesses the earliest evidence of an alphabetic letter (proto-consonantal \aleph). For Petrovich, the “Hebrew Caption” is “the smoking gun” (pp. 28, 192). Second, each proto-consonantal letter “was found to have a ME hieroglyphic exemplar from the ME sign list, and to match with a corresponding Hebrew word that is logically and acrophonically connected to the meaning of the pictograph” (p. 191). Third, three personal names from the Torah appear among the proto-consonantal inscriptions: Moses, Ahisamach, and Asenath (Sinai 361, 375a, and 376). Ahisamach sired the craftsman extraordinaire Oholiab, and Asenath married Joseph (Gen 41:45; Exod 31:6).

The caption of Sinai 115 dates to 1842 BC, during the lifespan of Joseph, says Petrovich (p. 28). He translates the caption as follows: “6 Levantines: Hebrews of Bethel, the beloved.” If the translation withstands scrutiny, Sinai 115 becomes the oldest extrabiblical reference to the Hebrews or Israelites—even older than the references on the Merenptah Stela (c. 1219 BC) and Berlin Pedestal 21687 (c. 1455–1418 BC) (p. 28). In addition, Sinai 115 provides justification for equating the Hebrews with the Apiru, according to Petrovich (pp. 73–74).

The Lahun Bilingual Ostrakon underwent ceramic analysis by a special contributor to the book, Sarah Doherty. After examining the previously unpublished diagnostic rim of the vessel, she determined the vessel dates to the nineteenth century BC (pp. 7, 53–57).

Petrovich’s conclusions needle at multiple critical presuppositions sometimes found among disciples of biblical and ancient Near Eastern studies. For instance, his work counters the theories that the Israelites emerged from within Cisjordan or Transjordan without an Egyptian sojourn (pp. 182, 186–88). Moreover, the presence of the name Moses on a fifteenth-century-BC inscription flies in the face of the Documentary Hypothesis and its various versions (pp. 172, 194). For that reason, the inscription (Sinai 361) “may stand as the single most important PCH [proto-consonantal Hebrew] inscription of the entire Bronze Age” (p. 172). Furthermore, the book challenges notions of illiteracy and incompetency among the early Hebrews. The inscriptions show early literacy not just among the overseers but among the bakers, shepherds, miners, and slaves, and not only in the form of prose but in the form of sophisticated poetry, including proverbial wisdom literature. Wadi el-Hol 2 arguably constitutes “the oldest extant Hebrew proverb” (p. 51; cf. p. 192). Furthermore, the engravers were multilingual, fluent in both Hebrew and Middle Egyptian (pp. 182, 193–94). The evidence of literacy in the proto-consonantal inscriptions predates the evidence of literacy in the Gezer calendar by about eight centuries.

The volume offers a treatment of Sinai 378, a one-word inscription transcribed \aleph (“El/God”). Petrovich suggests that a Hebrew individual engraved the

inscription, and that the inscription evokes the God of the patriarchs (p. 185). Given Petrovich's penchant for demonstrating synchronisms with the Hebrew Bible, it comes as a surprise that he chooses not to discuss Sinai 358, which possibly reads "the everlasting God," a title for God used by Abraham himself (Gen 21:33). The inscription was discovered *in situ* inside a turquoise mine at Serabit el-Khadim. Perhaps Petrovich will engage that inscription in a subsequent edition of the book or in the book's forthcoming sequel, provisionally titled *New Evidence of Israelites in Egypt from Joseph to the Exodus*.

Not everyone will agree with all of Petrovich's interpretive decisions on a variety of fronts, such as the identification of the glyphs and letters, the direction of writing (e.g. sinistrotrograde versus dextrotrograde), and of course, the transcriptions, translations, and historical significance. To date, adversarial critiques of Petrovich's work have come from Alan Millard, Christopher Rollston, and Thomas Schneider, to whom Petrovich has posted open responses on his Academia profile page (<http://thebibleseminary.academia.edu/DouglasPetrovich>).

Did the author accomplish his goal? Time will tell. As Petrovich puts it, "Final judgment as to the accuracy of [my] findings should be reserved for three, four, or five decades after publication, not determined hastily" (p. xiii).

In light of the thorough research, clear communication style, and important implications, I highly recommend this treatise not only to Hebraists and Egyptologists, but also to everyone who holds an interest in ancient Near Eastern studies and the history of the Bible. Professors of biblical Hebrew can evaluate the author's proposal that some of the traditional names of the alphabetic letters are not original (p. 201; cf. fig. 1). This reviewer commends Petrovich for his unwavering commitment to studying the sojourn-exodus narrative and its historical milieu.

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The Old Testament Is Dying: A Diagnosis and Recommended Treatment. By Brent A. Strawn. Theological Explorations for the Church Catholic. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2017, xxvi + 310 pp., \$29.99 paper.

The OT is dying. In fact, in some circles it is all but dead. Moreover, with the death of the OT eventually comes the death of the NT, though that process may take a bit longer. Such at least is the scenario that Brent Strawn presents in his remarkably perceptive book. His claim is not nearly as preposterous or overstated as it might seem at first thought. There is a sense in which the OT is dying.

In order to grasp the significance of Strawn's alarming diagnosis of the current health of the OT, one must first understand the linguistic metaphor that undergirds his rather morbid assessment. According to Strawn, one way to think about the OT is that, like a human language, it is susceptible to losing its vitality and eventually dying out even among those who should instead be its advocates. One should not misconstrue Strawn's language metaphor to refer primarily to the languages in which the OT was originally written. This book does not attempt to

provide a rationale for maintaining interest in Hebrew and Aramaic, however important that argument might otherwise be. Rather, what Strawn has in mind is OT literacy and fluency, or the ability of Christians to understand and speak the “language” of the OT. The OT presents a way of understanding God, humanity, and the world in which we live. It is a *language*, so to speak; it has a *grammar* for understanding God’s dealings with humanity. But for many, the OT has ceased to function as literature that makes any difference in the way they think and live. Consequently, like a language, the OT can fall into disuse (and/or misuse) and eventually experience death. It is a sobering thought.

This book has three major sections, each with three chapters. In the first section, Strawn presents evidence that, as he puts it, the OT is a dying language. In chapter 1, he provides an overview of his thesis, summarizing his diagnosis and warning of its consequences. In chapter 2, he appeals to religious polls and surveys that indicate widespread lack of familiarity with basic biblical facts. Collections of published sermons show how infrequently and inadequately the OT is represented in much of Christian preaching. The OT is underrepresented in Christian hymnody and lectionary as well. In chapter 3, he develops the idea of language growth and change. He shows how contact between languages sometimes leads not only to change but even to death of one of the languages. Particularly fascinating here is his use of the linguistic categories of *pidginization* and *creolization*. Pidgins are “greatly abbreviated languages that facilitate the bare minimum of communication needs between people who do not share a common language but who must nevertheless interact for some reason” (p. 62). A creole, on the other hand, is an expansion of a pidgin into a new form of language used by a community that has lost the use of its original language. According to Strawn, many Christians use a pidgin form of the OT, one that is a barely recognizable reduction of OT language. Others have developed a creole form of the OT that is an altogether different language. In both cases, the result is something far removed from the fuller language of the OT itself. Those who have adopted pidgin or creole forms of OT language usually do not realize that they are speaking a language different from that of the OT.

The second part of Strawn’s book is entitled “signs of morbidity.” In chapter 4, he discusses the New Atheism, whose advocates often express a truncated and shallow understanding of the OT even as they attempt to criticize it. Chapter 5 is devoted to Marcionites (both ancient and modern) who adopt a stance of rejection of the OT, either at a carefully reasoned theoretical level or as a more intuitive default in terms of practical choices. Here Strawn helpfully cautions against speaking of “the God of the Old Testament,” as though the OT and NT point to inherently different deities. Chapter 6 takes up the phenomenon of “health and wealth” prosperity preachers who create a new creole of biblical language that is in reality far removed from the actual language of the OT (or the NT). Strawn dubs such individuals the *happiologists*. The prime target of his criticism in this regard is Pastor Joel Osteen of Lakewood Church in Houston, TX, although Bruce Wilkerson’s *Prayer of Jabez: Breaking through to the Blessed Life* comes under criticism as well. Of the several groups discussed in this section, Strawn is especially hard on the so-called happiologists. He says, “The happiologists’ contribution is far more insidious insofar as

they pretend or actually think (it matters little either way) that they are actually speaking the original language. So, too, then, do their willing adherents, babbling away in their new tongue, without the foggiest idea that the language they speak can no longer crossbreed with the original" (p. 155).

The third part of the book sets forth a path to recovery for the dying patient. Chapter 7 lays out a recommended treatment for saving the OT from imminent demise. Borrowing from the modern phenomenon of the resuscitation of Hebrew as a living language, Strawn calls for renewed speakers of biblical language. He has in mind those who devote themselves to learning well and living out accurately the language of Scripture. As he puts it, "Learning to speak Christian involves, in no small part, learning to speak Scripture, both Old and New Testaments; here, too, that isn't just similar to acquiring another language: it *is* acquiring another language—a *second* one" (p. 176). Chapter 8 is entitled "Saving the Old Testament." Strawn takes the book of Deuteronomy as a model for the sort of "second-language acquisition" that he has in mind as a corrective for disuse, misuse, abandonment, and exclusion of the OT. Chapter 9, the final chapter, outlines a way forward. Strawn suggests the following five steps for recovery: (1) extensive and regular use of the OT; (2) ministerial leadership that is well trained in the language of the OT; (3) intentionality in communicating the language of the OT in its richness and depth, not just at a cognitive level but in a way that actually guides life; (4) adopting a bilingual approach that can switch between languages as necessary for the sake of those who are learning the new language (of Scripture); and (5) maintaining a focus on the OT so that it is not completely overshadowed by the NT. The book concludes with six appendices that mainly collect statistical information concerning the use (or non-use) of the OT in sermons.

Understanding of the OT and the role it should play in Christian experience is in serious decline. The OT may actually be dying, if we think in terms of the linguistic analogy that is the grounding metaphor for this book. If Strawn's imagery seems a bit exaggerated at times for dramatic effect, this is only slightly the case. The problem is very real. Biblical illiteracy—the inability to speak fluently the "language" of Scripture—impoverishes the life of the church. Strawn has helpfully diagnosed this problem and has set forth a much-needed corrective. I recommend the reading of this book as a first step in the right direction for correcting the problem.

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Christian Doctrine and the Old Testament: Theology in the Service of Biblical Exegesis. By Gary A. Anderson. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017, xix + 219 pp., \$29.99.

Christian Doctrine and the Old Testament is a culmination of Gary Anderson's passion for establishing foundations for Christian doctrine within the OT text. Nine of the ten chapters have been previously published as journal articles or book chapters over the last fifteen years. The sole new chapter (chap. 3) is titled "Crea-

tion: *Creatio ex Nihilo* and the Bible.” Though the articles were written separately, the topical organization and individual doctrines addressed in *Christian Doctrine and the Old Testament* allowed for a cohesive compilation of articles.

Gary Anderson is the Hesburgh Professor of Catholic Theology at the University of Notre Dame and thus *Christian Doctrine and the Old Testament* heavily relies on Catholic doctrine. Anderson desired to be ecumenical in his address of doctrine using the OT and the work is helpful for evangelical Christians. Yet, there remained a chapter on Mary and one on purgatory alongside chapters on Christology and original sin to root Anderson in his Catholic community. Therefore, one must be willing to ask the questions of purgatory and Mary (which are questions worth asking even for an evangelical) to appreciate the value of Anderson’s work.

The first two parts of *Christian Doctrine and the Old Testament* contain issues of the nature of God and the beginning of creation. These topics lend themselves to the ecumenical goals of Anderson and form strong arguments for doctrine as a help to exegesis. As an example, Anderson contrasts the intercession of Moses and the begrudging work of Jonah to highlight the canonical support for the impassibility of God in the OT. The work is helpful in supporting doctrine but acknowledges the expectation of the doctrine as one approaches the Biblical text. Anderson also utilizes the Jewish interpretive history of the OT to reveal continuity of doctrine based on the same text. Creation from nothing highlights the transcendence of God beyond anything created for both the Christian and the Jew.

The chapter on Mary begins well with the logical connection to the temple, but falls short of establishing solid ground for a current Christian to venerate Mary. Anderson’s argument is based upon Mary as the dwelling place of God while Jesus was in her womb. Therefore, she can be viewed in the same manner as the temple of the OT. The implication is holiness for Mary based upon the holiness of the third person of the Trinity that was for a time inside her body. The major issue is that the Holy One did not remain inside Mary’s body. The veneration of Mary fits in line with Jewish veneration of space that the Lord once or currently occupies. Mary should hold an appreciation from believers as the birth mother of Jesus and thus crucial to the understanding of incarnation but not to be venerated as continually holy.

Anderson’s case for purgatory as logical inference is based heavily on his understanding of merits and sanctification. The jump to purgatory appears to be a desire to have the process of sanctification continued after death before final dwelling with God. The scriptural support of charity having some level of merit and sanctification is well founded, but the step to purgatory is a stretch to establish the doctrine. This stretch is natural for a Catholic scholar but not so far as apologetic. Anderson’s work opens the door for purgatory based on a logical look at Scripture and the history of the doctrine.

Christian Doctrine and the Old Testament is a helpful work on the exegetical use of the OT in support of Christian doctrine and the helpfulness of doctrine in approaching the OT. Anderson is commended for highlighting the usefulness of the

OT in its canonical form to Christian doctrine. The spectrum of Christian scholars can appreciate and be challenged by *Christian Doctrine and the Old Testament*.

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Reading Jesus's Bible: How the New Testament Helps Us Understand the Old Testament. By John Goldingay. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017, viii + 262 pp., \$24.00 paper.

The NT authors believed the OT was essential to understanding Jesus. In *Reading Jesus's Bible*, John Goldingay examines how the NT authors utilized the OT (Goldingay prefers the term "First Testament") to understand Jesus but in order to ask the reverse question: How does the NT help us understand the OT? Goldingay, who is the David Allan Hubbard Professor of OT at Fuller Theological Seminary, does not claim that the NT is essential for understanding the OT because the OT is intelligible on its own. At the same time, he does believe the NT authors can offer some "pointers" for understanding the OT.

Goldingay does not argue for a central thesis in *Reading Jesus's Bible*, but rather frames his book around five ways in which Matthew utilizes the OT: (1) the OT tells the *story* of which Jesus is the climax; (2) the OT declares the *promise* that Jesus fulfills; (3) the OT provides the images, ideas, and words that help us understand Jesus; (4) the OT describes what a relationship with God is like; and (5) the OT is the foundation of Jesus's moral teaching, which Goldingay discusses under the chapter title of "Life."

Goldingay begins each chapter by examining the relevant portions of Matthew's Gospel and then continues by examining other NT passages that adopt a similar interpretive approach. Goldingay concludes each chapter by demonstrating how each NT interpretive approach can be found working within the OT itself. Thus, following the NT's interpretive approaches can offer pointers for understanding the OT, but these approaches are integral to the OT itself.

Goldingay should be applauded for allowing his unique understanding of many aspects of the OT text to emerge within *Reading Jesus's Bible*. The author has devoted his career to a detailed study of the OT, and he is unwilling to allow popular opinion to rule over what he believes these writings were intending to communicate. Furthermore, Goldingay has refused to settle for a disparate relationship between the two Testaments and establishes what continuity he can between them.

The main issue with *Reading Jesus's Bible: How the New Testament Helps Us Understand the Old Testament* is that Goldingay often seems more concerned with illustrating how the NT authors can hinder our understanding of the OT. If I were to transform Goldingay's subtitle into a question ("How does the NT help us understand the OT?"), the overall tone of the book would lead to the conclusion that more often than not, the NT will lead one to *misread* the OT. For example, concerning Matthew's use of OT prophecy, Goldingay states, "The passages from prophecy that Matthew quotes help him in various ways to understand Jesus. But a number of them do so as a result of his not focusing on the way the Holy Spirit

was speaking to the people to whom the prophecies were given” (p. 61). Similar statements appear throughout each chapter. Goldingay often claims the NT’s use of the OT invites the reader to take up the OT again: “By interpreting Jesus in light of the First Testament, the New Testament invites us to take up the First Testament’s own concerns in all their breadth and interest” (pp. 217–18). Unfortunately, for Goldingay, this often seems to be the extent of the NT’s help for understanding the OT. This critique is not aimed specifically at Goldingay’s conclusions. He and many others have come to these conclusions based on their detailed reading of these texts, but many of his discussions do not aid in reaching his stated purpose and are actually counterproductive.

Another disappointment is Goldingay’s characterization of progressive revelation. According to Goldingay, progressive revelation “looks like a baptized version of the idea of evolutionary development” (p. 211). God is training his people by offering them lower standards in the OT in order to reveal his ultimate standards in the NT. It is no wonder Goldingay characterizes this concept as unbiblical, but Goldingay’s portrayal of progressive revelation is a misrepresentation of this concept, at least among evangelical scholars. Progressive revelation is not based upon evolutionary ideas but upon how the Scriptures themselves present God’s plan for his creation.

The value of *Reading Jesus’s Bible* is that it examines how the NT utilizes the OT from the perspective of an OT scholar in order to understand the OT. While there are certainly competent OT scholars, most books examining the NT’s use of the OT are nonetheless written from the perspective of those who are experts in the field of NT studies with the goal of understanding the NT. Thus, Goldingay’s *Reading Jesus’s Bible* will have a unique place among these works. Hopefully, additional OT scholars will produce works addressing these issues from an OT perspective.

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A Handbook to Old Testament Exegesis. By William P. Brown. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2017, xv + 363 pp., \$35.00 paper.

Professor William Brown has written a work that is clearly a textbook for students, but this is not Douglas Stuart’s *Old Testament Exegesis*, although it starts there. It is, rather, both OT exegesis and hermeneutics in one, both the traditional “what the text meant” (as best as one can approach such a meaning) and “what the text means” in dialogue with the interpreter and his or her context. And yet it is quite Protestant in its choices of dialogue partners.

The introductory part, “Getting Started,” is short (21 pp.), but significant. Texts do not have a fixed meaning, but rather what was said and received in an ancient culture comes into dialogue with an interpreter far distant in time and culture, who is asking questions and seeking answers out of their own context. Thus, the part ends with a chapter on “self-exegesis” in which five interpreters present

their own historical and cultural backgrounds, which will be, of course, the glasses through which they will read the text.

The next part, “Analytical Approaches,” is much longer (170 pp.), and contains the more traditional methods of exegesis: chapters are devoted to translation, text-critical analysis, stylistic analysis (divided into poetry and narrative), structural analysis, compositional analysis, comparative analysis (comparing to other ANE literature), literary analysis, historical analysis, and canonical analysis. (Walter Brueggemann is clearly an influence on this work.) While understanding this book does not require a knowledge of Hebrew, some Hebrew is used in transliterated form. There are also some footnotes, but they mostly indicate which works in the bibliography at the end of each chapter are being cited. There is no general bibliography, although one can use the general index to discover if a scholar is cited. In each chapter there are clear illustrations of the method from the text of the OT. Students will surely have no excuse for not understanding.

Then comes a six-page “Interlude” in which Brown makes clear that he is shifting from the text to matters “in front of the text,” that is, to understanding it in a contemporary context, a context that will shift its meaning. The illustration here is the US Declaration of Independence, which, Brown points out, meant one thing in its original context and another to contemporary readers.

The next part is “Reading in Place” (127 pp.). Here the chapters engage in turn science, ecology, gender (two chapters, one on traditional feminist readings and one on womanist, *mujerista*, Asian feminist, and genderqueer readings), empire, minority, disability, and theology. The tendency here may for some readers to react negatively, which would be unfortunate. Truly, there are some readings of the text that demonstrate little Torah support, and even some that are just strange. I have spent enough time at SBL annual meetings to know there are readings that are stranger still and also to know: (1) if one listens closely enough to someone reading out of their “other” backgrounds, one will hear through the ideology new insights into the text, and (2) if something is truly strange, it will fade away. The contemporary job of interpretive work often appears to be to eat the chicken and throw out the bones! And these are contemporary concerns to which the text does have something to say, although not always either what the contemporary ideology wants it to say nor what traditional historical-grammatical exegesis wishes it had said. Allowing it to do so takes some emotional flexibility that releases its grip on defensiveness and allows both those with whom one feels some affinity and those with whom one feels little affinity to point to the living (i.e. inspired) voice of the text that still speaks in the present.

The final part is “Communication” (16 pp.), which is really a single chapter titled “Retelling the Text.” This focuses on communicating the text in the present day, principally in sermon and study group forms. The principal question is, “How does one communicate the text in a time and culture in which the text may seem quite foreign and distant and do so in such a way that those listening or studying grasp its relevance?” A two-page “Glossary of Exegetical Terms,” followed by 23 pages of indexes, completes the work, making it quite student-friendly.

While some may react to Brown's compositional analysis, some other aspect of his analytical approaches, or some of his readings (some of my teachers surely would have reacted, while one, F. F. Bruce, certainly would not have reacted), my concern lies elsewhere. The work is excellent in drawing students into the process and teaching them how to do it. That part one wishes one could do as well as Brown, as he is a master teacher. However, there is a chasm in the work. Brown states that we read and interpret texts in community, and that is quite right. But the only communities (besides those in the world of the text) he cites are contemporary ones. It is a thin slice of time without any history, and indeed it is a very selective group of those in the Western contemporary world. Would most Coptic or Orthodox Christians identify with the groups creating his readings? What about most African Christians? Yet an even bigger voice is also left out. The writers of the NT read the OT from their distinctive position, reading it through the lens of Jesus, the Anointed One. Here Richard Hays's *Reading Backwards* is a helpful guide, to give but one example. Then the patristic writers continued to read the text (and as with at least some NT writers, they read the larger OT, not the Protestant OT, which is Brown's focus) and filled book after book with their readings. Furthermore, from the Desert Fathers and Mothers on, the OT was not only read, but prayed, the Psalms being prayed daily or weekly for most of the last 2,000 years. And to that we must add medieval writers, East and West, and on down to the present. Where are these voices? Where is the communion of the saints? Where is the community called the church? Would including these not balance some contemporary readings? And is it not so very Protestant to think that the only dialogue is between those back in the ancient texts and us in contemporary culture? Those are the questions that this otherwise excellent work leaves me asking.

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Prophet, Priest, and King: The Roles of Christ in the Bible and Our Roles Today. By Richard P. Belcher Jr. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2016, xvi + 206 pp., \$16.99 paper.

Scripture is often interpreted either for personal edification or to show how Christ is the fulfillment of the text. Richard Belcher keeps both of these interpretive priorities together in *Prophet, Priest, and King* as he shows how Christ is the ultimate prophet, priest, and king to whom the OT pointed, before presenting how the church should live out its own prophetic, priestly, and kingly identity. Belcher is professor of OT and academic dean at Reformed Theological Seminary in Charlotte. His other works include *The Messiah and the Psalms*, commentaries on Job and Genesis, and contributions to *A Biblical Theological Introduction to the Old Testament*.

Prophet, Priest, and King comprises eight chapters. Chapter 1 explains the importance of the three offices of Christ for Reformed theology and surveys the embryonic expressions of these offices found in Adam, Abraham, and the nation of Israel as a whole. Chapter 2 explores the office of prophet in the OT. Belcher determines that a prophet is a mediator who is focused on the word of God and

prayer (pp. 17, 21), Deuteronomy 18 is the foundational “prophet” text (pp. 18–25), and Israel had an expectation for an eschatological prophet (pp. 39–40). Jesus is this expected prophet as Belcher shows Christ to be mighty in word, prayer, deed, and suffering in chapter 3. Chapter 4 studies the role of priest and Levite in the OT as those who work and guard the temple, and bless and teach the people. Belcher notes that during Jesus’s earthly ministry the term “priest” is not used (p. 86). In chapter 5, however, he argues that Christ’s priestly role is subtly present in the Gospels before turning to Hebrews to show that Christ is a superior Melchizedekian priest. Chapter 6 unearths the kingly institution in the OT as built upon Adamic dominion, foretold in Deuteronomy 17 (p. 109), a patent need evidenced by the book of Judges (p. 115), culminating in God’s choice of, and covenant with, David (pp. 120–25). The chapter concludes with the eschatological hope for a new king, drawn largely from the Psalter, and an excursus on the idea of a royal priesthood during the period of the kings (pp. 131–37). Belcher unpacks Christ’s kingship in chapter 7, showing that Christ had dominion over creation, that the kingdom of God is spiritually present yet also future, and that Jesus rules presently at the right hand of God. Belcher also displays the suffering nature of Jesus’s kingship, a characteristic misunderstood by the early disciples (pp. 150–54). The final chapter suggests some prophetic, priestly, and kingly roles for the church, distinguishing between elders and the congregation.

For its length, *Prophet, Priest, and King* is a useful introduction to the *munus triplex*. The chapters on the OT offices are particularly beneficial, providing a comprehensive description of the OT office. The chapters on Christ fulfilling the offices also contain many thought-provoking insights. For example, Belcher argues that Jesus not allowing anyone to carry anything through the temple after he cleansed it points to his priestly role in guarding the temple (p. 90).

The three offices of Christ have been important to Reformed theology since Calvin delineated them, so Belcher does not offer a rationale for why his work is limited to these offices. Such a rationale, however, would have been welcome because Belcher’s methodology throughout is akin to inductive biblical theology, yet the threefold office is, while pedagogically helpful, an external and assumed systematic category. Thus, the exegetical insights of Belcher are, at times, forced into this threefold schema when more nuance would have been preferable to underline the breadth of the person and work of Christ as presented in the Bible. For example, Christ’s dominion is placed under his kingly office rather than chiefly viewed as his role as the second Adam (p. 157), and his role of covenant mediator is subordinated to his prophetic role (p. 49).

It would also have been helpful for Belcher to define what he means by Christ “fulfilling” these offices, and how he understands the term “typology.” For example, if typology is a literary device employed with authorial intent, it is hard to see how Phineas is a type of Christ, as Belcher advances (pp. 92–94). And, almost allegorically, he claims that the blood which was put on the right thumb and big toe of the priest during ordination points to Christ being ready to do the work of God and go where God would lead him (p. 89).

Belcher's work is to be commended for seeking to apply these offices to the life of the believer. However, chapter 8 is brief and written from a particular theological tradition. The brevity disallows Belcher to engage important texts such as 2 Cor 6:18 and Rev 2:26–27, which speak of the church in Davidic terms. Belcher's theological position manifests itself when he explains the priestly role of believers as including "presenting (children) to the church for baptism" (p. 174) and when he articulates that the kingly role of elders grants them the authority to "admit someone into membership" rather than the congregation doing so (p. 175). Belcher also takes a traditional cessationist stance when understanding the church's prophetic role today (p. 163). These theological perspectives limit the potential of what should be the most important chapter.

These critiques aside, the student would struggle to find a more accessible introduction to the threefold offices of Christ within a Reformed tradition. *Prophet, Priest, and King* is also an edifying read as one is reminded again of Christ's accomplishments for the believer.

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The Heartbeat of Old Testament Theology: Three Creedal Expressions. By Mark J. Boda. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2017, vii + 220 pp., \$15.53 paper.

This monograph by Mark Boda is an effort to trace the overall theological message of the OT by isolating three "rhythms" that can be "heard" throughout the canon. In the author's words, "The book showcases an approach to the core theology of the OT that not only engages the OT text but also shows the connection between this core OT theology and the NT and the life of the community that embraces both Old and New Testaments" (p. xiv). His three rhythms are the narrative, the character, and the relational.

To make his argument, Boda divides his book into eight chapters followed by a sermon the author delivered at Acadia and an appendix that includes a revision of his earlier article that presents his theological hermeneutic for biblical theology.

Boda describes his own method as a "selective, intertextual canonical approach that identifies core expressions of God that appear throughout the OT canon" (p. 7). It is "selective" in that it identifies certain topics that are ubiquitous in the OT and constitute its "inner structure." It is of note to highlight these topics because they form a cohesion between the Old and New Testaments. It is "canonical" in that it focuses on the canon adopted by the Protestant church. It is "intertextual" because it highlights the repeated use of particular "phrases, expressions, and structures" that are found throughout the OT and NT.

Chapter 2 is devoted to the first of three "rhythms," the narrative creed, that Boda describes metaphorically as the heartbeat of the OT. He argues that theology is "expressed in summary form" and that "this summary is expressed in a historical or narrative form" (p. 14). Through this creed, we are exposed to the history of God's redemption through finite action or particular acts within specific times of

history. Boda posits that the basic elements of the story include the ancestors, the exodus, the wilderness, the conquest, the land, and the exile (p. 15). He lists several texts that summarize this creed, including Exod 15:1–19, Deut 6:21–23, Josh 24:2–13, and several others. Boda submits that the importance of humanity to OT theology is highlighted in this narrative creed.

Boda's second "rhythm" is the character creed, which he discusses in chapter 3. Boda argues that the OT focuses just as much on God's character as it does his works. He cites Exod 34:6–7 as a key passage in presenting evidence for the creedal depiction of God's attributes. He identifies this "rhythm" through the use of certain participles and non-perfective finite verbs. For example, instead of speaking about God as one who did something at a particular time in history, this creedal traction speaks of God as one who does particular things (e.g. participles: God is the one who creates [p. 29]). Boda suggests that Exod 34:6–7 illustrates this difference with Exod 34:6 focusing on God's abstract characteristics, while Exod 34:7 shines light on regular patterns of behavior. Boda centers his discussion of the character creed on the core characteristics of steadfast love and justice (p. 35).

Boda's third "rhythm" is the relational creed. He points out that it has been highlighted by nearly every major OT scholar throughout the history of interpretation. This creedal rhythm is expressed in terms of Yahweh's relational identity and usually appears in copular syntactical constructions (p. 55). Once again, humanity plays an important role, assuming the identity of "people" in these constructions, (e.g. "I will be your God, you will be my people.") This creedal expression explains the status of a group of people who were once disconnected but are now part of a family unit through agreement. Boda stresses the redemptive nature of the relational "rhythm" by pointing out the covenant relationship established between a holy God and a sinful world where humans are distant from God.

Boda cites Exod 5:22–6:8 and Nehemiah 9 as two passages that integrate these three creedal rhythms. Further, he adds a chapter demonstrating how the creation theme can also be seen in the three creedal rhythms. Boda then bravely incorporates a chapter that attempts to demonstrate the integration of his three creedal rhythms into the framework of the NT, which is perhaps the least convincing of the arguments.

The work is ordered and concise and will appeal to scholars, students, and pastors. The references to cardiology (EKG, heartbeat, etc.) were a bit unnecessary and actually faded in importance to the overall content of the book. However, it deserves its place among the literature in the field as one not to be missed.

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Scripture as Real Presence: Sacramental Exegesis in the Early Church. By Hans Boersma. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017, xix + 316 pp., \$39.99.

Scripture as Real Presence is the most recent book from prolific author and Regent College theology professor Hans Boersma. A Reformed theologian, Boersma

has also authored other works on sacramental theology, including *Sacramental Preaching* (2016), *The Oxford Handbook of Sacramental Theology* (edited with Matthew Leaverling, 2015), *Embodiment and Virtue in Gregory of Nyssa* (2015), and *Nouvelle Théologie and Sacramental Ontology* (2013), among others. While building on these previous works, Boersma's book also resembles the general aims of at least three other recent works: (1) Matthew Leaverling's *Participatory Biblical Exegesis* (2008), which navigates theological and historical interpretation of Scripture; (2) Andrew Louth's *Discerning the Mystery* (2007), an apologetic for modern allegorical reading of Scripture; and (3) Frances Young's *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (1997), which aims to refresh the categories of patristic exegesis.

Continuing the legacy of twentieth century scholars Henri de Lubac and Jean Daniélou, Boersma's stated aim is one of *ressourcement* (p. 273)—to present and evaluate the sacramental reading of Scripture celebrated by the Church Fathers. Pushing back against modern historical approaches in biblical studies, Boersma defends this spiritual, theological interpretation of Scripture, which he defines as “simply a reading of Scripture *as Scripture*, that is to say, as the book of the church that is meant as a sacramental guide on the journey of salvation” (p. xii). In an introductory first chapter, the author attempts to guide the reader into hearts and minds of the Church Fathers, presenting their questions and concerns about Scripture. Instead of situating the Bible in Christian worship as Word and sacrament, Boersma prefers to present the Word *as* sacrament. Though human authors conveyed the words of Scripture, the Bible is a divine book that should be read in light of the divine economy. It should be read in light of Christ and the rule of faith. It should be interpreted for “a certain purpose, a particular aim—eternal life in the Triune God” (p. 159).

In the chapters that follow (chaps. 2–10), the author discusses nine aspects or values for early Christian sacramental reading of Scripture. In chapter 2 (“Literal Reading”), Boersma shows that while Fathers such as Gregory of Nyssa and Augustine valued a surface reading of Scripture, their understanding of *literal* is quite different than how we conceive of it today. By reading Genesis 18 (Abraham's three visitors at the Oak of Mamre) through the eyes of Origen and Chrysostom, Boersma argues in chapter 3 for a “hospitable reading” of Scripture. He writes, “Reading Scripture is like hosting a divine visitor ... when we interpret the Scriptures, we are in the position of Abraham: we are called to show hospitality to God as he graciously comes to us through the pages of the Bible” (p. 56). In chapter 4 (“Other Reading”), the author offers a basic presentation of allegory, affirming scholarly consensus that no longer holds to a strict dichotomy between Alexandrian and Antiochene schools of interpretation.

In chapter 5 (“Incarnational Reading”), using the case study of Origen's homilies on Joshua, Boersma argues that the Church Fathers saw the incarnation applied not only in the person of Christ and in the written Word of God, but also in the life of the church. Chapter 6 (“Harmonious Reading”) explores how the Fathers thought about the essence of music and how the Psalms brought healing, harmony, and unity to the body of Christ. In chapter 7 (“Doctrinal Reading”), Boersma discusses how the Fathers understood Wisdom (Prov 8:22–25) and combat-

ed an Arian reading of this text through a sacramental approach. In chapter 8 (“Nuptial Reading”), he argues that Song of Songs was largely interpreted sacramentally (pertaining to the church and the soul) in the patristic period. In chapter 9 (“Prophetic Reading”), Boersma presents the Fathers’ Christological readings on the Servant Songs of Isaiah, asserting that prophecy for the early church was “not only a *fore*-telling of future events” but a “*forth*-telling of present realities” (p. 247). Finally, in chapter 10 (“Beatific Reading”), the only portion of the book where the NT is emphasized, Boersma summarizes the Fathers’ spiritual reading of the Sermon on the Mount. The purpose of the Beatitudes is to “participate in [the] happiness of God” (p. 272).

This book has a number of strengths. First, Boersma does a very thorough job of engaging the primary sources. Though he does not exhaust the corpus of patristic writings, his chosen case studies are strong and representative enough to make a compelling argument. Second, and relatedly, the author succeeds in helping the modern theology student enter into the thought and church world of the Fathers. By sketching out background details on subjects like philosophy and music, the reader is able to put on the lenses of Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, Augustine, and others and begin a sympathetic reading of the Fathers. In terms of *ressourcement*, Boersma makes a winsome case for reading Scripture today in a sacramental manner.

I only have two quibbles that are not content-related. In terms of overall flow and structure, the book lacked cohesiveness between chapters. Church Fathers, other scholars, and ideas are introduced again and again as if we had not read the preceding chapters. Because much of this book had already been published in other forms, more effort could have been made to bring this work together into one organic whole. Second, at points, the author seems unnecessarily critical of contemporary Reformed Protestants for failing to grasp patristic readings of Scripture. While his presentation of patristic sacramental exegesis was winsome, his invitation for modern Protestants to participate in this approach to reading the Fathers and Scripture could have also been more welcoming.

In sum, Boersma’s book is accessible and thorough, and would serve as a good resource for a seminary level course on patristic exegesis, which is apparently where the book was in part nurtured and developed.

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Money and Possessions. By Walter Brueggemann. Interpretation Resources for the Use of Scripture in the Church. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2016, 319 pp., \$40.00.

The pursuit, management, and accounting of economic resources, or lack thereof, comprises a good percentage of most people’s time and attention. It is appropriate, then, that the Interpretation: Resources for the Use of Scripture in the Church series has devoted an entire volume to the biblical witness on this theme.

This series is designed primarily “for those who teach, preach, and study the Bible in the community of faith” (p. x).

Walter Brueggemann describes the primary purpose of this book as exhibiting “the rich, recurring, and diverse references to money and possessions that permeate the Bible” (p. xix). While he did not intend to be prescriptive in this volume, the material itself, he avers, “pressed in the direction of advocacy” (p. xx). This adequately describes the feel of this book. It is first and foremost a description and exhibition of the biblical witness regarding wealth with some phrases and paragraphs of advocacy sprinkled in. All of this is written in Brueggemann’s striking prose.

The book opens with an introduction in which Brueggemann outlines six theses that serve as a frame of reference for the Bible’s perspective on money and possessions, each of these countering the prevailing wisdom of contemporary Western “market ideology” (p. 9). In a sense, this first chapter is a summary of the findings from the rest of the book. These theses concerning money and possessions are: (1) they are a gift from God; (2) they are a reward for obedience; (3) they belong to God and are held in trust by human persons in community; (4) they are sources of social injustices; (5) they are to be shared in a neighborly way; (6) and they are seductions that lead to idolatry (pp. 1–8).

The bulk of the book (chaps. 2–15) is comprised of a tour of and reflection on economic aspects of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. In this tour, Brueggemann points out often neglected or unnoticed aspects of Bible as they relate to economics. Some brief highlights from his tour are worth noting. First, he takes the command, “You shall not covet,” to be the core economic value in Genesis-Numbers and argues we can profitably read the story from Adam to Moses as a commentary on this command (p. 15). Second, in the exodus narrative, the author contrasts the unceasing toil Pharaoh commanded with God’s provision of manna, which makes room for Sabbath (p. 23). Indeed, manna becomes the central symbol of God’s generosity and abundance, which should curb human greed.

Brueggemann’s chapter on Deuteronomy rehearses the many laws designed to protect the vulnerable from those in power. He reads the book as God’s command for Israel to treat each other with neighborliness (p. 40). The economic significance of the Jubilee, Sabbath, and the year of release are aspects of Israel’s law that “reorient thinking about money and possessions” (p. 53).

In the chapter that reflects on Joshua-2 Kings, Brueggemann sees an inherent tension between two visions of economic justice—a Deuteronomic and a Davidic (p. 56). In the Deuteronomic vision, violation of the covenant results in defeat. Brueggemann’s parade example of this is Achan, who essentially misappropriated funds (p. 57). David and his descendants are viewed as ambiguous at best. They become royal “takers” (p. 67). These kingly examples are countered by the prophets, who envision an economy structured differently based on an alternative theological conviction (pp. 72–73). In the postexilic historical books, Brueggemann articulates the difficulty of economic life of Yehud, which wants to affirm “(a) the fidelity of God, (b) new life made possible by Persia, and (c) the reality of enslavement via taxation” (p. 89). In this section, he highlights Nehemiah 5 as a key text;

there, Nehemiah confronts the wealthy (including himself!) of unjust lending practices (p. 93).

Brueggemann focuses in on five particular Psalms that have an economic subtext. These psalms indicate that in Israel's worship every transaction includes a third party, YHWH (p. 102). The Psalms describe the wicked as people who take advantage of the poor and who do not acknowledge YHWH in economic life (p. 102). In Proverbs, wealth is "contextualized by the love of God and love of neighbor" (p. 118). Proverbs focuses on having our desires rightly ordered and on contradicting the belief that money is a private affair (p. 127). However, Proverbs is also concerned about financial security and the dangers of laziness and foolish behavior. Nevertheless, it warns against achieving this security apart from a concern for the "common good" (p. 129).

A lengthy chapter on the prophets reminds the reader how often the prophets denounce greed and exploitation, while also providing an alternative vision rooted in God's generosity and "neighborly justice" (p. 142). Brueggemann reflects on Ruth as a story of "a have and a have-not" (p. 164). He argues that this book subverts the normal pattern of economic thinking in the ANE by making Ruth an active agent and on Boaz's subordination of economic gain to his care for Ruth and Naomi (p. 166).

Brueggemann reflects on the NT in canonical order as well. He sees Jesus's stark pronouncement, "You cannot serve God and Mammon," to be a central conviction of the Gospels' witness. In his discussion of the Gospels and Acts, the normal texts that you would expect to appear in a volume like this are engaged. There is a cumulative force in gathering them in the way he has. In Paul's letters, he sees Paul acting out of an economy of grace instead of a merit-based relationship (pp. 219–20). For Paul, Jesus's self-giving is the ultimate model of generosity, which the church is to emulate (p. 223). The book of James focuses on the centrality of practice, and Revelation is primarily aimed at subverting Rome, including her economy.

Brueggemann is certainly strongest in the OT section of the book. His economic reading of Ruth and Esther themselves are worth the price of the book. The NT section did not seem to break much new ground but was a helpful summary of the theme. This section also included some unusual perspectives. For example, he accepts Brigitte Kahl's idiosyncratic view that the "law" in Galatians which Paul opposes refers to the "law of Caesar" (223). The advocacy sections of the book encourage the church to think critically about the economic system it is wrapped up in. However, some of these sections are underdeveloped, or represent an ethic derived from elsewhere. For example, when he writes about Paul's admonition to "extend hospitality to strangers" (Rom 12:13), he states, "When we draw tight exclusionary boundaries against strangers, it is because we fear scarcity, for example, not enough grace to include gays, not enough jobs to include immigrants" (227). It is unclear what he means by some of this. The inclusion of the issue of homosexuality has little to do with economic scarcity, the main point of the paragraph. If one is going to engage the issue, then certainly more space and reflection should be given to it to clarify the implications of the statement more thoroughly.

Brueggemann has succeeded in writing an insightful and thought-provoking analysis of the biblical material relating to economics. There are many places where most evangelicals will disagree with critical judgments or some of the particular ways he appropriates the text. Nevertheless, his deep engagement with the Bible on this issue make it a source that I will regularly turn back to in my own preparation for teaching and preaching.

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Controversy of the Ages: Why Christians Should Not Divide over the Age of the Earth. By Theodore J. Cabal and Peter J. Rasor II. Wooster, OH: Weaver, 2017, 239 pp., \$15.99 paper.

With the help of Peter Rasor, this book comes from a paper that Ted Cabal delivered (and I attended) at the 2001 national ETS meeting. In this book, he states that the age of the earth is not a “first-level” doctrine. Following Albert Mohler’s idea of “theological triage,” Cabal identifies the earth’s age as a “third-level” doctrine—a doctrine “over which Christians may disagree and remain in close fellowship, even within local congregations” (p. 189). For this review, I will use the following abbreviations: YEC = young earth creation; OEC = old earth creation; EC = evolutionary creation.

As a YECist, I rejoiced at the book’s title; however, at chapter 6, dismay set in when a polemic twist against YECism surfaced. Thus, the book’s title is misleading; however, Cabal’s often irenic tone, diligent research, copious footnotes, and use of the “conservatism principle” are the treasures of this work.

In chapters 1 and 2, Cabal discusses the myth of science vs. theology and the Copernican controversy. He dismantles this myth by tracing its genesis to the 1874 work of John Draper entitled *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science* and the 1896 work of Andrew White entitled *A History of the Warfare of Science and Theology in Christendom*. These men understood opposition to evolution as opposition to science; however, Christianity as a whole has actually nurtured the furtherance of science, especially since the Reformation (pp. 19–20). Next, Cabal gives a detailed historical sketch of the Copernican/Galilean controversy and advances the “Theological Conservatism Principle,” which is analogous to the business practice of “accounting for expenses and liabilities as soon as possible, but booking revenues or assets only when actually assured” (p. 40). Applying this principle to biblical interpretation and scientific discoveries results in three possible outcomes: the two can never wed, the two can court, or the two can wed on certain terms. Galileo used this principle by assuming biblical inerrancy but not inerrant interpretation, and that nature and Scripture cannot disagree. He further held that traditional biblical interpretation governs unproven science and that proven scientific theory requires biblical reinterpretation, hence most modern Christians interpret the seemingly geocentric biblical verses as ancient observational language. Obviously, Cabal ad-

umbrates that biblical interpretation and old earth can wed under certain terms, but he never shares the details of the terms.

In chapter 3, Cabal adroitly states that the Darwinian controversy saw a clash of worldviews that was not present in the Copernican controversy. Both sides agreed on a biblical worldview in the 17th century; however, Darwinism came from a solely naturalistic worldview.

The Copernican and Darwinian controversies were true clashes of faith and science; however, Cabal does not differentiate the kind of sciences involved. Heliocentrism is an observable and repeatable phenomenon; evolution is not. This is the difference between “observational science,” which employs the scientific method, and “origin science” which, being influenced by naturalism, retrojects the assumption that present processes always explain the past. Comparing these two controversies is a type of “apples to oranges” comparison.

Chapter 4 is another masterpiece of historical research, covering the American evangelical response to Darwinism. In the late 1800s, B. B. Warfield and Charles Hodge both rejected Darwinism (or common descent of humanity) but accepted an old earth. From the advent of Darwinism, scientific naturalism prevailed in American academic culture; however, the popular advancement of evolution came after the 1955 play and the 1960 movie about the Scopes monkey trial. In 1941, concerned evangelicals formed the American Scientific Affiliation, but by 1959, this organization assumed a pro-evolution position. The watershed year of 1961 saw the publication of *The Genesis Flood* by Morris and Whitcomb. Basically a constitutional manifesto for YECism, this book galvanized anti-evolution and young earth as one. Afterwards, YECists formed the Creation Research Society and the Institute of Creation Research. Today, four approaches exist: YECism, OECism, Intelligent Design, and CE. Of these approaches, only YECism is both non-evolutionary and young earth whereas YECism, OECism, and intelligent design are all three anti-evolutionary.

Chapter 5 addresses geology and the age of the earth. Again, Cabal’s historical research is remarkable. He describes the geological theories of diluvianism, neptunism, plutonism, and uniformitarianism. Here, Cabal demonstrates his OECism by stating the fossils, geological strata, the fossil column, and radiometric dating all point to an old earth. However, the discovery of polystrate fossils (e.g. pipiscids and lystrosauruses) and living fossils (e.g. coelacanth) call into question the certainty of succession layers, not to mention the fact that fossils must be formed rapidly in an oxygen-free environment.

Chapters 6 and 7 contain Cabal’s analysis of and response to YECism in relation to geology and science. Cabal scrutinizes the Scriptural Geologists of the 18th and 19th centuries, the Seventh Day Adventists of the 20th century, and Morris’s *The Genesis Flood*. At times, Cabal’s criticisms are well taken (e.g. Granville Penn’s emendation of the Hebrew text), but at other times they seem overdone (e.g. against Henry Morris). Cabal asserts that around 1989, Henry Morris set a combative tone for YECism by insisting that holding to OECism was a compromise with evolution (p. 145). Biblical inerrantists may hold to OEC, but the millions of years idea does originate from a naturalistic worldview.

Chapter 7 needs clarification. Cabal seemingly uses the terms “evolutionary science,” “atheistic science,” “naturalistic science,” and “modern science” interchangeably in his claims that YECists use evolutionary science and then chide others for doing the same (also known as hypocrisy). One might ask, what “science” is left for YECists to use? YECists embrace science and the discoveries thereof, but they do not approach science with evolutionary presuppositions. Much more discussion belongs here, but space constraints do not allow for this.

Chapter 8 addresses the Chicago Statements, biblical inerrancy, and the age of the earth. Here, Cabal intimates that article XX of the CSBI could allow for OECism due to the ever-changing findings of science (p. 175). The ETS and Reasons to Believe (OEC) hold to inerrancy and the CSBI. Many YECists do as well, but Cabal mentions Terry Mortenson’s proposed supplements to the Chicago Statements. I hope that Drs. Cabal and Mortenson can have a friendly discussion very soon. Regarding CE and BioLogos, Cabal states that BioLogos does not officially endorse inerrancy, and he rightly questions the statements of Kenton Sparks that indicate the jettisoning of inerrancy.

Chapter 9 contains Cabal’s application of theological triage to three creationist ministries. Cabal asserts that BioLogos draws the doctrinal boundaries too broadly while Answers in Genesis (AiG) draws them too narrowly. BioLogos entertains universal common descent and the rejection of inerrancy, and thus could cause harm. AiG could force the age of the earth to a first or second level doctrine, and thus cause unnecessary division. A potential lack of clarity exists around Ken Ham’s use of the phrase “gospel issue” when referring to the age of the earth, but the phrase “gospel coherency issue” should clear up any confusion. Cabal also mentions a few missteps by OECist Hugh Ross, but he never critiques the OEC position. In fact, he gives the position a “free pass.”

Chapter 10 is a call to patience and peace. His fictitious historical scenarios of 17th-century pastors struggling with the heliocentric debate are enjoyable but heliocentrism is observation science, not origin science. However, Cabal’s call for confidence in the Word of God and his request for “exquisite Christian kindness and gentleness” (p. 225) is welcome. YECists are passionate, and all YECists would do well to engage in kinder, and at times, less sweeping, rhetoric.

This book has great value, but not for bringing OECists and YECists together. In fact, I foresee the book producing potentially combative discussions. Because the conservatism principle is applied to different kinds of science, I doubt, though I remain hopeful for, its effectiveness in bringing OECists and YECists together.

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The Decalogue: Living as the People of God. By David L. Baker. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2017, xvii + 221 pp., \$20.00 paper.

Author David L. Baker teaches biblical studies at All Nations Christian College, which trains missionaries for cross-cultural works. Baker states that his book

tries to convince the readers on the relevance of the Decalogue for today, and in my judgment, he succeeds admirably.

This book is divided into four parts. The first part is a general introduction to the Ten Commandments regarding its shape, form, origin, and purpose. The Decalogue as recorded in Exod 20:1–17 and Deut 5:6–21 is numbered five different ways by various Jewish and Christian traditions. Baker accepts the numberings used by Orthodox and Reformed Christians and by Jews. About the form of the Decalogue, Baker believes the Exodus version was earlier, but he allows that each version added an explanation to an earlier shorter form. About the Decalogue's origin, Baker accepts that it was given by God directly as a historical event, but he leaves open the communication method. About the purpose, Baker takes the view that it is the Israelite constitution, but mainly provides an ethical basis for the people of God.

The second part has the detailed discussion about the first five commandments under the title "Loving God." In dealing with each commandment, Baker brings up ANE law and cultures (Sumerian, Babylonian, Hittite, and Assyrian), and explains the similarities and differences with the Decalogue. Then he discusses each commandment in the context of biblical materials (Book of the Covenant, Holiness Code, Deuteronomic Laws, and others). Finally, he reflects on each commandment's application in the contemporary world. This approach is similar to that of his previous book, *Tight Fists or Open Hands? Wealth and Poverty in Old Testament Law*, and Mark F. Rooker's *The Ten Commandments: Ethics for the Twenty-First Century*. Regarding the first commandment, Baker sees that it is not a statement of monotheism in the modern sense, but only "monolatry." He states that with the second part of Isaiah does true monotheism emerge. He concludes faith in one God and worship of him only is the heart of the first commandment. The second commandment concerns how the true God should be worshipped. Baker sees it as not against the visual arts in themselves but against making images to be used as idols. He emphasizes that God wants us to listen to his words, not to see him in any images. The third commandment requires reverence to God, especially in using his name. Baker sees that it warns against manipulating God by using his name and uttering profane speech with God's name, including the name of Jesus. The fourth commandment about Sabbath is unique in the ancient world. The theological bases are to imitate God and care for the vulnerable people. The purpose is for celebration and rest. He observes Sunday as Christian Sabbath. The fifth commandment regarding honoring parents is the basic principle for family life. It includes giving dignity and support to our parents, and also respecting religious education and tradition from one's parents. Baker concludes that the validity of this commandment does not depend on having perfect parents but on the role of parents as God's representatives in giving life.

The third part has the detailed discussion about the second five commandments under the title "Loving Neighbor." The sixth commandment prohibits killing of one person by another, includes both murder and manslaughter but not capital punishment or killing in war, self-defense, and suicide. Baker does not deal with the issue of abortion and euthanasia in this book, but acknowledges that God alone

has the right to determine whether a person lives or dies. He accepts the concept of just war in some circumstances. He points out Jesus's warning against hatred and anger. The seventh commandment is for protecting marriage, and not about pre-marital relationships. The author acknowledges that there are other laws on sexual relationships in Leviticus and Deuteronomy. Baker concludes that the law should be extended internally as Jesus warned against impurity of the heart. The eighth commandment prohibits theft in order to protect property ownership. The biblical penalties for theft are more lenient than those of other ANE societies because the Bible places a higher value on human life than on material possessions. Baker extends the concept of theft to indirect theft, unfair economic structures, and material greediness. The ninth commandment is primarily about perjury, but also prohibits lying and deceitful speech. Baker comments that some recent scholars disagree with Augustine and do not consider lying as always wrong. But he cautions that one needs to be sure of a higher moral obligation when telling a lie. The tenth commandment is concerned with thoughts and intentions, which is unique in the OT laws and consistent with Jesus's and other NT teachings. Baker praises contentment and points out that coveting is the first step toward breaking other commandments.

Baker concludes in the final part about the meaning and significance of the Decalogue for today. The Decalogue contains the ethical principles for the people of God throughout human history, which counters some ethicists' claim to the contrary. His conclusion affirms the thesis in his book *Two Testaments, One Bible*.

There is a bibliography (40 pages), followed by author, subject, and Scripture indices. The bibliography is divided into several sections that are difficult to use. I prefer a combined bibliography.

Baker taught in Indonesia and can see issues from cross-cultural perspectives. This book is a very good summary of the ethical principles given in the Decalogue and does an excellent job calling the people of God to live accordingly.

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Reading Old Testament Narrative as Christian Scripture. By Douglas S. Earl. Journal of Theological Interpretation Supplement 17. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2017, xiv + 369 pp., \$39.95 paper.

The interpretation of biblical narrative poses challenges for the Christian interpreter. In *Reading Old Testament Narrative as Christian Scripture*, Douglas Earl seeks to help the reader explore and understand "the nature of the Christian interpretation of Old Testament narrative through the 'nitty-gritty' of reading a range of texts that highlight different interpretive issues" (p. xi). Earl has written on this and similar topics elsewhere in *The Joshua Delusion? Rethinking Genocide in the Bible* (Cascade, 2011) and *Reading Joshua as Christian Scripture* (Eisenbrauns, 2010). The latter title was a revision of his Ph.D. dissertation undertaken at the Durham University and presents a more focused treatment of much of what is found in the present volume,

Reading Old Testament Narrative as Christian Scripture. This volume is the seventeenth installment in the Journal of Theological Interpretation Supplement series.

Earl's work is focused on reading a variety of OT narrative texts in order to engage in an interpretive "journey" while also "revisiting texts and interpretive assumptions in the process" (p. 1). While engaging in this journey, Earl notes that this book is not intended to provide a methodology or systematic treatment on how to engage narrative as Christian Scripture, as much as it is an example of reading that embodies what reading narrative should look like. Earl then notes that his influences in this type of reading are Wittgenstein, as understood through Peter Lamarque, and Ricoeur. Reading narrative is then to be considered a practice or activity that focuses on the issue of the text, which Ricoeur also refers to as the world of the text. This way of reading is discussed in detail within the prologue of the book.

After the prologue, Earl focuses largely on individual texts within the chapters that follow. Chapter 2 focuses on the difficult text of Genesis 34. Here Earl looks at this text through a variety of approaches (literary poetic, structuralist, myth) while seeking to critique traditional Christian interpretations. Chapter 3 looks at the book of Joshua while taking into account historical and ethical criticisms of the book. In chapter 4, Earl focuses on the theological problems of the text. In chapter 5, the focus is on the political ideology/ideologies of the David story interacting with the minimalist position. This serves as an example of what it may mean for a text to be read as Christian Scripture while also being largely fictional. Chapter 6 revisits Genesis 34 and the early chapters of Joshua, particularly the Rahab account. Chapter 7 focuses on the book of Ruth and how the modern interpreter can engage this book for a sexual ethic. Chapter 8 examines Gen 1:26 from a metaphysical perspective with an emphasis on the plural pronoun used and a Trinitarian reading of the text. In chapter 9, the focus moves from individual texts to salvation history. The book concludes with an epilogue, in which Earl notes that reading biblical narrative as Christian Scripture should be left "jagged."

Earl's work is thorough and well versed in literary theory, as well as many other disciplines. The task of reading the Bible, and narrative in particular, as Christian Scripture is a noble task. In many ways, Earl accomplishes what he has set out to do, which is to read a variety of texts that contain a variety of difficulties or problems, from a Christian perspective. Not every reader will be convinced by Earl's conclusions, but he will make a good conversation partner for any scholar or well-trained student seeking to read biblical narrative.

Those of a more evangelical persuasion will have some difficulties with many of the conclusions of this work. In particular, I will critique two aspects of Earl's work. First, throughout the work Earl assumes most critical conclusions, from compositional theories (e.g. within Pentateuchal scholarship) to a historical understanding of ancient Israel (the minimalist approach to the early Israelite monarchy). Earl also refers to multiple narrative texts as myth, including Genesis 34 and Joshua. At the same time, Earl says that a straightforward reading of a text is not easy and refers to this type of reading, and by implication those who engage in this type of reading, as naïve (for examples of this, see p. 30 with his description of reading the

Joshua narrative, and p. 149 n. 2 concerning the history of the David story). So if the reader of Earl's work, or the biblical narrative, is coming from a place of "naïve" interpretation, as I apparently am, then Earl's answers, or examples through the journey of interpretation, do not always address the difficulties and problems of reading narrative as Christian Scripture in a satisfying way.

Second, at times Earl's understanding of possible readings of narrative texts appears to ignore fairly concrete biblical/theological principles found elsewhere in Scripture. An example of this can be seen in his discussion of the sexual renderings of the Ruth narrative. Here Earl notes that the text can be read in a number of different ways (p. 228). Earl notes that different communities can legitimately read the Ruth text from their position of sexual ethic and can give privilege to some texts over others. He refers to multiple possible readings that are really mutually exclusive in both their meaning and application as "good" readings. It will be difficult for readers across the spectrum of theological and ethical conviction to affirm the opposite reading on this issue as good or legitimate. In allowing some readings as good there does seem to be a dismissal of ancient Israelite context and the vast majority of Christian interpretive history in order to accommodate very recent readings that do not clearly appear in the text. Can such a reading be rightly called Christian if it largely ignores Christian interpretive history? Does such a reading bring satisfactory answers to "difficult" texts? For Earl to allow vastly non-traditional readings seems even more odd when he affirms very traditional readings of Gen 1:26 in another chapter. To be fair to Earl, however, he does note throughout his work that he wants to explore different hermeneutical assumptions.

Reading Old Testament Narrative as Christian Scripture is a thorough work that is robust in its research and scope. In many ways, Earl will be a good reading and conversation partner to scholars and advanced students. Earl's work, however, will leave many evangelical readers with more questions than answers. Beginning and intermediate students will also struggle to keep up with the breadth of literature with which Earl interacts.

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Hope for a Tender Sprig: Jehoiachin in Biblical Theology. By Matthew H. Patton. Bulletin for Biblical Research Supplement 16. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2017, xvi + 254 pp., \$49.50.

Matthew H. Patton has produced a weighty study of Jehoiachin in this revised dissertation. The "tender sprig" in the title comes from Ezek 17:22, commonly understood to be a messianic image. The obscurity of the reference is fitting as Patton notes on the first page of the introduction: "Why is there such interest in a king who was so insignificant politically and who—literarily speaking—is a rather flat character?" The answer is quickly given and sufficiently defended. One suspects the impetus for the study was Patton's thesis advisor Daniel Block's 2012 article

(bibliography, p. 212), but this fact and the identification of outside reader Mark Boda adds intrigue and confidence to press into a careful reading of this work.

The introduction (chap. 1) includes a brief survey of the history of research, method, and overview. Its brevity aided in readability and the extensive footnotes allowed for more serious consideration when desired. Chapter 2 provides a helpful historical background to Josiah's descendants through whom Judah cascades into exile, as well as the varying condition of the exiles in Babylon. This background provides the groundwork for the narrative account of 2 Kings as well as the prophetic references to Jehoiachin in Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

A detailed study of 2 Kings 24 and 25 follows in chapter 3. To develop a positive view of Jehoiachin, Patton first notes that his only recorded action was his surrender to Nebuchadnezzar and ultimate survival, a thread of hope that will be pulled together with several other threads throughout the study. Even with thorough exegetical work in the Hebrew of these brief accounts, Patton admits 2 Kings' portrait of Jehoiachin is ambiguous. To tip the scales toward a positive portrait, Patton adds an excursus on the Primary History (PH: Genesis–2 Kings), which opens fertile territory for more than a dozen narrative analogies, both positive and negative. In addition, tracing the broad PH themes of "The Promise to David" and "Expectations of National Restoration" allow Patton to conclude that 2 Kings' portrayal of Jehoiachin is not as ambiguous as it is paradoxical—both humiliated (24:8–18) and exalted (25:27–30)—and that this paradox is a step forward in God's plan.

Chapter 4 opens by embracing Jeremiah's perplexing organization of oracles reflecting the confusing nature of the exile for Israel. In the midst of this aphoria, Jeremiah provides a twofold theological answer in 1:10 of judgment and restoration that is illustrated well in his portrayal of Jehoiachin. Patton examines the references to Jehoiachin in 22:24–30, 13:18–19, and 36:30–31 to support "Jehoiachin's uprooting"; and 27:16–28:17, chapters 24 and 29, and 52:31–34 to support "Jehoiachin's planting"; and then includes several passages that provide restoration hope for David more generally. Jehoiachin is identified as a prime example of Jeremiah's twofold theology.

Patton continues in chapter 5 with a similar dual message found in Ezekiel's phrase "exalt the low and bring low the exalted" (Ezek 21:26). Rather than Jehoiachin representing both sides of this equation as he did in Jeremiah, Zedekiah (among other less significant characters) will provide the negative example in Ezekiel. Also, an extensive effort is made to decode the symbols of Ezekiel 19. Jehoiachin will provide the positive example of a lowly one exalted. This chapter includes a more extensive development of hope for an eschatological David. Patton eloquently summarizes, "But while Zedekiah the vine withers, Jehoiachin the cedar sprig is sent to Babylon, a 'greenhouse' to preserve him during the cold winter of exile" (p.127).

Next, chapter 6 explores Jehoiachin's appearances in Persian-period Scripture. Patton makes clear his preference for "Persian-period" rather than "post-exile" since his thesis will lean on the perspective that the exile did not end with Cyrus's decree and/or the rebuilding of temple and wall, but was only "ameliorated." This

unique term was introduced early (p. 28) but is developed more thoroughly here. Chronicles is considered first. Great effort is spent to explain the significance of the genealogical notation 1 Chr 3:16–17 and the brief narrative of 2 Chr 36:8–10. After a detailed examination of each, Patton contends that these cameo appearances reinforce the Chronicler's theology of exile—an ameliorated exile. Concisely, it is explained that Yahweh's wrath is past, but the Israelites had not yet humbled themselves (2 Chr 7:14). Conditions are better, but the exile will not end until a Davidic ruler sits on the throne. Haggai and Zechariah provide only allusions to Jehoiachin through Zerubbabel and possible allusions elsewhere (e.g. Hag 2:23 to Jer 22:24; Zech 4:9 to Jer 22:30; and Zech 6:9–15 to Jer 33:14–26).

Chapter 7 addresses Second Temple texts as potential context for NT writers, although the value of this interlude is questionable. Chapter 8, on the other hand, was surprisingly compelling. Since Jeconiah (Matthew's Jehoiachin) appears in the NT only in Matthew's genealogy, it was hard to see how he would prove significant. Patton's twelve pages on Matthew's genealogy and its narrative function prove interesting because Matthew casts Jesus as one who humbly suffers God's wrath and is exalted by God in the resurrection. The unique double-mention of Jeconiah in the genealogy may convince the reader the reference is significant, and if so, sets up the thesis for a worthy conclusion. First, however, one must accept the related explanation for the omission of Jehoiachin (and all of Solomon's line) from Luke's genealogy. More challenging still may be the relationship between parable of the mustard seed and Jehoiachin through an allusion to Ezek 17:23. Patton admits in his conclusion that Jehoiachin was not a major point of reflection for NT writers but contends that they confirm the trajectory established to this point in the thesis.

If one follows Patton all the way down this path (or even most of the way), the concluding chapter (9) will establish Jehoiachin as a significant figure in salvation history. A brief defense of biblical theology and the theme of salvation history prepare the reader for a summation. The exilic works of 2 Kings, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel predominately portray Jehoiachin as suffering God's wrath, although they do offer glimmers of hope for the future. The Persian-period works of Chronicles, Haggai, and Zechariah provide a mixture of judgment and hope as Zerubbabel points to a future for the Davidic line. Matthew's double notation of Jeconiah demonstrates his pivotal role moving the story line from judgment to the fulfillment of hope in the coming of the eschatological Davidic King Jesus. Narrative analogies of suffering kings and exalted exiles lead to a final five-page summary that casts Jehoiachin as a type of Christ.

Hope for a Tender Sprig makes a worthy contribution to OT scholarship on Jehoiachin and biblical theology of salvation history. Though the author may overstate the significance of Jehoiachin, the exegetical work displayed throughout and the trajectory these passages provide in salvation history are valuable. This reader will incorporate many insights from this book into both teaching and preaching.

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Hearing the Message of Daniel: Sustaining Faith in Today's World. By Christopher J. H. Wright. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017, 248 pp., \$17.99 paper.

Christopher J. H. Wright, ordained Anglican minister, OT scholar, and the International Ministries Director of Langham Partnership, combines scholarship and practical ministry experience into an academically astute yet powerfully practical volume that exceeds the classification of Bible study and promises to be not only an intellectual but also a devotional tool to influence this generation and generations to come. While not all readers will be on the same page with Wright hermeneutically or in the area of eschatology, this work is nonetheless a solid companion to any study of the book of Daniel. There is much to commend this volume and few weaknesses.

When evaluating this volume, one would do well to note the parameters of the book laid out in the preface. There, Wright forthrightly states, "This is not a commentary on the book of Daniel" (p. 12). Nor does Wright address issues of the unity of Daniel or matters pertaining to the dating of later chapters (p. 12). Yet Wright does not shy away from identifying the scope and message of the book: "A major theme of the book is how people who worship the one, true, living God—the God of Israel—can live and work and survive in the midst of a nation, a culture, and a government that are hostile and sometimes life-threatening" (p. 17)

As with any written matter, this volume has its weaknesses. For example, I could point to the frequent references and illustrations drawn from the culture of the United Kingdom. Such an observation may seem trivial, but such references and illustrations may not have the desired meaning and impact in the minds and life application of many North Americans or individuals from other nations and cultures.

The following two examples point to more consequential matters and concerns related to interpretation and/or Wright's reluctance to take a stand on an interpretive issue such as the identity of the fourth man in the fiery furnace in Daniel chapter 3 ("It is somewhat pointless to argue about his identity," p. 85). In addition, Wright may allow the influence of modern psychology to influence his interpretation to a greater degree than some readers will appreciate. For instance, note chapter 4 dealing with Nebuchadnezzar's humbling before God. "It is even possible, according to some Christian psychologists, that preoccupation with low self-image may itself conceal a form of pride, or at least ego-centredness" (p. 91).

Even with the above clearly in view, the strengths of this volume far outweigh its weaknesses. Wright in a timely and insightful manner draws from the narratives of Daniel and develops immensely powerful applications from King Nebuchadnezzar and his successors, the people of Babylon, the Medes and the Persians, and of course, the events and places surrounding Daniel and his companions Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Wright masterfully develops the narratives of Daniel and weaves them into powerful application for Christians today. An example would be Nebuchadnezzar's statue of gold. Wright suggests that the statute represents the strength and unity of the Babylonian empire: "One king, one empire, one official faith—all symbolized in that massive golden statue. ... National unity, national

security, national pride—these were the powerful driving forces behind Nebuchadnezzar’s great, gleaming, golden festival” (pp. 64–69).

Application of the narratives to current world social and political events flows naturally and pointedly from Wright’s exposition. Like well-placed goads, Wright’s insights leave the reader with much to ponder. For example, “The seduction of polytheism and pluralism is that they widen every choice and set no limits. Under pluralism you can tolerate anything, except, of course, the person who insists that there is only one true God” (p. 75).

As to more controversial issues in Daniel, Wright states, “Those who want to explore the scholarly debate over whether the visions of the later chapters are truly predictive or a prophetic interpretation of past and present events need to consult larger commentaries” (p. 12). Yet, with skill and clarity Wright addresses the difficult portions of Daniel such as the statue of chapter 2, although not every reader will concur with every feature of his interpretation. Wright further tackles the difficult picture of the kingdoms represented by the ram and the goat listed in chapter 8. As a modern-day example of the succession of kingdoms, Wright points to the “slow collapse of the dominance and self-assured superiority of Western civilization” (p. 181). Many will agree with Wright in connecting such persons as Cyrus, Alexander the Great, the Maccabees, and the activities of Antiochus Epiphanes to the events and personages of chapter 8.

One of the most practical and powerful sections of the book is Wright’s development of Daniel’s prayer in chapter 9: “The words of his mouth echo the words of Scripture in his heart, the words of God himself. It’s a good model to follow” (p. 195). Wright treats the concluding chapters (10–12) as a climatic unit to be read and interpreted together (p. 212). He sees the great climax of Daniel as giving the reader both comfort and reassurance: “For all of us then, if we know the God of Daniel as our God, through faith in His Son, the Son of Man, the Lord Jesus Christ, the promise of God’s Word comes: ‘You will rest ... you will rise ... you will receive’” (p. 231).

Wright’s book, while claiming not to be a commentary, is nonetheless a good expository or homiletical commentary on the book of Daniel. Yet, beyond Wright’s exposition lies the power and practical application one would expect in devotional reading. Wright’s contribution to our understanding and application of the book of Daniel promises to be influential currently and in the future. I believe Wright’s book would be a good companion or secondary text to any class in the academic setting or in the church that is focused on the study of book of Daniel, as well as for the devotional reading of any scholar, pastor, or layman.

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Coins as Cultural Texts in the World of the New Testament. By David H. Wenkel. T&T Clark Biblical Studies. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017, xxv + 195 pp., \$128.00.

David H. Wenkel, Adjunct Professor of NT at Moody Bible Institute, seeks in this volume to equip NT scholars with the necessary foundation to benefit from numismatics. This is an important goal, and Wenkel's interdisciplinary contribution capably fills a lacuna in the literature. The target reader is "familiar with the basics of New Testament theology, history, and hermeneutics but lacks familiarity with Greco-Roman and Jewish 'numismatics'" (p. xvii). The book consists of an introduction, sixteen relatively short chapters (most of which are gathered together into longer sections), an appendix on events related to first-century numismatics, a bibliography, and indexes.

In chapter 1, Wenkel lays out one of his basic claims: "Coins are cultural texts that require a method of interpretation that is robust enough to capture the dynamics of author-text-reader interaction" (p. 1). The fact that coins are cultural texts means that we should seek to interpret them as we would try to interpret any other ancient text. Coins were a medium of communication to a predominately illiterate or semi-literate population that sought to communicate something to someone through the integration of image and inscription.

Chapter 2 builds upon the basic idea that coins are cultural texts "embedded in the 'discourse' between Caesar and the subjects of the Empire" (p. 22) and proposes that speech-act theory provides an appropriate hermeneutical framework to guide interpreters. Speech-act theory draws our attention to locution (the content of the coin itself—image and inscription), illocution (what the author of the coin sought to do), and perlocution (the reception of the communicative act). These three components of communication form the basis for the three main sections of the book. Section 1 explores the world in front of the coin, the readers and users of coins. The world in front of the coin consisted of the entire Roman Empire. Section 2 explores the world of the coin itself. This is a world of propaganda where coins functioned as "ideological tools for those in power" (p. 18). Section 3 explores the world behind the coin and argues that those who produced coins (the authors) primarily sought "to communicate something about their power" (p. 20). Each chapter within these three main sections concludes with a section on implications for studying the NT.

Chapter 3 provides an introductory discussion of the Roman and Jewish currency systems, while chapter 4 briefly discusses every reference to coins in the NT. Apart from Rev 6:6, all explicit references to coins appear in the Gospels and include the assarion, lepton, quadrans, denarius, talent, mina, stater, drachma, and didrachmon. Wenkel notes that understanding references to coins in the Gospels requires facility in the original languages, consideration of the Synoptic problem, and awareness of the lack of specificity in some of the terms related to money.

Section 1 includes chapters 5 through 7 and focuses on the world in front of the coin, the perlocutionary effect on the "reader" or user of coins. Chapter 5 argues that the reception and use of coins required a web of trust in first-century

society that involved the substance and form of the coin, money-changers, and weights and scales. Chapter 6 argues that coins functioned as a source of stability and security in response to fear of robbers, war, defilement, and death. Wenkel briefly discusses coins in relation to Revelation 13 and suggests that the “book of Revelation provides evidence that some first-century Christians feared their present economic system” (p. 62). Chapter 7 argues that “paying taxes was a communicative act with theological and social implications” (p. 65). Wenkel describes the temple tax as a technically voluntary tax that functioned as a form of worship and a boundary marker of identity. The trap set for Jesus regarding paying taxes to Caesar demonstrates that the images and inscriptions on coins were not neutral and many Jews wrestled with the implications of using coins with blasphemous content. The payment of taxes, particularly the *fiscus Judaicus* after the first Jewish revolt, communicated submission to Rome and its power. The *fiscus Judaicus* tax is also particularly important for understanding the parting of the ways between Judaism and Christianity at the end of the first century.

Section 2 includes chapters 8 through 12 and focuses on the world of the coins, the locution itself. Chapter 8 argues that inscriptions on coins could communicate as symbols even if the users could not read or understand the inscriptions. Inscriptions do not suggest widespread literacy but functioned as iconography. For example, the use of Paleo-Hebrew on coins of the first Jewish revolt against Rome communicated Jewish nationalism, identity, and divine election; the use of the Greek language on coins could communicate “universality or paradoxically provinciality” (p. 92); and the use of Latin on coins communicated the official status of the coins and Roman authority. Wenkel explores the possibility that abbreviations used in inscriptions on coins influenced the early Christian scribal practice of *nominata sacra*. Chapter 9 argues that dates on coins functioned as propaganda by reorienting time itself around the ruler. Chapter 10 explores how images functioned as propaganda in Roman coinage by placing the emperor at the top of the patron-client hierarchy of relationships. Wenkel focuses on common images such as the eagle, laurel wreath, quadriga, gods, temples, and human portraits and argues that these images sent a message that “all of the peace, prosperity, order, and success was tied to the favor of the gods acquired through piety and the might of the Roman army” (p. 114). Chapter 11 explores the propaganda value of Jewish coins by considering their ability to communicate messianic ambition, military power, and economic prosperity. Agricultural fertility was particularly important because it was tied to the fulfillment of Yahweh’s covenantal promises. Chapter 12 argues that “the language of metals in the first century often communicated purity or lack thereof” (p. 127). The hierarchy moved in purity from gold to silver to copper.

Section 3 includes chapters 13 through 15 and focuses on the world behind the coin, the illocution. Chapter 13 argues that rulers used coins to “shape the public identities of themselves and their family” (p. 139). This was achieved by associating the current emperor with past leadership and with deities. Chapter 14 argues that rulers used coins to project the perception of their personal presence throughout the empire. The Roman gods possessed a degree of collective omnipresence, and coins linked the emperor to the divine world. The presence of the emperor’s

image in every place communicated his power, authority, and presence in every city. Chapter 15 argues that the production of coins communicated a message of independence and power.

In the concluding chapter Wenkel cautions against basing exegetical conclusions solely on numismatic evidence, while reviewing the many contributions that the study of coins can make to our understanding of the NT and the world of the first Christians.

A few minor comments appear to be in error, or at least in need of more explanation. At one point Wenkel notes, “Each successive Caesar ... issued their own silver and gold denarii” (p. 36). Denarii were silver, and without further explanation this appears to be an accidental error. Wenkel also suggests that “SC” appeared “on the reverse side of *most coinage* in the Roman Empire” (p. 88, italics added). He does proceed to note that initially it referred to the Senate’s approval of copper and bronze (p. 89). This is a good clarification, but it does not sufficiently qualify the earlier statement that *most coinage* in the Roman Empire had “SC” on the reverse. In the first century all, or almost all, copper or bronze Roman coins had “SC” stamped on them as the Senate’s guarantee of their value even though their metal content did not merit such value, while “SC” only very rarely occurred on silver and gold coins to indicate special or unique issues from the Senate.

In conclusion, this book will play an important role in opening the world of numismatics to NT scholars and students. Its application of speech-act theory to numismatics is clear and cogent. It is fairly introductory, however, and will not offer much to those already familiar with both disciplines.

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A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus. Vol. 5: *Probing the Authenticity of the Parables*. By John P. Meier. Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016, xiii + 441 pp., \$55.00.

John Meier, William K. Warren Professor of Theology (NT) at the University of Notre Dame, published his first volume in this series in 1991. He consistently predicted that his next volume would wrap things up, but he has stopped doing that with volume 5, which appeared exactly a quarter-century later. Meier’s endeavor is clearly the biggest scholarly undertaking in the quest of the historical Jesus by any single individual since its inception in the late eighteenth century. It has been prolonged by a variety of challenges to Meier’s health, and he thanks his doctors for their expertise, which has made it possible for him to continue with his project.

Throughout this undertaking Meier has aimed to reflect a minimal consensus that he imagines an “unpapal conclave” cloistered in the basement of the Harvard Divinity School library made up of a Protestant, Catholic, Jew, atheist (and in recent volumes, Muslim) producing, by applying as objectively as possible the standard criteria of authenticity used in historical Jesus research. He repeatedly stresses that this does not mean that other material in the Gospels is always unhistorical;

frequently the historian must come to the verdict of *non liquet* (not clear) where there simply is not enough evidence either to authenticate or to dismiss something. In light of these ground rules, few of Meier's conclusions in the first four volumes have proved surprising, except in occasional ways that have pleased evangelicals—a ringing endorsement of the miracle tradition overall, especially with Jesus's healings and exorcisms, and a recognition that the emerging picture of Jesus is one of a robust Jewish eschatological prophet with possible hints of a messianic self-consciousness. On this last matter, however, he has consistently tantalized his readers with promises of clarification in his ever-postponed final volume.

Volume 5, as Meier himself recognizes, breaks dramatically from this tradition. The parables of Jesus have regularly been identified as bedrock-core, authentic-Jesus material, but Meier believes that they have been given a “free pass.” Particularly because the sizable majority of them are only singly attested (especially in Matthew or Luke), at best one can declare *non liquet*. The way many scholars get around this impasse is to admit the parallel passages of about a dozen of Jesus's parables in the Coptic Gospel of Thomas as independent (and often earlier) versions of their Synoptic counterparts. However, just as he did for the Gospel of Thomas overall and more briefly in volume 1, Meier here offers a detailed chapter that includes a passage-by-passage analysis of the parallels to argue convincingly that Thomas's versions are later than and dependent on the Synoptic material. Yet then we are back to the original problem of the parables' single attestation.

Meier finds four exceptions in the Gospels and analyzes them in detail. He believes that solid, authentic core texts lie behind the mustard seed (Mark 4:30–32 parr.), the wicked tenants (Mark 12:1–12 parr.), the twin parables of the great banquet (Luke 14:16–24) and wedding feast (Matt. 22:1–9), and the twin parables of the talents (Matt. 25:14–30) and the pounds or minas (Luke 19:12–27). Only his logic and conclusions concerning the mustard seed, however, at all match conventional parable scholarship.

In the case of the mustard seed, as various others have observed, Mark's and Luke's versions differ enough to suggest transmission through independent traditions, probably Mark and Q. Matthew's version then reads like a conflation of the two earlier traditions. So here we do have multiple attestation. The parable of the wicked tenants, shorn from the additional dialogue with the crowds and the saying about the cornerstone, ends with the death of the son who was cast out of the vineyard. Parable scholarship has tended to reject this passage because of its implicitly allegorical nature. However, Meier rightly rejects the notion that all allegory can or should be discarded as inauthentic. The allegory in the wicked tenants is entirely implicit and it is hard to make good sense of the passage without it. Once this is acknowledged, then it is even harder to imagine early Christians composing the nucleus of the story with an ending that leaves the master and his son defeated. So the discontinuity or dissimilarity criterion kicks in to authenticate the rest of the text.

The other two pairs of parallels are different enough from each other that they must be assigned to independent traditions, but they are not so different that they can be labeled as separate parables altogether. Of course, one must remove

redactional accretions, especially the seemingly separate story of the man without the wedding garment in Matthew's banquet parable and the details about the throne claimant in Luke's pounds or minas. A good portion of what remains in each case, however, can be seen to be multiply attested and thus accepted.

For further corroboration, Meier reminds his readers what the first four volumes of his series have been concluding: Jesus's authentic teaching tells the story of the creator God sovereignly choosing to make Israel his people and leading them toward salvation. Individual Israelites freely enter this covenant relationship and are bound to obedience to their God in response to the salvation he has provided for them. This obedience leads to the fullness of God's eschatological blessings promised from the beginning. It is precisely these themes that we see in the four authentic parables.

While it appears that Meier renders a *non liquet* verdict on the majority of the parables, he suspects that several more are authentic and that several are actually creations of the early church. He is particularly convinced that the Good Samaritan is a creation of Luke, because its theological emphases, narrative style, and linguistic peculiarities all match Luke's redaction elsewhere. By the criterion of coherence, this makes him suspicious of some of the other uniquely Lucan parables that prove similar in these areas, as he draws on the studies in the 1970s of Sellin, Goulder, and others, which were shown to be both inaccurate and one-sided already a generation ago.

What is particularly distinctive in volume 5 of *A Marginal Jew* is the weight Meier places on multiple attestation. It has always been important for him but what is missing in this volume is the regular assessment of the discontinuities or dissimilarities of the parables, their embarrassing features, their uniquely early Palestinian environment, and their remarkable coherence with much that Meier has already authenticated, especially among Jesus's other teachings on the kingdom. I am baffled as to how he can say that scholarship has given the parables a free pass, unless he is thinking only of the brand of scholarship that he rightly criticizes for making the parables fit the molds of their interpreters in such critical disciplines as structuralism, deconstruction, feminism, post-Holocaust theory, and so on. Nowhere is the reader presented with Jeremias's tendencies of the developing tradition, much less a critique of them, or with the various arguments for authenticity laid out in such diverse sources as the books by Perrin, Klauck, Weder, Bailey, Blomberg, Hultgren, or Snodgrass. Indeed, his sweeping dismissal of Snodgrass's *magnum opus* overall, after disagreements with just a few specific points of interpretation, is stunning. One senses that after all these years, Meier is thinking that no one else ever manages to separate theology from historical criticism adequately in ways that he can and does do.

Meier knows full well what he is doing, and he repeatedly refers to his "unfashionable theses" and "contrarian positions." He certainly appears to think that the method he has been following for the last twenty-five years is simply leading him to these conclusions. He admits he never thought he would be coming to them. Yet it is not clear that he is still following his method in quite the same way, and his grasp of the history of parable scholarship does not seem to be as thorough as in

some of the areas he has studied. That, of course, is not surprising given the sheer amount of that scholarship. This book is worth consulting just for the chapter on the Gospel of Thomas alone. Much of the rest of the volume, nonetheless, is somewhat more disappointing.

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The Last Adam: A Theology of the Obedient Life of Jesus in the Gospels. By Brandon D. Crowe. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017, xviii + 264 pp., \$29.99 paper.

The study of the Gospels witnessed a remarkable transformation over the twentieth century. The atomizing exegesis characteristic of source and form criticism yielded to renewed appreciation of the Gospels as narrative. With this heightened attention to the literary integrity of the Gospels has come renewed interest in the theological message of the Gospels. There can be no question that central to this message in each of the four Gospels is the redemptive death and resurrection of Jesus. Even so, scholars have increasingly explored how the life and ministry of Jesus antecedent to those climactic works factor into his work of salvation for his people. Some have gone so far as to allege that the historic Christian creeds have failed to give this aspect of Jesus's redemptive labors its due.

Brandon Crowe is appreciative of the growing chorus of scholars who perceive the life of Jesus to be integral to his work of salvation, but he regards historic Christianity, and especially the Reformed tradition, to have spoken constructively to this matter. In *The Last Adam*, Crowe mounts a convincing exegetical and biblical-theological case that the Gospels present Christ as a "representative figure," specifically, "the last Adam" (p. 16). As such, the "obedience of Jesus outside the Passion Narratives" is "vicarious" and carries "a saving character" (pp. 16, 17).

After an introductory chapter in which Crowe surveys the interpretative landscape and advances his thesis, Crowe develops that thesis in six substantive chapters. In chapter 2, Crowe argues that the four canonical Gospels present Jesus not only as the new Israel, but also as the Last Adam. Luke's genealogy represents Jesus's sonship as expressly Adamic in character, while Matthew's genealogy presents Jesus's ministry as covenantal and in the context of Genesis's creation account. The title "Son of Man" also presents Jesus as the Last Adam. Since Daniel presents the Son of Man as both a representative person and "the fulfiller of the Adamic task of ruling in God's image" and since the Gospels consciously connect this title with Daniel 7, one should understand the title "Son of Man" in the Gospels in terms of the Last Adam (pp. 39, 40). The specific "Son of Man" texts in the Gospels, furthermore, not only show Jesus to be a representative figure but also echo multiple aspects of the creation account, ranging from Adam's authority over the creatures to Adam's "created state of sinlessness" to the Sabbath (pp. 44–45).

In chapter 3, Crowe argues that the title "Son of God" does more than denote Jesus's filial obedience to God. That title carries in its background not only Israel but also Adam. Jesus is the obedient son that Adam and Israel failed to be.

This obedience is brought to the fore early in Jesus's ministry, particularly in the baptism and temptation accounts. These crucial and foundational texts portray Jesus's filial obedience as representative and vicarious in nature, "benefit[ing] those whom he represents" (pp. 68, 78).

Chapter 4 takes up passages in the Gospels in which Jesus is said to bring Scripture to fulfillment. Particular attention falls upon Matt 3:15, in which Jesus declares his intention to fulfill all righteousness. This intention signals, Crowe argues, Jesus's "fulfill[ment of] God's requirements vicariously as part of the accomplishment of salvation" (p. 89). Chapter 5 argues that the Fourth Gospel, no less than the Synoptics, presents "Jesus's lifelong, filial obedience [as] necessary for salvation" (p. 138). It is John's passion narrative, in particular, that offers suggestive indications that this obedience is that of the Last Adam (pp. 135–37).

Chapter 6 concentrates on the motif of the Kingdom in the Gospels. The "authority of Jesus to implement the kingdom of righteousness," Crowe claims, "is often portrayed in Adamic terms" (p. 139). Specifically, the Gospels characterize his obedience in this connection as "overcom[ing] the disobedience of Adam and the effects of Adam's sin" (p. 170). In the last substantive chapter, Crowe explores the connection between Jesus's life of obedience and his death and resurrection. Crowe stresses that, for the Gospels, the "life and death of Jesus are organically interwoven"—one may not think about the one without bringing the other into consideration (p. 171). In particular, Jesus's "full obedience ... qualifies him to save his people from their sins ..., serving as the (new) covenant sacrifice" (p. 176). Jesus's encounters with the rich young ruler and the lawyer signal Jesus's unique competence as "the last Adam" to "fulfill the principle of 'do this and live,' thereby securing resurrection life" (p. 181). The historical event of the resurrection is the "just verdict of God for Jesus" having done just that (p. 195).

In a final chapter devoted to "theological synthesis and conclusions," Crowe stresses the importance of the Gospels' underscoring the specifically Adamic character of Jesus's obedience (pp. 199, 203). Jesus, supernaturally conceived, was uniquely capable of meeting the "conditions for eschatological life that were originally given to Adam" that no ordinary descendant of Adam could meet (p. 203). This whole obedience was undertaken vicariously or representatively and, as such, is imputed to Jesus's people for their justification (p. 204). This point, Crowe concludes, is one that was not missed by "Christian creeds, confessions, and catechisms" (p. 214). Historic Christianity has long recognized "how the history of Jesus' life is necessary for salvation" (p. 214).

Crowe successfully makes the case that the Gospels present Jesus's obedience as necessary to salvation, as representative and vicarious, and as Adamic in character. Some of the strongest evidence for his thesis falls earliest in his book: the Matthean and Lucan genealogies and the accounts of Jesus's baptism and temptation. These accounts serve, as Crowe observes, to introduce the Gospel narratives that follow them and, as such, frame the entirety of Jesus's public ministry. These accounts not only establish multiple connections between Jesus and Adam but also cast the work of Jesus in a necessarily covenantal and representational light.

Crowe also addresses the significance of this observation for recent academic discussion of the Gospels. Many scholars who are sensitive to the ways in which the Gospel writers locate Jesus's life and ministry in the context of the OT Scriptures emphasize the antithetically parallel relationship between Israel and Jesus in the Gospels. Without disagreeing that such a relationship exists in the Gospels, Crowe sees in the Gospels a more basic relationship in place between Adam and Jesus. Recognition of this more basic relationship serves to enhance rather than to compete with the multiple biblical-theological resonances between Israel and Jesus. Crowe's thesis, therefore, complements and extends what many scholars have recognized in the Gospels concerning Jesus and Israel.

One virtue of Crowe's work is that it remedies a weakness that he notes in recent evangelical scholarship of the Gospels. This scholarship stresses the centrality of Jesus's life and obedience to the Gospels but fails to articulate adequately "how and why" Jesus's life and obedience are important (p. 6). Crowe's demonstration that Jesus undertakes his obedience as the Last Adam affords an explanation for its necessity to Christ's redemptive work. Jesus's obedience supplies the eschatological righteousness that Adam (and his posterity) failed to secure. A further strength of Crowe's argument is that it demonstrates the integration of the obedience, death, and resurrection of Christ. The whole of the Last Adam's obedience, which culminated in his death and was rewarded in his resurrection, was necessary to undo what Adam did and to do what Adam failed to do for his posterity.

There are one or two ways in which Crowe's argument might have been strengthened. Crowe's discussions of the genealogies, Jesus's baptism and temptation, and Jesus's statement that he came to fulfill all righteousness (Matt 3:15) fall in three different chapters. What Matthew and Luke set in closest proximity and at the outset of their Gospels, then, *The Last Adam* separates in its analysis. This separation has the unfortunate effect of diluting the force of one of Crowe's strongest arguments from the Gospels for the vicarious and representative character of Christ's obedience.

Furthermore, Crowe convincingly demonstrates that a number of texts in the Gospels testify to the obedience of Christ and that in representative, Adamic terms. Yet to say that obedience was a *sine qua non* for the Last Adam to be qualified to undertake his redemptive work need not require that this obedience was accomplished in order to be imputed to the people of God for their justification. These are, in other words, two distinct claims. *The Last Adam* does successfully show that the Gospels advance both claims, but it is not always clear whether a particular text under review supports, in the author's judgment, merely the former of these claims or both of them.

The Last Adam is a welcome and valuable contribution to the study of the Gospels. It persuasively demonstrates its claim that "obedience" and "Adam" are critical to a balanced appreciation of the ministry of Christ in the Gospels. As importantly, it provides a hermeneutical model for the study of the Gospels, one that integrates exegesis, biblical theology, systematic theology, and historical theology.

Both in what it says and in the way that it says it, *The Last Adam* commends itself to a wide readership.

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Matthew's New David at the End of Exile: A Socio-Rhetorical Study of Scriptural Quotations. By Nicholas G. Piotrowski. Supplements to Novum Testamentum 170. Leiden: Brill, 2016, xxiv + 315 pp., \$138.00.

Piotrowski's revised Wheaton College dissertation, completed under the supervision of Nick Perrin, argues that "Matthew's prologue-quotations give shape to the narrative's christological and ecclesiological vision by drawing on the language of Israel's exile and restoration" (p. 4). Matthew engages in the use of selecting "frames" for the audience to interpret his work, and the frames selected by Matthew in his early chapters draw upon the OT's story of God's raising up a Davidic King in order to lead his people out of exile. The seven OT quotations in Matthew 1–4 work together in a symphony to evoke "Israel's history: exile and restoration" (p. 13). This story certainly makes clear Christological claims, but it is ultimately in service of the ecclesiological aim of defining the identity of the people of God.

Each chapter presents a detailed examination of the OT context of each of Matthew's prologue quotations and situates the quotation within the broader Matthean narrative. In chapter 2 ("The Effect of Isaiah's Narrative World in Matthew 1:18–25"), Piotrowski examines Matthew's citation of Isa 7:14 and argues that it is used "to indicate that Jesus' 'people' (1:21) are Yahweh's end-of-exile people, and that they experience this through Yahweh's faithfulness to David's house" (p. 33). Matthew's genealogy plays a significant role here, for it leaves the reader with the impression that the most recent event within Israel's history is the Babylonian exile (1:11, 17). One of the defining features of exile, of course, is the absence of a Davidic king. Furthermore, the factor that led Israel into exile, namely the sin of the people, has not been dealt with (1:21). Piotrowski argues that Matthew's citation of Isa 7:14 serves to resolve these problems. He presents a careful reading of Isaiah 7–9 and demonstrates that God promises to be with his people ("Immanuel") by means of his ongoing faithfulness and establishment of the house of David. Israel's response to this promise will determine whether they experience judgment or salvation. Isaiah forecasts this as a prophetic event, and Matthew draws upon it to argue that the birth of Jesus means that "David's throne is reestablished, and the people can know that Yahweh is covenantally with them through his faithfulness to David's house, creating the expectation that exile will soon end for 'his people'" (pp. 53–54).

In chapter 3 ("The Effect of Micah's Narrative World in Matthew 2:1–12"), Piotrowski examines the quotation of Micah 5 and demonstrates its continuity with the themes of David and end of exile but suggests that it adds the expectation that the place of worship will now be Jesus himself rather than the Jerusalem temple. This is seen immediately with the magi from the east who come to worship Jesus.

The episode evokes Isa 60:1–17 and thereby anticipates “the end of the exile as a time when the nations will bring their wealth ... to be accepted in the cultic worship of Yahweh” (p. 64). They further function as the firstfruits of the fulfillment of the prophetic expectation for the eschatological pilgrimage of the Gentiles to Zion. Furthermore, King Herod’s opposition to Messiah Jesus recalls Isaiah 7–9 and thereby “puts the house of David at risk, together with Yahweh’s covenantal promises” (p. 69). Tragically, the chief priests’ and scribes’ alliance with King Herod demonstrates their determination, ironically, to remain in the place of exile as they reject the Davidic king. Matthew draws upon Mic 5:1–3 to suggest both that the exile will be over when Gentiles stream to Jerusalem *and* to suggest a change in Israel’s leadership as the new Davidic king will dethrone the pretender Herod and the defunct temple leadership.

Having established that Matthew’s use of Isaiah 7 and Micah 5 provide the OT frame of “David” as the solution to the problem of “exile,” Piotrowski presents an intermission of sorts as he examines the scholarly controversy over whether there is evidence that Second Temple Jewish literature portrays Israel as in a state of ongoing exile (chap. 4: “Exile and David in the Late Second Temple Cultural Encyclopedia”). As is well known, this argument has received wide attention through its particular employment in many of the writings of N. T. Wright. Piotrowski presents a nuanced case here. He rightly notes that there are plenty of Second Temple texts that speak of the exile as having ended. He might have noted that there are numerous texts that do not demonstrate any interest in the question of exile. Yet he also rightly points to numerous texts that present the continuing effects of exile as an ongoing problem. Some, for example, are bothered by the Jewish dispersion and the question of the return or reconstitution of the northern tribes. Others demonstrate a belief that the Deuteronomic curses continue to characterize Israel’s covenantal status. Many of these texts look forward to a Davidic king who will undo the curses, reconstitute Israel from the Diaspora, and renew the temple. However, Piotrowski is also right to argue that while examining the “cultural encyclopedia” is necessary, Matthew’s Gospel itself must demonstrate whether these frames of “exile” and “David” are necessary for reading the Gospel.

In chapter 5 (“The Effect of Hosea’s and Jeremiah’s Narrative Worlds in Matthew 2:13–21”), Piotrowski returns to his examination of the quotations and examines the citations of Hos 11:1 (Matt 2:15) and Jer 31:15 (Matt 2:18). Matthew’s use of Hosea shows that Israel, in its state of opposition to the Davidic king from Herod and Israel’s leaders, is functioning as Egypt (i.e. drawing upon the biblical connotations of Egypt as a place of captivity for the people of God), whereas Egypt itself becomes a place of refuge. Again, the point is that Israel is in a continuing state of exile. Piotrowski demonstrates that Hosea 11 and Jeremiah 30–31 function as prophetic anticipations for the future, and both do so by reflecting upon the past events of the exodus (Hosea) and exile (Jeremiah). The reader of Matthew is thereby able to follow the events of the child Jesus as calling for the child to be the one who will lead Israel out of exile through a second exodus and to be the one who inaugurates the promises of Jeremiah for a new temple, a new covenant, and forgiveness of sins through a new Davidic rule.

In chapter 6 (“The Effect of the Prophets’ Narrative World in Matthew 2:22–23”), Piotrowski examines a difficult quotation: “he will be called a Nazarene” (2:23b). Scholars have struggled to find what Matthew means here as he appeals simply to “the prophets” and as there is no actual citation given. Piotrowski makes a convincing case that Matthew is alluding to Isa 11:1 (MT) where the Hebrew text refers to the coming Messiah as a “shoot” or “branch” (*nezer*) that will come from the family of David. Matthew references the plural prophets here precisely because this image is found across a wide spectrum of prophetic texts that “*forecast the house of David reemerging from the ashes of the exile* (Jer 23:1–8; 33:14–18; Zech 3:6–10; 6:9–15; 4QFlor III, 10–13)” (p. 160, italics original).

In chapters 7 and 8, Piotrowski turns to the final two prologue quotations, one from Isa 40:3 (Matt 3:3) and the other from Isa 8:23–9:1 (Matt 4:15–16). In the first Isaiah quotation, Jesus is depicted as both the embodiment of Yahweh and the true Israelite who leads both Jews and Gentiles out of exile in a new exodus act. In the second quotation from the Isaiah, the *great light* of the end of the exile shines upon Gentiles as they submit to the rule of the Davidic king and his covenantal people.

Piotrowski’s study is a careful examination of the ways in which the OT texts create patterns for making sense of the events of Jesus’s birth and early days. His study of the OT texts and especially their broader context illuminates Matthew’s narrational purposes in significant ways. While he is by no means the first to demonstrate this, his work helps solidify the view that Matthew’s formula citations are not random or haphazard but were carefully thought out as a means of making sense of the story of Jesus. Furthermore, he has demonstrated that Matthew had more than a passing concern to show how Jesus brought an end to Israel’s exile and he has done so in a way that is methodologically convincing, namely, by prioritizing *Matthew’s* narrative rather than a construction of what Second Temple Jews supposedly believed. Given some of the recent studies of Matthew that have situated Matthew’s audience/community more tightly within Judaism (e.g. Matthias Konradt, Anders Runesson, etc.), I would have appreciated more attention to the historical situation that occasioned the Gospel of Matthew.

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Paul’s New Perspective: Charting a Soteriological Journey. By Garwood P. Anderson. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2016, xvi + 441 pp., \$45.00.

Can the New Perspective on Paul (NPP) and the Traditional Perspective on Paul (TPP) simultaneously convey helpful and right readings of Pauline texts but still fail to incorporate a balanced reading of the whole of Paul’s historical itinerary and literature? In *Paul’s New Perspective*, Garwood Anderson sets out on a seemingly impossible voyage that attempts to traverse the deep seas of Pauline literature and critical scholarship. Anderson assesses the broad implications of this research question.

Anderson's primary thesis is clearly identifiable and justifiably demonstrated; still, a number of subsidiary offshoots emerge as well. He proceeds to situate his argument as a "peacemaking" mediator between Pauline guilds (p. 3). Anderson's argument is a "both/and" kind of thesis. As Anderson suggests, "the argument of this book insists that both 'camps' are right, but not all the time" (p. 5). As both contradictory schools of Pauline interpretation are both right, while not at the same time, Anderson continues to suggest "both schools of interpretation are insufficiently attentive to the manner in which Paul's soteriology has developed from his earliest to later writings" (p. 379).

Numerous offshoots emerge as subsidiary theses from this "both/and" argument. First, he argues for a third reading of various texts (including but not confined to Phil 3:1–11; Rom 3:21–4:8; Eph 2:1–22) as a viable post-New Perspective on Paul (p. 91). Furthermore, he argues for specific positions of Pauline antinomies in scholarship including Pauline methodology, the coherence of Pauline theology, justification, and *pistis Christou*, so that Anderson argues for a "both/and by means of 'something else'" (p. 152). Also, Anderson constructs Pauline soteriology on the basis of thirteen Pauline letters and a timeline of Paul's life (pp. 153–225). Finally, Anderson argues for a development in Paul's soteriology that is coherent and builds from (1) Galatians to (2) the Thessalonian and Corinthian Correspondence to (3) Romans to (4) the Captivity/Prison Epistles and, finally, to (5) the Pastoral Epistles.

Although I am unsure if Anderson intended for his arrangement to be so, the structure of the entire book essentially revolves around three broad Pauline categories: (1) the landscape of NPP and TPP discussions; (2) historical-critical presuppositions of Paul's life and letters; and (3) Pauline soteriology.

In part 1 of Anderson's assessment, he opens in chapter 1 with an assessment of the New Perspective. Although refraining from a full introductory survey, Anderson does suggest a brief overview of the movement and the helpful features of the NPP. Concerning the NPP, he states the following: "I trust it will be clear that I consider the NPP a necessary and salutary corrective that has advanced our understanding of Paul, his context, his aims and his theology" (p. 15). To assess the NPP, two fundamental premises in biblical scholarship are involved: (1) reappraisal of Judaism; and (2) revisiting Paul after such a reappraisal of Judaism (p. 16). The breakthroughs of the NPP consist of the following broad categories: (1) revisiting Paul's conversion and call; (2) re-categorizing the "soteriology" of Judaism; (3) re-envisioning Torah observance; and (4) renewing the covenant. From these four breakthroughs, Anderson highlights the beneficial and paradigmatic features from the writings of Krister Stendahl, E. P. Sanders, James D. G. Dunn, and N. T. Wright, respectively (pp. 16–37, 55).

In chapter 2, "The Uncooperative Paul," Anderson addresses three particular texts (Phil 3:1–11; Rom 3:21–4:8; Eph 2:1–22), revealing both the unaccounted for, and often, uncooperative elements that remain tenuous in the NPP and the TPP. With regard to the TPP, Anderson suggests that "defenders of the traditional Protestant rendering of Pauline theology have just dug in to a foxhole, settling into comfortable acquired ways of reading Paul in which the theological superstructure

now functions as buttress instead” (p. 57). He criticizes both positions for so deeply entrenching their paradigms into their exegesis that they neglect to see essential elements in Paul’s literature (p. 58). Anyone who has waded through some of the literature in NPP and TPP exegesis realizes that these texts are not new to the discussion or under-evaluated; so, Anderson’s assessment offers nuances in these three texts that, in his perspective, point to neglected areas or unaccounted implications. For example, concerning Eph 2:1–22, he suggests, “the text is sufficiently multidimensional that it cooperates with both the TPP and NPP and equally frustrates narrow or extreme versions of both” (p. 91).

Although a bit lengthy, chapter 3 (“Getting Post the New Perspective?”) addresses some of the essential Pauline scholars since the major shifts from the New Perspective. Anderson revisits some of the work of Dunn and Wright, and then proceeds to address the contributions of Francis Watson, Douglas Campbell, Michael Gorman, Michael Bird, and John Barclay. Given this survey, a number of names remain glaringly absent, including some of the following (non-exhaustive): Stephen Chester, Paula Fredriksen, Richard Hays, David Horrell, J. Louis Martyn, Frank Matera, Douglas Moo, Mark Nanos, Stanley Porter, Thomas Schreiner, Mark Seifrid, and Frank Thielman.

Chapters 4 and 5, “Establishing the Pauline Itinerary” and “Reconsidering the Disputed Letters” respectively, advance Anderson’s historical-critical and historical reconstruction of Paul’s life and literature (part 2). These chapters are helpful in that they provide the historical assumptions made by Anderson that undergird his theory of Pauline theological development. Within these two chapters, Anderson makes some of the following essential arguments: (1) southern and early Galatian theory; (2) the undisputed letters being written after Galatians but before the composition of Romans; (3) Pauline authenticity of the Pastoral Epistles; (4) Pauline case for Colossians and Ephesians; and (5) timeline of Paul’s life. Thus, Anderson’s historical reconstruction for a developmental hypothesis rests on an order that begins with Galatians and ends with the Pastoral Epistles.

Finally, the last few chapters devote exclusive attention to assembling a constructive Pauline soteriology from the thirteen letters. Chapter 6 examines notions of works and grace in Paul’s theology. With regard to works, Anderson suggests that “works of the law” and the unqualified “works” are not synonymous. Rather, this move “reflects a pattern of development in Paul’s conception of the matters at hand, from a soteriology originally grounded in the dilemma of Gentile inclusion to a more formal rejection of human attainment as the antithesis of grace” (p. 228). Given John Barclay’s recent work, *Paul and the Gift* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), Anderson offers a modest proposal for concepts of grace. Much like the development of “works of the law” and “works,” grace “develops with a pattern that is roughly parallel to the development of his appeal to ‘works’” (p. 264).

Next, in chapter 7, “Markers of the Itinerary 2: Reenvisioning Salvation,” Anderson retraces the same Pauline itinerary with an eye to how Pauline soteriology/salvation is conceived. He suggests that as works and grace demonstrate a corresponding and corroborative evolution, so does the concept of salvation. Thus, Paul begins with past-forensic language that includes covenantal implications to an

eschatological-transformational conception of redemption (p. 282). Second, the forensic categories of soteriology are later supplemented with other soteriological metaphors, and reconciliation “enters the picture as a new and unprecedented metaphorical field in the soteriological constellation” (p. 282).

This volume is helpful in many ways, while also leaving room open for more questions and further clarity. I will only raise select items here. First, one of the greatest values to Anderson’s assessment is his large and sweeping overview of Pauline critical scholarship. Any new student to the field can be quickly introduced to a number of important Pauline scholars and a number of theological positions. His discussion of “antinomies of Pauline scholarship” in chapter 3 is especially helpful. Anderson broadly offers an overview of methodology, Pauline theology as coherent or contingent, justification, imputation and participation, and *pistis Christou* (pp. 116–51).

Second, Anderson helpfully categorizes key ideas and concepts reflective of many NPP and post-NPP authors, especially in chapters 1 and 3. He favorably identifies their ideas and how they have shaped the field of Pauline studies. However, something glaringly absent emerges from these initial assessments. Anderson offers a careful summary of and contribution by NPP and post-NPP advocates, but nothing is offered for the TPP voice. Why spend so much attention on NPP and post-NPP when one’s thesis is arguing for a both/and synthesis? The TPP history of research and contribution is glaringly absent.

Third, I wonder if this both/and approach is sustainable. For example, the TPP assumes much of Reformed theology as well as certain assumptions about theological positions that help inform TPP exegesis. NPP depends upon a thorough historical revision of ancient Judaism and Paul’s relationship to such a reconstruction before proceeding to particular readings of Pauline texts. If both TPP and NPP have a general internal coherence, foundational assumptions, and particular exegetical readings, will this both/and approach eventually crumble due to broader theological incoherence somewhere down the stream of implications? Similar to this question, I also raise a related difficulty, one relevant to Anderson’s views on the shortcomings of the NPP. Anderson neglects to interact with or offer assessments of—what the field would regard as—essential Second Temple Jewish texts. In what ways, then, does Anderson’s thesis and exegesis build on this Second Temple Jewish foundation so crucial to the NPP?

Last, I desire to raise a few questions regarding some of the ideas and implications of Paul’s soteriology and Anderson’s thesis. If justification as forensic eventually broadens in development to include eschatological transformational elements, then why do earlier letters contain transformational concepts and later letters still identify forensic categories (e.g. Titus 3:5–7)? For example, reconciliation, cosmic renewal, and transformational righteousness are joined together with union with Christ and righteousness language in 2 Cor 5:16–21. So, a soteriological constellation would appear earlier in Paul’s literature. A second, and partially related, question corresponds to a trending motif in Pauline theology, union with Christ and participation. Anderson finishes the final pages of the book by mentioning that participation is the “red thread of Pauline soteriology” (pp. 391–97). If union mo-

tifs permeate the entirety of Paul's soteriology, why is this discussion relegated to the end and not given greater attention? How, then, do union and participation motifs cohere or indwell within Anderson's developmental theory? Future work might consider these questions in order to bring further clarity to this both/and synthesis.

Time still remains to determine if this avenue will convince other interpreters or if this work will be added to an overflowing, burgeoning field of academic inquiry. I am still left wanting on the overall implications and thorough revisions of this both/and approach that include such concepts as Paul and his Galatian adversaries, the work of the Spirit and justification in Galatians, union with Christ and incorporation motifs, incorporated righteousness and transformative righteousness as part of the soteriological constellation, and covenant and works. This book will be of value to Pauline scholars who are invested in the TPP and the NPP, as well as new Pauline readers who desire to gain a "lay of the land."

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Colossians. By Paul Foster. Black's NT Commentaries. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016, xiii + 506 pp., \$44.95 paper.

This is a fine commentary on Colossians in a widely respected series. The author, Professor of NT and Early Christianity at the University of Edinburgh, has produced a well-written and succinct exposition of the text of this theologically rich and historically fascinating letter. I would characterize this volume as an expositional commentary. Although there is some explicit engagement with the Greek text, it is done so sparingly and always accompanied by English translation, so that the person with no knowledge of Greek can use this commentary with ease. More serious students, however, need to be aware that there is no discussion of grammatical constructions that would be typical of an exegetical commentary. Foster is conversant with the important literature on the book. Yet his own exposition is what predominates, and he does not get bogged down in discussing the nuances of particular views on every interpretational issue. I deeply appreciated Foster's clarity in writing. He has condensed his discussion to the most important data and explanations and one can quickly discern his conclusions about the meaning of the text.

He has written a substantive introduction to the commentary, one that extends to the first 121 pages of the volume (amounting to nearly 25% of the total work). He contends that Colossians is a letter written sometime after Paul's death (in the period AD 65–80) by one of his followers to address dangerous teaching misleading believers in the city of Colossae. Both the identity of the author and his place of writing are unknown, Foster contends. He thinks that the author's location would likely have been relatively proximate to Colossae. This person was intimately acquainted with the structure and themes of Paul's other letters as well as the nature of the teaching threatening the church at Colossae. Although the author writes in the name of Paul, he does so with noble intent in that he was applying key Paul-

ine teachings to the needs of the situation. Foster explains that “most of what is written in the commentary section would still stand, even if Paul could be shown to be the author of the letter” (p. 80). I found this to be true in his assessment of the many theological themes in the letter. He almost invariably presents the thought of Colossians as consistent with Paul’s theology. Nevertheless, he sees Colossians as presenting “creative developments in relation to Paul’s system of thought” (p. 110).

For the past fifty years, there has been a strong trend in the scholarship on Colossians to interpret the false teaching as thoroughly Jewish in orientation, that is, a law-oriented and mystical form of Jewish influence that was advocating visionary ascent to heaven experiences and participating with angels in worshiping God around his heavenly throne. Foster calls this approach into question and even wonders if there would have been a Jewish presence in Colossae at all. He rightly observes that there is no literary or material evidence of a Jewish presence in the city. He argues that the problem at Colossae was “a syncretistic religious pluralism.” He suggests that they were “combining elements of their new faith with their earlier commitment to some of the mystery cults that perhaps offered more ecstatic rites than Christianity. This may have also entailed drawing elements from Judaism, although that remains less certain” (p. 109). The danger of this teaching for the Colossians is that, by appropriating this rival teaching, they were diminishing the significance of Christ and subjecting themselves to cosmic forces from which they had already been freed by Christ (p. 111). Consequently, Foster understands *embateuō* (2:18) as a technical term from the mysteries and translates it, “while being initiated.” He interprets *thrēskeia tōn angelōn* as an objective genitive and sees it as a veneration of angels—a practice that is attested in Jewish and in pagan contexts.

Foster follows Christian Stettler in finding a coherence to the lines of the Christ-hymn in Col 1:15–20 and, therefore, argues against seeing this passage as an appropriated and redacted pre-Christian hymn. In fact, he contends that it is quite possible that the author of the letter was directly responsible for the composition of the final form of this beautiful and rich expression of praise to Christ. Since the passage does not conform to a strict poetic form, Foster prefers to refer to it as having “a lyrical quality” than as being a hymn. His discussion of the lines of this crucial text is disappointingly brief (pp. 174–201), with the result that the background of many of these themes is not unpacked as much as one might desire. One case in point is his treatment of *plērōma* (1:19). There is no discussion of possible OT roots to the term and no discussion of its usage elsewhere in Paul. He rather assumes a mystery cult background to the term and then focuses his explanation on how the author of Colossians is likely subverting claims made by the mystery cults that were potentially influential on the Colossian believers. Gnosticism, and Valentinianism in particular, is less relevant for understanding *plērōma* here, since mystery cult fed into second-century Gnosis (p. 195).

He posits a new solution to the problem of interpreting Col 1:24: “I am filling up what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of his body.” He eschews the popular interpretation that Paul sees himself as filling up the quota of messianic afflictions, because the passage itself and the letter as a whole appear relatively uninterested in apocalyptic themes. Rather, Foster camps on the double reference to

reconciliation in the immediate context (1:20, 22) and argues that Paul sees himself uniquely caught up in the cosmic drama focalized in Colossae and that he is “suffering on their behalf through his imprisonment to ensure that they ‘persevere in the faith’” (1:23). His view raises many unanswered questions that should be taken up in the space of an article.

Foster does not follow older German interpreters who suggest that *stoicheia tou kosmou* (2:8, 20) reflects a pagan cult of the elements looming in the background of Colossians. Nor does he see the expression as denoting elementary “teachings.” Rather, he contends that the expression should be understood as speaking of *both* personal cosmic powers and their composition from the fundamental material of the universe.

When he comes to the household code of 3:18–4:1, he notes the continuity and discontinuity with the prevailing patterns of behavior in the Graeco-Roman world. Thus, the household code “lightly subverts the prevailing structure by addressing the powerless first, and by undermining the basis of the maintenance of such relationships” (p. 373). With regard to the role of wives in the household, he sees the imperative for women to submit to their husbands (3:18) as moderating the degree of freedom enjoyed by women in the early Jesus movement and in Paul’s own attitude (Gal 3:28; see pp. 372–75).

In his discussion of the authorship question, he reported the results of a survey of 109 attendees at the British NT Conference in 2011 where respondents were asked to register their opinion on whether Paul was the author of Colossians. He reported that 51.4% were in favor of the weight of the evidence supporting Pauline authorship, 33% were uncertain, and only 15.6% were decidedly opposed to Pauline authorship. Thinking he was setting the stage for coming down on the side of Pauline authorship, I was a bit surprised when he concluded in favor of pseudonymity. This was underlined still further for me as I read his extended section on “prosopography” (as he describes it, “learning about group dynamics and social relationships through the study of collective biography,” pp. 90–112). As Foster rightly notes, there are more people mentioned in Colossians 4 than in any other chapter of Paul’s letters except Romans 16. Ten different people are mentioned through the course of the fourth chapter including those who extend their greetings or those whom the author wants to greet. This chapter of Colossians, for me, remains a major obstacle to accepting the pseudonymity hypothesis because one needs to contend that the personal and biographical material here must in some sense be a fictional portrayal of relationships for a theological purpose. Thus, Paul’s mention of being in chains (4:3) becomes “a way of adding an air of authenticity to the letter” (p. 402). The mention of Onesimus (4:9) suggests that the author of Colossians “has read Philemon and wishes to create an air of harmony by presenting Onesimus without reference to slave status” (p. 417). Ultimately, Foster contends that the many references to people “may function strategically to establish rapport and commonality with the recipients to these letters by drawing attention to the common network of associates” (p. 420). Yet I wonder if Foster has adequately thought through this and how it would actually work when the letter made its way to Colossae. If Onesimus has returned to the city, how would he respond to

this fictional mention of him in this letter by someone living in the nearby area? How would Archippus respond to the command from this author, as if from Paul, to be sure to fulfill the ministry he had received from the Lord (4:17)? Does this author know if these people are still alive (especially if he is writing around AD 80)? What would be the response to the command to exchange letters with the church in Laodicea (4:16), especially if no letter to Laodicea had ever been written? The bulk of Colossians 4 seems entirely unnecessary and difficult to explain on the pseudepigraphical view.

Nevertheless, Foster has provided an excellent exposition of the text of Colossians. The authorship matter does impact his explanation of the text in various places, especially in chapter 4. Yet in spite of the disagreements, I have high regard for this commentary and recommend it.

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1 & 2 Thessalonians. By Andy Johnson. Two Horizons New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016, xviii + 349 pp., \$26.00 paper.

The latest volume in the Two Horizons NT Commentary series is Andy Johnson's *1 & 2 Thessalonians*. As the editors note, this commentary series explicitly attempts "to bridge the existing gap between biblical studies and systematic theology" (back cover) and includes both "theological exegesis and theological reflection" (p. i). Approximately two thirds of this book is a passage-by-passage commentary with a significant emphasis on theological interpretation. The remaining one-third is entitled "Theological Horizons" and considers a variety of theological issues explicitly and implicitly related to 1 and 2 Thessalonians. In general, theological issues are discussed at various points in the commentary section and then brought together and expanded in the "Theological Horizons" section. Johnson, a NT professor at Nazarene Theological Seminary, has written numerous articles and essays related to 1 and 2 Thessalonians and was involved in the *Common English Bible* translation of these two letters. The reasonable amount of footnotes in the commentary section well evidence that Johnson is aware of all the standard scholarly issues.

Before moving to the more explicitly theological aspects, allow me a few comments on traditional commentary concerns. Johnson views Paul as the author of both 1 and 2 Thessalonians, with 1 Thessalonians being written around AD 49–52 from Corinth and 2 Thessalonians a few months to a year later (p. 5). Rhetorical and epistolary categories are *not* helpful for exegesis (p. 6); however, knowledge of Roman imperial ideas and vocabulary is useful because Paul is intentionally countering this political force (pp. 14, 32–33, 44, 71, 85, 124, 136, 186).

As to a few exegetical conclusions, Johnson states that many passages have a high view of Christ equating him with YHWH (1 Thess 1:1; 3:11–12; 5:2; 2 Thess 1:1; 2:13). Johnson does not see the apology in 1 Thess 2:1–12 as directed against real opponents. Paul is simply contrasting himself with generic wandering Sophists (pp. 58–59). Johnson has a traditional view of *πορνεία* (1 Thess 4:3), defining it as

any sex outside of marriage (p. 107). The eschatological sections (1 Thess 4:13–18 and 5:1–11) include Christ’s coming to earth to set up the full eschaton. The “apostasy” in 2 Thess 2:3 is “some sort of public rebellion outside the church against a political entity, deity, or both” (p. 186). The “temple” in 2 Thess 2:4 is the literal first-century AD Jerusalem temple. An ἀτακτος of 1 Thess 5:14 and 2 Thess 3:6–13 is best described as a “disorderly idler” (p. 151) who is not working because of his patron-client relationship with patrons who are leaders in the church.

Now I move to the more explicitly theological aspects of this book. Johnson is refreshingly up front about his theological commitments. He affirms that God is the “ultimate author” of Scripture and uses the classic creeds, especially the Nicene-Constantinople, as a “broader framework within which all readings of canonical Scripture that claim the adjective ‘Christian’ must fall” (pp. 270–71).

Although Johnson describes himself theologically as being in the “broad Wesleyan tradition” (p. 5), his primary and explicit theological emphasis is related to “missional” or *missio Dei*. He sees both God’s nature and actions as missional. The church is to be missional as it “participate[s] in the life and mission of the Triune God” (p. 5). Scripture contains a “missional framework.” Theological exegesis for the church “ought to be characterized by a missional orientation toward the interpretive task” (p. 5). Johnson’s dovetailing of the broad Wesleyan tradition and the missional emphasis is related to holiness, that of God and the manner in which Christians are “sanctified in particular historical and social settings” (p. 6). He sees this missional-holiness aspect as especially apt for interpreting 1 and 2 Thessalonians.

Johnson defines the “main plot line” of God’s mission as “bring[ing] creation to its intended destiny through the agency of humanity in a way that brings proper honor and glory to God.” A “subplot” of God’s mission “involves saving humanity from its guilt, as well as saving humanity and the entire created order from the consequences of human rebellion” (p. 3). Jesus has a particular redemptive pattern that is “directed toward God’s mission of bringing creation to its intended destiny” (p. 5). This is a cruciform pattern that the church is also to follow. (Johnson here acknowledges his indebtedness to Michael J. Gorman’s cruciform emphases.)

Throughout this book, Johnson often theologizes about πίστις connecting Christ’s faithful fulfillment of his covenantal responsibilities within God’s mission and relating this to believers’ faithful fulfillment of their responsibilities in God’s mission. He rejects the “‘traditional Protestant/Lutheran’ reading of Paul ... without argument” and affirms (1) δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ is God’s activity and not something imputed; (2) πίστις Χριστοῦ is a subjective genitive best translated the “faithfulness” of Christ; and (3) πίστις, even in Romans and Galatians, “includes not only belief and trust but also faithfulness and obedience” (p. 273 n. 92; also pp. 44, 54, 227, 232). Although he never uses the term, there are many “New Perspective on Paul” emphases here.

Given the above, Johnson complains about the typical understanding of the “‘gospel’ in terms of a truncated propositional ‘sales pitch’ relying solely on one atonement model (i.e. penal satisfaction)” (p. 51). According to Johnson, this truncated view encourages an interpreter of Paul to emphasize what Paul says about

proclamation as opposed to how Paul wants his communities to “embody” the gospel. This, then, negatively affects the *missio Dei* as the church is to embody what God and his “cruciform” pattern is like to the outside world—primarily this mission has a *corporate* church emphasis, although there is an individual component.

Concerning “eternal destruction” in 2 Thess 1:9 and “wrath” in 1 Thess 1:10; 2:16; 5:9, Johnson argues these texts are not clear. He seems to lean toward annihilation but hopes for universal salvation (pp. 172–74, 266–68).

As is well known, Paul uses “elect”/“calling” often in 1 and 2 Thessalonians. Johnson dismisses out of hand the traditional Reformed view of election and concludes that Christ is the primary elect one and Christians are secondarily elect as a corporate body. He includes a discussion interacting with John Flett and Suzanne McDonald on this issue, and his conclusions are closer to McDonald’s. He considers himself giving more prominence to the Holy Spirit in election than do either Flett or McDonald (pp. 323–25).

Concerning the Trinity, Johnson often argues that the triune God’s missional activity in the world matches his immanent being: “The being of the immanent Trinity [is] ‘sending/missional’” (p. 325). That the Father sends the Son and the Son sends the Holy Spirit is true not only for the economic Trinity but for the immanent Trinity. Johnson also suggests that the *filioque* clause of the Nicene-Constantinople Creed should be adjusted to “we believe in the Holy Spirit ... who proceeds from the Father *through* [as opposed to *and*] the Son” (p. 315, italics his).

Johnson includes an extended section arguing against dispensationalism. Although he has several arguments, he concentrates on dispensationalism’s assumption that “God has locked himself into a rigid master plan of history that he is no longer free to alter as it unfolds” (p. 303). He sees this view as severely mistaken about God’s being. He concludes that God’s actions relative to Nineveh in the book of Jonah show this “rigid” view to be wrong (pp. 303–4).

Given my Reformed sympathies and several of Johnson’s conclusions above, he and I have significant disagreements. For purposes of this review, I will only comment briefly on his *missio Dei* emphasis. The term “missional” and *missio Dei* are now in fashion among some, although in general these terms are not as well defined as they could be. I appreciate Johnson’s giving his definition, and as far as I understand it, his views are representative of many, but certainly not all, who use the term.

Two issues cause me concern. The first is the loss of the traditional view of forensic justification. As discussed above, Johnson sees a lack of concern among some churches for embodying the gospel because of their overemphasis on the proclamation of the gospel. From my perspective, Johnson’s downplaying of justification and individual salvation will naturally result in a downplaying of the proclamation of the gospel. Johnson’s downplaying was evident in his comments on 1 Thess 1:5–8 and 2:13 (pp. 51, 73–74). His emphasis on the corporate interaction of the church as a beacon to those outside the church was well said, but an emphasis on this without a starting point of forensic justification is to get the cart before the horse.

The second issue relates to Johnson's moving from the economic actions of the Trinity to conclusions about the immanent being/nature of the Trinity. Yes, the economic actions and being of God are related. Yet from my perspective, Johnson makes this relationship too mechanical in a one-to-one way. As I read him, Johnson appears to be significantly pushing the bounds of traditional Trinitarian orthodoxy. Also, his connections of the being/actions of the church to the being/actions of the Triune God seem again to be too mechanical. A discussion and references to the traditional "communicable attributes" and actions of God would have been helpful here. On the other hand, even though I have significant concerns, I applaud his attempt to theologize (1) from God's actions to his being; and (2) from the being/actions of the church to the being/actions of God and vice versa.

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Hostility in the House of God: An Investigation of the Opponents in 1 and 2 Timothy. By Dillon T. Thornton. Bulletin for Biblical Research Supplement 15. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2016, xiv + 322 pp., \$54.50.

Thornton's monograph is another fine scholarly contribution to an ongoing resurgence of interest in 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus, the Pauline letters traditionally known as the Pastoral Epistles. In particular, his work attempts to cut a path through the jungle of scholarly opinions about the opposition these letters envision. Thornton wants to sketch out the identity of the opponents, the nature and impact of their teaching, and the character of Paul's corrective response. In his own words, his work hopes to lay out the "*doctrinal strands and ethical norms that distinguished this group from the faithful Pauline community in Ephesus*" as well as give a "*detailed account of the communal procedure*" prescribed by the author "*for dealing with the deviationists*" (p. 2, italics original).

After a survey of recent literature that directly or indirectly gives an account of the opponents envisioned in the Pastoral Epistles, Thornton concludes that there is a need for a methodologically rigorous approach that assembles all the *relevant* data from the letters themselves on the opposition. In other words, how do we identify the data in the letters that can be trusted to tell us who the antagonists were, what they were saying, and what of Paul's teaching represents a response to them? In addition, how should we approach that material to avoid drawing on illegitimate extratextual parallels? Only when that is accomplished will it be possible to offer (1) a composite sketch of the opponents' identity, character, and ideology; and (2) an in-depth look at how the Pauline community at Ephesus was to handle this opposition.

Thornton quickly (and rightly) brushes aside the traditional designation of Pastoral Epistles in favor of the designation Letters to Paul's Delegates, based on the roles and function of the men addressed. In addition, he excludes Titus from his study on the grounds that Titus alone refers to the opponents as "those of the circumcision" (cf. Titus 1:10), that the impact on women found in 1 and 2 Timothy

is missing in Titus, and that Titus is sent to a location other than Ephesus (i.e. Crete, which he feels can be defended as the actual location). Thornton also sets the historical context for his study by arguing that 1 and 2 Timothy were written to Ephesus in the late first century. Each letter deals with a different stage of the conflict in the church there.

The methodological importance of this last move for his study warrants a closer look. Thornton begins by arguing that a firm position on authorship is not necessary for his study. Hence, he takes an “agnostic approach” (p. 10). However, there is a need to locate the letters historically, and, he believes, this is something that can be reasonably established. To locate the letters chronologically, he appeals to the probable allusions to 1 and 2 Timothy in Polycarp and Ignatius (along with the lack of quotations from Paul in the letters of 1 and 2 Timothy themselves) to locate the letters some time before 105–110 CE. In the end he agrees with Malcolm Gill’s contention (*Jesus as Mediator: Politics and Polemic in 1 Timothy 2:1–7* [New York: Lang, 2008]) that the date of composition lies somewhere between 64–100 CE (p. 11). Concerning their cultural milieu, Thornton contends that the letters were indeed written to Ephesus, to a real recipient, addressing real opponents. Even if pseudonymous, mentions of Ephesus and of people with known association with Ephesus suggest that Ephesus is the concern of the author. Likewise, if not the real Timothy, Timothy is most likely used to refer to someone leading the church at Ephesus under Timothy’s name recalling his former actual role there (cf. 1 Cor 4:17). Whether the author is Paul or an “early interpreter of Paul,” either option suggests that the broader Pauline corpus represents the most pertinent conceptual backdrop for interpretive purposes (p. 13).

At this point he is ready to tackle the two major obstacles to his study. First, he must surmount Robert J. Karris’s legacy that has led most interpreters of the Letters to Paul’s Delegates to doubt that the author either has real opponents in mind or that he gives us any real information about them. Second, he needs to chart out a methodology that can be trusted to overcome the real challenges of “mirror-reading” Pauline texts. In brief, Karris saw the approach to the opponents in the Letters to Paul’s Delegates as “stock.” The author simply drew on a schema traditionally employed by philosophers against sophists targeted more at defamation than refutation. Consequently, the particulars offer little real information about who the opponents were and what they were promulgating. Thornton responds with four lines of critique: (1) Karris’s contention that the real Paul characteristically picks up his opponents’ terms and uses their terms against them, unlike 1 and 2 Timothy, appeals to a non-existent scholarly consensus; (2) Karris’s argument for why the author used this schema (to cause aversion to the false teaching and so establish himself as the real authority) does not make literary sense; the first recipient, as presented in the letters, does not need convincing—he is there on the author’s side; (3) Karris treats words abstracted from their contexts to be able to fit the terms found in the Letters to Paul’s Delegates into the philosophical schema; and (4) Karris does not take into account the different communities and what happens to the elements of the schema in those different contexts—“it is unreasonable

to assume that a secular philosopher and an early Christian writer will use a set of terms or phrases in the same way" (p. 16).

Given the flaws in Karris's work, Thornton sets out to develop his own methodology with heavy dependence on the work of John M. G. Barclay and Jerry Sumney. First, he intends to rely solely on the primary texts (1 and 2 Timothy) to provide details of the conflict. To those who see the lack of external confirmation as problematic, Thornton argues that the current state of scholarship provides no agreed-upon external data to appeal to and that data from the primary texts can be tested to see whether they account for "*the full scope of internal evidence*" (p. 29, italics his). Second, he will analyze the explicit language related to the conflict in context. In doing so, he will keep in view whole discourse units. Third, he will select and analyze implicit discourse units, in other words, units that "call the opponents to mind without mentioning them directly" (p. 30). His guiding principle for recognizing "implicit units" is repetition: "When significant words, phrases, or themes found in the explicit units occur elsewhere in the letter, it is highly probable that the opponents are once again in view" (p. 30). As to what makes words "significant," these are words that seem to be more developed in the discourse than just mentioned in passing (e.g. 1 Tim 1:3–7 explicitly develops the relationship of the "law" to the opposition so that the implicit reference to the law in 1:8–11 brings that passage into the discussion). Repetition coupled with Barclay's caution that statements dealing with the opposition are open to a "range of mirror-images" serve as the primary controls on "mirror-reading" (p. 30). Lastly, he will not use "neutral units," those that cannot be connected to the explicit units via repetition of significant words. The bulk of the work (chaps. 2–6) applies the method to the primary texts in 1 and 2 Timothy—analyzing the texts that explicitly (1 Tim 1:3–7, 18–20; 4:1–5; 6:2b–5, 20–21a; 2 Tim 2:14–26; 3:1–9; 4:1–5) or implicitly (1 Tim 1:8–11; 2:9–15; 4:6–10; 5:9–16; 6:6–10; 2 Tim 2:8–13) speak of the opposition.

Thornton's goal is "*a disciplined description of the opponents and a detailed account of the communal reaction to the opponents*" (p. 237, italics original). So who are the opponents? They are men who arose from within the Pauline community at Ephesus, though, given Thornton's methodological limitations, he cannot establish whether or not they achieved the status of elder. Once in good standing, they revealed their "true standing as spiritual outsiders" (p. 238). They were treated as "insiders," although they came to reveal themselves as "outsiders" by their inability to produce *agapē* (cf. 1 Tim 1:5).

What was the nature of their erroneous teaching? On the most basic level, they had rejected the apostolic gospel. The rejection centered around a misunderstanding of Pauline teaching on the resurrection and resulted in an account of God's saving work in Christ in the present that was nothing but a "myth" (pp. 244, 250). Specifically, their erroneous eschatology stemmed from an "immaterialized" notion of the resurrection (cf. 2 Tim 2:18). The resurrection became a "purely spiritual event, fully realized in the present" (p. 250). As such, they believed they were living in the age to come as opposed to the era of the overlap of the ages. Consequently, the opponents distorted Paul's doctrine of the present participation of the believer in Christ's resurrection (p. 251).

Where did this lead and how did the opponents operate within the community? Lacking a “knowledge of the truth,” their character degenerated as their consciences and minds were corrupted by falsehood (p. 246). Motivated by greed and devoid of the Spirit’s enablement, they were captured by the devil to carry out his destructive purposes (p. 248–49). Marriage and motherhood were made out to be obsolete, old-order practices (p. 251). Food was likewise passé in that it was seen as spiritually insignificant. (Here, it is worth noting that Thornton argues that there is insufficient evidence to relate this food-based asceticism with Jewish food laws as some would argue when Titus is brought into the picture. Outside of the connection to law in 1 Timothy 1, there is no clear indication of the Jewish identity of the opponents in 1 and 2 Timothy, although that possibility remains open; pp. 253, 259). The *gnosis* (cf. 1 Tim 6:20) involved is a “more-complete knowledge, based on a perceived eschatological vantage point” (p. 254). The law became a sourcebook for those with “eschatological eyes” (p. 255). Confident in their incompetence, they were evangelistic in their zeal and drew adherents from both men and women, with the latter being the most fruitful source of converts (p. 265).

There is much more to say, but space has run out. Obviously with a wide-ranging study that gives close attention to heavily disputed passages, not all will agree with every interpretive move. For example, is 2 Tim 2:21 a statement that holds out hope for the conversion of the opponents (p. 192)? Also, methodologically, there is room for further considerations. For example, with regard to 1 Timothy in particular, I would argue that, although Thornton rightly looks at the material related to the opposition in context, the lack of appreciation of the overall literary structure may make his description of the opposition unnecessarily “disciplined,” in which case other so-called “neutral” texts could be brought into view (esp. 1 Timothy 3). Nevertheless, through his methodologically careful and exegetically driven work, Thornton has offered real gains in unlocking one of the perennial interpretive challenges in the Letters to Paul’s Delegates. He makes a strong case for the identity, character, teaching, and impact of the opposition threatening the vitality of the Ephesian church. He also indirectly makes yet another interpretive foray into the Letters to Paul’s Delegates that closes the distance between them and Paul.

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The Departure of an Apostle: Paul’s Death Anticipated and Remembered. By Alexander N. Kirk. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2/406. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015, xv + 318 pp., €89.00 paper.

Kirk’s monograph began as an Oxford D.Phil. thesis that was supervised by Markus Bockmuehl but now appears here in a revised and expanded form. He outlines his task in the opening chapter. The aim is to uncover Paul’s approach to his own death. Thus Kirk’s interest lies in Paul’s reflections on his own death rather than on death in general. Yet he does not limit himself to what Paul writes about his death but also gives attention to how other early Christians wrote about the

matter. To this end, the book takes up four of Paul's letters in which Paul reflects on his own death and four passages from late-first and early-second century texts that look back on Paul's death. The thesis unfolds in four parts: an introduction, a look at the departed Paul as known through later authors looking back at Paul's death, a study of the departing Paul as known through Paul's letters, and a conclusion.

Before embarking on his analysis of how early Christians looked back to Paul's death, however, Kirk sets out his methodology in chapter 2. He challenges accounts of Pauline reception that speak of the construction of Paul and suggests that Pauline reception should instead be placed within social memory studies. Using the category of effective history (*Wirkungsgeschichte*), he next highlights the complex way in which portraits of Paul were generated and draws two implications for the study of Pauline reception. First, in light of the intricate way in which images of Paul could have been formed, it is difficult to determine which sources an author used. Second, verbal correspondence between a later passage and a Pauline letter is inadequate as the sole criterion with which to study how Paul was understood by later authors. Kirk proposes using a modified version of Wittgenstein's concept of family resemblances to aid the study of Pauline effective history. The sole necessary condition needed for his study of Paul is a mention of Paul in a later text. With Paul's letters serving as a "hard core" of the text family" (p. 37), later texts can then be arranged in terms of nearer and farther relations to Paul.

Part 2 explores the way in which Paul's death was recalled in later writing. Kirk examines Acts, *1 Clement*, Ignatius's letters, Polycarp's *To the Philippians*, and the *Martyrdom of Paul*. The Lukan Paul's reflections on his own death arise in the Miletus speech (Acts 20:18–35), and Kirk argues that Acts 20:24 encapsulates Luke's portrayal of Paul's reflections on his life, death, and ministry. Paul is a herald who seeks to ensure that his message will be heard even after his death. *1 Clement* depicts Paul as an athlete who reached the goals that were set for him. Paul thus becomes a model for the Corinthians to follow. Ignatius speaks of Paul as a departed apostle who has ascended to heaven and become Ignatius's example in his own suffering. Polycarp presents Paul as an ascended athlete, but he pays attention to Paul's teaching through both his presence and his letters. Finally, the *Martyrdom of Paul* depicts him as an anti-Roman martyr who opposed Nero directly. Chapter 8 concludes part 2 by synthesizing the portrait of Paul that can be drawn from these texts. Kirk notes that no single text contains all the images mentioned in part 2. However, he argues that there are similarities between these writings such that family resemblances can be drawn regarding how they depict Paul's death.

Part 3 studies Paul's letters with a view to how Paul himself understood his death. Kirk begins with 1 Corinthians where Paul describes himself not only as an athlete (1 Cor 9:24–27) but also as a household manager whose praise comes from the Lord (1 Cor 4:1–5; 9:15–23). Paul writes as someone who has been condemned to death but remains a partner with the Corinthians (2 Cor 1:7–14) and who dwells in a tent in 2 Corinthians that will be put off (2 Cor 4:16–5:10). Chapters on Philipians and 2 Timothy follow. In the former, Paul views himself as a libation poured out for two purposes, namely, for others and for God. Paul shapes his own legacy

in 2 Timothy as he writes about the way in which he is preparing for his departure and how the victorious life that he has lived should continue to have an effect after his death. Part 3 again closes with a synthetic chapter in which Kirk highlights the importance of 2 Cor 1:9 as a significant event in Paul's reflections on his own death; Paul's assurance of his postmortem destination; the pastoral challenge that his death presented; and the use of his own death as an example to imitate.

Part 4 concludes the entire study by comparing the images of Paul found in his letters and in literature that was written subsequent to his death. Both Paul's letters and later writings focused on Paul's preaching, perseverance, model of righteousness, and postmortem ascent to God. Yet there is also discontinuity between these writings. Kirk mentions Paul's depiction as an anti-Roman martyr, tent-dweller, drink offering, and household manager as examples. In addition to looking at possible topics for future study, the book also closes with a robust bibliography and indexes.

The Departure of an Apostle largely succeeds in analyzing how Paul and writers in the following years understood his death. In addition, two methodological moves are made that others who study Pauline reception will want to consider. First, the utilization of Wittgensteinian family resemblances provides a helpful concept with which to study and classify how Paul was understood in later texts. The same concept has been used by Allen Brent in several studies of Ignatius and Second Sophistic rhetoric, and its application by Kirk to examine how early Christian authors discuss one topic is likewise salient. By doing this, Kirk recognizes that influence appears in a variety of ways and not by verbatim quotation alone. Kirk's location of Pauline reception within memory studies rather than in discussions of the apostle's construction also provides a useful perspective from which to read these texts. Second, the order in which the texts are discussed allows the reception of Paul to impact the reading of Paul's letters. Rather than serving as interesting academic addenda, the studies of late-first and second-century texts are given an opportunity to participate in the interpretation of the Pauline letters. Although one must be careful not to let the reception of Paul determine the exegesis of his letters, the images of Paul found in later writers can inform the reading of Paul's letters.

Once the methodology and structure of the books are affirmed, suggestions for how the book can be improved will likely dwell on smaller matters. One might push this book to develop further the claim that Polycarp's instructions to imitate Christ (Pol. *Phil.* 8.1–2; 10.1) are mediated through the imitation of Paul (Pol. *Phil.* 9.1–2; pp. 98–99). Although this is how Ignatius's letters work (see Alexander N. Kirk, "Ignatius' Statements of Self-Sacrifice: Intimates of an Atoning Death or Expressions of Exemplary Suffering?" *JTS* 64 [2013]: 66–88), Polycarp seems to juxtapose Jesus, Paul, and others whom the Philippians knew in *To the Philippians* 8–10 in order to provide the Philippians with several examples to imitate. The claim that one example is mediated through another requires further substantiation. Another means by which to think alongside this book is to consider further projects that could implement Kirk's methodology. For example, one might conduct a similar study of Paul's letters and reception history by looking at the use of metaphors in both Pauline letters and later texts that are influenced by Paul.

Nevertheless, Kirk consistently sheds new light both on Paul's approach to death in his letters and on how later authors depicted Paul's death. His approach is suggestive for future studies, and the prose is pleasant to read in addition to being well-informed. This book is warmly recommended for all those with a scholarly interest in Paul, his reflections on his death, and how those who received Paul understood him.

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The Letter to the Hebrews: A New Commentary. By Albert Vanhoye. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 2015, v + 266 pp., \$34.95 paper.

Cardinal Albert Vanhoye, S.J., who served for many years as Professor of Scripture at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome, is no novice when it comes to the book of Hebrews. Besides his numerous journal articles, he has written several books on Hebrews, including: *La structure littéraire de l'épître aux Hébreux* (2nd ed.; Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1976); *Situation du Christ: Hébreux 1–2* (LD 58; Paris: Cerf, 1969); *Prêtres anciens, prêtre nouveau selon le Nouveau Testament* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1980), *La lettre aux Hébreux: Jésus-Christ, médiateur d'une nouvelle alliance* (Paris: Desclée, 2002), and *L'Épître aux Hébreux: Un prêtre différent* (Paris: Editions Gabalda, 2010).

The Letter to the Hebrews is divided into two parts, "Introduction" (pp. 1–50) and "Commentary" (pp. 51–242). Vanhoye's "Introduction" provides a concise interaction with several topics: "Literary Genre: Letter? Homily?" (pp. 1–2), "Doctrinal Content: A Treatise on Christology" (pp. 2–5), "Who is the Author of the Homily" (pp. 6–11), "For Whom was this Homily Written" (pp. 12–13), "Where was the Preacher Active" (pp. 13–14), "Date of the Letter" (pp. 14–15), and "Structure of the Homily" (pp. 15–20). He argues that Barnabas wrote this homily from Italy to a Christian community in Greece or Asia Minor, which Paul endorsed with a concluding note just prior to his martyrdom around AD 66–67. Embracing a sixteenth-century exegete's suggestion (that of Estius), Vanhoye believes Paul may have "effectively guaranteed the value of this letter, despite the novelty of its doctrine" by writing the conclusion (13:19, 22–25). Attached to the introduction is "Text of the Letter Annotated," which is Vanhoye's interpretive translation for the Letter to the Hebrews (pp. 21–50).

Naturally, the majority of *The Letter to the Hebrews* is an explanation of Hebrews. Excluding the "Exordium (1:1–4)" (pp. 53–58) and the "Solemn Conclusion (13:20–25)" (pp. 230–38), Vanhoye divides the Letter to the Hebrews into five units: "The Situation of Christ (1:5–2:18)" (pp. 59–82), "A Trustworthy and Merciful High Priest (3:1–5:10)" (pp. 83–106), "Priceless Value of the Priesthood and Sacrifice of Christ (5:11–10:39)" (pp. 107–76), "Faith and Endurance Full of Hope (11:1–12:13)" (pp. 177–204), and "Pursuing Straight Paths (12:14–13:19)" (pp. 205–29). Vanhoye's fivefold division parallels those found in the critical commentaries by Harold Attridge, William Lane, and Paul Ellingworth—all of whose works

Vanhoye lists in his bibliography (pp. 243–45). One might assume their influence on his structural outline were it not for Vanhoye’s own previous work in *La structure littéraire de l’épître aux Hébreux*.

Vanhoye’s commentary is an expositional commentary similar in length to Homer Kent’s *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1972) and Victor C. Pfitzner’s *Hebrews* (ANTC; Nashville: Abingdon, 1997). Yet Vanhoye’s commentary differs from Kent’s and Pfitzner’s in two ways. First, Vanhoye opens each subdivision with an overview and an English translation before his exposition of the passage. While Vanhoye indents phrases and clauses throughout all of his translations, he does so with no explanation, expecting the reader to discern the significance of his interpretive indentations. Nevertheless, Vanhoye does not leave the reader guessing about OT quotes or allusions to OT verses, events, and figures. They are clearly cited with the translation, and they are a nice feature. A second difference is Vanhoye’s minimal to non-existent interaction with others in dealing with interpretive challenges. References to other sources are conspicuously missing. For instance, when discussing the blood of Jesus offered in the heavenly tent (9:11–12), Vanhoye notes that “some exegetes imagine that here the author is describing a ceremony of the offering of blood performed by Jesus on his arrival in heaven” (p. 143). Who are these exegetes? Are they included in Vanhoye’s bibliography? One can only imagine. So while he identifies a limited number of sources in the “Bibliography” (pp. 243–45), there is no evidence anywhere in his commentary of his consulting those contemporary sources. He does, however, credit two older commentators: Gulielmus Estius and John Chrysostom (pp. 145, 149). Once in a while, Vanhoye appeals to a few commentators in footnotes who are not listed in his bibliography (p. 144 nn. 1 and 2).

Throughout the commentary, Greek words are transliterated with English translation. His lexical interactions are often intriguing on at least two levels. First when a Greek term appears in the LXX, Vanhoye at times offers interesting alternative translations. For instance, he explains that, while the author of Hebrews uses the Greek word *diathēkē* for “covenant” as it appears in the Septuagint, “the etymological sense of this word,” says Vanhoye, “is ‘disposition’ but its most frequent use is ‘last disposition,’ that is to say, ‘testament.’” Thus he concludes that a more appropriate translation for *diathēkē* in Heb 9:15 is “covenant-testament” (p. 150). Unfortunately, no validation is provided. Second, Vanhoye highlights when the same Greek word appears more than once in Hebrews. For instance, *hypostasis* appears three times and is translated three different ways: “substance” in Heb 1:3, “position” in Heb 3:14, and “possessing” in Heb 11:1 (p. 179). His reference to Moulton and Milligan for *hypostasis* is a welcomed sight, but a person with no background in Greek tools would be left asking about the identity of Moulton and Milligan. Furthermore, the work is not listed among his short list of sources or in a footnote. It might have proven more helpful to reference BDAG’s entry (1040.1b). Yet he does reference BDAG in one of his infrequent footnotes (p. 196 n. 3) for his discussion of *archēgos*, where Vanhoye draws attention to the two usages of the noun to describe Jesus as “pioneer” (2:10) and “accomplisher” (12:2). So, on the one hand, Vanhoye’s transliteration may benefit a non-Greek audience, but, on the

other hand, his appeal to Greek lexical sources assumes some awareness of NT Greek and Greek tools.

As to Vanhoye's interpretation of Hebrews, he often offers an idea that forces you to stop and think for a moment before moving on to the next interpretation. On more than one occasion, Vanhoye demonstrates how the author of Hebrews advances an OT discussion. For instance, in Heb 4:16 he underscores the author's exhortation by describing it as "audacious." He then explains why the author's exhortation "Let us approach" is audacious. It is "a radical change in the religious situation with respect to the Old Testament, in which it was strictly forbidden 'to approach' (cf. Exod 24:2; Num 3:10, 38; Lev 16:2)" (p. 97). Similarly with regard to describing the different sacrifices in the OT for "faults committed 'by mistake' (Lev 4:2, 13; Num 15:22–29) and those committed 'deliberately' (Num 15:30–31)," Vanhoye rightly highlights that in the NT "the distinction disappears." These kinds of discussions are succinct, well documented with OT citations, and helpful. Nevertheless, in his discussion about the misplacement of the altar of incense in Heb 9:3–4, he avoids the problem by saying that the issue is "secondary and so there is no need to dwell on it" (pp. 137–38). So while Vanhoye does not shy away from interacting with OT subjects in Hebrews, he majors on the majors as would be expected in an expositional commentary.

Finally, there are times when Vanhoye, offers interpretations that are classic. In much the same way he appeals to Tertullian to support Barnabas as the author of Hebrews (p. 11 n. 2) and Estius to support his argument for a Pauline ending (p. 10), he cites John Chrysostom to explain the interpretation of "tent" or "perfect tent" of Heb 9:11: "'The tent' designates the flesh of Christ, the human body of Christ" (pp. 145). "To speak of the human body as a tent," says Vanhoye as a means of supporting Chrysostom, "is not rare in the Bible (see Wis 9:15; Isa 38:12; 2 Cor 5:1–4; 2 Pet 1:13, 14) and, besides, the Fourth Gospel says that Jesus was speaking 'of the sanctuary of his body' (John 2:21)." So while he offers interpretations that are somewhat distinctive, he does a poor job interacting with contemporary commentators with whom he differs. Therefore, while there are nuggets of items that are thought-provoking and helpful, there are disappointments as well.

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Letters from the Pillar Apostles: The Formation of the Catholic Epistles as a Canonical Collection. By Darian R. Lockett. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2017, xviii + 255 pp., \$33.00 paper.

Although the Catholic Epistles have traditionally received less scholarly attention than other NT writings, the publication of several recent works on these epistles is a positive indication of increased interest. In addition to a number of commentaries and theological studies, several recent publications explore various canonical issues relating to the Catholic Epistles. These writings include *Not by Paul Alone: The Formation of the Catholic Epistle Collection and the Christian Canon*, by David

R. Nienhuis (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007); *The Catholic Epistles and Apostolic Tradition: A New Perspective on James to Jude*, edited by Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr and Robert Wall (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009); and Nienhuis and Wall's *Reading the Epistles of James, Peter, John, and Jude as Scripture: The Shaping and Shape of a Canonical Collection* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013). Building upon these recent works, Darian Lockett's *Letters from the Pillar Apostles* offers a "sustained argument for reading the Catholic Epistles as an intentional, discrete collection set within the New Testament" (p. xvi). This central thesis, Lockett writes, is based upon the premise "that the process of editing, collecting, and arranging of these seven texts is neither anachronistic to their meaning nor antagonistic to their very conception" (p. xvi). Evidence in support of this thesis is presented in six major chapters followed by a summary of the book's conclusions in a seventh and final chapter.

Demonstrating an impressive familiarity with contemporary scholarship, the first chapter offers a judicious assessment of the recent works of Peter Davids, Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr, David Nienhuis, Robert Wall, Carey Newman, and Brevard Childs. As Lockett demonstrates, each of these scholars maintain differing viewpoints on significant matters such as the nature of canonicity and the hermeneutical implications of recognizing the Catholic Epistles as a discrete literary collection. To cite but a few examples, he suggests that, while Davids accounts well for the historical context of each writing, insufficient attention is given to the hermeneutical significance of the Catholic Epistles as a literary collection. On the other hand, Nienhuis and Wall are described as placing little significance on authorial intent, focusing rather on the reception of the writings in early Christian communities. Between these two viewpoints, Lockett finds greater affinity with the viewpoints of Niebuhr, Newman, and especially Childs, whom Lockett regards as the "most established and potentially most helpful" (p. 26). The survey of contemporary research concludes with the proposal that "these seven letters should be read taking both their individual historical situations and their literary and theological placement within the New Testament as crucial for their correct interpretation" (p. 27).

Arguing for a broader understanding of canon, Lockett contends in the second chapter that "canon is not limited to the listing of received books (canon as a fixed collection), but also involves the process by which these texts were received, collected, transmitted, and shaped by the early apostolic period" (p. 33). Rather than a mere historical event, Lockett argues that the process of canonization is hermeneutically significant given his perspective that the original composition of a writing cannot be separated from its redaction, collection, arrangement, and final shaping (p. 58).

The third chapter considers historical questions such as the time in which the individual letters were first regarded as a discrete collection and when this collection was first referred to as the "Catholic Epistles." Lockett evaluates a variety of witnesses from the early church (e.g. relevant Greek manuscripts and the testimony of church fathers such as Origen and Eusebius) and concludes that following a brief period in which the letters circulated individually, smaller collections began to develop (e.g. a small collection of 1–2 Peter and Jude), which was followed soon

thereafter by all seven letters circulating together as a discrete collection. With regard to the timing of these developments, Lockett concludes that at least by the time of Eusebius the sevenfold letter collection consisting of James, 1–2 Peter, 1–3 John, and Jude, though not uniformly cited and used by the church fathers, was nonetheless recognized as canonical and labelled “Catholic Epistles.” The survey also suggests that prior to Eusebius, perhaps as early as Clement, these texts were associated as a collection (p. 80).

Chapter 4 examines paratextual features contained in the Greek manuscripts of the Catholic Epistles in order to demonstrate that early editors and compilers maintained what Lockett refers to as a collection consciousness. The chapter examines the arrangement of the epistles in the earliest manuscripts, the titles of the epistles, and the presence of various reading aids (e.g. *nomina sacra* and divisions known as *kephalaia*), and colophons. These features, Lockett concludes, are designed to “form a theoretical framework within which readers understand the text” (p. 94) and “indicate an intentional collection consciousness in the Catholic Epistles” (p. 95). The chapter also provides a helpful treatment of the canonical relationship between Acts and the Catholic Epistles.

Chapter 5 makes the bold proposal that “concerns for selection and arrangement—compilational concerns—not only occur in the later canonical process, but also may be detected at the compositional level as well” (p. 137). In support of this significant conclusion, Lockett evaluates what he describes as catchwords or catchphrases at the seams of contiguous books and examines a number of OT passages that are either quoted or alluded to in more than one of the Catholic Epistles (e.g. Genesis 6–7; Leviticus 19; Prov 3:34, 10:12; Isa 40:6–8; Ezekiel 33–34). This evidence leads to his conclusion that “the Catholic Epistles were intentionally juxtaposed one with another” (p. 186).

The sixth chapter considers additional internal evidence such as thematic similarities that may be observed in two or more epistles as well as various “framing devices” that reveal a close literary relationship between the epistles. Noting several literary links between the epistles of James and Jude, Lockett concludes that “the compiler(s) of the collection recognized these features as indicating a kind of framing device, which, in turn, led them to place these two letters in first and last position in order to bookend the Catholic Epistles as a coherent collection” (p. 196).

Finally, the seventh chapter summarizes the evidence examined throughout the volume and concludes that “rather than reading the Catholic Epistles in isolation from each other—understanding their individual historical situations as the single, determinative context for their interpretation—proper understanding of these seven letters must equally attend to their collection and placement within the New Testament canon” (p. 231).

On the strength of a wide array of evidence deriving from both the content of the epistles as well as noteworthy paratextual features, the volume presents a compelling argument for recognizing the Catholic Epistles as a discrete canonical collection. Despite this notable achievement, some readers may conclude that the volume could have offered a more comprehensive treatment of the compositional history of the individual letters as well as the hermeneutical implications of a ca-

nonical reading. Concerning the former, Lockett is careful to avoid speculation as to whether the common features found in the epistles (e.g. similar content or use of the OT) may be attributed to the original authors or to subsequent redactional activity. While such caution is certainly understandable and often necessary, the origin of these features is of significance for the implication and significance of Lockett's main thesis. Attributing these internal features to the original authors would provide a considerably strong argument that the authors themselves understood their writings to be closely related to the other writings in the collection or in the very least would provide valuable insight pertaining to the various sources that influenced their writings. Alternatively, if these features are determined to have derived from later editorial activity, some may arrive at the conclusion that a canonical reading of the Catholic Epistles was simply a phenomenon that occurred in subsequent church history and as a consequence call into question its hermeneutical significance.

Finally, for readers without an extensive familiarity with canonical criticism or who remain sceptical of its basic assumptions, it may have been useful to provide greater clarity concerning the hermeneutical implications of reading the Catholic Epistles as a discrete canonical collection. Are there specific passages or themes within the Catholic Epistles that proponents of a canonical reading would inevitably interpret or understand differently than those who engage in the task of interpretation without a canonical awareness? If so, what might be said concerning the original recipients and other early readers of the Catholic Epistles? Would first- and second-century readers have read a particular epistle differently or even deficiently had they read the individual writings prior to the time in which the letters began to circulate as a literary collection?

While further consideration of these matters would be helpful in subsequent studies of the Catholic Epistles, Lockett's volume is to be commended for its clearly presented assessment of recent scholarship of the Catholic Epistles, for its examination of a wide range of evidence in support of a canonical reading of the epistles, and for the renewed interest that it promises to generate in the Catholic Epistles with respect to their place within the larger biblical canon as well as their significance to Christian theology.

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The Meaning of Jesus' Death: Reviewing the New Testament's Interpretations. By Barry D. Smith. T&T Clark Biblical Studies. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017, xii + 193 pp., \$128.00.

In *The Meaning of Jesus' Death*, Barry Smith expresses concern that much of the scholarship on the doctrine of the atonement is often lacking in its treatment of the biblical text. He seeks to correct this omission by providing an exegetical overview of NT passages that discuss the soteriological benefit of Christ's death. Smith organizes these biblical passages into several broad thematic categories. Chapter 1

explores three OT figures used by NT authors to describe Christ: the servant of YHWH in Isaiah, Melchizedek, and Adam, the representative first human. Chapter 2 examines passages that describe Christ's death as a sacrifice. Chapter 3 addresses the nature of justification and the righteousness of God. Chapter 4 surveys a variety of other NT expressions for the soteriological benefit of Christ's death. Chapter 5 looks at the evidence for understanding Christ's death as a means of deliverance from the dominion of Satan. In the final chapter, Smith evaluates four main theories of the atonement in light of their ability to account for the biblical data he has set forth thus far. In addition to examining the biblical data, each chapter also provides an overview of the theological contributions made by early church fathers. Smith claims that these early authors offer further insight into the biblical text, particularly by drawing out implicit meanings from the texts and by making helpful intertextual connections. Smith does not accept every conclusion found in these early authors, but claims that even their errors may help us better understand the biblical text.

In the first two chapters, the sacrificial nature of Christ's death is an important focal point. Christ's death was sacrificial in part because it "effects a change in God's disposition to the one on whose behalf it is offered" with the result that God forgives sin (p. 52). Smith also explores the meaning of *hilastērion* in Rom 3:25, concluding that it should be understood to refer to Christ's propitiating sacrifice that appeases the wrath or anger of God. In addition, the Passover offerings serve as a type of Christ's sacrificial death. As the Passover offerings resulted in Israel's freedom from slavery, so too Christ's death redeems believers from their own slavery.

The key focus of chapter 3 is the nature of justification and the righteousness of God in Pauline texts. Smith situates much of his discussion of justification within the debates between Protestant and Catholic theologians. According to Smith, the Protestant position better understands Paul's intended meaning. In contrast with Catholic belief, justification does not involve an infusion of righteousness, but is rather a declaration by God that a person is without guilt and thus no longer subject to the consequences of sin. Smith argues that the Protestant position equates justification by faith with the forgiveness of sins. In contrast, Catholic theologians teach that "being justified by faith means being made righteous by infused grace appropriated by faith, which then merits eternal life" (p. 76). Smith again sides with the Protestant interpretation, although he admits there is little witness to such a position among those in the early church.

In chapter 5, Smith explores NT passages that discuss how Christ's death brought about the defeat of Satan, which are often associated with the Christus Victor or "classical" theory of the atonement. For instance, Jesus seems to understand his own death as the means by which Satan's power as ruler comes to an end (John 12:31). In Eph 2:1–7, Paul teaches that humans are living under the rule of Satan in their sinful nature, but because of Christ's death and resurrection they are able to be made spiritually alive. Similarly, in Colossians 1 and 2, Christ defeats the rulers and authorities and "no longer can they have the same unimpeded access to human beings in order to lead them away from God" (p. 144). In addition to exam-

ining the NT evidence, Smith also examines how the early church attempted to explain the means by which Christ's death brought about the defeat of Satan—the most notable of these attempts, of course, is the ransom theory. Smith, however, expresses doubts about these early theories and concludes that they are often overly speculative.

In the last chapter, Smith puts the main theories of the atonement “to the test” in light of the biblical data. Smith briefly lays out his methodology for moving from the Scriptures to theology—he seeks to adhere to an “inductive theological methodology” where the meaning implicit in the biblical text is understood in more general and abstract terms. Four main theories of the atonement are examined—Moral Influence, Governmental, Satisfaction, and Christus Victor. Each theory is judged on how well it is able to synthesize and generalize the biblical data and on whether or not it proposes concepts that contradict the biblical data. Smith rejects the Moral Influence theory, claiming that it presupposes that God forgives unconditionally. He argues that this is contrary to the biblical account where God forgives humanity only on the basis of Christ's suffering and death. Smith also rejects the Governmental model, which teaches that God does not forgive humanity outside of Christ's death solely so as not to undermine the moral order. He argues that there is little biblical evidence to support such a position. Smith claims that the Satisfaction theory, which finds its greatest expression in penal-substitutionary terms, aligns best with the biblical data set forth earlier. Smith's acceptance of penal substitution does not preclude him from also accepting aspects of the Christus Victor model of the atonement. He suggests that these two models could function together to form what he terms the “Satisfaction and Spiritual Freedom theory of the atonement” where “the forgiveness that Christ makes possible by the penal and substitutionary satisfaction of his death also results in becoming free from the dominion of Satan” (p. 182).

Smith's work offers a helpful overview of many NT passages that deal with the atonement and Christ's death. He clearly lays out the exegetical issues that these passages introduce and summarizes the surrounding interpretive debates. As such, this work would be a helpful resource for readers interested in the theology of the atonement but less familiar with the main interpretive and exegetical issues at stake. The exegetical conclusions that Smith draws are frequently fairly traditional and familiar. Since the interpretation of these passages is oftentimes highly contentious, Smith's exegesis may be unlikely to persuade entrenched opponents of his views. Smith's well-researched and extensive footnotes, however, offer the curious or the unconvinced reader avenues for further study.

One of the more interesting aspects of Smith's work is the inclusion of early Christian sources. Smith includes a variety of both Greek- and Latin-speaking early Christian writers and consults a wide number of types of works. He also at times includes later medieval theologians and Protestant reformers. It is not always clear, however, exactly how these authors contribute to Smith's own interpretation of the biblical text. While he claims that they offer particular insight into the biblical text and the theological issues surrounding the doctrine of the atonement, it is not clear from Smith's work exactly how these authors make this contribution. Perhaps the

implicit reason for their inclusion is to help guard against accusations of novelty. On some of the most contentious and debated passages, however, Smith disagrees with the majority of early Christian writers. On the doctrine of imputed righteousness, for example, Smith concludes that “this evangelical truth was partially lost until it was rediscovered in the sixteenth century” (p. 77).

Smith’s worry that atonement theories can become too separated from the biblical data seems to be a valid concern. Penal substitutionary atonement in particular has certainly been met with a fair share of criticism. Often, however, these objections are not necessarily exegetical in nature but are concerned instead with broader theological or ethical issues. Smith helpfully calls us back to Scripture as we continue to seek to understand with greater clarity the meaning and purpose behind Christ’s death. Ultimately, Smith’s encouragement to listen more carefully to the biblical witness is an important and timely reminder.

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An Introduction to Empire in the New Testament. Edited by Adam Winn. Resources for Biblical Study 84. Atlanta: SBL, 2016, xvii + 348 pp., \$49.95 paper.

We are all biased interpreters. To claim a purely objective interpretation neglects the complexity of the interpretation process. This does not mean, however, that the interpretative process is flawed beyond comprehension. One can indeed interpret ancient documents well. However, one thing is for sure: we must recognize our “starting points.” Some may begin with the NT documents primarily as historical writings; others may view these same documents with deep religious convictions. Some may begin with a view of Scripture that cannot sustain contradictions; others may view Scripture as a mosaic of potentially conflicting writings. Whatever the case, recognizing one’s starting point is essential.

In the field of biblical studies, there have been many “starting points.” A significant one during the last twenty years involves the influence of the Roman Empire. How pervasive and persuasive was the Roman Empire to the writers of the NT? Did the NT writers shape their documents primarily in reaction to the Roman Empire? Or is there another “starting point” that the NT writers use as they proclaim Jesus and his kingdom? The book under review uses as its starting point the Roman Empire as the *sine qua non* for the NT writers.

This is a well-conceived book with a team of outstanding scholars and contributions. The fifteen essays attempt to establish the enduring importance of the Roman Empire in NT interpretation. There is no doubt, in my mind, about that sobering fact. The Roman Empire has been a neglected motif in NT studies. Winn’s book fills that lacunae nicely.

There is an introductory essay by the editor, Adam Winn, followed by an overview of the Roman Empire by Bruce W. Longenecker. The volume continues with a string of Gospel essays, with Richard A. Horsley setting the foundation, then Warren Carter on Matthew, Winn on Mark, Eric D. Barreto on Luke-Acts together,

and Beth M. Sheppard on John. Neil Elliot and James R. Harrison handle the guild's authentic Pauline letters (minus Philemon). Harry O. Maier tackles the twin epistles of Colossians and Ephesians. Deborah Krause offers her perspective on the Pastoral Epistles. Essays on Hebrews (James A. Whitlark), James (Matthew Ryan Hauge) and 1 Peter (Kelly D. Liebengood) come next. The final essay by Davina C. Lopez grapples with Revelation.

Perhaps the *crux interpretum* for this book is a quote from Richard Horsley's essay: "[The] Roman imperial rule was *the* determining factor in Jesus's mission" (p. 48, italics added). Horsley is to be commended for being one of the pioneers of empire criticism, and his scholarship is to be valued. I do not want to appear to be nit-picking here, but the use of the definite article in Horsley's statement is what separates, in many ways, the perspective of this volume from that of other interpreters. I would argue that Roman imperial rule was "a" determining factor (among many) in Jesus's mission, but not "the" determining one. I know it is the choice of one word—a definite or indefinite article—but it makes all the interpretative difference.

Truth be told: Having co-edited a book about anti-empire interpretation, I am, of course, a bit biased. Yet my bias is not whether the Roman Empire should be factored into NT interpretation, but rather "How much?" or even "Is it *the* central motif?" My starting point is that the kingdom of God/heaven is in active conflict with the kingdom of Satan—apart from the Roman Empire. I do not always equate the two. Much more can be said here—see *Jesus is Lord, Caesar is Not: Evaluating Empire in New Testament Studies* [Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013], especially the "Conclusion," 212–14). This is the crux of the matter: Do the NT writers vis-à-vis their documents intentionally see their purpose in writing as usurping the Roman Empire? Or, put another way, is their understanding of kingdom of God/heaven a direct affront to the Roman Empire? This is key.

The very short answer I would suggest is: not likely. The NT documents reveal the emerging of a new kingdom that stands in direct opposition to the kingdom of Satan (see Jesus's power encounters with Satan in the Gospels). Thus, the kingdom of God/heaven is not of this world (John 18:29–40) but has real world (read here political and social) implications for the followers of Jesus.

As I continue to ponder the many contributions of an anti-empire approach to the NT, I still have the following reservations:

(1) I remain impressed but unpersuaded by James C. Scott's work on "hidden transcripts" (see *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990]). I value postcolonial interpretation and it has added much to the uncovering of one's blind spots in interpretation, but, again, I think the NT documents are not subversive because of embedded "hidden codes" attempting to circumvent an oppressive power. The overall evidence seems thin and circumstantial. The NT documents are subversive because of the bold announcement of the kingdom of God/heaven—a kingdom inaugurated, but not yet fully consummated, which combats the oppressive regime of Satan, a struggle aptly described by the apostle Paul as "against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic pow-

ers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places” (Eph 6:12; also see again *Jesus is Lord, Caesar is Not*, 212–14).

(2) Much has been written about NT eschatology and how it might aid in an understanding of the kingdom of God/heaven; yet I do not see significant discussion of eschatology in this volume (except for Liebengood’s essay on 1 Peter). Eschatology certainly does not solve the “kingdoms” tension about whether the NT writers and their original hearers understood the kingdom taught by Jesus to be one “physically” established on this earth (*contra* Rome). However, a discussion of such “tensions” would be beneficial.

(3) I would like to see a robust discussion of the trial exchange between Jesus and Pilate, when Jesus tells Pilate that his kingdom is not of this world (see John 18:29–40). Beth Sheppard’s fine essay, unfortunately in my view, just makes a passing reference. I may be “cherry-picking,” but this is a revealing exchange—one that I may suggest functions like a “lens” as to what the evangelist understands about the kingdom of God/heaven. What did the evangelist imply by this exchange, especially since it involves a Roman Empire official who functions as the prime antagonist? What did John’s original hearers come to understand from this exchange? These questions need to be addressed.

(4) Can the Epistle of James be seen as an anti-imperial document? Matthew Ryan Hauge’s thought-provoking essay attempts to make the case, but I think it is a stretch in places. I think there is a difference between using an illustration that a writer employs (e.g. “crown of life” in Jas 1:12) versus viewing the same phrase as an anti-imperial retort.

Interestingly, this volume along with *Jesus is Lord, Caesar is Not* are both dedicated to a departed colleague. The warm tribute by the book’s editor demonstrates that scholarship is more than just arguments or publications. Scholarship is about friendships—ones forged in the pursuit of knowledge. In light of that noble pursuit, one is grateful for this volume.

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All That is in God: Evangelical Theology and the Challenge of Classical Christian Theism. By James E. Dolezal. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2017, 162 pp., \$18.00 paper.

James Dolezal, this little volume’s author, identifies it as a polemic on behalf of classical theism over against theistic mutualism, classical theism’s upstart rival. In his first chapter, Dolezal defines the opposing viewpoints. Theistic mutualists, he explains, hold that God not merely influences but receives influence from creatures. God, in their view, passes through time, becomes in turn happy, sad, or angry, and participates in a give-and-take relationship with his creation. Classical theists, by contrast, maintain “a strong commitment to the doctrines of divine aseity, immutability, impassibility, simplicity [and] eternity” (p. 1). Their “underlying and inviola-

ble conviction,” Dolezal asserts, “is that God does not derive any aspect of His being from outside himself and is not in any way caused to be” (ibid.).

Theistic mutualists, Dolezal explains, come in hard and soft varieties. Hard theistic mutualists such as process theists consider God subject without reserve to the vicissitudes of an interactive relationship with creatures. Soft theistic mutualists, by contrast, envision a bifurcated God, who in one aspect of his being satisfies some of classical theism’s requirements and yet undergoes the rough and tumble of a reciprocally influential relationship with creatures in another. Hard and soft mutualists concur, Dolezal observes, in deeming relationships meaningful only insofar as they parallel relationships among human beings (pp. 3–6).

In his second chapter, then, Dolezal argues for a central tenet of classical theism, the doctrine of divine immutability. Scripture, he maintains, teaches unambiguously that all beings in the created universe derive from God. Paul tells the Athenians, for instance, that God “gives to all life and breath and all things” (Acts 17:25). God, in other words, gives all to all. For “from him, through him, and to him are all things” (Rom 11:36). Scriptural passages like these, Dolezal observes, imply that human beings can bestow no bounty upon God (pp. 13–14).

To move another to change, Dolezal argues, moreover, is to actualize that other’s potentiality and thereby add to it some actuality it did not previously possess (pp. 15, 19). This creatures cannot do for God. Having received everything they have from God (1 Cor 4:7; John 3:27), they have nothing to give him which he does not possess already. For God could not have bestowed on creatures the goods they possess if he did not already possess them in an infinitely higher manner in himself (pp. 16–17).

The notion that creatures could impose change on God, Dolezal concludes, is fatuous. The idea that God could voluntarily subject himself to change, moreover, Dolezal finds doubly absurd. For, first, just as two contradictory statements cannot be true in the same sense at the same time, so a being cannot be both mover and moved at the same time and in the same respect. Since God accounts for all that is other than he, moreover, he cannot be composed of parts, for in that case God’s existence would depend on the existence of those parts. Since God possesses no parts, then, one divine part cannot move another. For God to move, therefore, would be for the same entity to be both mover and moved at the same time and in the same respect. Claims that this occurs, Dolezal concludes accordingly, are self-contradictory nonsense (pp. 15–16).

Second, in verses like Mal 3:6, “I am the LORD, I do not change,” and Jas 1:17, “with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning,” Scripture explicitly teaches that God cannot change (p. 18).

Third, all Christians rightly consider God perfect. For a perfect being to change would require its diminishing in some way its perfection. A perfect being, after all, cannot become better. God cannot change, therefore, because he cannot become imperfect (p. 19). One cannot escape these reasons’ force, Dolezal observes, by distinguishing God’s ontological immutability from his ethical immutability and affirming the existence only of the latter. For Scripture portrays God’s ontological immutability as the foundation of his ethical immutability (pp. 18–19).

Hebrews 6:13–18, specifically, states that God swore by himself so that his promise would be sure by two unchangeable things: his oath and his unchangeable being. The righteous God can do no wrong, Scripture teaches, precisely because he cannot alter his righteous being.

Nor, argues Dolezal, can one escape the consequences of his argument for God's ontological immutability by ascribing to God an immutable nature and deeming him mutable only in accidents, that is, characteristics God could relinquish without losing his very nature (pp. 25–26). For one who ascribes this degree of immutability to God attributes to him no more immutability than creatures possess. Human beings, for instance, do not cease to be human beings because they open their eyes or close them. They change constantly, but their nature remains the same (p. 26 n. 38). To those who contend that human nature can change because it is destructible, Dolezal responds that for a being to suffer annihilation is not exactly for it to change, for after its annihilation, the being does not exist at all. It does not exist in some altered state (*ibid.*).

Nor, argues Dolezal, can one blunt his argument's force by hypothesizing that God voluntarily creates mutable adjuncts to his immutable nature and in those adjuncts subjects himself to change. For one who claimed this would portray an aspect of God's being as a creature and hence characterize God as a kind of self-made cyborg. There is no medium, Dolezal observes, between creatureliness and deity (pp. 30–33).

In his third chapter, then, Dolezal sets forth a case for another central tenet of classical theism, the doctrine of divine simplicity, according to which God has no parts. By "part" in this context, Dolezal means "anything in a subject that is less than the whole and without which the subject would be really different than it is" (p. 40). The reasoning behind this doctrine is straightforward. Everything that has parts depends on those parts for its existence. A piece of a puzzle may exist, for example, without the other pieces, but no complete puzzle can exist without every piece (pp. 40–41).

Among this doctrine's many implications, Dolezal emphasizes two. First, if God is simple, *i.e.*, completely incomposite, his act of existence must be identical with his essence (p. 41). Divine simplicity thus distinguishes God radically from all creatures, who exist, but are not identical with their nature. Human beings exist, Dolezal explains, but no man or woman is identical with humanity as such. Hence numerous individuals who share the nature "humanity" can exist. Because God's existence is identical with his essence, however, there can be only one instance of the divine nature, only one God. God does not just happen to be one, then, and the doctrine of divine simplicity explains why (pp. 41–42).

Second, Dolezal asserts, the doctrine of divine simplicity entails that all of God's attributes are identical with the divine essence and thus also identical with each other. Human beings, accordingly, both live and love, but are neither life nor love. God, by contrast, is both life and love, and because the one God is identical with both, these attributes, in God, must be identical with each other (pp. 42–43). This second implication, Dolezal concedes, appears deeply counterintuitive.

The doctrine from which this implication follows, Dolezal maintains nonetheless, rests on an irrefragable biblical basis. The doctrine of divine independence or aseity (Acts 17:25; Rom 11:35) entails divine simplicity, he explains, because, if God were composed of parts, his existence would derive from something other than he (pp. 45–47). The doctrine of divine infinity entails divine simplicity, because whatever is composed of parts admits of augmentation, and one cannot increase that which is truly infinite (p. 48). The doctrine of creation, likewise, entails divine simplicity, because it declares everything other than God a creature. A mere part of God, if such a thing could exist, would not be God. Being other than God, rather, it would be a creature (p. 49).

Given divine simplicity's entailment by the unquestionably divine virtues just mentioned, it is unsurprising that Dolezal can find ringing endorsements of this doctrine in the Belgic Confession's first article, the first of the Church of England's Thirty-nine Articles, the Westminster Confession of Faith 2.1, the Savoy Declaration 2.1, the Second London Confession of Faith 2.1, and works by Irenaeus, Athanasius, Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, Augustine, Boethius, Anselm, Thomas Aquinas, William Perkins, George Swinnock, John Owen, Francis Turretin, Stephen Charnock, Wilhelmus à Brackel, and Herman Bavinck (pp. 39 n. 4, 50–58). The historic church's testimony on behalf of the doctrine of divine simplicity could hardly be more united.

In his third chapter, Dolezal asserts nonetheless, contemporary evangelicals frequently ignore, deny, or distort this doctrine (p. 60). Among the reasons evangelical opponents of the doctrine of divine simplicity offer for their skepticism, one is especially prominent. If God's attributes are identical with his essence and with each other, then, when one says, "God loves me," a believer in divine simplicity might appear to mean by the word "love" something profoundly different from what he means by "love" when he says, "I love God." Skeptics of divine simplicity fear that the putative gap between the meaning of words when used of God and those same words' meaning when used of creatures, imperils the possibility of human knowledge of God (p. 67). Dolezal could clarify matters considerably by appealing to the distinction between meaning and reference. Regrettably, he does not. Dolezal does comment helpfully, however, that in view of divine incomprehensibility, no one should expect human language to portray God's being with crystalline clarity (pp. 69–70).

In his fourth chapter, then, Dolezal argues for the doctrine of divine eternity. After explaining that by "eternity" he means transcendence of time altogether (pp. 82–83), he observes that the doctrines of divine infinity, immutability, and simplicity all entail it (pp. 87–89). Each implies that God cannot be subject to time. For time is a measure, and whatever is infinite is immeasurable. Time, moreover, is a measure precisely of change; it does not apply, therefore, to an immutable being.

God's simplicity, Dolezal explains furthermore, requires that he be entirely exempt from time's constraints. For the passage of time morcellates every creature's existence into innumerable instants. To creatures, the past is forever lost, the future is forever still to come, and the present is constantly slipping from their fin-

gers. The eternal God, by contrast, possesses his entire being at once (pp. 84, 88–89).

Many object to the doctrine of divine eternity, Dolezal notes however, because they consider it irreconcilable with Scripture's testimony to God's action in time (pp. 89–96). Dolezal responds to this contention by observing that, if God is simple, all of his acts are identical with his eternal, unchanging will. Unlike human beings, who after willing something, must bring it to pass by further action in time, God can accomplish whatever he wishes simply by willing that it be so. God's eternal will thus suffices to bring about events at particular times and places without further divine action. It is not God's acts, Dolezal concludes accordingly, but those acts' consequences, which appear in time (pp. 100–102).

In his fifth chapter, then, Dolezal defends the doctrine of divine simplicity against the charge that it conflicts with the doctrine of the Trinity. At the chapter's outset, Dolezal observes, the doctrine of divine simplicity constitutes an integral part of the historic doctrine of the Trinity (pp. 108–12). It is this aspect of the doctrine that makes it a mystery. For one can easily conceive of many ways in which three beings might either coalesce as parts of a larger whole or exist together as a group (p. 105). It is divine simplicity, Dolezal reminds his reader moreover, that explains why there can be only one God (pp. 106, 115–16).

Classical theists, Dolezal explains, typically seek to resolve the seeming conflict between God's simplicity and his subsistence in three distinct persons by identifying what distinguishes the persons from each other as their relations of opposition (pp. 119–20). These relations Dolezal identifies as paternity for the Father, filiation for the Son, and procession from the Father and Son for the Holy Spirit. These relations suffice to establish a real and inexorable distinction between the Trinitarian persons; no son, for instance, can be his own father (pp. 120–22). These relations do not disrupt God's simplicity, however, precisely because they are relations: i.e., references to something else rather than properties that inhere in their subjects (p. 121 n. 33).

Each divine person, Dolezal asserts, consists in the divine substance considered under the aspect of one of these relations. When one refers to the Father, therefore, one refers to God begetting. When one refers to the Son, one refers to God begotten, and when one refers to the Spirit, one refers to God proceeding. Because of the person-constituting relations of opposition, the Trinitarian persons can be really distinct from each other without cancelling God's simplicity (pp. 122–23).

Dolezal then reviews attempts by theistic mutualists to explain the Trinitarian persons' distinction in unity. He comments, for instance, on a work by two evangelical philosophers in which they explicitly deny that any one of the divine persons by himself is God (pp. 125–26). Rather, the philosophers in question hold that the three persons are mere parts of God so that, strictly speaking, only the three considered together constitute God. Presumably, these authors do not subscribe to the Athanasian Creed, which states, "The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God, and yet they are not three Gods, but one God."

Dolezal also criticizes a prominent evangelical theologian, who explicitly identifies the divine persons as “distinct centers of knowledge, will, love, and action,” who together compose “a particular social unit” (p. 126). Merely to state such views is to refute them. Dolezal concludes his work, then, by addressing theistic mutualists’ fear that classical theism’s God could not be as loving as the God of the Bible. Because God’s love and his hatred of sin are always necessarily as great as they can be, he explains, on the classical account, “God cannot be made more compassionate toward sinners or more opposed to sin than He is from all eternity” (p. 136).

Dolezal does not adequately respond, admittedly, to the charge that classical theism renders all language about God hopelessly equivocal. He also fails to address objections to the doctrine of divine simplicity that one might draw from the doctrine of Christ’s incarnation and from Scripture’s seeming ascription of distinct roles to the Father and Spirit in the economy of salvation. Dolezal deserves plaudits, nonetheless, for clearly enunciating and ably defending the truths of classical theism.

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The Christian Faith: A Creedal Account. By Hans Schwarz. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014, vi + 218 pp., \$21.99 paper.

In an age when many contemporary Christians are disconnected for a number of reasons from the historic Christian faith, fresh presentations of creedal Christianity are to be expected. In *The Christian Faith: A Creedal Account*, Hans Schwarz seeks to aid modern day believers towards greater familiarity with the “one faith” that is founded upon Christianity’s “one book,” the Holy Scriptures (p. v). Schwarz’s condensed presentation of “mere Christianity” comes from a long and established career as a Lutheran and systematic theologian with global theological interests, which is represented by works such as *True Faith in the True God: An Introduction to Luther’s Life and Thought* (rev. and exp. ed.; Fortress, 2015), a series of systematic studies (Eerdmans), and *Theology in a Global Context: The Last Two Hundred Years* (Eerdmans, 2005).

Schwarz begins with the admission that “Christianity is an amazingly divided religion,” yet he believes that because every Christian community shares the Bible as its “common book,” a creedal rendering of its faith is inevitable and needed (p. v). Schwarz is a member of the Lutheran Christian community and, therefore, his unique contribution amidst the current publications on classic Christianity is that his creedal account flows directly from his own confessional tradition. Thus, one will find in this volume an approach to the orthodox Christian faith influenced by the theological distinctives of the sixteenth century German Reformer, Martin Luther (p. vi).

In his “Introduction,” Schwarz describes five primary insights of Luther’s theology from which he wishes to glean: (1) “God is God,” or the classic phrase, “Let God be God”; (2) “God Does Not Reward Us”; (3) “God Creates Out of

Nothingness,” foremost pertaining to salvation, not creation; (4) “God Has Shown Us His Heart” in the person and work of Jesus; and (5) “Jesus Christ as the Ladder to God.” Upon establishing the characteristic influence of Luther upon his approach, Schwarz transitions to the body of the book, which is divided into four parts that ultimately unfold according to the triune contours of the creeds: (1) “Presuppositions for the Faith”; (2) “God the Creator”; (3) “Christ the Redeemer”; and (4) “The Holy Spirit as God’s Efficacious Power.” In “Part 1: Presuppositions for the Faith,” Schwarz covers the nature and task of theology (chap. 1) followed by the Christian faith’s total dependence upon the self-disclosure of God in revelation (chap. 2). His treatment of special revelation in this chapter is entirely concerned with Jesus Christ; identification of special revelation with Scripture is absent (pp. 28–31). That topic comes next (chap. 3), in which Schwarz makes the opening claim, “The Bible, or Holy Scripture, is normative for all of Christendom” (p. 33). Given that he is writing a creedal account of the Christian faith, Schwarz offers succinct thoughts on the formation of the NT canon, the origin of a two-Testament Christian Bible, and the relationship between Scripture and tradition, rather than a survey of other common tenets of evangelical bibliology such as inspiration, inerrancy, and sufficiency.

The Christian Faith’s “Part 2: God the Creator” consists of the doctrines of God (chap. 4), creation (chap. 5), humanity (chap. 6), and sin (chap. 7). As the reader will have already experienced in Part 1, Schwarz’s presentation of orthodox Christianity will come across as quite nuanced by his own theological concerns and commitments throughout each doctrine/chapter for the remainder of the book. In this way, some readers will not always recognize this version of the “ancient faith” due to the “new face” that many of the doctrines will seem to wear. For instance, in chapter five on “Creation,” while Schwarz affirms the classic doctrine *creatio ex nihilo*, he also enters into a speculative discussion about God’s dimensional space as a way of clarifying the Creator’s relationship to his creation for safeguarding against forms of pantheism (pp. 55–56).

“Part 3: Christ the Redeemer” contains two of the book’s longer chapters on “Jesus of Nazareth” (chap. 8) and “Jesus as the Christ” (chap. 9). This division of Christology reflects Schwarz’s involvement in the scholarly debates concerning the relationship between the historical Jesus and the Christ of faith. Chapter 8 begins on the note of describing the “Jesus” who is historically portrayed in the Gospels as a Jew with messianic associations preaching an eschatological message. Chapter 9 then starts with the clarifying words, “Though we must carefully distinguish Jesus of Nazareth from Jesus as the Christ, it is the Christian conviction that they are one and the same person” (p. 109). At this juncture, Schwarz returns to elaborating upon the eschatological implications of Jesus’s resurrection followed by other standard features of Christology like the early church councils on the doctrine of the incarnation and Christological heresies and atonement theories.

In “Part 4: The Holy Spirit as God’s Efficacious Power,” Schwarz covers the work of the Holy Spirit (chap. 10), church and kingdom (chap. 11), sacramental theology/the means of grace (chap. 12), and eschatology, framed as “The Christian Hope” (chap. 13). In these chapters, readers will continue to encounter a mixture

of traditional Christian theological terrain as well as distinct elements that reflect the interests of and influences upon the author. A prime example is chapter 11. Schwarz begins by briefly distinguishing the church from the kingdom, and then shows how in the book of Acts and during the first century, the church understood itself as a messianic, new covenant community that exists also in an “end-time epoch” (pp. 150–52). Schwarz transitions to “The Present Structure” of the church with special importance given to ecumenical concerns involving the invisible/visible church (pp. 152–57). The rest of the chapter discusses the Lutheran and Protestant ecclesial doctrine of the priesthood of all believers (pp. 157–62), an excursus on the “Unbridgeable Dissension in Understanding the Office?” between the Lutheran tradition and the Roman Catholic Church (pp. 162–64), a second excursus on Luther’s “The Two Reigns Theory” that considers the relationship between church and state/temporal government (pp. 168–71), and a closing excursus on “Luther and Music” that concludes with some of Schwarz’s thoughts on liturgy (pp. 173–75).

Schwarz’s creedal account is more than simply a re-presentation of core material for Christian orthodoxy in contrast to works like those of J. I. Packer and Thomas Oden’s *One Faith* (IVP, 2004) or Michael Horton’s *Core Christianity* (Zondervan, 2016). At times, *The Christian Faith* appears to have greater concern for making the “ancient faith” relevant and compelling for a contemporary audience in the twenty-first century. A common refrain throughout the book is epitomized in an early challenge from Schwarz that “it is necessary that we espouse our faith in a logically coherent manner without any contradictions” (p. 11). Shortly thereafter in chapter 1, Schwarz submits three essential functions of theology: critical, apologetic, and doxological (pp. 19–23). Theology’s critical service operates in the spirit of *semper reformanda*, and its doxological function is to glorify God in all that Christians do and believe (pp. 20–23). The apologetic function is summed up as explaining “to everyone who wants to know, in an intellectually convincing way, what we believe and why we believe it. It is of utmost importance to explain our faith in an understandable and convincing manner, because Christianity is often rejected out of ignorance or misinformation” (p. 21).

This apologetic function of theology to present creedal Christianity in a logical and intelligent manner captures well the tone and approach that many of the chapters take when they transition into scientific and philosophical discourse or contemporary theology to explain theological concepts or biblical teachings. Moreover, concerning theology’s critical function, Schwarz suggests that Christians “should ask how we can most effectively proclaim the gospel in word and deed under the changed conditions of the church and world” (p. 20). These kinds of statements provide the explanation for why Schwarz launches into many discussions that seem beyond the nature and scope of a creedal account of Christianity. These discussions include the classic proofs for God arguments (pp. 45–49), the use of dimensional understanding for locating God’s “space” (pp. 55–56), and the dialogical structure of humanity (pp. 69–72). In short, a more suitable subtitle for *The Christian Faith* might be *An Intelligible Account*, because Schwarz often operates in the realms of the critical and apologetic functions of theology.

Beyond the employment of these functions of theology, Schwarz's main aim is to deliver a creedal Christianity from within his own Lutheran confessional tradition. The major strength of his contribution comes through a retrieval of Luther's theology. The introduction that sets forth "Luther's Central Insights" for doing theology is beneficial on its own terms insofar as it properly orients the creature's relationship to the Creator both in terms of epistemic and redemptive access. Throughout the book, excursions on Luther provide helpful digressions into deeper explorations of the German Reformer's theology. These treatments include Luther's political theology in the context of ecclesiology (chap. 11) and the indulgence controversy, located amidst Schwarz's discussion on "Confession and Absolution" and the means of grace (chap. 12). Other places where Schwarz's incorporation of Luther's insights provide illuminating aid to Christian orthodoxy are Schwarz's use of Luther's doctrine of the hidden and revealed God to address theodicy (pp. 50–52) and special providence, and Luther's notion that miracles are not actual disruptions of natural laws because they are based upon human experiences of natural processes, whereas the Scriptures teach that because God is Creator of all things, nothing is impossible for him (pp. 62–61). Ultimately, the highest benefit of Schwarz's use of Luther is a strong Christological center to theology and approach to Scripture.

These strengths aside, many conservative evangelical readers will be unable to overlook certain theological commitments for either personal or classroom adoption of this book. For example, on multiple occasions Schwarz openly works from source criticism and assumes the Documentary Hypothesis to the OT (pp. 54, 66). On a different note, Schwarz appears to deny an actual intermediate state by entertaining a form of soul sleep due to his understanding of humanity's time-bound experience in contrast to God in eternity. At death, Schwarz teaches, "Regardless of when we go beyond this timeline, we appear on the 'other side' in 'the same moment' as all others. The transition from life to death leads immediately to the last judgment" (p. 208). Also, in the final chapter on "The Christian Hope," Schwarz seems to dismiss the reality of hell as a place of eternal punishment for the unredeemed, when he remarks, "But what about hell? Only in the world of fantasy is hell in the realm of the devil in which unfortunate people are continuously tortured. . . . Hell shows the dimensional separation of God from those who not accept God" (p. 212).

Yet, most of all, Schwarz's openness to inclusivism will likely be the issue that receives the strongest contention from a large swath of his evangelical audience. Specifically, his inclusivist ideas appear in the chapters on the doctrines of revelation (chap. 2), Christology (chap. 9), and eschatology (chap. 13). Some explicit examples: In his last thoughts on special revelation, Schwarz affirms that in addition to God's definitive revelation in Jesus Christ, "God has also made God's self known in other religions" (p. 31). Next, Schwarz addresses the fate of "those who have never heard" with an inclusivist hope: "But the Christian faith is not a doctrine concerning the destiny of other people. Since God has shown in Jesus Christ that God is holy and merciful, we may hope—though we do not know for sure—that those who have never completely experienced God's self-disclosure in Jesus

Christ will not be eternally separated from God” (p. 31). Similarly, Schwarz brings his last chapter (“The Christian Hope”) to an end on this note: “We need not be saviors in miniature form, as if the destiny of the world and of each individual human being depended on us. We can trust in the God who appears to us in Jesus Christ for the salvation of the world” (p. 212).

Even with these manifest problems, other questions for Schwarz remain such as the absence of any real treatment of soteriology, what is meant by the main thrust of his pneumatology encapsulated in the assertion that, “In the world everything occurs through the power of the Holy Spirit” (p. 144), and why no mention of Scripture is made in the chapter on “Revelation.” As much as readers will benefit from various aspects of this work—whether from Luther or from Schwarz’s own insights as a seasoned contemporary theologian with a global perspective—*The Christian Faith* will cause too many theological concerns for wide embrace in evangelical contexts.

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