

BOOK REVIEWS

The Holy Land for Christian Travelers: An Illustrated Guide to Israel. By John A. Beck. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2017, 256 pp., \$16.99 paper.

I took my first study tour to Israel in 1994, and since then have made twenty more. On my first visit, although I was an OT professor, I realized how little I understood about how the land of the Bible shapes the Bible's storyline. John A. "Jack" Beck shares my passion for the land and for introducing others to the richness it provides for our understanding of the biblical text. Beck has written several other related works (e.g. *Along the Road: How Jesus Used Geography to Tell God's Story* [Discovery House, 2018]; *Baker Book of Bible Charts, Maps, and Time Lines* [Baker, 2016]; *Discovery House Bible Atlas* [Discovery, 2015]) that provide further insights for students of Scripture and historical geography.

Beck begins his book with an introduction that describes his own discovery of Israel (pp. 13–15). In it, he provides readers basic tips for preparing for their own journey to the land. He then follows with a brief history of the land (pp. 17–23), in which he highlights both ANE events and biblical events. For example, when he describes the Early and Middle Bronze Ages (p. 17), he notes the collapse of urban centers and rise of larger walled cities—a general ANE feature—while also mentioning the appearance of Abraham and the growth of his family. Beck then follows with a summary of the land's geography and climate (pp. 25–30). Color charts describe Israel's geographic zones, agricultural year, seasons and culture, weather patterns, water, and rainfall.

In the next section, "Itineraries" (pp. 31–38), Beck provides possible itineraries for travelers who have various amounts of time to spend in the land. For those who have only three days, Beck suggests a 3-day itinerary of Jerusalem that features visits to both OT and NT sites. He then provides a 5-day itinerary of Jerusalem and Judea that includes exploration beyond Israel's capital to the south and southwest. Finally, he presents a 12-day plan that includes a good, basic overview of key sites and geographic features from north to south. As I surveyed Beck's suggested daily plans, I found them doable though sometimes a bit ambitious depending on the fitness level of the group traveling. A study tour to Israel will feature much walking, often on rugged terrain.

Six chapters provide the main shape of the book: Chapter 1, "Jerusalem: Walkable Sites in and Near the Old City"; chapter 2, "Jerusalem and Beyond: Drivable Sites Outside the Old City"; chapter 3, "Coastal Plain"; chapter 4, "Central Mountains South"; chapter 5, "Central Mountains Center"; and chapter 6, "Central Mountains North." In each chapter, the sites Beck recommends appear in alphabetical order. The author describes each site, providing both historical information and sometimes—as appropriate—biblical application. One example is when Beck describes Saint Peter Gallicantu, a site that commemorates Caiaphas's interrogation of Jesus and Peter's denials (pp. 72–73). He highlights the features of the site,

commenting on the stone steps on which Jesus would have walked after his arrest. He then reflects, “Imagine the thoughts that filled his mind as he faced the horrible close to his life that became the ultimate solution for sin in our own” (p. 73). Beck’s combining of historical detail with biblical application and reflection provides one of the strengths of the book.

The book concludes with a section of several full-color and well-illustrated maps (pp. 233–41), a Bible timeline that helps readers synchronize the writing of Bible books, key people and events of the ANE, and key people and events of the Bible (pp. 243–46), and an index of locations (pp. 247–52).

Readers who desire a deeply scholarly presentation on each of the biblical sites will be disappointed, but that is not the book’s purpose. Rather, Beck invites us on a journey to the land of the Bible in which we will read the land and see the text as we put land and text together. Beck also generally presents mainstream evangelical ideas and does not distract readers with questions over dating of particular Bible books or the dating of the exodus. (He opts for the early date.) The book contains no footnotes for those who may be seeking more documentation of Beck’s conclusions or desire more information on a particular site or topic. Nevertheless, it provides helpful foundational information for students of the Bible and well prepares the would-be traveler to Israel.

John Beck’s *Holy Land for Christian Travelers* is a helpful guide for professors who desire a better foundational understanding of the Bible’s relation to the land and for students who are anticipating their first study tour to Israel. I plan to recommend it and Beck’s other works to my students.

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An Introduction to the Scriptures of Israel: History and Theology. By Tzvi Novick. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018, ix + 203 pp., \$25.00 paper.

When one picks up an OT introduction, the expectation is that the book will begin with Genesis and end with Malachi (or Chronicles, if written according to the order of the Hebrew Bible). One hardly expects to begin an examination of the OT with Proverbs and Job, so Tzvi Novick has certainly distinguished his work from other OT introductions. In light of his stated methodology, even the apparent random order in which he examines the books of the OT seems a proper fit.

The opening chapter introduces the reader to Novick’s guiding methodology for much of the book by way of a portion of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s “mountaintop” speech in which he likened himself to Moses. The “universalizable” character of Scripture is what drives Novick’s examination of the OT, and he argues that even when the OT is speaking about Israel (the particular), it is also addressing the human condition as a whole (the universal).

To demonstrate the validity of his method, Novick offers a brief explanation of both traditional-canonical and historical-critical methods, arguing the two can coexist and are mutually reinforcing. In other words, the OT can be read both for

what it meant in its original context (the particular) and what it means for the reader within his/her tradition (the universal).

Given the nature of Novick's methodology, the choice to begin with Israel's wisdom collection seems appropriate, as the universal nature of Proverbs, in particular, is perhaps the easiest to demonstrate in the OT. Yet, Novick argues that the book of Job also might well be construed as more universalist in that it attributes to God authority over not only order but also chaos. The following chapter focuses on election in Israel and the seemingly chaotic nature in which it is presented. Particular attention is paid to the preference for Isaac over Ishmael and Jacob over Esau—the second over the first. While modern readers may not fully appreciate the “chaotic” nature of such occurrences, Novick contends that such chaos—a violation of the norm—is the only way to go beyond a universal relationship and understanding of God to a personal, particular relationship. Chapters 2 and 3 of this book serve to mark the boundaries of Israel's Scriptures from perhaps most universal (Proverbs, Job) to most particular as Novick concludes his third chapter with a discussion of Song of Songs followed by a brief introduction to source criticism. This introduction seems somewhat out of place as an “addendum” to the third chapter but it is clear Novick favors the historical-critical and tradition-canonical models.

The remainder of the book deals with various portions of the OT, though in seemingly random order, as noted previously. Rather than proceed book by book, Novick chooses at times to focus on individual stories; chapters 4 and 6 are dedicated to the Joseph narrative and the events at Sinai, respectively. What becomes clear within the first fifty pages is that Novick has no interest in reproducing a typical OT introduction; rather, he has written a particular introduction that traces a single theme (particularism vs. universalism) throughout the OT. Stories like the exaltation of Joseph, one of the youngest of Jacob's children, demonstrate the particularism of God's relationship with Joseph by breaking convention. Even the distinctive nature of Israel's law code—the concern for women and the less fortunate—reveal a deviation from ANE norms that belie the particularist nature of Israel's relationship with YHWH.

Still other stories reveal the universalist nature of Israel's Scriptures. The exodus event has often been universalized as God's offer of freedom and redemption to all, not just Israel. Novick argues that oracles against the nations, such as those contained in the book of Amos, are not a condemnation of the surrounding nations as enemies of Israel but rather a condemnation of their own moral failings. On the other hand, the offer of salvation God offered to the Assyrians through the prophet Jonah demonstrates that YHWH not only sits in judgment over the nations but also exercises compassion and love toward them as well.

In spite of the fact that the title of Novick's work is somewhat misleading—it is certainly not history and theology in the broad sense but rather a focus on a particular theological stream running throughout the OT—this book is an excellent resource for the student of OT. In a sense, Novick has demonstrated the “living” nature of the Hebrew Scriptures. They do not merely contain ancient stories for a

particular time, place, and people. Rather, the OT is “universalizable,” addressing concerns and principles applicable to and for all times, places, and peoples.

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A Hermeneutic of Wisdom: Recovering the Formative Agency of Scripture. By J. de Waal Dryden. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018, xxxiii + 292 pp., \$29.99.

The tools acquired at seminary do not always seem helpful for mining the raw mineral of the biblical text for the benefit of the church. What sensible exegetes do in biblical interpretation, whether for personal edification or preparation for the pulpit, is often at odds and at the very least in tension with the hermeneutical methods taught in academia. In ecclesial settings, Bible reading is for personal formation and the acquisition of formal education should lead congregants to expect accessible, practical, and transformative teaching from their pastors, but often the opposite is the reality. What is missing? J. de Waal Dryden’s new work *A Hermeneutic of Wisdom* challenges us to reevaluate our hermeneutical tools and proposes that recognizing the Bible as a wisdom text is the way to recover the formative agency of Scripture.

The main thesis is simple—the Bible should be understood as a wisdom text. By identifying the Bible as wisdom, Dryden means the Bible in all of its diversity has an “instructional intent” (p. 262) and thus a formative agenda. He presents a compelling presentation as to how we must hear the Bible as the Word of God given to foster wisdom. The Bible “reveals the truth of who God is not merely to teach us ‘theology’ but to inform our understanding and affections that we might orient ourselves toward him with a reverence that reflects both his glory and our dependence on that glory” (p. xxi). The Bible ought to shape us specifically in the areas of actions, reasons, and motivations (what he calls “right ARM”). The goal of this kind of formation is “a life marked by coherent desires, convictions, and action” (p. xxii).

The outline of his book is informed by the Parable of the Sower (Mark 4:1–20), which Dryden identifies as primarily about soils and how one hears (p. 35). In part 1, “Tilling the Soil,” Dryden discusses epistemology (chap. 1), metaphysics and ethics (chap. 2), and the relationship between law and gospel (chap. 3). In part 2, “Planting Seeds,” Dryden proposes a hermeneutic of wisdom specifically as it relates to the NT Gospels (chaps. 4–5) and epistles (chaps. 6–7). The work is rounded out with an appendix that situates Dryden’s understanding of wisdom in relation with OT wisdom literature. Dryden covers a wide range of topics and traverses many disciplines. He himself admits that in a transdisciplinary work as this his explanations are open to the liability of oversimplification (p. xxii), and any attempt in this review to overview all of them would be open to the same critique.

Dryden provides many expositions of specific biblical texts throughout his work and even devotes whole chapters to wisdom readings of specific texts (e.g. in his chapter on the epistles he covers Ephesians, Rom 6:1–14, Galatians, and 1

John), demonstrating the utility of his approach. In addition, Dryden provides studied discussions on the form of the text (he focuses on the Gospels and epistles). Dryden rightly situates these NT writings within generic expectations, recognizing that their very form encodes the intentions of the author. He identifies specific strategies in narratives and epistles that communicate their formative agenda and he provides many examples in his “practical” chapters that follow the “theory.” He also regularly applies the rubric of “right ARM” to explore how the text shapes readers. Dryden’s work in this way is quite practical and accessible, a clear guide for how one can read the Gospels and epistles for wisdom.

The most thought-provoking part of Dryden’s work is when he delves into epistemology, metaphysics, ethics and theology (chaps. 1–3). He argues that modernist and postmodernist epistemologies are both guilty of relating to the text as “sovereign subjects” standing in authority over the text, while a “wisdom compartment recognizes the authority of the text” (p. 17). To read for wisdom is to “be attentive to how the Bible, as a voice from outside our own idolatrous construals of reality, challenges and retunes our understanding and desires, and to consciously open ourselves to that process” (p. 21). Dryden also challenges the dichotomy between being and doing, identifying metaphysical presuppositions that lead to misleading or unhelpful dichotomies in biblical interpretation. In these chapters, Dryden tackles a wide range of issues and provides many helpful correctives, even if one may disagree with some of his arguments. Dryden intends to challenge long-held assumptions about biblical interpretation. It may be possible to summarize his views with his own words: “Modern epistemology severs the connection between the knower and the known. Modern metaphysics severs the connection between knowledge and the will” (p. 49). Dryden views a wisdom approach as properly relating the reader to the Bible, and as properly relating theology and ethics. Interpreting the Bible as wisdom, Dryden argues, is an important step that goes beyond many “modernist bifurcations of being/doing, meaning/significance, critical/confessional, fact/value, head/heart, indicative/imperative, and history/theology” (p. xviii).

Dryden’s thesis is self-evident to those in ministry and in the church, which has long believed that the Bible is given not merely for knowledge but for formation. However, this does not always translate into clear hermeneutical practice. Dryden brings clarity by providing utility to this claim, showing how the Bible as wisdom shapes our approach and method of interpretation. Interpreters who have been taught along the lines of a modern hermeneutical method (whether the more academic historical-critical approach or the evangelically conservative historical-grammatical approach) may object that they do seek to submit humbly to the text and be shaped by it. Dryden’s work is most provocative here, as he contends the methods themselves, insofar as they are negatively influenced by modernist or postmodernist foundations, even if used with such stated aims, ultimately undermine those aims.

Dryden’s work is compelling, well reasoned, and well informed. One major weakness is that he does not address the OT. His thesis is that the Bible as a whole is a wisdom text, yet his book focuses on the NT. Dryden is aware of this and

points readers to his appendix where he provides a “more cursory argument that extends this claim to the remainder of the canon” (p. 239). Yet if the central claim of his book is that the whole Bible should be read as a wisdom text, then it is insufficient to focus his arguments on the NT without giving due weight to how this claim should extend to the OT in the actual body of his work. Another weakness is that Dryden does not adequately situate his writing in relation to other hermeneutical works. A great deal of effort is given to critiquing other methods and their undergirding foundations. He criticizes traditional methodologies for excluding the intentionality of the text. So does he view his work as providing a rationale for abandoning them, or can traditional methods still be redeemed within a wisdom framework? Does he hope to supplement or supplant existing hermeneutical methods? Many more quibbles can be raised, especially since he engages with so many topics and texts, but these should not take away from the overall value of his work.

A Hermeneutic of Wisdom will help interpreters recognize the interconnectedness of being and doing, theology and ethics, and doctrine and practice. Dryden writes to help readers recover the formative agency of Scripture by reading the Bible with a hermeneutic of wisdom, and in this he succeeds.

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Interpreting the God-Breathed Word: How to Read and Study the Bible. By Robbie F. Castleman. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018, x + 132 pp. \$17.99.

There are any number of books on hermeneutics that are intended for the seminary student. There are not many books on hermeneutics, however, written for the layperson. It is a difficult task, because that audience may not read much. Further, what reading they do may be fiction or light non-fiction, read uncritically. The subtitle of this book is perhaps misleading, as it leads the reader to expect chapters on genres and literary techniques and their decipherment. An immediate plunge into the technical terminology of modern hermeneutics would alienate the prospective reader from the beginning. Robbie Castleman has wisely chosen another course. She has avoided most technical language, since she is aiming at a non-technical audience. Further, she has avoided the kind of step-by-step hermeneutics approach that some authors have taken.

The author asks the reader first to listen to the Word, and to listen attentively. She encourages the reader to read the passage aloud more than once, listening to the rhythm of the language. In a sense, though she does not use this language, she asks the reader to become a child again, listening to adults telling stories, for the God-breathed word is a wonderful story. She summarizes exegesis as “Slow Reading Done Well” (p. 19), then proceeds to show how it is done.

By focusing on hearing the Word, Castleman draws the reader’s attention to what she calls the three voices in Scripture. The first voice is “the historical reality of the event itself” (p. 43). The second voice is that of the scriptural authors. The third voice is the reader’s own “acting out the word of God that has been heard” (p.

79). Castleman is a good teacher. In each of the chapters she illustrates her point with several examples. She then assigns readers exercises by which they may apply what Castleman has demonstrated. Further, she directs readers away from a common problem of inductive Bible study: the text isolated from its larger biblical context. She devotes the concluding chapter to showing the reader how to read any given passage in its larger biblical-theological context.

I especially appreciate three things about this book. First, Castleman largely avoids technical terminology. Professionals in biblical interpretation can easily forget that not everyone knows the language of the guild. Second, she avoids the “how to” approach, preferring to demonstrate by example the principles she inculcates. Third, she makes clear that there is no easy way to interpreting the word of God, no shortcuts. Hearing the word of God rightly, slow reading done well, requires humility, diligence, hard work, and prayer.

I am probably not the best-qualified reviewer of this work. That would be a layperson who has studied this book and then studied the word of God in light of the principles set out there. However, I would not hesitate to recommend this book to someone in my church who is serious about wanting to learn how to read the word of God well. I would also recommend it to a beginning seminary student with a weak background. It is an excellent stepping stone to a more technical book on biblical hermeneutics.

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Where the Gods Are: Spatial Dimensions of Anthropomorphism in the Biblical World. By Mark S. Smith. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016, 248 pp., \$75.00.

In *Where the Gods Are: Spatial Dimensions of Anthropomorphism in the Biblical World*, Mark S. Smith applies his expertise in Ugaritic and OT literature to the issue of divine embodiment in relationship to space. In his introductory chapter, Smith remarks regarding the need for his study, “Despite the importance of deities, place in relation to deities has rarely received a broad treatment in scholarly discussion of divinity in the Bible” (p. 2). As opposed to a “general survey,” he conceives of his analysis as a “series of interlocking probes that address foundational notions of deities and space” (p. 5). Drawing on the work of scholars in a different disciplines (e.g. sociology and psychology), Smith provides a succinct and helpful introduction to the concept of anthropomorphism, noting, “The body served as a basic pattern recognition tool in organizing the world and for human intuitions and insights about various phenomena, including deities. Understood in human terms and yet also more than—and different from—humans, deities bear human features, including their bodies within human places and spaces” (p. 8). Smith concludes the introduction with a preview of the three constituent parts of the book.

The first chapter of Part 1 introduces the “Three Bodies of God” observed by Smith in the OT. Surveying Genesis 2–3; 18–19, and 32, Smith explores what he calls “God’s Natural ‘Human’ Body.” Smith contends that these texts combine to

form a picture of God as possessing a human body, with which he walks about, eats, drinks, and even wrestles with a man (i.e. Jacob). Smith surmises that these texts, all of which appear in Genesis, might be part of a literary progression, “moving from a natural coexistence of the human and the divine (the Garden of Eden), to an interpersonal visit of the divine with a human (the Sodom and Gomorrah story), to a problematic interaction between the human and the divine (Jacob wrestling)” (p. 18). The second divine body observed by Smith is a “Supernatural ‘Liturgical’ Body,” seen in Exodus and Isaiah. This body is superhuman in scale and non-physical. Smith contends that such a body is exhibited in Exod 24:1–11; 33–34; and Isaiah 6. He further argues that Solomon’s temple (1 Kgs 6:23–28), which provides the setting of Isaiah 6, reflects the superhuman scale of its occupant in its symbolism (e.g. the ten-cubit cherubim, which Smith regards as symbolizing YHWH’s throne). Finally, “God’s Cosmic ‘Mystical’ Body” is Smith’s third category of divine embodiment. Observed in the later prophets, this body is regarded as cosmic in scale, but “it is not manifest on the earthly level” (p. 21). Rather, it is associated with heaven. While Smith surveys a variety of texts that support this third category (e.g. Isa 40:12; 66:1; Ps 113:6; Dan 7:9–10), he regards Ezekiel 1 as the “great exemplar” (p. 21).

Smith goes on to offer religious-historical conclusions about his proposed three bodies. While he avoids seeing a clear-cut linear development from the first body to the third, he contends that the third body postdates the first two bodies, arising during the post-exilic period in accordance with a monotheistic outlook. Chapter 2, “Like Deities, Like Temples (Like People),” surveys the ways in which ANE temples (particularly West Semitic) function in connection with his second category of divine embodiment. Drawing heavily on Ugaritic and biblical texts, Smith contends that temples (1) provide an intersection between humans and deities; (2) tell stories about deities (e.g. divine victory over the sea); (3) participate in the power, eternity, and holiness of the deity; and (4) analogize the superhuman scale of the deity.

Part 2 of Smith’s work turns to the relationship between anthropomorphism and theriomorphism in cultic space. Chapter 3 provides an illustrative survey of the ways in which these concepts are employed in the Ugarit corpus and the OT, examining “direct predications” about humans and the divine, as well as “indirect predications” that compare humans and deities. After introducing the concepts of theriomorphism (deities in animal form) and physiomorphism (deities possessing natural properties), Smith illustrates how the “various divine forms offer a kaleidoscopic view of the deity” (p. 57). As opposed to competing expressions, Smith contends that “the theriomorphic and anthropomorphic together serve as two ways for looking at a deity at the same time” (p. 57), before turning to the calf images at Dan and Bethel (chap. 4), which he regards as “the best-known case of theriomorphism in biblical cult” (p. 57). Smith leads the reader through a complex and highly detailed discussion of the textual and iconographic evidence relevant to these two cult sites, contending that the “textual witnesses point to both singular and plural images at Bethel” (p. 64). Smith’s discussion concerning Dan and Bethel attempts to

illustrate how a variety of different cultic forms functioned to “evoke a multifaceted cultic reality that combined the anthropomorphic with the theriomorphic” (p. 68).

Part 3 explores the relationship between deities and their city sites. In chapter 5, Smith provides a helpful summary of four different types of linguistic constructions of a divine name in relationship to a geographical name (e.g. DN of GN), largely found in West Semitic material. After introducing the reader to Benjamin D. Sommer’s notion of “fragmentation” (i.e. one deity being manifested in two places simultaneously) and Spencer L. Allen’s “splintering” view (i.e. multiple autonomous versions of a deity), through surveying a variety of different Ugaritic sources, Smith demonstrates the prominence of Baal Sapan in comparison to Baal of Ugarit. He then explores the relationship between YHWH and various locals (e.g. Teman, Samaria, and Hebron). Smith concludes chapter 5 by positing that the Song of Songs potentially celebrates “the political-religious centrality of Jerusalem, with the deity as king and the city as spouse” (p. 98). Chapter 6 explores the ways in which city space in the ANE symbolically communicated its relationship to the divine. As Smith remarks, “Like temples, cities were stages for the performance of divine power and presence. In a sense, cities were temples writ large” (p. 103). Smith also explores how cities commonly functioned as the female counterpart of a deity, before concluding his work with an Epilogue, which largely summarizes his findings in each chapter.

Smith brings a wealth of expertise to bear on the subject and draws upon an impressively wide range of relevant scholarly discussions. Evangelical readers will generally observe, however, a significant disparity between their own approach to the OT and the present work. This is particularly seen in Smith’s methodology, which proceeds from a thoroughly historical-critical framework and the relatively high degree of continuity with which Smith treats Ugaritic and Hebrew texts. As regards Smith’s three categories of divine embodiment in the OT, I offer the following reservations. First, in the light of the clear sanctuary parallels observed in Genesis 2–3 and the ambiguity of the text concerning a scaled body, would Genesis 2–3 not better fit into the second category proposed by Smith? Second, while Smith rightly acknowledges the ambiguity of Exodus 24 as it relates to a scaled body, Exodus 33–34 is perhaps equally ambiguous. The main evidence Smith cites of a scaled body in Exodus 33–34 is YHWH’s offer to cover Moses with his hand (Exod 33:22), but such evidence is inconclusive at best. The laconic and mysterious nature with which Moses’s close encounter with YHWH is presented in this text should caution against drawing concrete conclusions from the anthropomorphic imagery used. Third, although Smith’s third category is regarded as being associated with the sky, given that temples in the ANE were commonly regarded as a miniature of the cosmos and the nexus between heaven and earth, this distinction relating to categories 2–3 seems somewhat arbitrary. In addition, the Sinai pericope indicates that YHWH descended (*yarād*) onto the mountain (Exod 19:18). The three categories outlined by Smith are perhaps not as clear-cut as they might initially appear. In turn, using these categories as a basis for positing developments in Israel’s religious history (e.g. pp. 24–30) is all the more speculative.

The above reservations aside, learned readers of all stripes will greatly benefit from Smith's well-established expertise and thoughtful reflection of the relationship between ANE deities to their respective spaces.

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Friendship in the Hebrew Bible. By Saul M. Olyan. The Yale Anchor Bible Reference Library. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2017, xiii + 191 pp., \$50.00.

In this short volume (endnotes and indices comprise a third of the book), Saul M. Olyan explores a delightful topic—friendship. Although several monographs cover friendship in the NT or in the Greco-Roman world, no previous monographs address the topic in the Hebrew Bible. Olyan seeks to remedy this lacuna by reviewing the vocabulary, idioms, and texts of all literary genres that relate to friendship in the Hebrew Bible.

The introduction describes Olyan's approach. He begins with contemporary questions about friendship but tries to let the Hebrew Bible speak for itself. His approach is largely synchronic, though Ben Sira provides a diachronic point of reference. Noting several terms associated with friendship, Olyan remarks that friendship in the Hebrew Bible is a voluntary relationship in which friends love and know each other and share mutual goodwill. However, ambiguity in the terminology exists because several friendship-related terms can mean other things as well. They can also be associated with covenant relationships, which are not always friendships. David and Jonathan, the best example of male friendship in the Hebrew Bible, is also a covenant relationship.

Chapter 1 begins by comparing and contrasting friendship and kinship. In the Bible and other West Asian texts, family relationships are considered the closest relationships. Kin are expected to love each other, be loyal, respect generational hierarchy, and play certain ritual roles such as redeeming, burying, mourning, and maintaining the family tomb. At times biblical texts compare friends to kin, such as Prov 18:24, which describes a friend who is closer than a brother. Whereas in modern western culture, friendship is the paradigmatic relationship (such as when one identifies a relative as one's closest friend), in the Bible, kinship is the paradigm for friendship. Both friends and kin who are disloyal are subject to censure. Likewise, both kin and friends can be a source of help, should be loyal in hard times, and love each other. Friends are exempt from the familial duties of being a redeemer or burying the dead, though friends *are* expected to comfort friends who mourn. Finally, biblical texts describe gradations in friendship, not unlike those in Aristotle.

Chapter 2 addresses the issue of failed friendship—a common theme in the Bible and in other West Asian texts. Friendships fail when a friend stands “at a distance” in times of trouble or repays evil for good (both idioms of rejection), deceives, betrays, or otherwise acts as an adversary. At times God is described as a cause of failed friendships (e.g. Ps 88:9, 19). After reviewing these causes of failure in friendship, Olyan notes that friendships may be terminated, but familial ties are

not generally subject to termination. When such termination happens, biblical authors and characters may call others to shame or curse the unfaithful friend or relative. Such a state is evidence of degeneration in society (Mic 7:5–6). Often the psalmist laments the enmity of friends in order to move God to act.

Chapter 3 examines friendship in several key biblical narratives. Olyan argues that Ruth's ongoing association with Naomi after the death of their husband is a voluntary matter, thus within the realm of friendship rather than a family relationship. Although he notes that Ruth continues to be called Naomi's daughter-in-law, he may make too much of the voluntary nature of their relationship. It is voluntary to an extent (as Boaz's praise of Ruth bears witness), but the family relationship remains essential to Ruth being able to bear offspring for Elimelech's family. Olyan likewise explores Jonathan and David's relationship, noting that some texts describe their relationship in the terms of friendship but others in terms of covenant. This may be a false dilemma, though his discussion is nuanced and worth reading carefully. I am unconvinced by Olyan's suggestion that 2 Sam 1:26 suggests a homoerotic relationship between them. Olyan also explores Job and his comforters, Jephthah's daughter and her companions, and Amnon and Jonadab. One major conclusion of this chapter is that reciprocity is a feature of biblical friendships.

Chapter 4 examines Ben Sira as a book that continues and modifies earlier biblical presentations of friendship. Ben Sira affirms the same expectations of friends, such as loyalty or reciprocity, but adds that friends give guidance and can be reconciled. Olyan also explores several ideas that show Hellenistic influence, such as the idea of the fighting friend.

Olyan's treatment, though brief, is detailed and sensitive. He struggles with the relationship between friendships and covenant relationships. Lacking sufficient data, he cannot say whether covenants between friends were common, but I suspect covenant is more important to friendship than westerners usually assume.

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1–2 Samuel. By Paul S. Evans. The Story of God Bible Commentary. Grand Rapids; Zondervan, 2018, 560 pp., \$44.99.

At first glance, Paul Evans's commentary seems to be set up like most commentaries, with an introductory section and then a systematic treatment of the text in which comments are made in relation to the original meaning and application of the text for today. There are some differences though. The aim of this commentary series is "to help people, particularly clergy but also laypeople, read the Bible with understanding not only to its ancient meaning but also of its continuing significance for us today in the twenty-first century" (p. 1). In order to accomplish this, the technical evaluation is kept to a minimum, not that the author does not deal with this. Rather, he is carefully selecting what he will list as important, and footnotes are kept to a minimum.

The presentation of the commentary is set up under different headings. The first heading is labeled “Listen to the Story,” in which the text of the Bible is listed in a different shade to be clearly distinguishable from the rest of the commentary. Evans bases his commentary on the NIV (2011). After each biblical text segment, he provides pertinent historical background information related either to similar literary stories, customs, or cultural practices from the ANE. The comments here are insightful and very helpful.

The second heading is labeled “Explain the Story.” In this section, Evans places the story in light of the overall gospel story of the Bible. Lots of great links are made to highlight the grand design of Scripture.

The third heading in the commentary section of each pericope is labeled “Live the Story.” In this section, the writer gives some clear reflection about how the text should impact us today.

Reading the commentary left me with a number of questions. The first one relates to a position Evans takes in relation to the topic of historiography (pp. 23–24). He states that the writer of Samuel used the same techniques as those of ancient Greek historians and as such the speeches in the book were mostly the creative works of the historian. Since the book was written centuries after some of these events, the author invented much of the wording. As a caveat, he states that this does not mean that the speeches are historically misleading, but the writer of Samuel invented them to present a narrative of the past. I understand that is a very popular position of a good number of scholars, I just would have expected a little bit more interaction and discussion, how this process relates the truthfulness of the Scriptures, and why in his commentary Evans often argues strongly for certain historical reconstructions that are partially based on invented dialogue.

A second question arose in the author’s theological message section, where he deals with the theme of “the anointed one/Messiah” (pp. 32–33). He states that “the origins of the hope for an anointed one who would save Israel begin in Samuel.” While it is correct that the idea of the anointed king, who would save Israel starts in Samuel, other texts in the Pentateuch do seem to indicate a ruler who would be leading his people, or the references of the anointed priest also prefigure in some way, the Messiah who is to come.

A third quibble I have is with the writer’s statement that the fall of the temple from Jesus’ day signaled the end of the old covenant and the beginning of the new (p. 56). The NT states clearly that the death, burial, and resurrection is the inauguration of the new covenant, some 40 years earlier than the destruction of the second temple. On the same page, I think it is an overstatement that Samuel prophesied the end of the priestly dynasty rather than the end of a particular priestly dynasty, namely the dynasty of Eli.

A fourth quibble I have is with Evans’s treatment of 1 Sam 15:29 (God does not change his mind) in relation to the statement in 1 Sam 15:11 (pp. 166–67). The author contends that in the Scriptures, God and the narrator are always truthful, and so here, Samuel must be incorrect in his statement. But he does not consider the fact that Samuel is quoting Num 23:19. Thus, a deeper discussion is required here as to the harmonization of these different statements.

A fifth quibble is the statement on page 203 that with the term “Immanuel,” the Bible indicates that the Son of David is on God’s side. I think one could easily argue also that the term can indicate that with Jesus, as the Son of God, he demonstrates he is with us. By coming in the flesh, God is not only on our side but also with us: “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

These quibbles aside, I thoroughly enjoyed reading the commentary, and would recommend it to any pastor. If all the other commentaries in this set will be as engaging and enriching as this one, the church is in for a real treat.

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An Introduction to Israel’s Wisdom Traditions. By John L. McLaughlin. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018, 230 pp., \$25.00 paper.

McLaughlin begins his discussion of wisdom by recognizing that sages and magi were not peculiar to Israel, but were found throughout the ancient Near East. While wisdom influence pervades much of the Hebrew Bible, the author defines the books that will undergo detailed examination as Proverbs, Job, Qoheleth, Ben Sira, and the Wisdom of Solomon. The book then goes to specific instances of wisdom found in the books mentioned. This review will cover only the canonical material treated in McLaughlin’s book.

In a quick overview of Job, McLaughlin spends a lot of ink analyzing where each component had its origin. My understanding of Job depends on plenary inspiration: interpreting Scripture as a whole, as it was canonized. It is interesting to note that Job 1–3 provides an insight into what appears as evil on the earth and that Job 4–27 is an ancient poem of possible non-Israelite origins. I protest, however, that it was not the Edomite poem but the whole book that was canonized and that it is saying something quite different in the whole than what it says in part. It is our task, not to itemize the pieces, but to try to follow the thought of the one who put it together, that is, the final redactor. McLaughlin dismisses Elihu’s contribution as a later addition due to his “more advanced” view of suffering as a learning process. I cannot understand Job 1–3 and 4–27 apart from the Elihu sections (32–37) and the theophany (38–41). Smith is correct, however, when he concludes the message of Job is fundamentally a refutation of the doctrine of retribution.

McLaughlin correctly interprets Qoheleth as determined by the two bookends that form an *inclusio* (Eccl 1:2; 12:8). *Hebel* is defined by the words that follow: “a pursuit of the wind” (1:14, 17; etc.), something transitory. When found in the phrase *hebel hahebalim* a superlative is indicated. While I prefer the term “ephemeral” to “transitory,” I think McLaughlin is saying much the same thing. In summary, Qoheleth says all things acquired in this life are ephemeral (*hebel*), but remembering God while one is young is not.

Finally, in Chapter 9, McLaughlin examines the theology of wisdom. Due to limitations of space, it is this chapter that will constitute the emphasis for this re-

view. Despite such references as Prov 1:7, 29; 2:5; 8:13; 9:10; 10:27; 14:26, 27; 15:16, 33; 16:6; 19:23; 22:4; 23:17; and 31:30, the author can state that the references to the deity in Proverbs are found in just over 10% of the book and thus concludes, "There is little explicitly 'religious' about most of the content of Proverbs." Instead, I find Robert Gordis's treatment more convincing when he suggests a dual approach for Israel's wisdom, some coming from common sense observations such as Prov 6:6 that suggests that the road to wisdom implies that true wisdom resides in hard work (WBC). Another branch comes from a setting that ties religious piety to genuine reverence (*Kobeletb: the Man and His World: a Study of Ecclesiastes* [New York: Schocken, 1968]). See not only the verses cited above but the interplay between personified wisdom (Proverbs 1–9) and its antithesis, folly (Prov 7:4–27), as examples. It seems to me there is a strong suggestion that true piety is both reverent as well as moral. McLaughlin is quite aware of the interplay between wisdom and folly, but makes the strange but common error of assuming that a goddess, presumably a Canaanite one, lies behind the imagery, rather than simple personification based on the feminine gender of the noun *hokmâ* (חֵכְמָה). Instead, he considers the Egyptian goddess Maat, the Canaanite Asherah, or some unnamed Israelite goddess is intended. This is not to deny the influence by the surrounding cultures on the *Zeitgeist*, but rather to argue that cultural stimulation does not equate to emulation or assimilation.

McLaughlin is correct, however, in tying Israelite wisdom to a theology of creation (Prov 3:19). He is also correct in rejecting a common interpretation of the verb *qnh* (קָנָה) in Prov 8:22. Instead, the context shows that wisdom guided the LORD when he "fixed securely the fountains of the deep, when he gave the sea its boundary so the waters would not overstep his command, and when he marked out the foundations of the earth" (Prov 8:29).

The second element McLaughlin sees in Israelite wisdom is order. The cosmic struggle of the LORD to bring order out of chaos, light out of darkness, is seen in many passages, from the Creation Hymn (Gen 1:1–2:4) to Eccl 3:11 where in God has made everything "beautiful in its time."

A final aspect of wisdom theology McLaughlin has presented as "A Complement and Challenge to Salvation History." It challenges salvation history as a central organizing motif for OT theology by its absence, and it complements salvation history by showing many of the aspects of practical living (e.g. hard work, thrift) as well as some of the inner workings of the kingdom of God. Salvation history can only show "what the Lord has done for me," whereas wisdom can show how and why it was done (e.g. Job 1–3).

In conclusion, McLaughlin's book is a curious mixture of the general and the specific. Perhaps it would be appropriate as an introductory text for a mature student in a graduate program or a seminary. But as an evangelical, I find the author's emphasis on critical method excessive for beginners or undergraduate students.

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Psalms, Volume 2. By W. Dennis Tucker Jr. and Jamie A. Grant. The NIV Application Commentary. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018, 1045 pp., \$64.99.

The NIV Application Commentary (NIVAC) series remains true to its name and achieves its goal of helping bring the message of the ancient biblical text into the modern world. Each commentary in the series accomplishes its goal by discovering the original meaning, bridging the contexts of the ancient and modern world, and making contemporary applications of the biblical text under consideration. In keeping with the purpose of the NIVAC series, the present volume treats Psalms 73–150 in exegetical fashion by discussing the original meaning, bridging contexts, and making contemporary application.

Psalms, Volume 2 begins with Psalm 73 and covers Books 3–5 of the Psalter (Pss 73–150). Tucker and Grant address each psalm in a substantial exegetical and systematic manner. The authors demonstrate the process of deriving the original meaning of each psalm by discussing pertinent matters of Hebrew grammar, poetry, and style. They also provide a strophe-by-strophe analysis of each psalm. The analyses consider key Hebrew terms and concepts, distinct features of Hebrew poetry, and significant geographical references. In bridging contexts, the authors consistently consider key biblical theological themes. Whenever a particular psalm is cited in the NT, the authors do a nice job explaining the NT use of that psalm. The authors likewise consistently offer timely applications of the theological principles derived from the psalm.

As stated above, the authors exegete each psalm strophe by strophe. Their explication of Psalm 73 sets the stage for how they exegete each psalm moving forward. The exegesis of Psalm 76 provides a pertinent example of how the commentary points out various nuances of Hebrew poetry such as wordplay (p. 113) and symmetry (p. 114). For example, the authors point out the poetic symmetry in Ps 76:8 (MT v. 9) where the first phrase begins with מְשָׁמִים (from heaven) and the second line begins with אֶרֶץ (earth), thereby balancing the declaration with beautiful symmetry (p. 114). In addition to lexemic wordplay, the authors call attention to subtle phonetic wordplay. Furthermore, the authors do not shy away from difficult verses (e.g. 76:10; 77:10). Commenting on difficult verses in the Hebrew text, the authors state that the translation “must take its cue from the context and natural flow of the poem itself” (p. 127). The authors consider the various genre that are incorporated into the psalms, including wisdom (e.g. Ps. 78), imprecatory (e.g. Psalm 109), lament (e.g. Psalm 79), thanksgiving (e.g. Psalms 116, 118), and praise (e.g. Psalms 117, 135). In exegeting each psalm, the authors give careful attention to significant Hebrew terms such as *shub* in Ps 80:3 and *hesed* in Psalm 89. Careful attention is given to significant biblical-theological themes such as the exodus motif (Ps 80:1–18). The authors demonstrate the importance of geographical references and historical contexts through their exegesis of various Psalms (e.g. p. 201).

Perhaps the most challenging task of biblical exegesis is bridging the gap between the ancient world and the twenty-first century. The NIVAC series in general and the present volume in particular do an extraordinary job in bridging the situational divide. The treatment of the temple and Holy Spirit in Psalm 74 serves as an

example of how the authors of the present volume bridge the situational contexts. As emphasized in the commentary on Psalm 75, it is crucial to read the Psalms within the canonical context (e.g. Psalms 97, 105, 106). Along this line, tracking the use of the Psalms in the NT helps build the bridge across the contextual gap. Recognizing culture-bound metaphors is another important element in bridging contexts (Psalm 106).

Several significant features of *Psalms, Volume 2* stand out. First, the authors consistently demonstrate the continuity between the Psalms. Examples include noting the literary transition from 82:8 to 83:1 (pp. 229–30); pointing out that Psalm 86 is reminiscent of Davidic psalms in Books 1 and 2 (p. 276); noting the comparisons between Psalms 92 and 73 (p. 359); and detailing how Psalms 105 and 106 provide a paired message (p. 512) with Psalm 106 “flip[ping] the message of Psalm 105 on its head” (p. 529). Furthermore, the authors detail how Psalm 107 is a “response to the petition in Psalm 106” (p. 550). They demonstrate how Psalms 111 and 112 mirror each other in form, noting distinct feature and unique Hebrew style that does not come across in English. Programmatically, it is noteworthy that Ps 93:1a—“*Yahweh malak*”—summarizes the key theme of Book 4, which is in turn the key to understanding the entire Psalter (p. 373). These are merely a few examples pulled from *Psalms, Volume 2* that demonstrate the artistry and intentionality with which the Psalter was formed.

Second, the authors consistently point out unique characteristics of grammar, poetry, and style within Books 3–5 of the Psalter. For example, regarding grammatical features of the Hebrew text of Ps 108:6, the authors point out significant grammatical details that English does not convey (p. 569). Furthermore, the ancient Hebrew poems contain unique poetical features such as subtle phonetic wordplay. For example, in Ps 107:11, the Hebrew poem has *himru* (rebelled) followed immediately by *'imre* (words) of God (p. 555). Thus, when reading the Hebrew text, one hears *kî himarû 'imârê 'el* in the first line of verse 11. Sadly, English translations lose this distinct feature of Hebrew poetry. The Psalter makes extensive use of inclusio (Psalm 113), alphabetic acrostic (Psalm 119), and anadiplosis (Psalm 120). Tucker and Grant carefully detail the unique literary characteristics of Books 3–5.

Third, the authors consistently call attention to significant Hebrew terms. For example, they point out that Ps 83:1 includes three synonyms—*damah*, *harash*, and *shaqot*—to imply “voicelessness” rather than “inactivity” (p. 233). The authors provide several detailed discussions about the concept of *hesed* since it is so prevalent in the Psalter and in the OT as a whole (e.g. pp. 263, 315, 318, 551–52). They explain difficult Hebrew terminology such as the elusive phrase in Psalm 84:5b (p. 249). They give detailed attention to rich Hebrew metaphors that English translations cannot convey. For example, commenting on Ps 85:2, the authors point out “the language of the forgiveness of sins in Hebrew is rooted in the idea of God’s ‘lifting off’ or ‘carrying away’ the sins of his people (*nasa'ta 'awon 'ammeka*)” (p. 261).

Fourth, the authors treat difficult subjects in a substantial manner throughout the commentary. For example, they provide a significant treatment of imprecatory psalms such as Psalm 109 (pp. 586–88), discussing the relevance of imprecation for

NT Christians. The section on Psalm 110 and Jesus (pp. 595–96) provides the authors an opportune time to discuss the divergent interpretive approaches regarding the use of the OT in the NT (p. 596). The discussion is hermeneutically relevant and challenging.

Finally, the commentators consistently offer timely applications of the biblical psalms. For example, the authors point out how Psalm 77 epitomizes the power of remembrance and the life of faith (p. 122). A recurring salient feature of the contemporary significance of the Psalms is related to prayer (e.g. Psalm 83) and worship. The discussion regarding practical atheism in connection to Psalm 86 is particularly insightful (p. 286). The authors engage in a pertinent discussion regarding Psalm 96 and the concept of mission (pp. 411–12), stating, “Psalm 96 introduces the element of invitation to the nations to join the worshipping community of faith” (p. 421). In relation to Psalm 104, the authors engage the reader in a timely discussion regarding the “creational worldview” (pp. 508–9), a perennial hot topic.

Some treatments of particular psalm texts in the NT are insufficient. For example, Ps 82:6 is quoted by Jesus in John 10:34–38 (pp. 225–26). The explanation on p. 225 is inadequate. Jesus’s use of sarcasm is a significant factor in his response to the Pharisees in the John passage; here Craig Keener’s commentary on John 10:34–36 is especially helpful. Also in relation to Psalm 82 in the NT, the authors do not consider whether the theme of social justice is picked up in James—a theme quite significant in that letter (pp. 225–26).

In regard to Psalm 95 in the NT, the authors state that Psalm 95 is “used powerfully in Hebrews 3:1–4:13 as part of the author’s rhetorical challenges to the first-generation Christians to remain faithful to Christ” (p. 408). While agreeing with the overall import of the statement, I would offer a correction: the recipients of the letter to the Hebrews seem to be second- or possibly third-generation Christians (Heb 2:3).

From a pastor-teacher perspective, *Psalms, Volume 2* is an indispensable resource for vocational ministers and lay persons alike. It is obvious the authors have a firm grasp of the Hebrew Scriptures. They offer a substantial exegetical treatment of each Psalm, effectively bridge the contextual gap, and offer timely applications of the theological principles. *Psalms, Volume 2* should prove to be an invaluable resource for anyone who desires to dive deeply into the Psalter.

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Psalm 101–150. By Jason Byassee. Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2018, 288 pp., \$32.99.

“Each commentary . . . is designed to serve the church and to demonstrate the continuing intellectual and practical viability of theological interpretation of the Bible” quips the editor’s blurb on the back cover of this volume. With that charge in mind, Jason Byassee, professor of homiletics and biblical interpretation, pens this volume.

In this volume, Byassee clearly indicates his goal for the reader—to discover Christ (p. xxi). He contends for this approach, distinct from traditional interpretive methods, by referencing Jesus' claim in Luke 24:44. Byassee ponders, "What if ... *Jesus is actually teaching us how to read [the Psalter]?*" (p. xxii). However, his approach is not one-dimensional. In tension with his Christocentric approach, Byassee also hopes that "the church can read this commentary and become more faithful in its love for Israel ... the planet and most importantly ... God" (p. xxiii). In humility, Byassee begins this volume on Psalm 101–150 (minus 119) and his conversation between the text and historical interpreters such as Augustine, Spurgeon, and others.

Throughout the commentary, Byassee works to apply his interpretive method. In the psalms alluded to or quoted by NT authors, he rightly uses the NT interpretation or application as "mini-commentaries" (p. 77). This feature of Byassee's work only increases its value for the Christian preacher. However, Byassee's approach creates difficulty for him, particularly in the Psalms of Ascent (Psalms 120–134). While Byassee tries to stay true to his "Christologically maximalist" interpretive method, shadows of Gunkel overtake Byassee's goal. For example, in commenting on Psalm 121, he writes, "The psalmist is heading out on a journey," and proceeds to engage in conversation with Augustine and others on pilgrimage in life. Ultimately, he concludes his commentary on this psalm, "God has filled the world with signs of his incarnation, and filled scriptures with hope, and filled the life of discipleship with blazes on every trail, light by night and by day, and companions on the way. When we lift up our eyes, we are never left without guidance or hope" (p. 135). This is typical for Byassee in this section.

Nevertheless, Byassee's treatment of Psalm 139 exemplifies the strengths of his writing. As he works through the text, he constantly interacts with writes of church history. As he discusses the issues, he fairly represents opposing positions and even chides some within his own tradition. And as he concludes, he rightly points the passage to Christ.

Perhaps Byassee's comments on Psalm 146–150 shine as the jewel of his work. Throughout these chapters, he weaves rich theological conversations such as theology proper, anthropology, and ontology with practical notions of praise and holiness. Moreover, he does so with ease and clarity anyone could understand. Consider this excerpt from Byassee's writing on Psalm 147: "Psalm 147 is theological in the proper sense ... [God is characterized] as transcendentally and unimaginably powerful. God's 'wisdom has no number' ... [yet] God raises up the broken-hearted into holiness. In other words, God's perfection is not distant and remote. It is unbearably intimate" (pp. 233–34). This exemplifies Byassee's smooth style of noting complex theological concepts while putting them in understandable and personal terms.

Beyond content, the volume's structure lacked clarity. While it neatly titled each chapter of the Psalter in a contained unit, it presented no other markers to assist the reader in following the work while studying the text. Homileticians studying the work would be aided by some simple sub-headings or even bolding key words or concepts.

Since Byassee interacts little with the Hebrew text and focuses more on theological concepts (by design), this work should be utilized as a secondary guide for those studying Psalm 101–150. Notwithstanding, what Byassee’s work lacks in exegesis and critical scholarship, it makes up for in practical, pastoral, and theological scholarship. In light of this, this volume would best serve as a reference work for ministers engaged in pastoral ministry.

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Habakkuk. By Heath A. Thomas. The Two Horizons OT Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018, xiv + 234 pp., \$25.00.

In *Habakkuk*, author Heath Thomas, Dean of the College of Theology and Ministry, Associate Vice President for Church Relations, and Professor of OT at Oklahoma Baptist University, presents a thoughtful and insightful treatment of a challenging OT book. This commentary on Habakkuk is a recent addition to Eerdmans’s Two Horizons OT Commentary series edited by Gordon McConville and Craig Bartholomew. The Two Horizons OT Commentary series seeks to “bridge the gap between biblical studies and systematic theology” and aims to help “pastors, teachers, and students engage in deliberately theological interpretation of Scripture” (back cover). Moreover, Thomas seeks to “help readers of Habakkuk hear God’s address” (p. 4) and focuses on reading for transformation within the Christian tradition (pp. 6–8). These aims are addressed with skill and compassion in this commentary.

Thomas bases the organization of his commentary on the “two horizons” of the commentary series. Part I of the book (“Introduction and Commentary”) provides theological exegesis, while Part II (“Theological Horizons”) offers theological reflection. Part I begins with a multi-faceted introduction, covering such issues as reading for transformation, background information on the life and times of the prophet Habakkuk, the dialectic of biblical and systematic theology, the poetry of Habakkuk, and the theology of Habakkuk. This introduction is followed by an original translation and commentary of each chapter of the book. In addition to the introduction, translation, and commentary, Thomas also includes three excursuses in Part I, each inserted into the commentary of the three chapters of Habakkuk: “The Power of Lament Prayer” (chap. 1), “The Power of Silence” (chap. 2), and “The Power of Memory” (chap. 3).

Part II of Thomas’s commentary provides theological reflection on the book of Habakkuk. The three chapters in this section address the following topics: the main theological themes of Habakkuk (“Major Themes in the Minor Prophet: Habakkuk and Biblical Theology”), prayer (“Centering Shalom: Habakkuk and Prayer”), and the path of spiritual formation as seen in Habakkuk (“Dead Ends to Doorways: Habakkuk and Spiritual Formation”). The last chapter is followed by a select bibliography and indices.

The obvious strength of Thomas's commentary is his bold, yet compassionate and nuanced discussion of some delicate and often misunderstood topics in Christian experience. Through a combination of exegesis, research, and theological reflection on the book of Habakkuk, Thomas does prodigious work in drawing out and addressing such difficult issues as lament prayer, suffering, and waiting faithfully in the Christian experience. Thomas discourages overly simplistic readings of Habakkuk in order to allow the reader to wrestle with the issues and to provide space for the process of spiritual formation in Habakkuk the person. This, then, allows space for spiritual formation in the audience of Habakkuk the book as well. Thomas challenges his readers to sit with Habakkuk and with their own areas of pain and suffering, letting God address the difficult questions as he will. Thomas's previous work on Habakkuk, Lamentations, and the issue of faith in suffering ("Suffering Has its Voice: Divine Violence, Pain and Prayer," in *Wrestling with the Violence of God: Soundings in the Old Testament* [BBRSup; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2015], 91–111) no doubt has provided the preparation needed for the thorough and thoughtful treatment of these similar topics in the current work.

Overall, Thomas's commentary is strong and insightful, especially when it comes to the theological reflection on the challenging issues Habakkuk raises. However, there are a couple of details that could be improved. First, when a difficult passage is addressed, Thomas seems to prefer emending the text more often than wrestling with the Masoretic Text (MT) as it stands. To be fair, Thomas does present a range of interpretive options in each case, including the original MT. However, his preference is often for the emended text.

Second, in his discussion of the symbolism of fishing at the end of Habakkuk 1, Thomas seems to take the interpretation in a direction not supported by the text. He focuses his discussion on technology, specifically the good and bad uses of technology. However, the symbolism of fishing in Habakkuk 1 seems to be pointing more to the exploitation of those weaker (i.e. fish exploited by the fishermen as smaller nations are exploited by Babylon). Understood in this way, technology benefits the one using it (fishermen // Babylon), but it is damaging to those upon whom it is used (fish // smaller nations). Rather than taking this more direct interpretation, Thomas contrasts the good use of technology (fishing) with the destructive use of technology (war).

These drawbacks notwithstanding, Thomas presents us an outstanding reflection on suffering, lament prayer, and faith, all drawn from the pages of the prophet Habakkuk. His work should be read by students and pastors who want a deeper understanding of the book of Habakkuk and by Christians who are wrestling with the issues of faith and trust in God in the context of suffering.

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A Critical Examination of the Coherence-Based Genealogical Method in New Testament Textual Criticism. By Peter J. Gurry. NT Tools, Studies and Documents 55. Leiden: Brill, 2017, xiv + 254 pp., \$127.00.

Many have heard about the Coherence-Based Genealogical Method (CBGM) but few understand it. Peter Gurry is one of those few, and he is the first to write a book-length evaluation of it. This book is a revised version of the author's doctoral dissertation written at the University of Cambridge. Importantly, Gurry writes not as an editor of the CBGM—that is, from the inside—but as a sympathetic observer, and so his critical judgment as an “outsider” is highly valued. At the time of writing, the CBGM had only been applied to the Catholic Letters, and so Gurry's analysis is limited to that corpus.

The CBGM is easily the most important methodological innovation in NT text criticism in the last several decades. Although it was developed relatively recently, the effects of the method can already be seen in the pages of the *Editio Critica Maior* (ECM) volumes produced by the Institut für neutestamentliche Textforschung as well as in the Nestle-Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th edition (NA28), the standard handbook edition of the Greek NT. Editors involved now regard the CBGM as “indispensable” to their ongoing work. Yet in spite of its now fundamental place in editorial decisions about the text of the NT, very few outsiders actually have an adequate grasp of this complex method, a fact that has not stopped many from venturing to write about it anyway. In light of this situation, Gurry has filled a massive gap with this sustained, critical assessment and in doing so has performed a great service to us all.

A word of caution: this book is not an introduction to the CBGM. It is rather what the title promises, a “critical examination.” For those not already familiar with the CBGM, some of Gurry's other publications would be more suitable starting points. See his article, “How Your Greek NT Is Changing: A Simple Introduction to the Coherence-Based Genealogical Method (CBGM),” *JETS* 59 (2016): 675–89, as well as a volume co-written with Tommy Wasserman, *A New Approach to Textual Criticism: An Introduction to the Coherence-Based Genealogical Method* (Resources for Biblical Study 80; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2017). Both publications should be read and understood before attempting to appreciate the volume under consideration here.

Part 1 consists of two chapters, the first of which traces the history and reception of the CBGM. Here Gurry helpfully corrects many common misconceptions about the CBGM. More substantial is the second chapter, which is a detailed breakdown of the inner workings of the method, its tools, and their functions. Gurry then considers several specific examples of where the CBGM has led the editors to change the text of the ECM/NA. One of the principal arguments of this chapter is that the CBGM does not replace the traditional criteria used in reasoned eclecticism but rather works in conjunction with them and even casts them in new light.

Part 2 explores the relationship between the CBGM and the elusive *Ausgangstext* (“initial text”). Yet, first, if the goal of the CBGM is to reconstruct the initial

text, a clear definition of that entity is needed. Much to our benefit Gurry provides exactly that, and he does so with refreshing clarity, sweeping away several misunderstandings about what is meant by the term *Ausgangstext*. Chapter 4 then reports on several tests that seek to use the CBGM to study scribal tendencies. Most fundamentally, the notion of coherence is used to pinpoint scribally-created readings that may not necessarily be singular, a function that could have enormous implications for our understanding of how texts change. In contrast to the “scribal habits” method employed by James Royse and others, the CBGM can vastly increase the amount of data considered and widen our horizons. The results are fascinating and will no doubt pave the way for future studies. A significant finding of this investigation is that scribes appear to have added text about as often as they omitted—a point that stands in tension with the conclusions of Royse and others (who suggest that omission was more common among early scribes).

Part 3 deals with some nagging questions about the CBGM’s relation to the text as it developed in history. Chapter 5 addresses what is perhaps the most widespread criticism of the CBGM, namely, that it is unhelpful for studying actual history. A hallmark of the CBGM is that it relates texts rather than manuscripts, a methodological feature that suggests to many that real manuscript relationships are ignored. Gurry responds by considering a specific set of witnesses with a known historical relationship, the Harklean Group. After careful consideration, Gurry maintains that rather than ignoring or confusing the historical relationship of these texts, the CBGM—when used properly—actually clarifies that relationship. Chapter 6 then reflects on what sorts of variants should be fed into the CBGM data. What about singular readings, spelling variations, nonsense readings, and scribal corrections? Are any of these genealogically significant? Despite the methodological sensitivity needed to analyze these correctly, Gurry recommends that all such readings be included in future editions of the CBGM.

Overall, Gurry’s diagnosis of the CBGM is optimistic. Although the method entails a very steep learning curve, he demonstrates precisely how the CBGM can be employed to illumine new insights about the initial text of the NT and its subsequent transmission. Gurry does, however, highlight some limitations of the CBGM and propose several ways that it could be improved; these suggestions comprise the book’s closing chapter. Notable here is the caution that the CBGM does not actually solve the problem of contamination—as has been claimed—although “it may help us work in the midst of it in many cases” (p. 178).

Weaknesses with the book are very few. Typographical errors are rare, and, for such an abstract and technical discussion, Gurry’s prose is lively and engaging. The discussion throughout is heavily dependent upon diagrams and figures. Unfortunately, many of these visuals are so reduced in size as to be practically unreadable. (Gurry has, however, made the full-size figures available online.) There are a few minor points of argument that may be overstated. For instance, Gurry maintains that the CBGM is fundamentally at odds with the text-critical approach of rigorous eclecticism (which emphasizes internal evidence over external). Since the application of coherence-based principles pushes the editor to recognize some witnesses as standing closer to the initial text than others, it would therefore be inconsistent

to go on “treating all witnesses equally” (p. 107). However, this may be overstating the case somewhat because it is not exactly clear what is meant by “treating all manuscripts equally” or what this means in practice for a given rigorous eclectic. In addition, it seems unlikely that chapter 5 will pacify those who fear that the CBGM is insufficiently suited to history. The force of Gurry’s argument about the specific example of the Harklean Group is impressive, and his reasoning is persuasive. Critics might ask, however, about the CBGM’s fitness to address other historical relationships for which we have less explicit evidence from colophons and versional witnesses (as with the Harklean Group). Almost certainly there will be ongoing debate on this front.

In considering the positives of this study, I must restrict my comments to three basic points: First, the volume offers an extremely clear explanation of the CBGM theory and procedures. Some of the most confusing and complicated issues such as the *Ausgangstext*, (pre-) genealogical coherence, textual flow, and connectivity are handled with utmost clarity and precision. A consequence of this first point is a second one: Gurry conclusively demolishes the notion that the CBGM is simply a machine that automates the text of Scripture. Among some critics there is a suspicion that the CBGM is little more than a set of computer algorithms that bypasses all the traditional tenets of text criticism and does so with minimal input from actual human beings. Nothing could be farther from the truth, and Gurry shows us exactly why. Third, and most importantly, the book clearly and persuasively demonstrates how the CBGM can be useful for text critics in a variety of ways. This final point suggests an idea that is implicit throughout the study: it looks as if the CBGM is here to stay, so text critics need to understand and use it (at least the parts of it that are publically available). The volume is thus in part a call to action. Yet Gurry does more than just sound the call; he also shows us the way forward. In sum, Gurry deserves our gratitude for this brilliant and badly-needed contribution to the field of NT text criticism.

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Ancient Rhetoric and the New Testament: The Influence of Elementary Greek Composition. By Mikeal C. Parsons and Michael Wade Martin. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2018, x + 326 pp., \$39.95.

Rhetorical study of the NT has become something of growth industry within NT studies since the 1980s, in part as a result of the impact of Hans Dieter Betz’s landmark commentary on Galatians. The discussion thus far, however, has for the most part focused on the classic treatises on rhetorical oratory, ranging from Aristotle’s *Rhetorica* in the 4th century BC to Quintilian “Institutions of Oration” near the end of the first century AD. The elementary exercises found in the *Progymnasmata*, however, have received less attention, even though these exercises could be called stage one in a rhetorical education.

Now we finally have a detailed examination by Parsons and Martin of the work of Aelius Theon (who was probably writing in the first century AD, though some suggest a date as late as the 5th century AD), with occasional reference to the works of Ps.-Hermogenes of Tarsus, Aphthonius of Antioch, and Nicholaus of Myra (all of whom compiled their works in the third to fifth centuries AD). At points in this book these works on elementary exercises are also compared to the standard oratory treatises. Parsons and Martin, after a brief introduction, systematically work their way through the elementary exercises or topics involving composing a *chreia*, fables, narratives, and using *ekphrasis*, speech in character, encomiums, and *synkrisis* in such compositions. In a revealing statement early in the book, the authors cite the work of R. Criboire and others “who have demonstrated a fluidity in what, when and how students learned. The implementation of the tripartite educational system varied from locale to locale. The school of Libanius in Antioch, for example, ran all three levels of education concurrently, perhaps even in the same classroom. Thus older students, working in the tertiary stratum could serve as models for the younger students at the primary and secondary levels, assisting the teacher, and at times even substituting for him (see Libanius, *Ep.* 1408). In many cases ... the result, perhaps prompted as much by necessity as intention, was something of a cross between the proverbial one-room schoolhouse and the Montessori educational philosophy of the mixed-age classroom” (p. 2).

The implications of this admission are not really further explored by Parsons and Martin. For one thing, this means that these three levels of education all had the trajectory and primary purpose of producing orators. The students learned how to produce letters and speeches and compose rhetorical exercises in order to further their careers in public speaking, not primarily to further their writing skills composing letters or other sorts of written documents. Exercises in composition had a rhetorical end game or purpose. The second thing this observation should make quite clear is just because one can find the influence of these elementary exercises in NT documents is no proof that the NT writers did not go beyond elementary rhetorical education. *Chreia*, *synkrisis*, speech in character, encomium, etc., were gone over at all three levels of education, and the only real question is the level of skill the writers of the NT show in using such devices and techniques. In my view, Paul, Luke, the author of Hebrews, and the author of 1 Peter all show advanced skills in handling such things.

Parsons and Martin quite rightly cite and build on the work of George Kennedy who published a critical edition of the *progymnasmata* in the 1990s which was in turn helpfully picked up and redone by SBL Press in 2003. Yet *Ancient Rhetoric and the New Testament* is no mere rerun of Kennedy’s work; it makes its own valuable contribution to our understanding of both the *progymnasmata* and the NT. The book is at its most valuable when it is analyzing the Gospels, Acts, and Hebrews, which have garnered somewhat less attention than the Pauline material when it comes to rhetorical criticism.

One of the main reasons Parsons and Martin are focusing on the *progymnasmata* is because they involve exercises in composition rather than declamation *per se*, and of course the NT involves written texts. In an important aside, they say at one

point that Hebrews is the one clear example of declamation in the NT, the implication being that it is more helpful to study NT compositions in light of the composition exercises of antiquity. The latter, as this book shows, are helpful, but in fact many NT documents, especially the letters of Paul and Peter, reflect the larger conventions and concerns of the rhetorical treatises as well as the conventions of the elementary exercises. Thus, a word of caution is in order about too strong a distinction between elementary exercises in composition and handbooks on declamation.

Parsons and Martin quite rightly do not make a hard and fast division between these elementary educational exercises and the materials in the rhetorical handbooks, as there is considerable overlap. Yet there is a mistake in their assumptions that is only clearly stated at the end of the book: "it is our belief that the *progymnasmata* should be seen as the *starting point*, and not merely a secondary resource for NT rhetorical criticism. This is owing to the nature of the NT as a collection of mostly nondeclamatory genres and the nature of the *progymnasmata* as the standard curriculum in Graeco-Roman education for prose composition" (p. 276). Apart from ignoring the fact that the NT is full of texts that were meant to be *read out loud*, not merely viewed as written compositions, and barely mentioning in this book one of the most key elementary exercises, namely composing examples of confirmation and refutation as a preparation for providing rhetorical arguments for and against in a speech, this judgment also ignores which is the rhetorical chicken and which is the rhetorical egg.

The *earliest* rhetorical treatises by Aristotle and others on rhetoric predate even Theon's work on the *progymnasmata* by centuries. These studies of rhetoric were already shaping both composition and oratory from at least the 4th century BC. In other words, it would be better to say that the *progymnasmata* are distilled and simplified versions of what we find in the rhetorical treatises rather than that these elementary exercises are the basis of later full-fledged rhetorical handbooks. This same criticism can be raised against those who want to privilege epistolary studies of the NT "letters" over "rhetorical" studies of them. The epistolary handbooks by Ps.-Libanius and others postdate the rhetorical manuals of Aristotle, Cicero, and others by centuries, and, furthermore, letter writing is taken up as a rhetorical exercise in those handbooks and also in the *progymnasmata*.

Since the Greek and then Roman cultures were largely oral cultures, and the texts we are talking about, including NT texts, are mostly *oral texts meant to be heard*, even if they begin as compositions (and are later read out loud), we should not be making too broad a distinction between composition and oratory, or elementary exercises and the materials in the fuller rhetorical handbooks such as that of Quintilian. Like the later epistolary handbooks, the *progymnasmata* were based on things in the earlier rhetorical handbooks, not the other way around. The proof of this is not hard to find. When one studies the list of standing topics covered in the *progymnasmata*, these are all topics also covered in the earlier rhetorical handbooks in one way or another.

In short, the *progymnasmata* alongside of the rhetorical handbooks should be used to analyze the rhetoric of the NT, not least because we have not only micro but also macro rhetoric in the NT, including thesis statements, full rhetorical argu-

ments, and perorations in the epistolary literature in the NT. It is not adequate at all to suggest that, because Paul's letters are prose compositions, they are unlikely to reflect macro-rhetorical structures of speeches (see pp. 278–79). This argument falls apart when one realizes these letters were meant to be read out loud, as in effect a speech within an epistolary framework. What Paul says in his letters is what he would have said orally, and in a rhetorically convincing way, had he been present. The very existence of exordiums, thesis statements, full-fledged arguments arranged according to the rules about inartificial proofs being stronger than artificial ones, followed by emotional perorations such as we find in Eph 6:10–20 and elsewhere should have warned us against such simplifications. No study of NT rhetoric that does not attend to these larger rhetorical features in the NT epistles will ever be adequate.

Happily, Parson and Martin's helpful book has very few typographical errors to trouble those who do close readings of such books, but there are some puzzles along the way. To cite but one example, why exactly do we have quotations from the old Loeb and Josephus and Philo and Tacitus English translations by the likes of Thackeray or Oldfather or Whiston or Colson or Church, when the authors are perfectly capable of doing their own Greek and Latin translations of the works cited, or at least citing the most recent Loeb editions of these works? This is strange.

In terms of proportions, the bulk of this book involves a detailed examination of the *progymnasmata* with less time spent on the NT itself (only 85 pages of text in a book of over 300 pages total), with NT exposition coming at the end of each chapter. Interestingly, there is a rather clear and sustained critique of the old form-critical and Jesus Seminar approach to the parables of Jesus (see the chapter on fables, and also on *chreia*), as well as of older theories that see the hymnic material in the NT as interpolations or of those that fail to see the Gospels as ancient biographies indebted to the rhetorical treatments of encomia. One could have wished for a good deal more direct interaction with the NT material itself along these lines (see my *New Testament Rhetoric* [Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009], and my socio-rhetorical commentaries on Mark, Luke, and Acts).

Nevertheless, no one book can serve all purposes or accomplish all aims, and this one does a good job of acquainting the reader with the elementary exercises, especially as viewed by Theon. If judged by the statement of the authors of what the work was intended to accomplish—"to show the pervasiveness of the progymnastic forms as building blocks of ancient Mediterranean literature, the New Testament included, and to illustrate the usefulness of progymnastic theory for the interpretation of those forms" (p. 275)—then this book must be deemed a successful accomplishment of the intended goal. As such, it fills a needed gap in the ongoing study of rhetoric and the NT.

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The Role of the Synagogue in the Aims of Jesus. By Jordan J. Ryan. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017, xiv + 396 pp., \$79.00.

Jordan J. Ryan, Assistant Professor of NT at University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, combines in his book, *The Role of the Synagogue in the Aims of Jesus* (revised dissertation from McMaster University in Ontario, Canada), no less than three separate investigations. Part 1 provides a sweeping up-to-date overview of recent research on “early synagogues,” meaning first-century synagogues in the land of Israel. Part 2 focuses on “the Historical Jesus and the Synagogue,” by investigating all synagogue traditions in the Gospels, including the Gospel of John, in order to understand the historical Jesus’s relationship to the synagogue. Finally, Ryan has attached two lengthy appendixes outlining his approach to doing historical research, which includes an introduction to Collingwood’s idealist approach to historical data (as opposed to historical criticism and its criteria-based “Scissors-and-Paste” approach) and an introduction to Lonergan’s critical realism as a robust way of handling sources by asking the right questions in the right order.

Ryan’s overarching aim is to show how the synagogue was an intentional platform and the very locus for the message of the historical Jesus in Galilee and not only a coincidental, convenient locality (p. 3). The central part of his argument is unfolded in part 2, but part 1 on the nature and function of the synagogue in first-century Galilee becomes pivotal and in essence Ryan’s primary exegetical tool. This is seen in the way that he applies in part 2 his historical reconstruction concerning the function of the NT texts with what he terms “institution criticism.” The crucial point concerns whether the synagogue was a closed, liturgical and religious assembly, or an open, public community center, which then in turn should shape our understanding of the aims of Jesus. In order to determine this, Ryan discusses the origin of the synagogue (chap. 2) and concludes with the views of Lee Levine and Anders Runesson, who both stress the public nature of the synagogue. Levine argues that the synagogue evolved from the ancient-city gate and not as a substitution for the lost temple. For this reason, it served many functions such as a courtroom, school, hostel, meeting place, place for social gatherings, and more. Runesson accepts that the evidence also points toward a synagogue tradition that evolved under the influence of the Greco-Roman voluntary associations, which would have been more closed and analogous to clubs. However, Ryan argues that the bulk of the evidence of association synagogues stems from the diaspora, whereas the evidence from Galilee points in the direction of an open, public synagogue, as witnessed by the way in which Jesus could freely enter. There is also no indication that any of the known Galilean synagogues belonged to a certain Jewish group.

Next, Ryan provides a comprehensive 50-page blueprint of the first-century Galilean synagogue “as Jesus knew it” (chap. 3). The contour that Ryan paints stresses the synagogue as the assembly for an entire community or village “where all Jews came together” (citing John 18:20). It was “local-official” in character (p. 45) as evidenced also by Josephus, who describes huge gatherings in the synagogue of Tiberias. Here Scripture was read, yet not only for what we would term “religious” purposes. The Torah was the backbone of the civil law, and drawing on Ben

Sira, Ryan expounds how honor and shame was upheld and distributed based on the law. In the same manner, Ryan refers to the sayings by Jesus concerning persecution in the synagogues as evidence for a legal-judicial function of the synagogue, another way in which it had inherited the function of the city gate. Ryan further outlines the sources for the synagogue offices and discusses the eight to ten archaeological finds of first-century synagogues. The one thing missing compared to many earlier studies is an attempt to outline the liturgy of synagogue services. While Ryan allows for some liturgical purpose of the Galilean synagogue, Ryan finds a fixed liturgy to be anachronistic. Still, Ryan accepts, on basis of the decorative stone found in Magdala, the argument of Donald Binder that the synagogue to some extent served as an extension of the temple with some degree of purity observance (p. 72).

Finally, in part 1, Ryan provides a research overview of studies dealing with Jesus and the synagogues by dividing them into three phases of which he situates himself within the final phase, one that seeks to recover the synagogue as a context for Jesus's mission. Specifically, Ryan criticizes Twelftree's approach based on criteria of authenticity for being "shockingly minimalistic" (p. 108). Even Runesson, whose approach is characterized as post-criteria by favoring contextual plausibility, is criticized for being caught in the same game of sorting data by relevance instead of operating on the level of inference (i.e. asking "What can we learn?" from this evidence, rather than "is it true or false?"). This paves the way for the questions Ryan wants to discuss in part 2, namely, questions related to (1) how a synagogue setting for Jesus's kingdom program enlightens it; (2) how the synagogue was part of Jesus's aims; (3) how the synagogue sheds light on the political elements of Jesus's program; and (4) how the evidence in John can be used in a reconstruction of the historical Jesus's aims.

Part 2, "The Historical Jesus and the Synagogue," is comprised of five chapters discussing the Nazareth incident (chap. 6), the three incidents of healings and exorcisms (chap. 7), the Johannine teaching on "I am the bread of life" (chap. 8), the *apostynagōgos* passages in John (chap 9), to which Ryan adds an initial discussion of Jesus's kingdom program and the Sermon on the Mount as related to the synagogue (chap. 5). In this chapter, Ryan reconstructs Jesus's message in the synagogues as essentially his kingdom message (cf. Matt 4:23; Luke 4:15–16, 43–44). While Ryan sides with the eschatological understanding of Jesus's kingdom message (cf. p. 133), this should not be understood in otherworldly terms but as an expounding of God's kingly, "new exodus" inbreaking into the present world directed at the entire nation of Israel as such. Exactly at this point, emphasized in many other studies, Ryan is able to add his support with his "institution-critical" reading of the synagogue as the locus for Jesus's program. Jesus did not just speak out in the hot air to maladjusted Galileans flowing around, but addressed "the town as a corporate, political entity" (p. 143). In this way, the synagogue became intrinsic in the aims of Jesus as opposed to an incidental gathering of a crowd willing to listen. Jesus tried "to restore Israel one municipality at a time" (p. 147). This explains why Jesus doomed entire towns, when they rejected his offer, such as Chorazin, Capernaum, and Bethsaida. Ryan further suggests that the Sermon on the

Mount and especially the antitheses would represent “the sort of things” (p. 151) Jesus taught in the synagogues as the place for Torah discussion and legal matters. In turn, such a setting highlights the “political nature” (p. 167) of the Sermon on the Mount, by which Ryan does not mean “anti-Roman” or “revolutionary,” but teaching aimed at the entirety of the Galilean village communities (p. 148).

Chapters 6–9, which deal with actual synagogue incidents, are structured in much the same manner. Ryan first discusses their historical reliability, arriving in all cases at a positive view of their value. Next, Ryan deals with a number of traditional issues discussed in research and does so extremely carefully and comprehensively. Finally, Ryan raises his “institution-critical” perspective by asking in which way the synagogue as an institution interprets the incidents. In each case, the position outlined above is corroborated. The preaching in Nazareth was an invitation to the entire community to be part of the eschatological restoration, and its response was a public out-shaming (pp. 204–5). The reported healings and exorcisms should not only be viewed as singular events, since the synagogue setting reveals their potential as events that bring to realization the reign of God and “the overthrow of diabolic dominion” (p. 241). The two chapters on the Gospel of John deal thoroughly with how to use John as a source for the study of the historical Jesus in light of recent research. In terms of the role of the synagogue, the conclusions are much the same. The setting of “the bread of life saying” in the synagogue of Capernaum helps to highlight the corporate thrust of the New Exodus theology embedded in the kingly response to Jesus. The *apospynagōgos* sayings in John mark a shift from the local synagogue level to a national temple level, since they are all uttered in a temple context. The important statement in the trial scene (18:20) highlights that Jesus’s message in the synagogues was an open offer to the entire *qahal* of Israel.

In the concluding chapter, Ryan summarizes his case for viewing the synagogue as intrinsic to the aims of the historical Jesus, not accidental. As the locus for his ministry, their public nature as a community center underscores the comprehensive political and eschatological aim of Jesus’s program. He aimed at inviting entire communities into the Kingdom of God. In this way, Ryan situates his study within the main trajectory of the Third Quest looking for a “Jewish Jesus” who engaged his Jewish society.

There is much to commend in Ryan’s work. I especially found the up-to-date treatment of first-century synagogues to be helpful and worth the price of the book alone. The application of Collingwoodian and Lonerganian post-criteria approaches to the sources is likewise refreshing and promising. To some degree, I found the institution-critical approach in part 2 a little bit underwhelming, since the “public and political” reading of the reported incidents to some degree becomes a subpoint even in Ryan’s own conclusions which rely just as much on his understanding of the kingdom, the new exodus scheme, and eschatological restoration. Further, I should have liked to see Ryan engage Binder’s suggestion concerning the synagogue as an extension of the temple more, which highlights the religious nature of the synagogue. Still further, Ryan’s emphasis on the corporate nature of Jesus’s Galilean ministry needs to be counterbalanced by the many reported meetings and interactions with individuals not representing a village community or the like.

That said, Ryan makes a convincing case. Western readings of Jesus, liberal and conservative alike, struggle to understand the corporate nature of Jesus program. Ryan has provided a top-level study, one that must be reckoned with in future studies of Jesus in Galilee.

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Mark. By Eckhard J. Schnabel. Tyndale NT Commentary. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2017, xxix + 441 pp., \$26.00 paper.

The venerable Tyndale NT Commentary series is now entering its third generation under the editorship of Eckhard Schnabel. The series aims for introductory-level commentaries that surpass the rudimentary information available in one-volume Bible commentaries but do not lose the reader in technical details characteristic of more advanced works. This most recent version of the series aims to continue the tradition of its predecessors but to include a wider diversity of authors than preceding ones. According to the IVP Academic website, third-generation volumes are now in print for John, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, James, and Revelation. This commentary by the series editor replaces the original contribution of Alan Cole (published in 1961).

With regard to Schnabel's commentary on Mark, one should not mistake the label "introductory" for "non-substantial." This volume encompasses 29 pages on introductory matters (numbered separately in Roman numerals) followed by 441 pages in the commentary proper. In other words, Schnabel covers the necessary ground in his interpretation of Mark even if the series format does not allow for exhaustive treatment of each issue. In a sense, the length of this work reflects the explosive growth of biblical scholarship in the past fifty years (Cole's commentary was 263 pp. long).

The introduction treats the customary issues: Mark's genre and relation to the other gospels, distinctive characteristics of Mark, its origin (the lengthiest section), theological emphases, and structure (quite brief). Schnabel includes a 13-page select bibliography. The volume contains no indices.

Schnabel's conclusions on introductory matters can only be summarized briefly. Following Adela Yarbro Collins, Schnabel categorizes Mark as a "historical type of biography," one that could also be called a "historical monograph," given its emphasis on Jesus's role in God's decisive plan for history. Schnabel agrees with Papias's account of John Mark as the author stating that "Mark's gospel is a written account of the teaching of Peter" (p. 18). Peter's teaching provided John Mark with his primary if not only source for his Gospel. Schnabel tentatively assigns it a Roman provenance, though he dates its composition earlier than most. He posits a range of plausible dates extending anywhere from AD 35–50 (based on internal evidence) to AD 50–64 (based on external evidence) rather than a more common

dating ca. AD 70. He contends that accepting Mark 16:8 as the original ending of the Gospel best accounts for the internal and the external evidence on the matter.

Schnabel's discusses Mark's theology under four headings: (1) Jesus, the Messiah and Son of God; (2) the secrecy motif; (3) the kingdom of God; and (4) the identity, requirements, and mission of followers of Jesus. He understands Jesus as Messiah and Jesus as Son of God to be the central motifs in Mark's Gospel. He writes that Jesus did not shy away from these "traditional titles" (p. 24), though Schnabel provides no definition of what these titles traditionally meant either in his introduction or in his exegesis of Mark 1:1 where the term *Christos* first occurs. One finds a description of the term only later in the treatment of Peter's confession in 8:29. In the introduction section he does offer a summary sketch of how Mark's presentation of these titles unfolds thematically in the narrative. Schnabel's treatment of the messianic secret consists largely of a description of and response to William Wrede's thesis without a description of why this theme constitutes a central theological emphasis. Schnabel's discussion of the kingdom of God and of Jesus's followers offers succinct synopses of the evidence for these topics in Mark. These final two sections provide a valuable aid by gathering the evidence from Mark related to each topic for a beginning student.

Schnabel divides Mark into four sections: 1:1–13, 1:14–8:21, 8:22–15:47, and 16:1–8. The two major units making up the body of the Gospel he helpfully labels "Jesus' Messianic Authority" and "Jesus' Messianic Suffering." By doing so, he highlights not only their common emphasis on Jesus's messianic identity but also their distinctive roles in defining that identity.

The commentary itself is organized around small units of text (identified in the outline at the conclusion of Schnabel's introduction). The discussion of each unit falls into three sections. A brief opening *Context* section locates it within the flow of Mark's narrative and provides an overview of that unit. The *Comments* section supplies lengthier notes on the text a few verses at a time. Each unit concludes with a succinct treatment of *Theology* as reflected in that passage.

For example, his exegesis of Mark 1:1–13 runs as follows. Schnabel divides the passage into three units: Heading (1:1), Jesus and John the Baptist (1:2–8), and Jesus declared Son of God and conflict with Satan (1:9–13). His treatment of these individual units contains each of the three sections mentioned above: *Context*, *Comments*, and *Theology*. Thus, in his discussion of the seven-verse unit on Jesus and John the Baptist (1:2–8), his opening *Context* discussion consists of a single paragraph linking these verses to what precedes and follows it. The *Comment* unit is made up of multiple-paragraph examinations of one to two verses at a time. The concluding *Theology* unit contains one paragraph discussing John's baptism.

The brevity of the *Context* and *Theology* sections should not be mistaken for shallowness. Schnabel uses an economy of words to guide his reader. Take the *Context* section introducing the feeding of the five thousand in Mark 6:30–44 for an example. He notes that this passage follows the mission of the Twelve and forms the first of two nature miracles. Together these miracles demonstrate an authority that goes beyond Jesus's healing and deliverance ministries. Furthermore, he notes the parallels between Jesus's feeding miracle and similar miracles performed by

Elijah (1 Kgs 17:8–16) and Elisha (2 Kgs 4:42–44). In this manner, Schnabel effectively identifies key issues of the Markan and the larger scriptural context for his reader in a two-sentence paragraph. Similar digests of essential information can be found in his *Theology* sections.

In all, Schnabel's approach to the Mark can be characterized as a traditional close reading of the text. That is, Schnabel does not employ any particular methodological approach such as narrative criticism. For Schnabel this Gospel is not so much Mark's story of Jesus as it is Mark's report of Peter's preaching. Furthermore, Schnabel consistently engages historical issues that arise in the text. However, (thankfully) he refused to speculate about the supposed prehistory of the text within hypothetical early Christian communities.

This commentary achieves the goals of the series. The commentary reflects great learning worn lightly for the benefit of readers seeking a guide through Mark's Gospel. Major interpretive issues and possible solutions are carefully summarized without devolving into labyrinthian discussions of every possible solution to interpretive difficulties. Yet, footnotes effectively point students to resources for further study. One feature I found particularly helpful was how Schnabel fills his exegesis with cross-references to Mark's discussion of the same or related issues elsewhere in his Gospel. This practice will prove particularly beneficial for helping a student to integrate individual passages within the broader message of Mark's Gospel. This enables a beginning exegete to engage Mark holistically, modeling how to do so in the process.

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Mark 15:39 as a Markan Theology of Revelation: The Centurion's Confession as Apocalyptic Unveiling. By Brian K. Gamel. Library of NT Studies 574. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017, xvi + 206 pp., \$114.00.

At the highpoint of Mark's Gospel stands a centurion, who—just after Jesus's death on the cross—confesses him to be the Son of God. As Brian K. Gamel points out in this revision of his Ph.D. dissertation at Baylor University, the centurion's confession in Mark 15:39 serves as the culmination of Mark's passion narrative (p. 3). The centurion is the first and only fully human character in Mark's Gospel—besides, of course, Jesus himself—to recognize Jesus as the Son of God. The centurion's confession is also the first human response to the death of Jesus, which, according to Gamel, gives it enormous weight in conveying the narrative significance of that death. The core of Gamel's investigation of Mark 15:39 appears in chapters 3–5 where he seeks to answer three questions: (1) What do the centurion's words actually mean (chap. 3)? (2) Why does the centurion speak these words (chap. 4)? In other words, what in the narrative motivates the centurion's confession of Jesus as the Son of God? (3) How does the centurion's confession convey Mark's theological understanding concerning the significance of Jesus's death (chap. 5)?

As far as the meaning of the centurion's confession is concerned (chap. 3), Gamel argues that Mark presents the confession as a sincere expression of the centurion's insight into the divine identity of Jesus as God's Son (e.g., p. 67). Some interpreters have insisted that the centurion's words are simply a continuation of the mocking statements directed toward Jesus throughout the crucifixion scene in Mark's Gospel. Indeed, Mark's passion narrative is punctuated with instances of exalted speech concerning Jesus that are nothing more than mocking taunts. However, as Gamel points out, each time that characters speak with mocking disdain toward Jesus, Mark provides, either explicitly or implicitly, the proper framework for understanding their statements as sarcastic by labelling their words as "mocking" (15:30), "blaspheming" (15:29), or "reviling" (15:32), or by using OT allusions and literary connections to earlier examples of taunts (e.g. 15:36). Yet the centurion's speech lacks all such markers that would identify it as insincere or derogatory. Instead, the centurion's confession begins with "truly" (*ἀληθῶς*), the type of indicator that Mark uses elsewhere for when characters are asserting the truthfulness of their statements (cf., e.g., 12:32; 14:70). The truth and sincerity of the centurion's words, however, lead to a rather odd conclusion. The centurion correctly understands the identity of Jesus but appears to lack any reasonable basis in the narrative for doing so: "He is not just saying more than he understands—he is understanding more than he should know" (p. 68).

Chapter 4 seeks to answer the question "Why?" Why, or on what basis, does the centurion make his correct confession concerning the identity of Jesus? Gamel evaluates two previously suggested answers and appropriately finds both of them inadequate. First, some interpreters have argued that the unusual signs and portents that take place in connection with Jesus's death (the tearing of the temple's veil or the darkness covering the land) would have validated Jesus's true greatness for the centurion and perhaps could even have indicated to the centurion that Jesus was no mere mortal. However, as Gamel rightly points out, there is no indication in Mark's narrative that anyone in the story, including the centurion, was influenced in the least by these signs. For that matter, there is no indication in the text that the centurion standing at the execution site could possibly have seen the tearing of the veil at the temple. The greater difficulty for this interpretation, however, is Mark's consistent ambivalence toward signs as a means to faith. Jesus refuses to give signs as a way to produce faith (8:11); instead, it is the false Christs who offer signs and wonders to lead people astray (13:22). To accept supernatural events as positive signs meant to induce faith cuts against the grain of Mark's thought (p. 75).

Second, some interpreters have argued that the manner in which Jesus performed his death made a striking impression on the centurion and caused him to view Jesus in a different light. As Gamel notes (p. 77), this interpretation is an improvement over the previous one in that it is rooted in the text of Mark 15:39, which states that the centurion made his confession after seeing how Jesus died. Yet Gamel argues that the centurion is not changed by seeing how Jesus died but rather that the centurion's "seeing" itself was changed, which allowed him to understand the death of Jesus differently. Indeed, Mark's portrayal of Jesus's death does not fit the pattern of a noble death faced with dignity found within Greek

traditions or the model of the courageous martyr's death found within Jewish traditions. Crucifixion was a brutal and shameful means of execution, and in Mark's account Jesus does not stoically or boldly accept his fate. He asks the Father for another way, and at the moment of his death he cries out as one who is utterly forsaken and abandoned by God. Nothing about Jesus's death in Mark's Gospel provides a clear motivation for the centurion to make his sincere and correct confession of Jesus as God's Son. For Gamel, this odd set of circumstances exposes a central theological concern for Mark: "that the truth of Jesus is known through divine revelation and that revelation happens at the cross" (p. 86). The centurion does not utter his words because of his own disposition or perception but because he has received sight as a gift through the apocalyptic act of God, an act represented in the narrative by the rending of the temple's veil (15:38). Throughout chapters 3 and 4, Gamel carefully and persuasively argues each of his exegetical conclusions, and any future studies on Mark 15:39 will certainly need to take his detailed arguments into consideration.

At chapter 5, Gamel's argument shifts, moving away from the specific exegetical concerns surrounding the interpretation of Mark 15:39 to the ramifications of the centurion's confession for an understanding of Mark's soteriology. In what way does Mark 15:39—as a compact expression of Mark's soteriology—demonstrate what salvation means for Mark? For Gamel, the centurion's confession in 15:39 summarizes (although it does not exhaust) what it means to Mark that Jesus's death brings salvation (p. 115). By way of evaluation, perhaps this is a section that stands in need of a more careful definition of terms. Phrases such as "Mark's soteriology" and "what salvation means for Mark" point to broad theological categories that may encompass a variety of aspects concerning how Mark views the relationship between God and humanity. For example, theologians have often in the past divided the topic of soteriology into salvation accomplished and salvation applied. Early in Gamel's work, he summarizes his overall thesis briefly as arguing that the centurion's insight into the divine sonship of Jesus is a gift (p. xiii). The language of insight as a gift points more in the direction of salvation applied, that God so works in the lives of the spiritually blind that they are able to perceive the truth about Jesus's identity through his death on the cross.

Most of Gamel's lengthy discussion in chapter 5 also moves in the direction of salvation applied. Throughout Mark's Gospel, spiritual blindness is a condition that grips humanity (p. 116). In this way, Mark shares a similar perspective to that found in Jewish apocalyptic literature, that life as experienced by most human beings does not reveal the full picture of the cosmos and that there is a hidden dimension to the world that escapes the attention of most people (p. 136). Yet at the same time, Mark highlights characters who from the beginning of Jesus's ministry seem to demonstrate at least some genuine insight into Jesus's identity and character. They understand something about Jesus, even if that understanding is incomplete (p. 150). At Jesus's baptism, the heavens are rent, so that God has begun the process of revelation in the ministry of Jesus. The centurion, however, becomes the climactic example of human perception. His insight is "an apocalyptically mediated gift representing the new condition of humanity before God as a result of Jesus'

death on the cross” (p. 151). Eschatological sight, received as a gift, is a clear expression of the kind of salvation Jesus’s death brings in Mark (p. 176). Yet once again, the idea of insight received as a gift on the basis of Jesus’s death relates to the application of salvation to the individual and does not directly address the question of what the death of Jesus accomplished in order to restore, at least potentially, the relationship between God and humanity.

In the conclusion to the book, Gamel seems to object to approaches that look for Mark’s soteriology in Jesus’s own words about his death—for example, in the ransom saying in 10:45 and the saying about the cup in 14:24—rather than in Mark’s narration of Jesus’s death (p. 174). Yet Jesus’s teaching about his death is without question part of Mark’s overall narrative and crucial for understanding Mark’s own views on the meaning of that death. Indeed, Gamel himself includes a brief and helpful discussion of Mark 14:24, one that presents Jesus’s death as a covenant-making event that brings rapprochement between God and humanity (pp. 160–63). For me, Gamel’s book is a helpful reminder that Mark’s understanding of salvation should be broadly conceived and should be discovered from throughout his narrative, including the crucifixion scene itself. However, in determining Mark’s view on the particular issue of how salvation is accomplished through the death of Jesus, it seems necessary to provide thorough and direct answers to difficult questions, such as: What does it mean that Jesus’s gift of his life is an act of service for others and his death is a ransom for many (10:45)? What does it mean that Jesus’s death provides the blood of the covenant that is poured out on behalf of many (14:24)?

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Archetypes and the Fourth Gospel: Literature and Theology in Conversation. By Brian Larsen. T&T Clark Biblical Studies. London: T&T Clark, 2018, xi + 216 pp., \$114.00.

Archetypes “make up the groundwork of the human psyche. It is only possible to live the fullest life when we are in harmony with these symbols; wisdom is a return to them.” So wrote psychologist Carl Jung, founder of our modern understanding of archetypes. What started as a movement in psychology became a leading approach to literature as well.

I have maintained throughout my half-century career as a literary scholar that the archetypal approach to literature is a necessary lens for anyone who reads and interprets literary texts, including ones in the Bible. No approach offers more as an organizing framework for texts and as a vehicle for showing the relationship of a given text or motif to other instances of it. In the middle of the twentieth century, archetypes were part of virtually every classroom discussion of literature. For no good reason, they dropped out of currency. As someone who never abandoned the archetypal approach to literary analysis, my heart leaped when I became aware of Brian Larsen’s application of that approach to the Gospel of John.

For his theoretic and methodological masterplan, Larsen goes to the same foundation on which I have built—Northrop Frye’s landmark book *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957). Frye’s mind was both systemizing and encyclopedic, and his approach accordingly reached out to encompass many categories beyond archetypes as such. Strictly defined, an archetype is one of three things—an image or symbol (and by extension a setting), a character type, or a plot motif. In all of these, the essential feature of an archetype is that it is ubiquitous in literature and life; it constantly recurs because it is the groundwork of human existence in the world.

Once we grasp this principle of universality, it is obvious that we find such recurrence in more categories than images, character types, and plot motifs. We find them in genres, which display common features in every occurrence of a given genre. In addition, there are the amorphous categories of literary *conventions* (such as the happy ending), literary *devices* (such as dramatic irony), and *motifs* (such as the younger son preferred over the older son). If the determining criterion is recurrence, all of these become candidates for discussion. Frye adopted an open definition, and Larsen does the same. Thus in Larsen’s book we are as likely to find a discussion of genre as of character type, or dramatic irony as of plot motif. The advantage of such breadth is thoroughness of coverage; the omnipresent danger is lack of focus and conceptual overload as the categories multiply. The most obvious scholarly virtue of *Archetypes and the Fourth Gospel* is the quantity of scholarship that is packed into the book, with the bibliography (for example) running to nearly 300 entries. This is a book of specialized scholarship. The sheer quantity of detail, along with the complexity of the conceptual framework, results in a book that few readers will be able to master *in toto*.

Yet we do not need to master the superstructure and its divisions and subdivisions in order to glean the insights that the book stands ready to offer. As Larsen correctly notes in his preface, the four main chapters (actually sections with numerous divisions) are relatively self-contained, making the venture of mastering the book more manageable. In addition—and I have found this true of Northrop Frye also—it is entirely possible to mine the material for good individual insights into the text under discussion, quite apart from the superstructure that I have noted. This is the level at which most readers will assimilate and use this book.

What is the nature of these individual insights into the Gospel of John? They are predominantly new insights because the analytic categories are new. Literary scholars are rarely given a place at the table of biblical analysis, with the result that few members of the biblical scholarly guild will have an acquaintance with the insights that Larsen reveals based on the methodology of Frye. In addition, as already implied, the insights into John’s Gospel are largely literary in nature. Larsen’s autobiographical narrative in his preface of the events in his life that led up to the composition of the book is an archetypal “good read,” and one of the revealing events in that narrative is Larsen’s becoming disenchanted as a college student with traditional biblical scholarship and changing his major to English. That shift shows in this book. Larsen does not do everything with the Gospel of John that can be done by way of literary analysis, but what Larsen does cover

shows a commitment to literary analysis. The resulting insights are largely fresh ones for people who are accustomed to approaching the Gospel of John in the familiar categories of biblical scholarship.

To render the picture even more complex than already indicated, when we turn to what receives the most space in Larsen's analysis, we find that the primary methodology is that of close reading, in the mode of formalist criticism (also called "New Criticism") that had its heyday at approximately the same time as archetypal criticism in the mid-twentieth century. Archetypal criticism *could* have yielded attention to unifying patterns in the Gospel of John as a whole but Larsen's interest lies instead in smaller features of the text. Specifically, the book focuses on four characters, each considered in relation to one of the four phases of Frye's monomyth (the composite circular story that comprises all of literature). The lineup is as follows: Jesus and the narrative form of romance; Pilate and tragedy; Thomas and irony; Peter and comedy. Again I will note that what stands out most obviously is the innovative nature of applying unexpected categories to familiar material.

In both the introduction and conclusion, Larsen states his intention to combine literary and theological concerns. The subtitle poses it as a conversation between literature and theology. This is a somewhat misleading claim, inasmuch as the overwhelming preponderance of the analysis is literary in nature. This is not a criticism but an observation. It should be linked to another one: this book is not a commentary on the Gospel of John. It is piecemeal in its approach to the Fourth Gospel, being a close reading of selected characters and narratives. Larsen's book demonstrates what Northrop Frye's archetypal approach yields when applied to a narrative text in the Bible. For any reader who is similarly committed to Frye's schema, Larsen's book can serve as a model for analyzing many biblical texts. Such application will seem unattainable to the fainthearted, inasmuch as Larsen's analysis is based on (1) a monumentally thorough acquaintance with Frye's system; (2) the expansiveness of Larsen's mind that enabled him to master such a comprehensive framework; and (3) the brilliance of Larsen's analytic ability. Perhaps the challenge will seem more manageable if I add that archetypes can be viewed in simpler terms than what we see in Larsen's approach and that through the years I have repeatedly witnessed the archetypal approach as providing the "light bulb" moment that convinced students and others that they could enjoy and master literature after all.

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Paul: An Apostle's Journey. By Douglas A. Campbell. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018, xii + 207 pp., \$22.00 paper.

The year 2018 was an interesting one for biographies of the apostle Paul. Biographical works by two major NT scholars, Douglas Campbell and N. T. Wright, were released within months of each other, which makes for an interesting comparison. This is especially the case since the two scholars come from perspectives on Paul that appear to some—certainly to Campbell—as mutually incompatible. The

present work aims at a more popular audience and is often conversational in tone. As such, it is not a scholarly contribution nor does it engage with the scholarly literature. In a few places, the author points to larger, more detailed works that unfold his arguments at greater length.

Campbell begins by noting Paul's massive influence on the church throughout the last two thousand years, and certainly on American Christianity. Astonishingly, this is completely out of keeping with how much he actually wrote. In addition, the manner in which he is understood on a variety of topics that affect the contemporary church is largely determined by the culture and politics of the people reading him. On this point, here are Campbell's own words: "The real Paul has been largely buried under later arguments and conflicts about how to read him. His presentation today—and certainly in the U.S.—frequently derives more from the culture and politics of the person reading him than from Paul himself, which is why I am writing this book" (p. 2). Campbell's biography has two parts. The first deals with Paul's conversion and early ministry, along with some aspects of his teaching. The second treats the opposition that dogged Paul throughout his ministry and some of the teaching that sprung from controversy.

Regarding sources, Campbell contends that it is not the best course to begin with the narrative of Acts and work Paul's letters into that frame. Rather, he begins with the letters to determine the historical frame, using Luke's account here and there. This approach is justified on the basis that Luke had his own theological and narrational agenda, and this does not include providing something of a *bios* of Paul. Further, the historical statements in Paul's letters are incidental and unconscious. Paul is not trying to provide historical details, and because of this, his comments are more likely to be useful in constructing a historical account (p. 5).

Campbell narrates Paul's conversion in theological terms. That is, he does not delve into purely historical factors that caused this about-face, nor does he search for modern, scientific terms with which to render Paul's autobiographical comments. His conversion came about by revelation from God, a source outside himself, who dramatically altered the course of his life (p. 18). Campbell's account is in keeping with the "apocalyptic" school of Pauline interpretation that envisions the gospel as a radical in-breaking of God's liberating power that frees an enslaved cosmos. This is in contrast to more of a "new perspective" angle of approach that might envision greater continuity between Paul's pre-Christian mode of existence and his post-Damascus Road ministry.

Interestingly, among the transformational aspects of Paul's conversion, Campbell points to his new conception of God as three in one (pp. 18–19). This is remarkable in that Pauline scholars debate the extent to which trinitarianism can be found in Paul—whether it is explicitly there or is a legitimate development of his thought. Certainly, many biographers would leave this to the side if they would mention it at all.

Just after his conversion, Paul begins his ministry in "Arabia." This note in Galatians 1 has often been taken to mean that Paul went to the desert to sort through just what had happened in his conversion. Campbell, however, claims that "Arabia" does not merely designate the desert, but the stretch of land between

Damascus, south through the Decapolis and down to Nabatea, throughout which Paul traveled preaching and teaching immediately after his arrest by the Lord Christ and his commission as apostle (p. 23).

In the several chapters after treating Paul's conversion, Campbell discusses Paul's early ministry practices, such as developing networks of support and cultivating ministry partnerships. As noted above, much of this is conversational and the book takes on the tone that represents something of a small-group resource. Indeed, each chapter concludes with discussion questions, and so this must be quite intentional. However, the discussions of matters such as ministry style are interlaced with practical illustrations and even exhortations to readers, integrating a portrait of Paul with a developing vision for embodying his teaching in contemporary contexts.

This dynamic is on display in the author's chapter on the character of the church as a community that shares life together, the book's fifth chapter. Based on the relationality of the Father and the Son, Campbell demonstrates how Paul's vision of the church is of a community that is fundamentally relational. Just as people have their very identities in relation to others, so the Father and Son have their identities in their relation to one another (pp. 60–62). In the same way, churches are fundamentally communities that are knit together, places where people can live into the fullness of their renewed and restored humanity (p. 63). Unfortunately, such a conception of the church is rarely embodied, as Campbell notes. This chapter will be quite useful for groups discussing the life of the church.

To regard Ephesians as genuinely Pauline is quite remarkable in the history of critical scholarship, but Campbell does so, and claims that it is "Paul's manifesto" that is "inordinately important" (p. 83). Oddly, this is a point on which both Campbell and Wright would agree, both flying in the face of the scholarly consensus. Yet it is a letter that Paul writes during a reflective period of his ministry while he is in prison and has the time to think through things and express more or less an overarching conception of his thought, summarizing the content of what he would have preached during his ministry (pp. 86–89).

In a chapter titled "Covenant versus Contract," Campbell discusses how ancient and contemporary interpreters easily slip into a contractual characterization of salvation which happens when people add conditions to the gospel (p. 140). He contends that this is the process of turning the way of God revealed in Jesus into a "religion." The gospel, by way of contrast, and all that goes with it, like Christian living, takes place within a relational dynamic with God, knowing one who is fundamentally love and who is "for us" (p. 141). Paul's conception of the gospel was covenantal, and the false gospel of his perpetual enemies was one that was contractual (pp. 143–44).

In a chapter titled "God Wins," Campbell argues for a universalistic conception of Paul's teaching—that is, there will not be any who are not ultimately redeemed. For Campbell, the work of God in Christ cannot be said to have failed in any way, and this means that it is effective for everyone (pp. 165–66). Much of this depends on a certain reading of Romans 11 regarding God's faithfulness to unbelieving Israel (pp. 166–70). For Campbell, if there is any "contractual" dynamic

lurking in an understanding of Paul's gospel—that is, a requirement that must be met, like repentance, for a person to avoid judgment—then this is inevitably a corruption from a covenantal framework to a contractual one. This brief chapter will not be convincing to everyone as such a position requires far more argumentation than he provides here. Further, he must somehow explain what Paul means when he enumerates several kinds of people who will not inherit the kingdom of God (e.g. Eph 5:5).

Ultimately, Campbell has provided a highly readable and accessible portrait of Paul's life that makes good sense of the NT evidence. As any biography must be, this one views Paul through the theological lenses of the author, but in this case it makes for an exciting read and a compelling vision of the subject.

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Philippians: A Commentary. By Paul A. Holloway. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017, xxx + 256 pp., \$49.00.

Paul A. Holloway is University Professor of Classics and Ancient Christianity at Sewanee: The University of the South. The commentary is largely an outgrowth of his doctoral dissertation at the University of Chicago which was published as *Consolation in Philippians: Philosophical Sources and Rhetorical Strategy* (SNTSMS 112; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). It is a welcome addition to the Hermeneia series along with other recent volumes such as Robert Jewett's work on Romans and François Bovon's work on Luke.

Looking at the commentary as a whole, one finds front matter containing a preface, table of contents, and abbreviations (pp. vi–xxx) before coming to the introduction (pp. 1–57). After the commentary proper (pp. 59–191), we find a bibliography (pp. 193–208) as well as indexes for Greek terms and expressions, modern authors, and subjects (pp. 209–54). Sadly, one is left with 132 pages of commentary, less than what one finds in recent mid-size commentaries, such as those by Stephen Fowl (*Philippians* [Two Horizons NT Commentary Series; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005]) and Lynn H. Cohick (*Philippians* [Story of God Bible Commentary; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013]).

Let me start with some of the obvious strengths of Holloway's commentary on Philippians. First, Holloway gives us a rich resource in references to ancient literature on consolation and on Paul's word choices. A number of these are cited and explained in the text. One welcomes the reading of the letter against the historical background. Second, for Holloway Philippians is a letter of consolation; he follows this thesis throughout, never diverging. One always knows where the author is going. Third, the bibliography is a valuable resource, containing many continental works in German, French, and Italian.

Throughout the introduction to the commentary, Holloway states his positions in a direct way. He opts for a Roman provenance for the letter (p. 22). Regarding composition, after nine pages on the issue, Holloway concludes that the

letter is a unity rather than a collection of fragments (pp. 10–19). This position is largely based on the “striking ... number of verbal and thematic parallels that run through the various alleged letter fragments” (p. 18). Regarding the letter’s occasion, Holloway presents his perspective clearly. The situation Paul faces is as follows: First, the Philippians’ reported factiousness (e.g. 4:2) was causing them to live in a manner unworthy of the Gospel (1:27), thus endangering their final salvation (2:12–13). Second, the root cause of this difficulty was their grief over his imprisonment and their own unexpected suffering. Third, the first source of grief (his imprisonment) indicated a failure on the Philippians’ part to identify the things that really matter (1:10). Fourth, the second source of grief (their own suffering) indicated a failure to expect suffering as the apocalyptic people of God (1:29–30). Finally, while Paul had to thank the Philippians for the recent gift (4:10–20), he would need to do so without contradicting his claim that material circumstances do not really matter (see pp. 30–31).

Perhaps it might be helpful to point out Holloway’s positions on particular exegetical issues. Holloway, in my view rightly and against most translations (ESV, KJV, NASB, NET, NIV), takes the prepositional phrase ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ μνήσῃ ὑμῶν (1:3) as a cause for Paul’s thanks: “I give thanks to my God *for* every remembrance *of you*” (p. 72; emphasis original). He argues partly from syntax and partly from the fact that finding “comfort in pleasant memories was a popular consolatory topos” (p. 72).

Regarding ἀρπαγμός (2:6), Holloway rejects the conclusions of Roy Hoover (“The *Harpagmos* Enigma: A Philological Solution,” *HTR* 64 [1971]: 95–119) that Christ possessed equality with God yet did not regard it as a situation to exploit. Holloway translates the second half of 2:6 as stating that Christ “did not consider [his] equality with God a possession that he could not part with” (p. 114). Sadly, the recent defense of Hoover’s position by Michael Martin (“*Ἀρπαγμός* Revisited: A Philological Reexamination of the New Testament’s ‘Most Difficult Word,’” *JBL* 135 [2016]: 175–94) is not referenced by Holloway. Regarding the participle ὑπάρχων (2:6), Holloway opts to take it concessively. That position seems likely. He asserts: “An identical use of the participle is found in 2 Cor 8:9b: ‘although he was rich ...’” (p. 119).

Holloway takes πίστεως Χριστοῦ in 3:9 as objective (largely following Barry Matlock, “Detheologizing the ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ Debate,” *NovT* 42 [2000]: 1–24). For Holloway, Paul’s common contrast of “faith” and “works” is rhetorical shorthand for different methods Gentiles might use to join the people of God. He adds, “As is often the case with Paul, clarity is sacrificed for rhetorical point” (p. 164).

Again, according to Holloway, Paul faces a difficult situation. The Philippians had sent him a gift for which he should thank them. Normally this would have been simple enough. In the case of Paul’s relationship with the Philippians, however, it has been significantly complicated by Paul’s decision to present himself as someone unaffected by things that do not matter, which presumably includes the Philippians’ gift. However, the alleged obligation to thank the Philippians is a modern cultural importation. Holloway, though masterful in his use of ancient sources on consolation, completely neglects ancient and many modern sources on social

reciprocity and gratitude. Regarding Phil 4:10–20, although he uses the well-worn label “thankless thanks” (but only in the introduction; pp. 16–17, 30), he does not engage G. W. Peterman, “‘Thankless Thanks’: The Epistolary Social Convention in Philippians 4.10–20,” *TynBul* 42 (1991): 261–70.

I should also point out some areas of concern. In keeping with the goals of the Hermeneia series, the commentary is historical and critical, taking no particular confessional stance and eschewing homiletical translation. Sadly, this means little to no theological reflection. One could easily accept this if we did not, at times, find the author striking a condescending tone regarding theology. For example, Holloway asserts that there is a host of religiously conservative commentators whose views are skewed by their theological commitments. His footnote includes the works of Gerald Hawthorne, Peter O’Brien, Moisés Silva, Gordon Fee, Marcus Bockmuehl, and Ben Witherington (p. 10 n. 81). Fee, Hawthorne, and Silva appear only in this note. Witherington is dismissed in another note. References to Bockmuehl and O’Brien together equal the references to Gnlika, a favorite of Holloway (other favorites include Collange, Lightfoot, Müller, and Reumann). On a related note, since one of the goals for the Hermeneia series is to provide a full critical discussion of each problem of interpretation, one wonders why the commentary does not have a single reference to N. T. Wright’s works (see, e.g., Wright’s “ἀρπαγμός and the Meaning of Philippians 2:5–11,” *JTS* 37 [1986]: 321–52).

Regarding Phil 2:12, relying only on NT evidence, Holloway takes *κατεργάζεσθε* as “do,” “produce,” or “make” (as with the rest of the NT uses; e.g. Rom 2:9, 4:15, 7:15; Jas 1:3; 1 Pet 4:3). He translates the main clause of 2:12 as “work hard to accomplish your own salvation.” No evidence is supplied, such as Exod 35:33 or 39:1 (LXX), which could justify translating it “put your salvation to work” or “work your salvation” (to make it fruitful).

Holloway mentions Paul “languishing in a Roman prison” (p. 71). If one is inclined to give historical credence to Acts—and Holloway rejects that possibility (e.g. pp. 20, 24, 26)—then house arrest is more likely (Acts 28). There is a strange habit that, when referring to joy, the word is almost always (and without explanation) found in quotation marks. He complains that “the commentary tradition has yet to come to grips with Paul’s use of this important term” (p. 3). Sadly, the mechanics of joy are not explained.

In conclusion, the commentary, at \$49 and 286 pages, is relatively small and expensive in comparison with other commentaries. Gordon Fee’s *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995) brings us 543 pages for \$50.00. G. Walter Hansen’s *The Letter to the Philippians* (PNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009) offers 392 pages for \$44.00. Certainly, the scholar on Paul, or especially on Philippians, will find that Holloway’s Hermeneia commentary on Philippians is a necessity. Pastors will be better served by Fee and Hansen.

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The Letter to the Colossians. By Scot McKnight. New International Commentary on the NT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018, lx + 442 pp., \$55.00.

Scot McKnight, the author of the present commentary, is Julius R. Mantey Chair of NT at Northern Seminary. This is his third contribution to the NICNT series, now edited by Joel B. Green (2013–). McKnight has previously contributed commentaries on James (2011) and Philemon (2017) to this series. McKnight's present entry, along with his 2017 commentary on Philemon, replaces two of the three letters encompassed by F. F. Bruce's 1984 three-letter commentary, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, which itself replaced his own 1957 commentary on Colossians and E. K. Simpson's commentary on Ephesians (with which it was bound) and Jac J. Müller's 1955 commentary on Philemon. McKnight's replacement volume on Colossians is a much longer than Bruce's 1984 replacement, which occupied 184 pages. As is typical of other recent contributions to the NICNT series, this one opens with a series preface by the editor of record (Green; pp. xi–x), an author's preface (pp. xi–xii), a list of abbreviations (pp. xiii–xvi), and a select bibliography (pp. xvii–lx). The bibliography includes commentaries, ancient sources, and general resources. Following the bibliography are an introduction (pp. 1–72) and an expositional commentary of the text of Colossians (pp. 75–400). Appended to the commentary are three indices: subjects, authors, Scripture and other ancient texts.

McKnight offers a lengthy, 72-page introduction to Colossians. He organizes his discussion under five headings: authorship, opponents and setting, date and imprisonment, theology, and structure. McKnight favors Pauline authorship (pp. 5–18) but observes that much of the discussion on the authorship of Paul's letters proceeds on a faulty assumption that his undisputed letters present "a pure Paul." These letters, then, become the basis upon which scholars compare the disputed letters. Instead, McKnight contends, "We have no pure Pauline letters, no 'undisputed' or 'genuine' Pauline letters, but only letters in which we hear the voice of Paul standing alongside co-workers and (probably) professional scribes" (p. 18). Concerning Pauline opponents in Colossae (pp. 18–34), McKnight identifies five descriptive points of scholarly consensus: (1) they operated with a Jewish set of ideas and practices; (2) they allied to their Jewish-Christian theology a kind of dualism that probably owes its origins to some kind of Hellenism; (3) they entangled themselves with the "elemental powers of this world"; (4) they affirmed a kind of world-denying asceticism; and (5) they may also have worshiped angels or, more probably in McKnight's estimation, advocated a form of asceticism designed to lead worshipers into ascetic, sensory, and mystical experiences. McKnight favors characterizing them as "*halakic mystics*" (p. 32; cf. p. 18). McKnight favors an Ephesian imprisonment for Colossians (pp. 34–39, cf. p. 382) and a date of origin in the mid-50s (p. 39). McKnight organizes the theology in Colossians (pp. 35–65) under the categories of conversion/call, Christology, soteriology, ecclesiology, ethics, and eschatology. He is less certain about whether there is an anti-empire theme in Colossians. The last portion of the introduction addresses the literary structure of Colossians (pp. 66–72). After delineating the proposals of seven representative

commentaries (those of Wright, Barth and Blanke, Dunn, MacDonald, Sumney, Heil, and Pao), McKnight offers his own four-point structure, along with various subpoints. The main points are: I. Introduction (1:1–2:5); II. Doctoral Correction (2:6–3:4); III. Practical Exhortation (3:5–4:6); and IV. Conclusion (4:7–18).

With regard to the format of the commentary itself, McKnight follows the NIV 2011 as a base translation, coupled with ongoing comparisons to the CEB in the footnotes. Each major section of the commentary is prefaced with introductory comments that serve to provide readers with an overview of the literary, structural, and thematic details of that portion. The numerous subheadings begin with the translation and comparison, as previously mentioned, and relevant text-critical notes, followed by a verse-by-verse commentary. Greek terms, grammatical details, and more technical matters of scholarly discussion are typically relegated to footnotes. McKnight's principal dialogue partners are the writings and commentaries of Barth and Blanke, Bruce, Dunn, Harris, Hübner, Lohse, MacDonald, Moo, Pao, Pokorný, Sumney, Thompson, Witherington, and Wright. In addition to providing a verse-by-verse treatment of the text, which is customary of the NICNT series, McKnight includes four excursuses: "A Wisdom Hymn" (1:15–20; pp. 133–45); "Sharing Christ's Sufferings" (1:24; pp. 187–92); "The Powers as Polluted Structures" (1:16; 2:15; pp. 252–61); and "Household Regulations in Search of Order" (3:18–4:1; pp. 336–41).

The following is a sampling of McKnight's interpretive perspective on the text. Like many scholars, McKnight regards Col 1:15–20 as a hymn, but he also helpfully discusses its rhetorical strategy: namely, "to show that the audience and the author are allied in a common Christocentric faith, or perhaps more refined, into a [C]hristological monotheism" (p. 132). In discussing Paul's suffering (1:24), McKnight concludes that the "big picture" is to "*locate those sufferings in a meaning-creating narration of the gospel story*" (p. 186; emphasis original). McKnight is "inclined to see" the debated phrase τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου (2:8, 20) as "a clever reference to *diaspora-framed Jewish halakic practices understood now as having spiritual force contrary to the will of God*" (p. 228; emphasis original). He plausibly interprets σωματικῶς in 2:9 as a reference to Christ's incarnation: "God's fullness indwelling the body of Jesus himself both in his earthly and in his glorified existence" (p. 230). McKnight understands the genitive construction of the debatable "the worship of the angels" (θρησκεία τῶν ἀγγέλων [2:18]) as a descriptive genitive: namely, "angelic-like worship" (p. 276). He maintains that this view is confirmed by the third expression Paul uses in 2:18 (going into great detail about what one has seen). McKnight identifies the two references to the "things above" in 3:1–2 as referring respectively to where Christ rules, on the one hand, and in stark contrast to the earth, where the powers of sin rule, on the other (p. 291). The phrase has implications in three dimensions: cosmological, eschatological, and ethical (p. 291). McKnight's brief excursus on the household code (*Haustafel*) of 3:18–4:1 (pp. 336–41) precedes his exposition of it (pp. 341–67). He contends that the external-facing dimension of the code regulations need not be the entirety of interpretation, "for they display here an internality that deserves even more attention: this is how husbands-wives, children-fathers, and slaves-masters are *to live out the gospel in the world*" (p. 340; em-

phasis original). McKnight considers the “ecclesial instructions” of 4:2–6 (prayer and relations with outsiders) to be lacking in explicit connection with the two principal themes of 2:6–4:1 (baptismal life and doing all in the name of Christ) (pp. 367–68). He therefore characterizes this unit “to be the turning home in the writing of Colossians” (p. 368).

Throughout the commentary McKnight draws widely upon both biblical and extra-biblical texts along with representative Jewish, Greco-Roman, and (some) early Christian sources. At times McKnight has a tendency toward long citations of both primary sources (pp. 66–71, 99, 139–43, 196, 234–36, 247, 253–54, 256–59) and secondary paragraph-length quotations of DeMaris (p. 26), Bockmuehl (p. 196), Dunn (p. 260–61), and others. One wonders if some of these citations could have been thinned out to some degree.

Key in many ways to much of McKnight’s commentary is his understanding of the opponents as halakic mystics (cf. the index on p. 404). He views almost the entire middle portion of the letter as a form of doctrinal correction (2:6–3:4), with 2:6–7 providing the initial exhortation, 2:8–19 providing the correction of false religion, and 2:20–3:4 providing the exhortation to true religion. Here, I would like to have seen some engagement with the doctoral thesis of Adam Copenhaver, completed at the University of Aberdeen in 2012 and recently published as *Reconstructing the Historical Background of Paul’s Rhetoric in the Letter to the Colossians* (LNTS 585; London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2018). Copenhaver takes issue with the common theories that maintain that Colossians was a response to active, defined opponents in the Lycus Valley. He maintains instead that Paul adopted a form of oppositional rhetoric to develop his recipients’ identity as new people in Christ and to appeal to them to live a new kind of life in Christ in the face of a hostile religious context.

The portion on practical exhortation (3:5–4:6) is full of good insights (McKnight goes contrary to many commentators in commencing this portion with 3:5 rather than 3:1). It is also evident throughout the commentary that McKnight is concerned about making contemporary connections and application, and his emphases on both “Christocentrism” (e.g., pp. 90, 145, 211) and “Christoformity” (e.g., pp. 49–50, 145, 298, 311, 331, 357) are surely welcome (the latter as a suggested alternative to Gorman’s “cruciformity”). Overall McKnight has provided another substantive contribution to the NICNT series, a worthy replacement of its abovementioned predecessor by F. F. Bruce. Credit goes to the present and previous editors of the NICNT series for their diligence in keeping the entries of the NICNT series up to date.

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Jude on the Attack: A Comparative Analysis of the Epistle of Jude, Jewish Judgement Oracles, and Greco-Roman Invective. By Alexandra Robinson. Library of NT Studies 581. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2018, xix + 251 pp., \$114.00.

Whereas many have observed Jude's polemical style, Alexandra Robinson's revised Ph.D. thesis, *Jude on the Attack*, seeks to clarify more specifically both the Greek and Jewish elements standing behind the letter. Surveying a range of Greco-Roman and Jewish sources, Robinson argues that "Greco-Roman invective and Jewish judgement oracles ... [are] the specific genres Jude may have drawn upon in his composition" (p. 201), and she concludes that "Jude's Jewish invective is a remarkable fusion of Greek and Jewish polemical texts compelling the beloved to 'contend for the faith'" (p. 204). She argues that formally Jude is indebted to Greco-Roman invective but that the letter's themes and allusions are dominated particularly by Jewish judgment oracles. Thus, she settles on the final label of "Jewish invective" for the letter (p. 5).

After a brief introduction (pp. 1–5), Robinson's second chapter discusses the issues of authorship, the relationship between Jude and 2 Peter, and two particular textual variants (Jude 5 and 22–23) that bear upon her overall argument ("Preliminary Matters"; pp. 6–16). Deciding against the NA²⁸ and with Wasserman and Frey, Robinson argues that verse 5 should read *κύριος* (agreeing with NA²⁷) rather than *Ἰησοῦς*. While she acknowledges that either reading is possible, the *ὁ κύριος* reading is important for her argument later in the monograph regarding what she sees as an *inclusio* between v. 4 and vv. 14–15 revolving around the term *κύριος*, a connection that is strengthened by the presence of the same term in vv. 5 and 9 (see p. 69 and pp. 131–32). Furthermore, concerning the difficult issues that surround vv. 22–23, Robinson settles for a "three-clause, single-object interpretation whereby the beloved are instructed to show mercy to those with whom they contest" (p. 16); however, the latter point is not developed anywhere in the rest of the work.

Chapter 3 ("Examining the Literature, the Method, and the Genres"; pp. 17–39) surveys the commentary literature regarding the various Jewish, Greek, and polemical elements of Jude. In addition to clarifying the methodology used in the study (Robinson adopts a "tri-focal" lens: rhetorical, historical, and sociolinguistic), the chapter argues for the primary influences of Greco-Roman and Jewish judgment oracles upon Jude. With these preliminary chapters in mind, the main body of Robinson's study consist of an analysis in four parts: an examination of structure (chap. 4), aims (chap. 5), themes (chap. 6), and style (chap. 7). Each of these four chapters follow the same pattern: (1) an examination of Jewish judgment oracles, complete with a four-part case study of Jer 29:9–22; (2) a corresponding examination of Greco-Roman invectives supported by a four-part case study of both Demosthenes's *Against Meidias* and Ovid's *Ibis*; (3) an examination of Jude itself; and finally (4) a comparative analysis of Jewish judgment oracles, Greco-Roman invectives, and Jude. Proceeding in this way successfully supports Robinson's stated purpose.

With respect to structure (chap. 4; pp. 40–81), Robinson demonstrates that Jude contains features of Greco-Roman invective. Specifically, the letter's use of

praise and blame to demarcate the dangerous intruders from the beloved are said to resemble the same strategy outlined by Cicero and Libanius. The strategy of dividing one's audience into two groups, one that is the beloved and the other that is marked out for shame, is typical of Greco-Roman invective. A second feature that Robinson identifies in Jude is the "noticeable rise in aggression and intensity, as opposed to the outright anger typical of the prophets" (p. 81). This, too, suggests for Robinson that Greco-Roman invective has influenced the structure of the letter.

Jude's aims, according to Robinson, also resemble Greco-Roman invective (chap. 5; pp. 82–113). Primarily, Jude uses his epistle to warn his audience of the secret threat among them, specifically encouraging them to contend for "the faith" (which Robinson understands as a reference to the covenant relationship with God; she takes ἡ πίστις "to be a pledge between two parties" [p. 101]). This aim—warning an unaware community of an internal threat—is at home with the concerns of Greco-Roman invective, but it uses Jewish content to fill in the details. Jude publicly shames the intruders marking them out as a dangerous group that has infiltrated the community. Exposing the intruders' true nature is a feature shared among several Greco-Roman invectives (e.g. Cicero's *First Catiline*, *Against Piso*, *Against Verrés*, and *Against Sophists*), but Jude specifically achieves this warning by means of Jewish narratives and allusions focusing on the audience's covenant relationship with the Lord. Less convincingly, Robinson identifies a second aim in which Jude addresses the intruders themselves in order to communicate that "their fate is sealed" (p. 107). In several passages, Robinson hints at a situation where the intruders are present at the public reading of the letter (Jude "makes clear to the opponents, hidden among the believers, that judgement is coming" [p. 94]; "Jude addresses both the believers and the ungodly" [p. 107]; "the false teachers ... standing among the believers as the epistle was read" [p. 110]). However, she does not offer an argument for this historical situation and does not consider contrary evidence to this picture; namely, the fact that the letter never directly addresses the intruders.

The final two substantive chapters considers themes (chap. 6; pp. 114–49) and style (chap. 7; pp. 150–200). Here Robinson argues that the majority of Jude's themes, stories, metaphors, allusions, and quotations are drawn from Jewish traditions (Exodus, the fallen angels, Sodom and Gomorrah, Cain, Korah, and Balaam). Jewish judgment oracles in particular are taken up by Jude to make his point. Implicitly she asserts that the Jewish content of Jude is due to the fact that the audience is primarily Jewish. Stylistically, Jude "follows the texture of invective, constantly altering the pace and tenor of his discourse to maintain the attention of his audience" (p. 204).

Robinson's study clearly shows the affinities Jude has with both Greco-Roman invective and Jewish judgment oracles. Her most helpful contribution alongside bringing the comparative material together for the reader to consider is her observation that the "*form* (structure, aims, and style) of the epistle is typical of a Greco-Roman invective, while the discourse is filled with Jewish *content* (themes and stylistic devices)" (p. 204; emphasis original). Robinson's monograph is well-organized and judicious in expression, keeping its focus on the central thesis

throughout. The work clarifies the specific kind of affinities Jude's polemical character has with Greco-Roman and Jewish influences. Though each of the substantive chapters includes sections analyzing Jude's structure, aims, themes, and style along with a concluding section in which she compares Jude with the Greco-Roman and Jewish parallels, insights regarding the nature and structure of Jude itself fade into the background. There is much in the way of interesting and illuminating parallels between Jude and Greco-Roman invective and Jewish judgment oracles here, but how specifically this helps to illuminate the structure, aims, themes, and style of Jude's epistle remains, at least for me, in the half-light.

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Both Judge and Justifier: Biblical Legal Language and the Act of Justifying in Paul. By James B. Prothro. WUNT 2/461. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018, xiii + 280 pp., €84.00 paper.

In this careful work, Jim Prothro makes a significant contribution to the clarification of what sort of legal settings Paul's language presupposes. One would have thought that this question, as significant as it has been in the history of interpretation, would have been settled long ago. At the very least, the lines of debate and disagreement should be clear by now. They are not. To be sure, it has been widely assumed or accepted that Paul's language implies the image of a trial and entails a forensic metaphor. Although this construal of the symbolic context of "justification" in Paul has been contested or qualified, most interpreters read Paul with this conception in mind. Filling out the imagery is left to the imagination of the interpreter. One generally lands in the scene of a criminal trial—where standing law is to be applied—or, in the case of the work of N. T. Wright, a covenantal story of God's dealings with Israel. Our imaginations, however, have to be tamed by the text. Words matter. Prothro rightly gives his attention to them, not in discussion of etymology or semantics, but in the simple but powerful practice of exegesis that takes words and their usage seriously. This study is linguistic, and properly so, even if it does not overlook historical setting and tradition history. It is a model of concision and clarity of argument. The contextually related expressions that have been matters of recent debate, namely *ἔργα νόμου, πίστις Χριστοῦ*, and also *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ*—which for Prothro's purposes is relatively opaque—are left out of consideration. Aside from the conclusion of the work, the same is the case for the term *πίστις*. Prothro does not offer a study of Paul's understanding of justification: the nominal and adjectival usage of righteousness language remain beyond its scope. He offers instead a study focused on Paul's usage of the verb *δικαίω* and the legal scene that this verbal usage implies, as that usage has been formed by the (Greek) Scriptures that form Paul's thought.

As Prothro observes, Paul's usage of *δικαίω* is decidedly biblical in nature. In Hellenistic usage, "to justify" meant to condemn or punish; in borrowing from this usage, the Septuagintal translators have inverted its sense. This observation does

not yet answer the question as to the background and imagery that this language implies. It merely opens the debate, on which Prothro offers an insightful discussion. Some interpreters insist on a narrow, forensic sense of “acquittal,” while others argue for a broader transformational sense. N. T. Wright offers yet another option of a “covenantal declaration” (pp. 7–26). Not only here, but throughout the work, Prothro has read the relevant literature and presents a dispassionate, measured, and often incisive analysis. The footnotes themselves offer an eminently useful bibliography. The appeal to a covenantal conception of Paul’s understanding of justification on the basis of a generalized appeal to Jewish background should no longer be accepted without question. In his careful attention to detail, Prothro has shown that while covenantal ideas are not absent from juridical contexts, they do not form their basis; his discussion of Wright’s reading of Gal 2:16 is superb (pp. 141–45).

Prothro proceeds by analyzing the legal settings of the Septuagintal texts, giving special attention to the contexts in which *δικαιῶ* appears. Following the work of Pietro Bovati on the Hebrew Scriptures, he gives attention to two-party or bilateral contentions, and he rightly makes these his starting point. There are, of course, instances in which a contention is brought before a higher authority such as the elders in the gate or a king, who is expected to render an impartial judgment. In the end, however, the vocabulary of these trilateral contentions does not differ appreciably from that of the bilateral disputes. The judge is there to ensure that justice is done in a contention between two parties. We may note, parenthetically, that the trial of Jesus, as we have it in the Gospels, basically maintains this form, even if Jesus’ accusers appeal to Roman interests. Prothro further helpfully distinguishes the mundane, or as he describes them, “quotidian” contentions from those involving God. Such contentions, especially those that are bilateral, take on added dimensions, since there is no higher authority to which one might appeal in seeking justice against one’s opponent. In a contention with God, everything depends on the mercy of God alone.

The treatment of the Septuagintal background consists of three chapters. Prothro first explores “quotidian” bilateral and trilateral contentions. Against this backdrop, he devotes two independent chapters to the discussion of bilateral and trilateral divine contentions.

Following a brief summary of his findings and an equally short but effective presentation of tradition-historical observations, Prothro turns to Paul. For Paul as well as for the Scriptures and tradition from which he draws, the usage of *δικαιῶ* appears more frequently, but not exclusively, in theological contentions that are bilateral. In such contexts, the accused may be “the justifier” who confesses God’s right in a “doxology of judgment,” or God himself may appear as the “justifier” who, despite his right, justifies his human adversary in the contention. This dynamic is clear to nearly all interpreters in Rom 3:4, with N. T. Wright—who perhaps has forgotten God’s contention with Job—being, apparently, nearly the lone exception. Here Prothro sets aside Wright’s argument brilliantly and briefly (pp. 168–70). The bilateral context appears elsewhere, as, for example, in Gal 2:16, where it is made evident by Paul’s allusive reference to Ps 143:2 (142:2 LXX): “by works of

the Law, no flesh *shall be justified before you.*" As Prothro rightly observes, this conception of the legal context of "justification" extends into Paul's following argument in Galatians, as is evidenced by the echo of it in Gal 3:11, "in the Law no one shall be justified *before God*" (cf. Rom 2:13).

Prothro's work also confirms the observation made by others that "justification" (*δικαίω*) entails not merely a bare verdict, but judgment effected. In biblical and Pauline contexts, whether the contention is bilateral or trilateral, the one who triumphs in the dispute seeks not merely judgment pronounced, but judgment effected. In this connection, Prothro's extended argument for reading Rom 6:7 as a Christological reference, and therefore as expressing God's justification of Christ through Christ's vindication in his resurrection, is especially valuable (pp. 186–202). As Paul makes clear in context, this vindication of Christ belongs to all the baptized. The verbal expression of Rom 6:7 has its nominal counterpart in Rom 4:25 and is thus contextually related to the close connection between "reconciliation" and "justification" that appears in Rom 5:9–10 (which Prothro discusses at length; pp. 182–85). As Prothro observes, in this recognition of "justification" as effected justice, both the conception of justification as a bare pronouncement and the opposing conception of justification as transformation (or a bare liberation) of the human being are set aside.

As Prothro observes in his conclusion, his work opens up fresh questions for further study (p. 212). It is worth noting here some of the theological implications of the contention between God and the human being that Prothro discovers at the center of Paul's understanding of justification. If this claim holds, both present justification and the final judgment do not for Paul take the form of a criminal trial in which guilt or innocence is determined merely by written law. As significant as the Law is for Paul, it "enters in" later to a contention between God and the human being that already exists. Transgressions appear in Romans as the divine retribution that falls on idolatrous humanity. Paul's perspective in Galatians is no different. For him, the first commandment remains the first commandment. Or, more precisely, it is the commandment behind all the written commandments. Behind all "sins" lies the fundamental sin of unbelief. This observation goes a long way toward answering the false distinction between sin conceived as "transgression" and Sin conceived as a "power" offered by J. L. Martyn and Martin de Boer, which Prothro also rejects (pp. 149–54). It also clarifies Paul's apostolic mission of effecting "the obedience of faith" among the Gentiles (1:5; 15:18; 16:19, 26). Faith itself, or more precisely faith in the gospel, is for Paul the one true obedience that manifests itself in thanksgiving and worship of the Creator and love toward the neighbor (cf. Rom 6:17–18). It is not, *pax* Prothro (following Matthew Bates), simply allegiance or devotion (pp. 213–14), although it encompasses these. Faith is "newness of life" and includes the bodily obedience that is the necessary anticipation of the bodily resurrection (Käsemann).

As Prothro indicates, he is in substantial agreement with my own reading of Paul on the question of justification. It is no wonder that I find myself in fundamental agreement with his argument in nearly all the matters he touches. His work, however, is obviously his own. His careful analysis of Paul's understanding of justifi-

fiction provides a clarity and depth to its setting and background that cannot be ignored. This work is not to be overlooked.

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The Pharisees and Figured Speech in Luke-Acts. By Justin R. Howell. WUNT 2/456. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017, xii + 386 pp., €94.00.

The Pharisees and Figured Speech in Luke-Acts is a revised version of Justin R. Howell's doctoral thesis, completed at the University of Chicago under the supervision of Hans-Josef Klauck. Howell's central argument is that, although scholars have detected ambiguity in the portrait of the Pharisees in Luke-Acts, careful attention to Luke's employment of figured speech reveals that his opinion of this group is actually negative.

The book as a whole consists of sixteen chapters divided into four broad sections bookended by a brief introduction and conclusion. In the introduction, Howell highlights the problem of Luke's ambiguity about the Pharisees, and he suggests that ancient rhetorical conventions, particularly those regarding figured speech, may prove to be an illuminating approach to this topic.

The first section, titled "Contextualizing the Question," is made up of four chapters. Chapter 1 focuses on clarifying what Howell means by "figured speech." In lieu of providing a succinct definition, Howell points to six terms that relate to speech that may fall under this label: (1) allusion (ἔμφασις); (2) discretion (εὐπρέπεια); (3) security (ἀσφάλεια); (4) freedom of speech (παρρησία; although free speech is often the opposite of figured speech, Howell claims that feigned free speech can function figurally); (5) irony (εἰρωνεία); and (6) indirect speech (ὁ πλάγιος λόγος). There is some overlap between several of these terms, and the uniting factor appears to be types of speech whose meaning is in some way disguised and therefore must be figured out by the audience. Howell goes on to note, however, that there is no standard list of figures in ancient rhetoricians, and he mentions several other categories of figured speech in the main body of the work.

Chapter 2 lays out Howell's wide-ranging and eclectic methodological approach, and the three remaining chapters of the first section survey scholarship on the historical Pharisees, discuss the provenance of Luke-Acts, and examine the identity of the author of these volumes and his original readers. On many of these issues, Howell does not propose any firm conclusion, but he does suggest that Luke-Acts was likely written between 105 and 120 CE, and he argues that these volumes reflect a Hellenistic Jewish perspective.

The second section is titled "The Suppression of Free Speech" and contains three chapters. The first of these addresses the framing of Luke's narrative, noting that the first and final lines respectively contain the words ἀσφάλεια and παρρησία. According to Howell, the preface's use of the term ἀσφάλεια, which can mean "security" or "truth," is intended to indicate that, although the book contains subversive content, it is veiled in figured speech so that the book is "secure" to

possess and share. At the same time, he claims, this signal is itself veiled by means of the double meaning of ἀσφάλεια, which here also refers to the “truth” of Luke’s message. The remainder of this chapter then points to the need for guarded speech within Luke’s narrative due to the role of the Pharisees as spies.

The next chapter focuses on the question of Christian Pharisees in Acts, and Howell suggests that Luke consistently depicts such characters as former Pharisees. Paul’s claim to be a Pharisee in 23:6, Howell claims, is an instance of figured speech that is shown to be false by Paul’s statement in 26:5 that he *used* to live as a Pharisee. The final chapter in this section then discusses Luke’s perspective on Gamaliel in Acts 5:33–40, arguing that Gamaliel is a less friendly character than many have assumed because he refers to the apostles contemptibly, because he is perhaps depicted as being responsible for the beating that the apostles receive, and because his only named disciple (Saul) is an ardent persecutor.

The third section, “Luke’s Moral Diagnosis of the Pharisees,” also consists of three chapters. The first suggests that subtle figural devices within Luke’s introduction of the Pharisees imply that they are not among the righteous but among the sinners who need the healing that Jesus brings. The second claims that Luke depicts the Pharisees as full of unjust passion for money, glory, and luxury. These unquenchable thirsts, Howell proposes, are figurally represented by the man with dropsy in 14:1–6. The third chapter in this section then discusses Jesus’ overt criticism of the Pharisees in 11:37–52, suggesting that this passage contains subtle links to earlier sayings in the chapter that are thereby shown also to be figural references to the Pharisees.

The fourth section is titled “The Pharisees and the Kingdom of God,” and each of the five chapters in this section focuses on an individual passage in the Gospel of Luke. In the first, Howell argues that Jesus’s statement that the kingdom of God is ἐντὸς ὑμῶν in 17:21 has a double meaning, referring both to the kingdom being “within” one’s power to enter and also “among” Jesus’ hearers through the presence of Jesus as a kingly benefactor. The next chapter discusses the events within the home of Simon the Pharisee in 7:36–50 and attempts to draw links between Simon, the Pharisees more broadly, and the unspecified groups criticized earlier in chapter 7. Following this, Howell examines 13:31–35 and detects figural wordplay indicating that the Pharisees here function as negative characters. He also claims that the reference to Herod as “this fox” in this passage is a figural reference to the Pharisees because of Jesus’ use of the demonstrative pronoun “this” (αὐτή). Howell then looks at Jesus’ entrance into Jerusalem and the Parable of the Minas, suggesting that the citizens who reject the reign of the king within the parable are a figure for the Pharisees who seek to silence the acclamation of Jesus in 19:39. The section then concludes with a chapter on the story of Zacchaeus in 19:1–10. Howell here claims that Luke uses figural wordplay to depict Zacchaeus as an informer who intends to alert the authorities about Jesus. Howell furthermore links this passage to the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector who “went down to his house justified” in 18:14 in order to interpret Zacchaeus’s ascent and descent from the tree as a figural pointer to the Pharisees’ need to humble themselves in order to receive the salvation that Jesus offers.

In the conclusion, Howell claims that his work has demonstrated that Luke's use of figured speech is the real cause behind the ambiguity in Luke's portrait of the Pharisees: "We have seen that such figures enable him to offer his criticisms in a discreet and secure fashion, albeit with the effect that sometimes the figures and thus the points of critique either go unnoticed or are even understood as laudatory" (p. 296). He then points to further implications of his work for studies regarding the writings of oppressed groups, the relationship between Luke-Acts and the writings of Marcion, and the study of Luke-Acts within a Hellenistic Jewish context.

The virtue of this book is that it does contain a plausible argument that scholars have overestimated the degree to which the Pharisees function as positive characters in Luke-Acts. Unfortunately, many implausible layers have been added onto this plausible argument, and some of these additions constitute central arguments within the book. I will mention four.

First, the fact that Luke includes overt criticisms of the Pharisees (e.g. 11:39–44) casts more than a shadow of doubt on Howell's claim that Luke felt the need to disguise his criticisms of this group for the sake of his readers' safety. If Luke exercises such "freedom of speech" here, why would he need to speak in figures elsewhere? Second, Howell's attempts to find references to the Pharisees in passages where they are not named often seem either to be too subtle or to miss the point that the passage applies to a group that would certainly include the Pharisees as Luke depicts them but is by no means limited to the Pharisees. For example, the Pharisees are hardly the only party in Jerusalem that rejects Jesus. Third, Howell's frequent claims that Luke intended particular words with a double meaning are sometimes intriguing but rarely persuasive. The double-meanings that he suggests usually appear to be beyond what any ordinary ancient reader could (or did!) comprehend in one term. Finally, Howell's interpretations sometimes appear to cross over into allegory (e.g. his comments on Zacchaeus going up and down the tree), which does find support in some early church readings but bears little resemblance to disciplined exegesis.

These shortcomings significantly diminish the impact of the overall argument of the book. Nevertheless, if one is able to look past these features to the stronger aspects of Howell's arguments about the passages that mention the Pharisees, he has made a case that is worth considering. In addition, each chapter displays a wealth of research, and the book may be worth consulting for an interesting perspective on a number of the passages that it covers.

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How to Read Theology: Engaging Doctrine Critically and Charitably. By Uche Anzor. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018, xv + 218pp., \$21.99 paper; *Approaching the Study of Theology: An Introduction to Key Thinkers, Concepts, Methods and Debates.* By Anthony C. Thiselton. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2018, xv + 240 pp., \$24.00 paper; *Introducing Theological Method: A Survey of Contemporary Theologians and*

Approaches. By Mary M. Veeneman. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017, 202 pp., \$24.99 paper; *Evangelical Theological Method: Five Views*. Edited by Stanley E. Porter and Steven E. Studebaker. Downers Grove, IL, IVP Academic, 2018, viii + 224 pp., \$25.00 paper.

Books dealing with theological method tend to be ignored or placed on the back of our reading lists. We overlook theological methodology to the detriment of the church as well as our own understanding and perspective. In this era when postmodern worldview believes that there are no permanent or universal truths and *sola Scriptura* is on the decline among evangelicals, we need to pay attention to the rapidly changing viewpoints and methodologies that are shaping both the evangelical and larger Christian world.

The four books in this review, either directly or implicitly, deal with the issue of theological method and provide an important barometer of contemporary discussion of this issue.

I begin with the text by Uche Anizor on *Reading Theology* because it will provide a helpful guidepost and attitude for reading books on theological method or any other theological subject “charitably” as well as “critically.” Before evaluating the theology of authors or speakers, Anizor, who teaches at Wheaton College, helpfully and engagingly cautions readers to read in a manner that seeks an understanding of the theologians and their context and background as well as to find value in their perspective before entering into an evaluation or critique of their writing. This will allow readers to truly “speak the truth in love” (Eph 4:15). Next, I will look at two books that attempt to take a descriptive rather than prescriptive way to see theology and its methodology. The first is a text by the eminent British theologian Anthony Thiselton, who writes *Approaching Theology* with the apparent goal of describing the major ideas and thinkers in the history of theology as well as giving concise explanations of major theological doctrines, words, and phrases important to the study of theology. Mary Veeneman, who teaches at North Park University, surveys theological methods of contemporary Christian theology and theologians in a short and descriptive way. The final text I will discuss is part of the Five View series that deals with theological method. Edited by theologian Stanley Porter and his coworker at McMaster Divinity College Steven Studebaker, the book attempts to survey different methods of “evangelical theologians.” Its purpose is to “define and provide rationale for a specific theological method within evangelical theology and explain the importance of their orientation to theology” (p. 23) with a concluding section on application to Christology to show how their method works in a practical way. In my review of each book I will focus on the basic ideas of theological methods by looking at the sources used by theologians and movements and assess whether the book meets its stated goal.

Anizor develops his idea of how to read theology charitably by asking the question, “How would Jesus read?” (p. 22). Jesus would read by seeking the interest of others before his own agenda. This means that we should read texts based on an attitude of love. Quoting Saint Augustine, Anizor proposes that the reading of Scripture (and by implication theological texts) is good only if it results in the love

of God and neighbor (p. 6). This means we should avoid what Anzor calls the “enemies of love,” which are arrogance, suspicion, and favoritism toward those who agree with us. In its place, we should seek as a goal in our reading to promote peace and harmony through seeking an understanding of their perspective. Once we begin the reading process with this attitude, we should then read in an objective manner by understanding the context of the writing, which includes historical context, church or denominational context, and polemical context. In other words, we should do our best to learn the story behind the writing and be empathetic for the writer. Anzor uses the backgrounds of Jürgen Moltmann and Gustavo Gutierrez as examples of understanding the context of theologians. This combination of an attitude of love and a framework of context will allow the reader to enter the reading of the text charitably.

Part 2 of the book discusses how to read critically. Anzor begins with his own perspective on how to evaluate an author’s theological claims. He discusses what he believes should be the sources of theology—Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience—stating, “even where theologians disagree on the relation of Scripture to tradition, reason and experience, they agree on the centrality and authority of Scripture for Christian theology” (p. 60). He also offers what he believes is the best way to use these sources, citing classical and contemporary theologians to show what he believes is a proper way to provide a workable and reliable theological method for evangelicals. With this in mind, his larger point is to provide a basis for understanding and evaluating theology. Because his book is primarily for those who are developing basic skills in reading theology, Anzor points evangelicals in a direction in which they are not reading based on cynicism and personal agendas. On the contrary, he urges us to read with an understanding and appreciation of the value and perspective of the writing so that our critique can be fair minded and useful for a productive and helpful dialogue, even when we disagree.

Thiselton writes an introduction to the study of theology that maps significant landmarks as well as the main areas of debate. It is part of a series of books that attempts to provide basic information for students taking a course in theology or simply contemplating entering into such a study. It begins with an introductory section that lays out the biblical roots and historical periods in the study of theology. The section on biblical roots deals with the standard doctrinal divisions of theology and uses biblical texts as well as scholars to explain the basic idea of each doctrine. The historical section presents each of the major historical periods with a discussion of the major ideas and theologians of that period.

After the introduction, the book is divided into three main sections: approaches, concepts and issues, and key terms. From biblical theology to a theology of religions, Thiselton discusses different ways that theologians have approached the study of theology. He does an excellent job of using various theologians of different periods and various types of theological method, with particular emphasis on the progression and trends in hermeneutical theology, one of his areas of expertise.

The second section addresses concepts and issues that are important to the study of theology, such as the atonement, the Trinity, the authority of the Bible, and a very adroit and interesting discussion of Eastern Orthodoxy. While being fair

and descriptive throughout, his discussion emphasizes European theologians and favors less conservative evangelical theological perspectives. For example, in the section on authority, he fails to discuss inerrancy, while in his section on eschatology he is dismissive of the idea of eternal punishment in hell.

The third and last section, Key Terms, briefly defines and explains about 180 terms in approximately forty pages. From fundamentalism to purgatory, and from post-liberalism to queer theology, Thiselton offers a kind of short dictionary of theological terms. This fits the overall purpose of his book, which also contains a substantial bibliography of theological texts with recommendations for reading that seem to be based on his European moderate evangelical perspective. It also contains a chronology of major historical Christian theological figures.

In *Introducing Theological Method*, Mary Veeneman fulfills her purpose of describing theological methodology across the wide spectrum of views that constitute contemporary Christian theology. Beginning with the end of World War I, which marked what Veeneman calls a “turning point in modern theology” (p. 1), through Karl Barth and his break with modern liberalism, she discusses the different theological methods that have emerged in this arc of time. In particular, she highlights the different beginning points of Karl Rahner (human experience), Karl Barth (the Word of God), Thomas Aquinas (the philosophy of Aristotle), and John Calvin (the providence of God, with the Bible as the primary source) to lead readers to understand that “theological method matters because it drives how theological questions are asked and the ways in which texts are read” (p. 3). Veeneman presents the “sources, starting points and orienting questions” to underscore “what is at stake in doing the work of theology” (p.14).

Veeneman begins by discussing the four major sources of theology, which are the same as Anizor’s four sources: Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience (classically called the Wesleyan Quadrilateral). In a helpful discussion of *sola Scriptura*, Veeneman explains that the Reformers identified the Bible as the chief but not only source of theology. This is not the general way that many the contemporary theological methods approach the Bible; instead, they “use” it to reach their own conclusion. While correctly stating that “no plain or flat meaning can be gleaned from the work of interpretation” (p. 12), Veeneman demonstrates that non-evangelical theologies portray a lack of interest in interpreting the Bible as the Word of God in the words of the text.

The remainder of the book discusses what Veeneman believes to be the major theological methods of contemporary theology: ressourcement and neo-orthodox, correlation, postliberal, evangelical, political, feminist, and theologies of religious pluralism and comparative theology. She presents these theologies by using important advocates of each position. For the most part, Veeneman follows her purpose in being fair-minded to each view while describing strengths and weakness of each position. In her description of political and feminist theology, she spends an excessive amount of space (twenty-seven pages) on feminist theology as compared with other political theologies, of which she acknowledges feminist theology is a part. She also reveals her theological perspective in the strident criticism that she has for one particular viewpoint: “very conservative evangelical thinkers” (p.

84). She devotes fourteen pages to the viewpoint of communitarian Stanley Grenz but only four pages to the more mainstream and conservative propositional type of approach represented in her discussion of Millard Erickson. Veeneman notes that the propositional type of approach is “isolated” (p. 86) and often fails to acknowledge the culture. She is less critical of the other viewpoints, which is more consistent with the descriptive purpose of her book. A final point of disagreement is her closing remark that all the perspectives detailed in the book are Christian in a relatively equal sense (p. 190).

The last and most disappointing book is the one that should be, from an evangelical perspective, the most useful and enlightening. Porter and Studebaker have compiled a book that repeats the same problem as some of the spectrum or multi-view books series: the contributors and the positions that they espouse are not necessarily relevant or representative of evangelical theology. While our culture has obviously become more relativistic and postmodern, the mainstream of evangelicalism has not to this point become dominated by these types of views. Yet three of the five perspectives in this volume do not take the Bible as the normative source in a sense like *sola Scriptura* nor see tradition as identifying boundary markers in the sense believed throughout most of church history. While many evangelicals affirm *sola Scriptura* according to the idea that the Bible is the Word of God, Porter and Studebaker wrongly assume that the Bible is the primary and final source for all evangelicals discussed in their book. In reality, the evidence points to culture or context as the primary source that rules over Scripture for three of the methods discussed.

John Franke, an adept scholar who follows the approach of Stanley Grenz, is dismissive of the Bible as propositional truth and discusses Christology as though the decisions of the councils of the early church on the person and work of Jesus are either irrelevant or certainly not authoritative. Missional theology, the term used by Franke to describe his view, is often advanced outside a communitarian and non-foundationalist contexts based on the notion of the “plurality of truth” (p. 171). All contexts are equal, while Scripture can only be interpreted in that community or context that lead to a “variety of theological outcomes and conclusions” (p. 155).

Telford Work, who teaches at Westmont College, takes what he calls an “interdisciplinary approach” where theology penetrates all other fields of human inquiry like a frame displaying a painting. It shows the “true shape and significance of things in the domain of the God’s kingdom” (p. 79). Based on this notion, he discusses Christology to reach the conclusion that the Christian faith is not clear on the issue of homosexuality even though all biblical texts universally condemn it. He sees the church as potentially including homosexual people because they are “sexual minorities” (p. 91). The Bible should not be read as a text of identity politics with a civil-rights agenda. Given his emphasis on other disciplines that can alter conclusions clearly derived from the Bible, Franke ends up with the undefined notion of being gospel-centered with apostolic sensibility.

When context drives the results of theological methods and the Bible is not the primary source for theology, a societal hermeneutic that prioritizes what is

unique to that culture determines theological conclusions. For example, Victor Ezigbo, who teaches at Bethel University, states that we can use indigenous traditions (which are often syncretistic) to redefine the person and work of Christ with the notion of Jesus as Revealer. In fact, syncretism and relativism are issues that Franke, Work, and Ezigbo are forced to discuss because they are real concerns that have no satisfying solutions in their theological methods. Truth is relative in important ways in each of their methods.

Theological methods that do not have to deal with concerns of relativism and syncretism are those espoused by Paul Metzger and Sung Wook Chung. Metzger, who teaches at Multnomah University, espouses a “Trinitarian Dogmatic Theology” that emphasizes the importance of tradition with a focus on the Trinity based on God’s revelation in Jesus Christ. While Franke sees Barth as a relativist, Metzger uses Barth to affirm the central idea that “the only foundation is God’s revelation in Jesus Christ” (p. 118). While Scripture is not the primary source, Metzger’s confessional commitment to the historic Christian faith is clear.

Finally, Chung uses an approach based on the idea of “organizing God’s word into a system of doctrines in accordance with essential topics of biblical instruction (p. 31).” This could be understood as the general approach of a propositional use of Scripture. It is a God-centered approach with the primary goal of knowing God. Chung, a professor at Denver Seminary, uses some of the ideas of Millard Erickson (as did Veeneman) along with his mentors from Denver seminary (Demarest and Lewis). It seems that Chung is rather cryptic in his advocacy for his approach, taking an extraordinary amount of his chapter to qualify his idea. His critique of other approaches lacks any significant attempt to differentiate his perspective from the others. Perhaps a person with firmer convictions and the ability to distinguish between viewpoints could have been selected to write this mainstream and dominant viewpoint in the history of evangelicalism.

An attempt to summarize four books that take four different paths is difficult. While my review is critical of some of the spectrum multi-view books series, I seek to provide helpful insights about why evangelicals should maintain *sola Scriptura*. Anizor affirms that the Bible is the “ultimate authority” (p. 61). The use of community, context, or other disciplines as controllers of the authority of Scripture means, as evangelical theologian Kevin Vanhoozer states in his view of Grenz (and by implication Franke), that Scripture is “made simply one voice among many” (Veeneman, p. 99). Anizor helps point the way to how to read theological texts (charitably as well as critically) while providing a mainstream evangelical perspective on how to read and think theologically. Thiselton and Veeneman offer excellent discussions on the state of contemporary and historical theological methods and ideas, while the Porter and Studebaker edited volume could have been more focused on, and faithful to, mainstream ideas and advocates of evangelicalism without denying the relevance of context or that other views within evangelicalism are growing in influence.

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Cross Vision: How the Crucifixion of Jesus Makes Sense of Old Testament Violence. By Gregory A. Boyd. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017, xii + 292 pp., \$24.99.

Cross Vision is a popularization of Boyd's two-volume work, *The Crucifixion of the Warrior God: Interpreting the Old Testament's Violent Portraits of God in Light of the Cross* (Fortress Press, 2017). Both works, as the subtitles indicate, seek to use the theology of the cross to come to terms with OT passages that portray God as committing violence or as commanding his people to commit acts of violence. Boyd's analysis is one among several recent books wrestling with the OT's apparent approval of genocide and divine violence, including *Show Them No Mercy: 4 Views on God and Canaanite Genocide*, edited by Stanley N. Gundry (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003); *Is God a Moral Monster? Making Sense of the Old Testament God*, by Paul Copan (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011); *The Violence of Scripture: Overcoming the Old Testament's Troubling Legacy*, by Eric A. Seibert (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012); and *The Lost World of the Israelite Conquest*, by John H. Walton and J. Harvey Walton (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2017).

Boyd argues from two premises: (1) Christ crucified is the supreme revelation of the character of God, showing specifically that God is compassionate and non-violent, never destroying life or commanding others to destroy life. (2) Divine inspiration of the Bible is no guarantee that it correctly portrays the character of God, because much of what it says reflects the prejudices and culturally-conditioned beliefs of the human authors. In particular, the Israelites held to typical ANE conceptions about deity, believing that YHWH was a warrior god who committed acts of violence and demanded bloody sacrifices. The first premise forces Boyd to the conclusion that the OT's frequent claims that God commands or inflicts violence cannot be correct. The second premise gives him the means to explain such passages: The prophets, when they attribute violence to YHWH, are mistaken. Boyd asserts that whenever the OT says that YHWH is a vengeful deity who destroys his enemies, "*something else is going on*" (p. 15, emphasis original). The "something else" regularly takes two forms: Either God is using evil proxies to destroy life (because God never directly kills people), or biblical texts that claim God engaged in or commanded violence are simply wrong.

Boyd's first premise disregards a significant feature of traditional Christian theology. The church has always asserted that Jesus's revelation of the divine nature is in two parts, as demonstrated in the two advents. In the first advent, Jesus came as a servant, ready to give his life for the ransom of sinners and to accept the violence inflicted upon his person. Because of the purpose of his ministry, Jesus never called down divine wrath on his enemies. In the second advent, however, Jesus judges the nations with an iron rod and slays them with the word of his mouth. Christians have never believed that Jesus the suffering servant and Jesus the Lord on a white horse who "judges and makes war" (Rev 19:11) are opposed to one another. Both legitimately reflect the character of God, and neither should be embraced to the exclusion of the other.

But Boyd takes 1 Cor 2:2, "I was determined to know nothing while with you except Jesus Christ—and him crucified," as a doctrinal and epistemological claim

that there is nothing to be said about God vis-à-vis violence except that he is the God of the cross and therefore wholly non-violent. Boyd states, "This statement reflects Paul's assumption that, if you understand the meaning of Jesus's crucifixion, you understand everything you need to know about God and about the gospel" (p. 44). But Paul is speaking of his ministerial practice, not making an absolute claim about the divine nature. Paul was continuing the earthly ministry of Jesus, filling up in his flesh what was lacking in Christ's afflictions (Col 1:24). He was not teaching that God never slays his enemies or that the crucifixion contradicts the OT.

Boyd claims that the Israelites allowed their ANE ideology to distort their conception of God. For example, on the basis of Exod 23:28–30 and Lev 18:24–25, he argues that God's original intent was to make Canaan unfruitful and so peacefully induce the Canaanites to migrate elsewhere. In that manner, there would be no need for a violent conquest. However, he says, "It seems that when Yahweh said, 'I want my people to dwell in the land of Canaan,' what Moses's fallen and culturally conditioned ears heard was, 'I want you to slaughter the Canaanites so my people can dwell in the land of Canaan.' For again, in Moses's ANE worldview, acquiring someone else's land and slaughtering the inhabitants of the land were two sides of the same coin" (p. 117). Boyd thus asks, "Now, given their ANE context, we can understand why Joshua and the Israelites sincerely believed Moses. But the important question is, should we?" He answers his own question, "If we remain resolved that the cross is the full revelation of God's true character, I frankly do not see how we can" (p. 117).

Boyd asserts that the Israelites thought that YHWH was similar to the Ugaritic goddess Anat, a grim, murderous deity. Jeremiah 13:14, which speaks of YHWH smashing families without mercy, reflects this pagan ideology. But God, true to his cruciform character, condescended to Jeremiah's misguided theology. God stooped "to bear Jeremiah's sinful conception of him" (p. 54). Boyd celebrates this, as it shows God's compassion and "cruciform" character. Also, when God allowed himself to be portrayed as monstrously violent, that, too, demonstrated his cruciform character. Like Jesus on the cross, God was willing to be portrayed as evil. God revealed "his beautiful character by stooping to bear the ugly sin of his people, thereby taking on a surface appearance that mirrors that sin, just as he does on the cross" (p. 53).

But, Boyd warns us, we have no excuse for holding Jeremiah's notion of God. He says, "But if you instead trust in the mercilessly violent character of God that is reflected on the surface of Jeremiah's ugly portrait, God's true cruciform character will remain as hidden from you as it was from Jeremiah" (p. 54). And yet, he says, Jeremiah did occasionally get it right, when the Spirit broke through his ANE misconceptions to communicate the truth: God did not actively punish Jerusalem at all; he merely withdrew his hand of protection, so that the Babylonians (not God) afflicted Judah (pp. 167–68, citing Lam 2:7).

There is much here that is troubling. Exodus 23:28–30 and Lev 18:24–25 do not imply that YHWH intended to peacefully ease the Canaanites out of the land; this is an exegetical fantasy on Boyd's part. More significantly, Boyd embraces a radical version of a canon within the canon. Having a better understanding of

God's character than Moses or the prophets, he censors their "sinful conception" of God. Against this: Yes, now that the great mystery of Christ has been revealed, there are doctrines we know that they did not. But that does not mean that the prophets misunderstood God's moral character or that they taught theological error. To have only a dim understanding of the Trinity, the incarnation, or the nature of the Messiah's earthly ministry is one thing; to teach gross falsehood about God is quite another. Also, I fail to see how God allowing himself to be wrongly presented as bloodthirsty could be a redemptive act. Jesus accepted the company of sinners and took on the punishment of sinners, but he never pretended to be a sinner. When the Pharisees made accusations against him, he either rebutted them (Matt 12:24–32; Mark 2:24–28) or warned them of the gravity of their error (Matt 26:64). The prophets' alleged misstatements about God are not analogous to the Pharisees' accusations against Jesus. Jeremiah was YHWH's acknowledged prophet, seeking to turn the nation from sin; the Pharisees were the enemies of Christ, seeking to murder Jesus by judicial means.

Boyd's hermeneutic has left the OT with no meaningful authority. It is we who decide in a given text whether Jeremiah is speaking out of his sinful misconceptions or the Spirit breaking through, speaking the truth. If it is the former, all we can do is look upon the misguided text and rejoice that God was so loving that he allowed the prophets to tell countless lies about him.

The church has long maintained that God employs condescension in his communication with people, using terms they understood to get his message across (the Antiochene interpreters called this *συγκαταβᾶσις*). But this is a tool of communication, allowing God to teach truth about himself to the weak and ignorant. It never meant that God allowed the prophets to teach the people evil misconceptions about himself. Surely God could find a way to tell Jeremiah that his understanding of the divine nature was wrong; it would not be that hard. If God "stooped" to allow atrocious notions about himself to go unchecked, he was not gracious; he was inept. His indulgence allowed the prophets' false message to mislead people for millennia, causing believers to hold to a seriously distorted theology and giving unbelievers a reason to flee from Christianity.

Boyd claims that God does not kill or destroy; instead, God *allows* evil or chaotic forces to kill or destroy. He calls this God's Aikido, where by God turns the force of evil against itself. God did not command or force Babylon to attack Jerusalem; he merely withdrew his protection from Jerusalem. Even so, the Babylonians went beyond what God intended. God did not slay the firstborn of Egypt; the "destroyer" did (pp. 163–64; Exod 12:23), and the destroyer is Satan (citing John 10:10; Rev 9:11). In the rebellion of Numbers 16, it was again the destroyer, not God, who slew the sons of Korah (1 Cor 10:10), although ANE notions of chthonic deities may have also crept into the Numbers narrative. In Noah's flood, God withdrew his restraining hand so that the primordial waters of chaos reclaimed the earth. When God seemingly drowned the Egyptians in the Red Sea, he in fact only ceased restraining the chaotic powers of the deep, which in turn destroyed the soldiers in another act of God's Aikido. When Elijah called down fire on some sol-

diers (2 Kgs 1:10–12), he was abusing his God-given authority, but it was actually Satan, not God, who sent the fire (pp. 222–25, citing Job 1:16; Rev 13:13).

This defends divine justice by giving God plausible deniability. Like a careful president seeking to bring down enemies without getting himself into legal or political trouble, God does not command or do anything violent. He just gives his minions space to do what they want to do. This is not a compelling theodicy.

Boyd's exegetical interpretations are also doubtful. It is not certain that "the destroyer" of Exod 12:23 (תִּיהַשְׁמַח; LXX τὸν ὀλεθρεύοντα) is to be identified with Satan in John 10:10 or with Apollyon (Ἀπολλύων) in Rev 9:11. Satan is not necessarily the only being that destroys or sends down fire, and Apollyon is identified with Hebrew אַבְדָּדוֹן (אִבְדָּדוֹן), not with תִּיהַשְׁמַח. Paul probably does regard the "destroyer" of 1 Cor 10:10 (τοῦ ὀλοθρευτοῦ) as the same as "the destroyer" of Exod 12:23, and so also as the agent of vengeance in Numbers 16, but it is not clear that Paul thought of this destroyer as demonic or evil. Elsewhere, the angel of YHWH (מַלְאֲכֵי יְהוָה) is the agent of plague and destruction; this is surely not a demonic figure (2 Sam 24:16; 2 Kgs 19:35). Of course, Boyd can always claim that these texts represent the Israelites' confused, pagan thinking about YHWH's nature, but this only illustrates again how slippery Boyd's hermeneutic is. He can declare the verses that support his thesis to be the authentic voice of the Spirit, while all others arise from a depraved ANE culture. Finally, when Rev 13:13 says that the second beast could call down fire, it means that he mimics the power of Elijah, not that the fire Elijah called down came from Satan.

The account of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1–11) is analogous to OT narratives in which someone is slain for seemingly minor offenses. This husband and wife fell dead at Peter's feet when he rebuked them for misrepresenting the value of the gift they gave to the church. Boyd's interpretation thus stands against both the prophets *and the apostles*, the latter group seemingly unaware of the theological revolution that the cross represents. They did not grasp that Jesus's crucifixion demands a radically non-violent understanding of the nature of God. And God himself continued the charade: He struck down Ananias and Sapphira at the word of one of his apostles, apparently under no compulsion to modify his behavior in light of the new revelation.

The episode of 2 Sam 6:6–9, in which "God struck down" Uzzah for touching the ark with his hand to keep it from falling off a cart, is also a problem for Boyd's analysis. One cannot claim that this was condescension to Israelite notions about the ferocity of their warrior God, because David was appalled by what he saw (v. 8). That is, Uzzah's violent death *contradicted* David's preconceptions about God; it did not affirm them. Furthermore, because Boyd's theology requires that God strikes people down by evil proxies, one can only assume that God had some demon stationed by the ark, ready to protect its holiness by slaying all who touch it—a truly bizarre idea.

NT eschatology represents a formidable difficulty for Boyd. No one in the Bible said more about hell than Jesus, and he presumably was not confused by his culture. But indeed, even those who hold to annihilationism must still affirm that God calls untold millions of people into judgment and then destroys them all.

Compared to this, what happened in the destruction of Sodom or the conquest of Canaan was paltry in scale. The only solution for Boyd would seem to be universalism. Boyd does suggest the possibility of post-mortem salvation: "So, we should not conclude that all who perished in God's judgment on Egypt, or any other judgment for that matter, are necessarily lost. To the contrary, because God's love is stronger than death, we should remain confident that the Good Shepherd will continue to search for every single lost sheep, so long as there is any hope of their being found by him, whether in this life or the next" (p. 216).

Boyd employs vivid illustrations to drive his arguments home. He states, for example, that if he saw his wife attack a panhandler, he would not assume that his wife was an aggressively violent person, because he knows that she is not. He would assume that something else was going on. I will close my response to Boyd with an illustration of my own.

A man stands in his front yard holding on a leash a large dog. A boy comes up on the man's lawn and begins to hurl insults at him. The boy is known to be trouble; he is rude, undisciplined, and has committed some petty crimes. After taking verbal abuse from the boy, the man lets go of the leash. The dog rushes upon the boy, leaps up, seizes his throat in his jaws, and kills him. Astonished neighbors call for an ambulance and the police, and the boy is pronounced dead at the scene. When questioned, the man calmly says, "I never harmed the boy at all. I never trained the dog to attack. I never commanded the dog to attack. I just let go of the leash. The dog acted out of his own violent nature; I didn't make him that way or force him to do anything. Even if I thought the dog might harm the boy, I never intended the dog to kill him. You can't blame me for anything." No one would be persuaded by the man's explanation, even if it were true that he never trained the dog to attack. The man knew about the dog's capacity for violence. Whether he intended it to get that far or not, he killed the boy.

And yet this is precisely the defense Boyd makes for God. God did not force the Babylonian army or the demonic powers to do anything; he only let go of the leash so that they could act according to their nature. Thus, even if one were to grant Boyd's exegetical claims, his theological argument rings hollow. Having God kill by proxy, using agents whose violent nature he fully understands, does not absolve God. He is still responsible for the violence he releases upon people.

There is only one defense one can make for God's actions: Because he is maker of heaven and earth and the author of all life, God, unlike the man in his yard, has the right to take life. That being the case, whether or not God uses proxies for administering justice is irrelevant. He may use human agents, or demons, or directly obliterate Sodom by his own power. But in every case, God intentionally takes human life by some form of violence. When he releases forces of chaos, he is responsible for the deaths that follow. But being *responsible* is not the same as being *guilty*. When God slays, he is well within his rights, and his actions are always just.

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Sons in the Son: The Riches and Reach of Adoption in Christ. By David B. Garner. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2016, xxx + 366 pp., \$24 paper.

David Garner's in-depth monograph is the latest evidence that the doctrine of adoption is enjoying something of a golden age, at least in evangelical and Reformed circles. *Sons in the Son* indicates that the zeal for the recovery of adoption, dating back to the mid-twentieth century, shows no signs of abating. Quite the contrary! Interest in the doctrine has become multidisciplinary and is beginning to reap dividends. Thus far, our knowledge of the theological history of adoption has grown beyond anything understood, or at least published, previously. Studies of the biblical and theological use of the adoption motif (*huiothesia*) are forsaking unsubstantiated assumptions of the biblical data, notably the conflating of Paul's model of adoption and John's model of the new birth. Applications of adoption to Christian living and mission are increasingly obliged to understand that adoption is from slavery rather than orphanhood.

Garner's volume, then, does more than replicate prior studies such as those of Candlish (1864), Houston (1872), Girardeau (1905), or Webb (1947); add to the stock of biblical studies (e.g. Byrne, Scott); or echo the socio-cultural approach (e.g., Lyall, Mawhinney, and Burke). Rather, to quote Sinclair Ferguson's Foreword, he has "garnered" the fruit of both the emergent Reformed biblical theology and renaissance in Calvin studies, to formulate a fresh top-down, redemptive-historical approach (pp. xxii, 78). Methodologically sound and exegetically thorough, it claims to "blaze ... new trails concerning filially framed contours of Christology, pneumatology, and soteriology" (p. xix).

In his first of three parts, Garner considers the hermeneutics, history, and etymology of adoption. Recognizing Paul's exclusive use of *huiothesia*, and rightly noting how his five references sketch the history of redemption from the first to the last things (Eph 1:4–5; Gal 4:4–6; Rom 8:15–17, 22–23; 9:4), Garner lays a sure foundation for his theology of adoption. Initially, this foundation serves to expose the underplaying of the doctrine in historical theology and to occasion discussion as to whether Paul was also influenced by societal adoption. While Greek adoption predated Paul, Garner believes that Paul filled the Hellenistic term *huiothesia* with Old Testament covenantal and messianic content now being realized in Christ. Yet, into this redemptive-historical approach, Garner encourages the sowing of lessons drawn from the Roman practices of *adoptio* and *adrogatio*. These he later applies not to the sons of God, but uniquely and chiefly to the Son.

In Part Two—"An Exegetical and Theological Survey of the Key Texts"—Garner unpacks the redemptive-historical contours of Paul's five uses of *huiothesia*, affirming the Pauline authorship of Ephesians. Indeed, he begins with Eph 1:5, expounding it under the title "Adoption Purposed" (chap. 4), followed by "Adoption Accomplished" (Gal 4:4–7 [chap. 5]), culminating in "Adoption Applied" (Rom 8:15–17, 22–23; 9:4–5 [chap. 6]). Clearly, Garner supports the view of Calvin, Ridderbos, and others, that adoption is, fundamentally, a coherent category of the *historia salutis* with theological implications for the *ordo salutis*. Thus, his latter head-

ings echo John Murray's *Redemption: Accomplished and Applied*, although he rightly breaks from Murray's inherited conflation of the filial language of John and Paul.

Instead, in Part Three—"Adoption in Biblical and Systematic Theology"—Garner offers his take on the redemptive-historical approach. Embracing a high Christology—one from above, accepting the eternal and preexistent divinity of God's Son—Garner focuses *via* Rom 1:3–4 (especially) on the progressive and functional dimension of Christ's Sonship. Contra high Christologian Donald Macleod, who understands Christ's appointment to his Sonship in power as declarative of his exaltation, Garner follows Geerhardus Vos and Richard Gaffin: Christ's appointment constituted a change in his functional sonship, which was rewarded to him on account of his filial fidelity to the Father in his testing, maturing, and perfecting. Thus, qualified for his resurrection, Christ is constituted adoptively in power and holiness "the covenantally proven and eschatologically excellent Son" (p. 214). He is enabled thereby to bring every soteric benefit to sinners, including adoption.

Naturally, then, Garner turns from Christ's resurrection-adoption to the *ordo salutis* (chap. 7), wrestling first with how biblical theology questions the legitimacy of the *ordo salutis*, its fixation with the forensic, and its stirring of reactions in the forms of the "new perspective" and Federal Vision. Garner attributes this fixation to the reading of adoption through human legal practices and to its subsuming under justification. He counters this fixation by seeking, through his redemptive-historical reading, to connect more explicitly the benefits of salvation to the Savior (chap. 8). The Spirit, he emphasizes, unites believers to the Son in a union that, neither an absorption nor a fiction, constitutes a real solidarity in which soteric benefits flow from the resurrected-adopted Son to adopted sons. Thus, "To insist that *huiusmodi* is soteriological and not Christological predicates that the believer receives a benefit from Christ not attained by him" (p. 203).

This adoption in Christ was anticipated in Adam and typified in Israel (chap. 9). Although Adam failed his probation, broke the covenant of works, and missed out on the inheritance of an inviolable sonship in a glorified body, God continued his pursuit of a holy son. Therefore, God granted Israel at Sinai a typological, corporate, and minority sonship (Rom 9:4). Israel, however, lacked the ability to be the holy son and followed in macrocosm Adam's failure. At last, God's procurement of a family of faithful sons found fulfillment in the eschatological adoption of the resurrected Son of God, the true Israel. In him, the sons of God transition redemptive-historically into the eschatological age he inaugurated, receive personally their vindication, as also their power to combat sin. Now freed from slavery, God's sons are empowered for filial obedience. Although consequential upon the obedience of their Elder Brother, the sons' obedience fulfils God's purpose in Christ's resurrection-adoption, namely that in "the grand finale" they should not only be declared justified or legally sons but be conformed to the image of the Son.

Garner's emphasis on adoption in Christ brings him back to the *ordo salutis*. The union is not with the Son in his eternal, pretemporal divinity, but with him as he became incarnate, a creature in our nature as sons of Adam. Because this union is filial, how, Garner asks, are we to understand Calvin's limitation of its benefits to

justification and sanctification (regeneration)? This *duplex gratia Dei*, Garner fairly deduces, is included by Calvin under the overarching redemptive-historical scope of the grace of adoption. Likewise, Princetonian A. A. Hodge: Adoption speaks of believers in both their new creation (regeneration and sanctification) and new relation (justification) and comprehends both. Garner therefore rejects versions of the *ordo salutis* forensically-driven through the medium of justification (Piper, Horton, and McCormack) or by the heritage of Turretin and Dabney (*et al.*) who, understanding adoption to complete justification, “merely warm[ed] courtroom speech with familial features and relational benefits” (p. 302). The Westminster Standards on adoption (WCF 12; WLC 74; WSC 34), read in light of the WLC’s Q and A 69, are closer to the Pauline understanding, argues Garner, because the distinctive treatment of adoption draws on union with Christ (as does that of justification [WCF 11] and sanctification [WCF 13]).

Garner, however, does not merely juxtapose adoption, justification, and sanctification. This arrangement would contradict Paul and Calvin and “misalign” the filial grace of adoption (p. 304). Rather, adoption is the highest privilege the gospel offers (Packer) and is the zenith of union with Christ (Murray), because the resurrection-adoption of Christ was the culminating event of his work, and the adoption of believers its culminating purpose. Adoptive sonship is, accordingly, *the* benefit of union—not because of its warm familial tones but because it overarches justification and sanctification. Adoption, then, must no longer be overshadowed by the forensic, or subject to the “benefit conflation” of today’s “new perspective” and Federal Vision (p. 306). Rather, it is the supreme benefit, marking “the comprehensive attainment of [our] Elder Brother, who is himself, as adopted Son of God, the very ‘life’ of the redeemed sons (Col. 3:4)” (p. 311).

In review, Garner’s advocacy of the Pauline and the redemptive-historical approach is highly commendable. His scholarly contribution aids significantly the doctrine’s profile, the biblical-theological (i.e. top-down, redemptive-historical) understanding, and the defense of the theology of Reformed orthodoxy. Given, however, the inflated claim made of Webb’s *The Reformed Doctrine of Adoption* when it was first published (namely, that it would defeat liberalism), a more measured appreciation of Garner’s study is warranted. Here are some reasons why.

Note, first, Garner’s brief forays into historical-theology. The statement that “the church fathers show little attention to *huiiothesia*, with the notable exception of Irenaeus” (p. 21), needs nuancing as the study of adoption in the Greek and Latin fathers of the ante-Nicene, Nicene, and post-Nicene periods develops. Likewise, we are learning restraint in dismissing the relevance of the Schoolmen of the Middle Ages. Of the two best-known theologians of the period, Anselm says nothing of adoption in his extant writings, but Aquinas’ discussion “Of Adoption as Befitting to Christ” in his *Summa Theologica*’s “Treatise on the Incarnation” is, presently, the earliest distinct treatment of adoption known of in the annals of historical theology. Furthermore, while it likely remains true to say that the Westminster Confession of Faith (1647) is the first to include a distinct chapter on adoption, Craig’s Catechism of 1581—a staple in Scotland prior to the Westminster Catechisms—

has two (admittedly lightweight) sections on adoption: “The Certainty of Adoption” and “The Trial of Our Adoption.”

Generally, though, Garner’s exposition is somewhat detached from the theological history of adoption. Mention of the Candlish/Crawford debate of the 1860s over the original sonship of Adam and the nature of the believer’s union with Christ would have been appropriate. Edwin H. Palmer’s treatment of the Roman Catholic Granderath/Scheeben debating of the formal cause of adoption also raises relevant issues. Given current discussions of deification (*theosis*), Garner’s statement that union relies “on [Christ’s] condescension and accommodation, not the believer’s elevation and deification” (p. 289), requires explanation. Most relevant is Aquinas’ denial that Christ as man was the adopted Son of God.

Second, Garner forgoes discussion of biblical language. At one level, we may sympathize, for while Calvin, sensitive to Scripture’s divineness and humanness, mentions metaphors, figures, similitudes, etc., his view of the language of adoption is unclear. Puritan and Presbyterian systematics, focusing on the divineness of Scripture and the unity of its system of truth, pay scant attention to the authorial diversity of the NT and its rich variety of figures of speech. Garner offsets the historic conflation of the NT’s filial models (robust metaphors) by highlighting the Pauline and redemptive-historical features of adoption, yet, not defining his terms, he variously describes it as a concept, a meta-concept, a metaphor, and a model. When referring to Pauline and Johannine “sonship models” (p. 144), he misses the distinctive structure of John’s new birth model wherein *tekna* is consistently used, except significantly in Revelation 21:7, to distinguish Christ’s Sonship from the childhood of the regenerate. By jumping over the thorny question of how biblical language functions, Garner overlooks a significant argument for the importance of adoption and the discussion of how biblical models may substitute or supplement the *ordo salutis*.

Third, and related, Garner meshes two models of biblical theology. Making much of redemptive history (Calvin, Vos, Ridderbos, Gaffin) he weaves in another model, what Brevard Childs calls “Biblical theology within dogmatic categories.” This is fair enough, because models of biblical theology are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Garner, however, uses the meshing to “complete” Paul’s adoption model by referencing non-Pauline sources and systematic categories not demanded by the model (e.g. Adam and the covenant of works). Garner justifies this “dogmatic construal” (Childs) by warning repeatedly of the word-concept fallacy. Sometimes this is reasonable enough, but at other times we ask at what point does the omission of a theological term from a given text or context bespeak the absence of the idea. Thus, while Garner draws on theologians of adoption such as Calvin, Ridderbos, and Murray (who, to varying degrees, drew dogmatic categories from biblical theology), his method is, in part, more that of Meredith Kline (biblical theology within dogmatic categories).

Fourth, Garner’s disputed claim that Christ’s resurrection was his adoption bears too much weight. Because Aquinas denied that Christ could have two sonships (the one natural, the other adopted) on the basis that sonship adheres to the person and not the nature, when do the Vosian-Gaffinesque-Garnerian two dimen-

sions in Christ's Sonship (the one static, the other progressive) constitute two sonships—the one static, the other progressive? While Scott argues the case for Christ's resurrection-adoption from the 2 Sam 7:12, 14/Rom 1:3–4 connection, Calvin's treatment of the latter makes no such connection. Accordingly, Garner's describing of the absence of *huiothesia* in Rom 1:3–4 "a word-concept fallacy," his assumption that 2 Sam 7:12–16 and Rom 1:3–4 require Christ's adoption, and his strong critique of Macleod's and Burke's traditional view that Paul refers to Christ's exaltation all await adjudication.

Not only does Garner's theory rely for its unpacking on non-Pauline passages, its claim in effect that Christ's resurrection-adoption alone retains the connection between Christ and his benefits is tunnel vision. Furthermore, the belief that "a failure to understand the Father's adoption of the Redeemer will render misunderstanding of the Father's adoption of the redeemed. Such a consequence is simply unavoidable" (p. 195), recalls Gal 4:4–5. There, it is Christ's death-redemption, not his resurrection-adoption, that secures the adoptive sonship of the redeemed. True, redemption could not be guaranteed without Christ's resurrection, either in the now or the not yet (cf. Rom 8:22–23), but Paul clearly links our adoptive sonship to Christ's redeeming of us from enslavement. Because, hermeneutically, we work from the clearer statement of Gal 4:4–5 to Rom 1:3–4, it is odd that Garner makes Rom 1:3–4 the *locus classicus* of adoption. The issues remain complex for sure, but Garner's would not be the first theological theory, powerfully and beautifully advocated, to lack biblical warrant. States Garner: "What makes theological errors compelling is not their flagrancy, but their proximity to biblical truth and their captivatingly fresh redefinitions" (p. 190). Precisely!

Fifth, there are sizable lacunae in Garner's exposition. Strangely, one is more conscious of "Christology," "pneumatology," "soteriology," and "eschatology," than of patalogy. The Father elects and sends the Son and the Spirit, but it is Christ's qualification for his resurrection-adoption, and the Spirit's uniting of the sons to the Son, that predominate. In Garner's "filiocentric gospel" (p. 306) and "Spirit-wrought faith-enabled solidarity with the resurrected Son" (p. 252; cf. p. 271), the Father is more assumed than expounded. This is largely due to the minimal attention Garner affords the adoptive state. His typological reading of Israel's sonship places more emphasis on its corporate than minority character. Galatians 3:23ff. receives insufficient attention, with its contrast between the filial experience of Israel under the old covenant and that of believing Jews and Gentiles under the new. Similarly, the state of our majority sonship under the new covenant is skated over. A methodical exposition of filial liberty, assurance, sustenance, obedience, and inheritance, stripped of its terminological overload, would have done more to resonate Paul's (and Calvin's) attention to both the adoptive act *and* state.

Finally, there is the "preachability" of Garner's treatment. Given the strong individualism of the West, advocates of the redemptive-historical approach have their work cut out persuading hearers of the relevance of Paul's panoramic understanding of adoptive sonship and the healthy corrective it offers today's selfie culture. Yet, the terminologically-laden weight Garner places on his central claim (Rom 1:3–4), and the underplaying of the adoptive state, limits the volume's use-

fulness for pulpit ministry. Certainly, advocates of the redemptive-historical method of preaching will find a feast here, but those regarding expository preaching as the true heir of the redemptive-historical model of biblical theology will feel shortchanged.

Garner's monograph will be remembered as an early rather than as a definitive study of the redemptive-historical kind. While his courageous and weighty endeavor raises the profile of adoption and offers a foundation that should withstand the test of time, its legacy is marred by Garner's decision to make Rom 1:3–4 rather than Gal 4:4–7 the lynchpin of his exposition. Add to that the very real possibility that Garner has read too much into Rom 1:3–4, and we are left gleaning from the volume what we can.

In seeking to, there are questions Garner does not address. For example, how does Paul's reading of the OT sonship tradition in terms of adoption comport with OT references to Israel's birth (e.g. Exod 4:22–23)? What are the hermeneutical guidelines for mixing into Paul's redemptive-historical reading of adoption elements of the practice of Roman adoption? How does the adoption model function metaphorically if it bespeaks both a union and a forensic declaration? Because adoption reveals the union to be filial, how do we do justice to other Pauline pictures of union with Christ (e.g. Eph 5:22–33)? How may we maintain the integrity of justification and sanctification if they are but subsets of adoption? Is Garner's denial of the logical sequence of justification-adoption consistent with the Westminster Standards? If not, his methodological divergence from the Westminster Standards confirms that the new wine of the redemptive-historical approach to adoption calls for new wine skins (the methodological and attitudinal renewal of Puritan/Presbyterian systematics). Garner disavows this constructive form of Calvinism, yet his volume, to a degree, presents the case for it, and supplies a springboard from which adoption may be recovered and Westminster Calvinism renewed.

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Doctrine and Race: African American Evangelicals and Fundamentalism between the Wars. By Mary Beth Swetnam Mathews. Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2018, 204 pp., \$29.95, paper.

In *Doctrine and Race*, Mary Beth Swetnam Mathews (professor of religion at the University of Mary Washington) explores the interaction between fundamentalists and African American evangelicals during the period between World War I and World War II. Mathews selects four black denominations for her study: the National Baptist Convention, Incorporated; the National Baptist Convention, Unincorporated; the African Methodist Episcopal Church; and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. While these groups do not speak for all black Protestants during this period, they offer a representative picture of responses to fundamentalism among black evangelicals. Mathews' primary source material for these black evangelicals is quarterlies and weekly papers. These publications provide a window

into the debates, discussions, and concerns that occupied black evangelicals during this period. In the case of white fundamentalism, she draws on a wider variety of sources including sermons, journals, and books.

In chapter one, Mathews explores racial attitudes of fundamentalists in the early part of the twentieth century. In painstaking detail, she demonstrates that fundamentalists leaders mirrored the racialized perspectives of the white majority; for example, they supported segregation (e.g. Dwight L. Moody holding segregated evangelistic rallies). A. C. Dixon strongly opposed interracial marriage. (Fear of interracial marriage proved to a galvanizing issue among fundamentalists in the 1928 presidential election.) Dixon argued for the legitimacy of segregation by distinguishing between “political privileges” and “social privileges.” Whereas voting was a “political privilege” extended (in theory) to all African Americans, integrated accommodations represented a “social privilege” that was not extended to persons of color (p. 16). Fundamentalists adopted paternalistic attitudes toward African Americans flowing from a posture of superiority. Black Christians were frequently presented as emotional, impressionable, easy led astray, and standing in need of white guidance. The involvement of black musicians at white evangelistic events “allowed [fundamentalists] to marginalize and subjugate blacks” (p. 25). (As a side, Mathews’ discussion of black musicians serving in white spaces sheds light on the recent experiences of Lecrae with white evangelicals as he began to speak out on issues of justice at his concerts.) A few fundamentalists did speak out on racial issues. For example, Baptist minister John Roach Straton criticized the film *Birth of a Nation* as well as the founding of a KKK chapter in New York City. At the same time, his sermons reflected a posture of racial superiority by presenting blacks as “easily manipulated, intellectually simple and relatively harmless when properly handled” (p. 34). Even schools founded by whites to train black preachers during this period (e.g. Dallas Colored Bible Institute) did not view blacks as equal partners in ministry but rather as those needing protection from corrosive influences of modernism.

To survive as minorities, African Americans had to understand the world of whites. This was especially important for black clergy who functioned both as pastors and community leaders. In chapter two, Mathews examines how black Baptists and Methodists responded to fundamentalism. While there is little evidence that black pastors received copies of *The Fundamentals* (mailed to every preacher in the U.S. and bankrolled by Lyman Stewart), black Christian leaders were intimately aware of the debate over “modernism” in white churches. These leaders viewed “modernism” through a racialized lens as a problem that was created by white people. Although black leaders frequently opined that modernist ideas (e.g. Darwinism, higher criticism) would not affect their churches, Mathews demonstrates that the story is more complicated. Debates over modernist ideas did emerge in black spaces. For example, in 1915, the National Baptist Convention Incorporated (NBCI) and National Baptist Convention Unincorporated (NBCU) split. While leadership differences played an important role, theological differences were also at stake. In denominational publications, NBCU regularly attacked modernism while NBCI expressed a more sympathetic stance toward modernist ideas. At the same time,

both groups emphasized the importance of social justice and criticized white churches for failing to address injustice. While theological differences existed among black Baptists and Methodists in their responses to modernism, their conversations were far less polarized than conversations among white Protestants. Some black leaders condemned modernism while others sought a middle ground between fundamentalism and modernism. For many years, debates between fundamentalists and modernists received detailed coverage in black denominational publications. Interestingly, Mathew notes that “while both black Protestants and white fundamentalists could agree that modernism was their enemy, each believed the other was more susceptible to it” (p. 54). Like their white fundamentalist counterparts, black evangelicals viewed the debate over modernism as a battle for the future of Protestant Christianity (p. 66).

In early decades of the twentieth century, fundamentalists drew a theological line in the sand in their response to modernism. In chapter three, Mathews considers how African American evangelicals interacted with fundamentalist teachings. While they refused to identify as “fundamentalists,” black Baptists and Methodists embraced the core beliefs of fundamentalism including the divine inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture, the virgin birth, the deity of Christ, and the need for conversion. Denominational publications frequently “underscore[d] their adherence to what they understood as traditional evangelical Christianity” (p. 69). There was one element of fundamentalism, however, that most black evangelicals rejected: premillennial dispensationalism. They viewed dispensationalism as “innovative and untested” teaching and distanced themselves from it (p. 77). Black evangelicals also debated the merits of evolutionary theory, frequently expressing skepticism about Darwinism. At the same time, many refused to adopt the either/or posture of fundamentalists. Denominational writers urged pastors to avoid this debate and focus on preaching Christ. A tension existed among black leaders between embracing modern science as an avenue for social uplift and resisting evolution. Reflecting on this reality, Mathews observes, “their position on the margins of American society complicated their participation in the discussion over religious doctrine and modernity” (p. 97). They wanted to protect their communities from the dangers of modernism without (further) marginalizing themselves.

Modernism not only presented intellectual challenges to the church but also social challenges in the form of divorce, drinking, gambling, movies, and dance halls. In chapter four, Mathews explores how African American evangelicals responded to these challenges. Like their fundamentalist counterparts, black evangelicals expressed concern about changing social mores. Denominational publications regularly attacked dance clubs, condemned gambling, and criticized new ways women were behaving. In their responses to these issues, black Protestants may have sound similar to fundamentalists; however, they sided with fundamentalists on these issues not because they were copying the latter but because they believed these practices were contrary to Scripture. Unlike fundamentalists, their response to these issues was also driven by concern for the social uplift in the context of segregation. It was important for the black community to appear respectable to white majority. Baptist and Methodist denominational papers expressed grave concern

about the corrupting influence of dancing on young people (especially young black women). They claimed that dancing draws people away from the church, hinders the formation of Christian character, and encourages sexual immorality. Pastors were encouraged to speak out against the evils of dancing from the pulpit. Along with dancing, denominational papers also discussed marriage. They defended the institution, condemned divorce, criticized the use of birth control, and encouraged women to embrace traditional gender roles. Concern for social uplift also played a key role in discussions of marriage as the family was seen central to improving the standing of the black community.

Perhaps the most important part of this chapter was Mathew's discussion of the 1928 presidential election between Republican candidate Herbert Hoover and Democratic candidate Al Smith. Prohibition was a dividing line between these candidates (Hoover supporting it and Smith opposing it). Prior to 1928, African Americans uniformly voted for the party of Lincoln, but this election marked the beginning of an exodus from the Republican party. Black voters faced a difficult choice. On the one hand, many black ministers and denominational leaders were concerned about the negative influence of alcohol and supported Prohibition. For this group the choice was clear: "all Christians ought to vote for Hoover" (p. 122). However, there was also a growing sense that the Republican party had grown indifferent toward the core concerns of African Americans, who might be better served by the Democratic party. These leaders urged black Christians to cast their vote on issues of race and economics. Whereas black voters may have been divided in 1928, they abandoned the Republican party en masse in the 1932 election (which occurred in the wake of the Great Depression). In future elections, issues of justice and economics would play a far greater role in shaping the black evangelical vote than drinking and dancing.

Whereas the previous chapter highlighted shared social concerns between black evangelicals and fundamentalists, Mathews examines the great divide on race in chapter five. In the early decades of the twentieth century, black Christians experienced racism and injustice on a daily basis. This was true not only in the South (with lynchings and Jim Crow laws) but also in the North. Every denominational paper Mathews examined contained numerous articles addressing racism and injustice. Black evangelicals shared a deeply-held conviction that the dignity and equality of all human beings was central to true Christianity: "Any understanding of the Christian message had to include a steadfast belief in the equality of all people before God" (p. 127). As a result, social justice was just as important in defining true Christianity as "doctrines like the Virgin Birth, the inerrancy of the Bible, and the substitutionary atonement of Jesus" (p. 128). Here the contrast with fundamentalism was stark. The AME *Star of Zion* recounted the lynching of two black men in Sherman, Texas. How is it, the author asks, that Sherman has twenty-six churches yet not one white religious leader spoke out? Indeed, the consistent failure of white Christian leaders to speak out against acts like these raised difficult ecclesiological questions in the minds of black evangelicals. Can someone be a *true* Christian and remain silent? How can "Christian" churches include members of the KKK who lynch blacks? There was a conviction among black leaders that "white Christians

had either forsaken Christianity or embraced a very warped interpretation of it” (p. 131). One glaring inconsistency frequently caught the attention of black leaders: “why did white Americans seem to have so much charity and evangelistic zeal for people of color in other countries and continents when they could not treat their own neighbors of color with the simple decency taught by their religion?” (p. 138). This was not merely a problem in the church. Denominational publications also pointed out the hypocrisy of the U.S. government when it championed human rights abroad but ignored them at home. Despite experiences of racism and hypocrisy from white Christians, black Baptists and Methodists did not walk away from the Christian faith. From their perspective, the problem was not with Christianity itself but with white interpretation and practice. “For these black evangelicals, being a Christian meant right belief and right living, being theologically traditional and socially progressive in terms of racial equality” (p. 155). Fundamentalists championed the former but neglected the latter while black evangelicals avoided the false dichotomy that white fundamentalists made between personal conversion and social justice.

Doctrine and Race is carefully written, well-argued, and engaging reading. Lack of historical awareness represents a major hindrance to contemporary discussions of race and justice in white majority-culture spaces. Many white evangelicals are clueless about the experiences of ethnic minorities in their midst (whether Black, Latino/a or Asian). By exploring interactions between black evangelicals and fundamentalists in the early part of the twentieth century, Mathews offers a great gift to the church—namely, the opportunity to learn from the past. History matters! By selecting four black denominations, Mathews is able to highlight the commonalities and differences that existed among black evangelicals in their responses to fundamentalism.

One striking feature of Mathews’s study is way in which some of the weaknesses encumbering fundamentalism in the early decades of the twentieth century continue to plague contemporary evangelical churches today. This problem comes most sharply into focus in chapter five where Mathews compares the differing postures of fundamentalists and black evangelicals toward social justice. Whereas the black evangelicals in her study viewed social justice as a core element of Christian teaching (along with other doctrines that whites affirmed), white fundamentalists defined Christianity simply in terms of adherence to doctrines like inerrancy, the virgin birth, and the work of Christ. Carl F. H. Henry put his finger on this problem in 1947 when he wrote *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*. Despite “orthodox insistence upon revelation and redemption,” writes Henry, “evangelical Christianity has become increasingly inarticulate about the social reference of the Gospel.” This reflects a “divorce between evangelical doctrinal and evangelical ethical insistence.” Henry urged evangelicals to develop a robust social ethic based on the kingdom teachings of Jesus. Unfortunately, Henry’s call was largely ignored. More recently, African American theologian Carl Ellis has argued that theology includes two elements: what we believe (which he calls “side A”) and how we live, our ethics (“side B”). Ellis argues that white evangelicalism tends to focus on “side A” while largely ignoring “side B” (apart from a few areas of personal morality).

Mathews' study demonstrates that the roots of this problem run deep. By way of contrast, it is striking how the black evangelicals in her study held together robust affirmation of side A (e.g., inerrancy, virgin birth) along with an equally strong commitment to side B (e.g., social justice).

Three minor limitations of *Doctrine and Race* should be noted. First, because this is a historical study, readers will need to look elsewhere for input on the way forward in responding to the lingering effects of the problems she identifies. Second, while Mathews carefully distinguishes fundamentalists from evangelicals, readers would benefit from greater clarity on who counts as a fundamentalist. Whereas black evangelicalism has a clear ecclesial referent(s) in her study, white fundamentalism does not. In chapter three, she talks about how black evangelicals rejected a key element of fundamentalism—premillennial dispensationalism; however, not all fundamentalists were dispensationalists (e.g. Presbyterians). Finally, *Doctrine and Race* omits Pentecostals. Mathews's rationale for excluding Pentecostals makes perfect sense (see p. 9), especially as the black denominational papers she studied did not directly engage them. Nevertheless, it would be interesting to see how the inclusion of white Pentecostals (who shared many of the same theological commitments as fundamentalists) might (or might not) reshape the picture she paints of the decades between the wars—particularly because Pentecostal churches tended to be ethnically diverse. These limitations notwithstanding, *Doctrine and Race* is a must-read. It would make a great addition (either the whole book or individual chapters) to courses covering the history of American Christianity, courses exploring issues of race and justice, ethics courses, and systematic theology courses covering theological anthropology or ecclesiology.

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Eduardo J. Echeverria, *Revelation, History, and Truth: A Hermeneutics of Dogma*. Ecumenical Studies, volume 2. New York: Peer Lang, 2018. 190 pages plus general index.

A full disclosure as I begin this review. Eduardo Echeverria is a friend of a number of years. Eduardo knows very well that I am passionately and robustly Protestant, and I of course know he is a true Catholic. For those who do not know Echeverria, he is a former Protestant, and knows the Reformed tradition very well. He studied with folks in Toronto, then went on to do his Ph.D. at the Free University in Amsterdam. His significant recent volume on Berkouwer (*Berkouwer and Catholicism: Disputed Questions* [Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2013]) has been well received. He currently teaches philosophy and theology at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit, Michigan.

In the Introduction, Echeverria gives us several theses statements of sorts: “a hermeneutic of creative retrieval, in short, of *ressourcement*, is at the heart of the Second Vatican Council’s Lérinian hermeneutics” (p. xiv). Echeverria believes Berkouwer is posing the key question correctly: “What is the relationship between

unchanging truth and theological formulations and doctrinal choices?” (p. xv). Echeverria approvingly quotes Kevin Vanhoozer: “theology may move beyond the words and concepts of the Bible, but not beyond its underlying pattern of *judgments*” (p. xvi). Echeverria summarizes his purpose in the book: “The general topic of this book concerns the contemporary challenges faced by the necessity of maintaining the integrity of dogmatic truth of the Christian faith, of divine revelation and its transmission through tradition, particularly with respect to the relationship between history and doctrinal truth” (p. xvi). And Echeverria poses an important question: “In modern Christianity, the normativity of dogmas, creeds and confessions is a problematic one. Why this opposition between history and permanent truth?” (p. xvi). So, the question of affirming both (1) unchanging and eternal truths, while not denying (2) the particular, historical context of various creeds, confessions, or dogmatic formulations is key: “Emphasizing their [i.e. various dogmatic formulations] historical influences, however, has led some to set up an opposition between history and permanent truth, that is, to denying that their dogmatic formulations express something that is valid and binding for all times” (p. xvii). Echeverria’s goal is “to show how we can consider the historical and contextual nature of dogmas, creeds and confessions while at the same time honoring their assertions of truth that are permanent” (p. xvii).

Chapter 1 is titled, “The Hermeneutics of Vatican II: The Essentialist vs. Historicist Dispute.” This chapter is mainly a study of three key ways of interpreting/categorizing Vatican II: (1) Type 1: an *historical* approach (which tends to emphasize *discontinuity* between Vatican II and what precedes it); (2) Type 2: a *theological* approach (which tends to emphasize *continuity* between Vatican II and what precedes it); and (3) Type 3: a view which *synthesizes* the historical and theological approaches (and Gavin D’Costa is the key exemplar of this approach). As Echeverria unpacks these three types, he is giving attention to “essentialist” versus “historicist” perspectives. The “essentialist” position affirms that there can be *both* “the truth of dogma” *and* “its expressions;” *both* “truth’s essence” *and* “the form in which it is realized and expressed;” *both* “unchanging truths” *and* “its changeable formulations or expressions;” *both* “truth” *and* “its historically conditioned formulations;” *both* “form” *and* “content” (pp. 10–11). Echeverria quotes John XXIII, *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia* (from Vatican II): “For the deposit of faith [2 Tim 1:14], the truths contained in our sacred teaching, are one thing; the mode in which they are expressed, but always with the same meaning and the same judgment [*eodem sensu eademque sententia*] is another thing” (p. 11).

What is going on here? God has given his people a “deposit of faith”—a revelation. The question Echeverria is exploring—as he adjudicates fascinating debates between various (mainly Roman Catholic) interpreters of Vatican II *and its meaning and significance*, is the relation between (1) this unchanging deposit and (2) various dogmatic formulations, creeds, confessions, doctrinal pronouncements of the church, etc., over time. And to dig down a bit deeper: Do these later and ongoing formulations (1) simply creatively restate, reapply, etc., fundamental truths for their own time and place and context, or is there (2) true development, growth, even correction or significant discontinuity, and so forth, in the church’s under-

standing over time? Almost every word I have just written in trying to summarize these issues is very important, and it takes some effort (especially for the Protestant?) to make sure and be fair to the Roman Catholic position on these key issues. In short, in understanding the church's various theological confessions, creeds, statements, and so forth, are we dealing with true continuity, or is there significant discontinuity—where later confessions, creeds, statements, and so on, are actually engaged in *correction* of the past? *Rejection* of a past doctrinal construal? No small issues here. Echeverria approvingly quotes the way Catholic theologian Thomas G. Guarino puts the question: “How to explain ‘the substantial identity between the faith once delivered to the saints and the faith preached in every age of the church’” (p. 13).

The Type 1 position ultimately holds the “essentialist” affirmation of *both-unchanging-truth-and-historically-articulated* to be untenable. For Type 1 advocates one *cannot* have one's cake and eat it too. For Type 1 advocates, to believe in some sort of real and ultimate unchanging doctrinal truth *precludes* different formulations of this truth over time.

So on to Type II (the *theological* approach which affirms more *continuity* over time in the church's various dogmatic and confession articulations). If one does indeed affirm that there is fundamental *continuity* in the church's theological/doctrinal formulations over time, then Vatican II is (perhaps) something of a challenge. Echeverria notes there are really two ways that Type II advocates can make sense of Vatican II. Because Vatican II (on one reading) *does* seem to be a departure from the Catholic theological tradition which preceded it, then either (1) there was really no binding *doctrine* taught at Vatican II (i.e., there was no binding dogmatic formulation coming forth from Vatican II); or (2) there *was* doctrinal formulations coming forth from Vatican II. These doctrinal formulations *were* a departure from Rome's theological tradition and *therefore* Vatican II is *not* binding on true or traditional Catholics, that is, Vatican II is a renegade reality, which faithful Catholics can safely “ignore.”

In discussing Type II, Echeverria poses a good question related to a “realist view of truth” and a “historicist view of truth.” He asks: “Does the truth of dogma depend on [1] its conformity to the reality of things as objective states of affairs [the realist view of truth] or on [2] its conformity to the current measure of human knowledge [the historicist view of truth]?” (p. 16). It is clear that Echeverria prefers the realist view of truth position. But this leads to a second question: “How, then, can one be a realist regarding the relationship between dogmatic propositions and reality in respect of the truth, and yet simultaneously hold that such statements may require further thought and elucidation, being as such open to reconceptualization and reformulation, and hence that no statement comprehensively exhausts truth?” (p. 16). This is perhaps the key question (or at least one of the key questions) Echeverria raises in his volume. The short answer, turning to Yves Congar, is that there can be *contrasting* perspectives on the truth without such perspectives being fundamentally *contradicting* of one another. More on this anon.

And finally Type III. This is Gavin D'Costa's position, as well as the position of John XXIII, Yves Congar, and Pope Benedict XVI. This position “synthesizes

historical and theological interpretation” (p. 2). In explaining this position, Echeverria offers what is surely his own understanding: “The claim that once something is true it is always true, forever true, and unchangeably true, is not inconsistent with finding new ways of expressing the truth of dogma when the need arises” (p. 22). Likewise, “It is not the context that determines the truth of the proposition that is judged to be the case about objective reality; rather, reality itself determines the truth or falsity of a proposition. In sum, the historical context does not determine the validity—the truth status—of the doctrine” (p. 22). So, for Echeverria, “essentialism” in terms of Christian doctrine is sound: there are fundamental theological doctrines or truths which are true in a universal, unchanging, sense, and are true for all times and places. However, “the linguistic formulation or expression can vary, as long as it mediates the same judgment of truth of the same dogma or doctrine” (p. 22).

Chapter Two is titled “The Nature of Revelation: Scripture, Tradition, and the Church.” Echeverria begins this chapter by noting that in the twentieth century there has been a consistent pattern of pitting *personal revelation* over against *propositional revelation*, and this tendency has manifested itself in numerous Roman Catholic theologians as well. Echeverria engages with Catholic theologian Marianne Moyaert—an exemplar of this general tendency to pit personal revelation over against propositional revelation (with propositional revelation always losing)—and does so in dialog with the work of evangelical theologian Kevin Vanhoozer. Moyaert summarizes her position: “God does not reveal propositions: he reveals himself” (p. 51). Or: “God’s revelation cannot be reduced to a conceptual formulation or the disclosure of facts. God does not express truths of faith; he expresses himself” (p. 51). In criticizing Moyaert, Echeverria’s main point is straightforward: It is unnecessary to pose a false dichotomy between *personal* revelation (and what Moyaert can call “dialogical”) and *propositional* revelation. For any traditional evangelical in the USA (particularly if one is, say, fifty years or over), this is an old, old issue, and links quite directly to the founding and purpose of the Evangelical Theological Society itself.

Echeverria engages in extensive dialog with Kevin Vanhoozer, whose position Echeverria essentially affirms, but Echeverria also turns to the work of Paul Helm to outline his own more constructive approach to revelation (i.e. affirming both person and proposition revelation). In a keen insight, Echeverria suggests that Moyaert is engaged in a deep inconsistency: while denying propositional revelation, Moyaert ineluctably ends up affirming certain central propositions or doctrinal conclusions, propositions or conclusions which are nigh impossible to affirm once one has (ostensibly) *denied* the reality of propositional revelation. Indeed, is it logical or coherent for Moyaert, having denied propositional revelation, to *then* state: “the Christ-event was the climax of God’s salvific work in history: God’s revelation reached its completion in Jesus Christ” (p. 59)?

Echeverria offers a robust affirmation of propositional revelation, noting that the same *proposition* (= “the meaning of a sentence,” p. 58), can be communicated with different *words*. He notes: “the linguistic formulation or expression can vary, as long as they mediate the same judgment” (p. 61). Likewise, “The truths of faith are, if true, always and everywhere true; the different way of expressing these truths

may vary in our attempts to communicate revealed truths more clearly and accurately, but these various linguistic expressions do not affect the truth of the propositions” (p. 61). Echeverria chafes a bit at Vanhoozer’s notion that tradition has an “ancillary” authority (in relation to Scripture). Echeverria prefers to speak of “the coinherence of Scripture and Tradition,” a term he coopts from Timothy George (p. 69).

Echeverria points to a number of points in Vanhoozer’s *Biblical Authority After Babel* where Vanhoozer affirms a high place for the church, and that God through his Spirit is at work in the church as the church wrestles with Scripture. Echeverria quotes *Dei Verbum* no. 9, thinking that Vanhoozer’s line of thought *should* move Vanhoozer to accept the essential truth of *Dei Verbum*: “It is not from Sacred Scripture alone that the church draws her certainty about everything which has been revealed. Therefore, both sacred tradition and Sacred Scripture are to be accepted and venerated with the same sense of loyalty and reverence” (p. 71). In short, Echeverria thinks Vanhoozer is essentially in full agreement with *Dei Verbum* (especially no. 9), but for whatever reason pulls up short of so confessing.

In Chapter Three, “Divine Revelation and Foundationalism: Towards a Historically Conscious Foundationalism,” Echeverria asks the question “whether foundationalism—epistemological or metaphysical—is demanded by the very notion of Christian revelation and, if so, what sort of foundationalism” (p. 93). Echeverria’s answer is a clear yes: The very notion and reality of Christian revelation itself demands a certain kind of epistemological and metaphysical foundationalism. Echeverria engages at some length with a Reformed thinker (Bernard van den Toren) and a Catholic thinker (Thomas G. Guarino). Van den Toren attempts to combine epistemological and metaphysical realism with a rejection of epistemological and metaphysical foundationalism, while Guarino is both a realist and a foundationalist. Echeverria’s sympathies lie with Guarino, and Echeverria tries to argue that the Christian faith requires *some kind of* foundationalism (over against Van den Toren).

We get a good summary of Echeverria’s own position on realism and propositional truth on page 108: “the knowledge of the realities known by human beings is propositional, and hence propositions are not mere thoughts or human words, altogether separate from reality, from God—in the case of conceptual formulations and verbal expressions of faith—because what the words convey and the thoughts grasp propositionally is the truth about reality, enacting the truth-attaining capacity of the mind to lay hold of the true real world.”

Echeverria argues at length that Van den Toren’s “fallibilism” (defined by Echeverria as “the conviction that knowledge claims are always open to further rational criticism and revision,” quoting Richard Bernstein) cannot cohere with Van den Toren’s realism, and that fallibilism is the death-knell of Christian theology (p. 119). Over against Van den Toren, Echeverria is largely in agreement with the “historical conscious foundationalism of Thomas G. Guarino.” And indeed, one of the insights Echeverria mines from Guarino is a distinction between (1) *unqualified* fallibilism and (2) *qualified* fallibilism. Echeverria rejects the first—*unqualified* fallibilism—and affirms the legitimacy of the second—*qualified* fallibilism. That is: all or

most Christians will say that their beliefs (or some of their beliefs) are adjustable and somewhat malleable (= *qualified* fallibilism), but it is *not* the case that all Christian convictions are complete changeable (= *unqualified* fallibilism) (pp. 124–25).

We get a helpful thesis statement on pages 125–26: “only if we distinguish between propositions and sentences, between a determinable content of truth and context, and focus on the truth-content or propositional character, of divine revelation, will we avoid sacrificing unchangeable truth to relativism.” This is a helpful summary of Chapter Three and is central to the argument of the whole book. Echeverria also offers this summation: “In sum, the position for which I have argued in this chapter can affirm a propositional view of truth and a corresponding propositional view of revelation while at the same time (a) accounting for the need for new theological formulations; (b) defending the notion that the material continuity of the Christian faith is possible because truth is unchangeable; and (c) maintaining that doctrine must progress according to the same meaning and the same judgment (*eodem sensu eademque sententia*—from Vincent of Lérins), allowing for legitimate pluralism and authentic diversity within a fundamental dogmatic unity” (p. 128). Echeverria’s goal in this chapter is to show “the compatibility of historical conditioning and permanent truth” (p. 129). Echeverria follows Guarino: “Christian faith is itself a foundationalist enterprise because ‘foundationalism appears to be demanded by the very notion of revelation’” (p. 129).

Echeverria ends the chapter with an impassioned defense the *analogia entis*, the “analogy of being.” In short, Echeverria argues thus: If there is no *analogia entis*, there are no grounds for meaningful (albeit analogical) language about God. And if we do not have such meaningful language of God (rooted in the *analogia entis*), we are left with either (1) completely *equivocal* language of God—and hence our theological language or statements are simply *fideistic* acts (we simply *assert*—apart from reason—things of God), or (2) completely *univocal* language of God—that is, we end up saying that the Creator and created inhabit the same ontological plane or reality (and so we speak of God as we would speak of other realities within the same ontological plane or reality).

Chapter Four is titled “Applying Lérinian Hermeneutics: Berkouwer, ‘duplex ordo cognitionis,’ and the *Nouvelle Théologie*.” The thesis of the chapter is this: “a historically conscious, essentialist hermeneutic can account not only for the need for new expressions of the truth of dogmas/doctrines but also that new expressions do not logically entail discontinuity in respect of that truth” (p. 153). The first part of the title pertains of course to Vincent of Lérins. Then, G. C. Berkouwer is mentioned. “Duplex ordo cognitionis” refers to a “twofold order of knowledge [that is] distinct both in principle and also in object,” and comes from *Dei Filius*, from Vatican I (1870). The last part of the title refers to the *Nouvelle Théologie* theologians like Henri de Lubac and Hans Urs von Balthasar. The upshot of the chapter is that a “Lérinian Hermeneutic” (contra Berkouwer) can affirm a fundamental consistency between Vatican I and the *Nouvelle Théologie*. We are in the world of the development of doctrine, and whether Rome can *really* say that the church—in its theologizing—has always gotten it right (even if it sure *seems* as if there have been some pretty incommensurate (contradictory?) theological affirmations coming forth

from the church in her history. In this chapter, Echeverria wants to dispute and deny Berkouwer's conclusion: "The leap from both Vatican Council I and *Humani Generis* to a religious Christian philosophy [i.e. whether the *Nouvelle Théologie* or something like Dooyeweerd's 'Christian philosophy']—in connection to a Christian, religious *a priori* of revelation—remains a leap" (p. 157). In particular, whereas Vatican I, with its affirmation of a "twofold order of knowledge"—(1) natural reason and (2) faith given by grace (and thus, ostensibly, an autonomous and religiously neutral "natural reason"), can in no way be reconciled with the teachings of the *Nouvelle Théologie*, with its quite adamant *affirmation* of reason which is always bound up with faith, or inextricably religious presuppositions. In short, for Berkouwer: The teaching of Vatican I and the teaching of the later *Nouvelle Théologie* are simply irreconcilable. Echeverria wants to challenge Berkouwer at this point.

A part of Echeverria's argumentation is to return to the distinction between "truth and its formulations or expression" (p. 159), between "form and content," between "context and content" (p. 158), between "unchanging truth and its historically conditioned formulations" (p. 160). Recognizing the often-polemical contexts of various theological formulations can also help the interpreter understand what is *really* being said, and what is not being said—in this or that theological formulation (e.g. the Council of Trent, Vatican I). What is central is that "new formulations of unchanging truths are in *eodem sensu eademque sentential* (according to the same meaning and the same judgment) with the gospel and the Church's prior authoritative tradition of creeds and confessions" (p. 160). This title includes reference to the fifth-century monk, Vincent of Lérins, because Echeverria is trying to work within Vincent's understanding of doctrine and doctrinal expression, and the nature of ongoing doctrinal growth, as when Vincent writes, "Therefore, let there be growth and abundant progress in understanding, knowledge, and wisdom, in each ad all, in individuals and in the whole Church, at all times and in the progress of ages, but only with the proper limits, i.e., within the same dogma, the same meaning, the same judgment" (pp. 160–61).

Echeverria then utilizes this Vincentian hermeneutic (which functions for Echeverria, it seems, as a way to make sense of doctrinal development, restatement, reformulation, and so forth, over time, while still affirming fundamental doctrinal continuity) in relation to Berkouwer's critique of natural theology (p. 161). In this final part of the chapter Echeverria attempts to refute Berkouwer's notion that the following are incompatible: (1) Vatican I's "duplex ordo cognitionis" (= twofold order of knowing—i.e. where faith and reason are ostensibly seen as being more sequestered, with reason seen as being—in effect—autonomous and religiously neutral); and (2) the *nouveaux théologiens'* understanding of human reason (which is ostensibly more open to the inherent and inescapable religious nature of reason) (p. 162). Echeverria argues that Vatican I does not require any such sequestering of faith and reason (largely due to what Vatican I does *not* say), and that the *nouveaux théologiens* can be interpreted as affirming the core of Vatican I's understanding of "natural reason."

Chapter Five concludes the book with "The Development of Dogma." Here Echeverria outlines the logic of papal infallibility, and then outlines five types of

dogmatic development—the fifth being Echeverria’s preferred model: “Development as properly theological contemplation of revealed reality by the inter-relation between the light of faith and reason” (p. 180). This fifth approach (Echeverria’s is further elaborated throughout the conclusion). Echeverria returns to his affirmation of propositional revelation and how it is not to be construed as *opposing* or *negating* personal revelation, but that *propositional* revelation is constitutive, or helps serve the real experience of God. Quoting Schillebeeckx, Echeverria writes, “One may never leave behind these original propositions because ‘the former [experience of reality] cannot be had without a basic minimum of the latter’ [i.e. of the propositional revelation]” (p. 182). Indeed, “These propositions are constitutive of special revelation, for they are fundamentally normative for an understanding of that reality, and hence give us access to divine reality” (p. 183).

Echeverria summarizes one of his essential points concerning doctrinal or dogmatic development as follows: “Development is more than logical explication in the sense of restatement or clearer statement of what is already conceptually possessed and known, that is, different expressions of the same truth. It also involves explication by what I have been calling the ‘virtually revealed’” (p. 184). Echeverria quotes Rahner approvingly: “What we ‘deduce’ in this way, God has not indeed stated ‘formally’ in the initial propositions from which our deduction proceeds (i.e., he has not expressed it in the immediate meaning of the propositions), but he has really ‘communicated’ [*mitgeteilt*] it, so that entire faith can be given to it as his knowledge” (p. 184). Hence, “we know much more than we can tell” (p. 186). We can experience God himself, and our articulations of that experience (even in propositions) can be true and accurate, although lacking in anything even *approaching* an exhaustive comprehension.

For Echeverria, “There exists a kind of knowledge of the *res* that ‘is the starting-point of an intellectual process which develops into propositions’” (p. 186; the latter part of quotation is from Rahner). In short: we can understand or state our knowledge propositionally, even when our experience of something was an experience of the *thing itself*, and not the experience of a proposition. In short, a real revelatory experience of the living God can then (legitimately and appropriately) be summarize or articulated or stated in propositional form.

Why does all of this matter? The bottom line is “that there can be more in the development of dogma than was previously already propositionally expressed” (p. 188). In short, doctrinal development over time need not be considered simply as later development or growth or improvement of an earlier *propositional* statement. Rather, later development or growth or clarification can be stating in propositions something that earlier was not *first* given in propositional form at all. So, if later development or growth or clarification is not making explicit was already implicit in earlier propositional content, but is putting in propositional form something that originally might not have been *initially* given in propositional form, how do we discern or judge the legitimacy of later development or growth or clarification? Echeverria here turns to the necessity of a magisterium. In the end, we need the Catholic magisterium, Echeverria argues.

Just a few thoughts on the book in general. First, if you want to understand something of contemporary and traditional Roman Catholic theology—from an insider’s perspective—this could be a great book. Echeverria writes clearly, and you will come away with insights into how a traditional Roman Catholic does theology. Second, Echeverria understands Protestant theology, so an evangelical could read this book knowing he or she is engaging a thinker who understands much of the Protestant world. Third, if you are trying to come to terms with thinkers such as James K. A. Smith, the third chapter is for you. Echeverria makes a robust case for both epistemological and metaphysical realism, and for objective truth and reality. Echeverria also argues for a certain form of foundationalism. Although Smith is not featured prominently in the book, Chapter Three summarizes the various kinds of critiques of Smith that Echeverria has made elsewhere. Fourth, Echeverria’s defense and articulation of propositional truth and propositional revelation is simply superb. Such a defense and articulation is a large part of Carl F. H. Henry’s legacy, and Echeverria’s treatment of propositional truth and revelation is convincing and informative. Fifth, even if a Protestant does not conclude that the Roman Catholic magisterium is ultimately needed, Echeverria’s treatment of (1) unchanging truth and (2) various formulations of this truth over time, is very helpful. You might feel that you—if you are a non-Catholic reader—are being led down the primrose path, and perhaps this is indeed what Echeverria is doing. Indeed, a part of Echeverria’s polemic is to use the “unchanging truth” and “its historically conditioned formulations” distinction (p. 160) as part of an argument to champion a Roman Catholic understanding of the truthfulness of the church’s pronouncements over time—even when many (all?) Protestants would conclude that it is nigh impossible to truly hold together coherently the various (contradictory?) pronouncements of the Roman Catholic Church in her history. Nevertheless, the distinction between “unchanging truth” and “its historically conditioned formulations” could be a helpful one. In short, for readers wanting to understand Roman Catholic theology from the inside, from one who understands Protestant theology, and one who offers an impressive defense of much that many evangelicals would affirm (especially propositional revelation and realism), this is a great book to read. Just keep in mind that Echeverria is a Roman Catholic apologist, and a good one.

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