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BOOK REVIEWS

Suffering Wisely and Well: The Grief of Job and the Grace of God. By Eric Ortlund. Wheaton: Crossway, 2022, 191 pp., $16.99 paper.

Unlike most books that handle suffering and God's providence from a philosophical and systematic approach, Job scholar Eric Ortlund approaches the topic with a thematic overview of the book of Job. *Suffering Wisely and Well: The Grief of Job and the Grace of God* is structured with a pastoral and ecclesial framework, within which Ortlund writes primarily for the pastor, evangelist, and layperson as he explains the wisdom God wants believers to use in response to suffering in their lives and the lives of others. Using the imagery of Job's ordeal, Ortlund paints a picture comprising five underlying themes: suffering, consolation, reconciliation, vindication, and restoration, in all of which God is intimately involved and working. This book is not a verse-by-verse commentary but an overview of thematic motifs, whereby Ortlund exposits Job's ordeal in an explanation that relates to believers' suffering experiences today. At the outset, Ortlund sets a reader's expectation for a biblically and pastorally sensitive exposition on the book of Job, functioning as a guide to wisdom for suffering wisely and well.

Chapter 1 surveys the believer's experience in several types of suffering, which Ortlund describes in categories of sin, spiritual growth, persecution, wilderness wanderings, and lament. Although these are not all experiences that describe Job's ordeal, they are suffering experiences witnessed throughout the Bible that give readers a starting point to identify the circumstances of suffering in the life of believers. Chapter 2 expounds on Job 1–2, seeking to explain God's hand in Job's suffering and the evils brought upon him. While Ortlund is correct on God's providential directing of Job's agony for Job's greater good and God's glory (p. 40), his articulation of God's sovereignty (p. 51) has difficulty in that he implies a deterministic view, whereby although God is not the immediate cause of evil, he is indirectly the cause. However, this should not weigh critically on the book since it is not Ortlund's goal to argue or explain the problem of evil but rather the believer's response to suffering. Hence, even when suffering circumstances seem meaningless in that they do not identify with sin or spiritual growth, God is still good, providentially aware, and concerned for his children.

Chapter 3 expounds on Job 3–37, examining the poetic speeches of Job's friends for lessons to learn relative to consoling a friend who is suffering through a Job-like ordeal. Chapter 4 continues in Job 3–37, examining Job's speech as he protests God's goodness while trying to understand why God has allowed such tragedy to overcome him. Chapter 5 discusses Job 38:1–40:5, emphasizing the gentle response of God to Job's suffering protest, which readers of Job often misinterpret as a heavy-handed response from an angry God. Ortlund describes God's tone in questioning Job not as sarcastic and demoralizing but in a gentle manner, leading

Job to recognize his limitations and return his focus to the goodness of God amidst a world of continuing evil. Chapter 6 moves to Job 40:6–41:34, emphasizing God's justice. Job takes consolation in God by recognizing his identity as the divine warrior who is "intimately aware of the evil at loose in his world" (p. 156). Using the imagery of the behemoth and leviathan, God reveals to Job the real enemy he will defeat but tolerates for only a brief time. Chapter 7 expounds on Job 42, examining Job's response to God's speeches and promise to defeat the chaos far beyond Job's limited knowledge. Job's remark "but now my eye sees you," expresses his renewed faith and assurance in God.

Ortlund concludes with reflections on what we should learn from Job's ordeal. Primarily, that is to "suffer well by being wise about suffering" (p. 175). As part of the OT wisdom corpus, while keeping explanations simple, Ortlund does well to exposit the wisdom elements of Job often questioned in a plain and simple reading. Hence, Ortlund's observations of Job should encourage the believer to endure suffering joyfully in God's grace, hope, and love as a requirement that is "his way of fitting us for eternity" (p. 175). *Suffering Wisely and Well* is a fascinating articulation of Job, whereby the reader is encouraged to persevere in the hope of the gospel.

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Imprecations in the Psalms: Love for Enemies in Hard Places. By Steffen G. Jenkins. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2022, 352 pp., $56.00.

While the book of Psalms has been a favorite that believers have turned to for thousands of years, perhaps the most troubling and persistent of all the questions raised for readers of this book are those provoked by its sometimes shockingly violent prayers against the wicked, that is, the imprecatory psalms. They strike us as sub-Christian, perhaps less inspired and certainly less inspiring among the biblical books. Yet there they are, in all their graphic detail, like uncivilized, misbehaving children intruding into adult discussions, offending our modern sensibilities of propriety and enlightened ethics. Whether defending their rightful value for today, explaining away their embarrassing presence in some way, or dismissing them as literature from the vindicative indulgences of a more primitive age, readers have always had to deal with them somehow.

It is into this this theological cacophony that Steffan Jenkins speaks a fresh, clear message in his *Imprecations in the Psalms: Love for Enemies in Hard Places.* He begins with a helpful survey of the history of their interpretation in a section titled "A Real Problem: Retribution in the Psalter." Here he catalogues the previous approaches into five categories. First, on *a priori* enlightenment ethical grounds, some maintain that these psalms lie beyond any attempt to soften them or to integrate their teaching into theology. A second category is those who reject their ethical teaching, yet retain belief in their inclusion in the canon, either by allegorizing them, or, in the case of Brueggemann, by suggesting they are "profoundly sinful, [yet] they arise from an uncontrollable psychological state" (p. 10). A third category is

those who aver that imprecatory psalms are not evil *per se*, though they have no place in the church today. While they might be appropriate for Jews, they cannot be melded into Christian teaching. The fourth category takes a cautious approach in which we can and should pray against evil and all its schemes, though imprecatory curses ought not to be directed to specific sinners. Included in this category is Bonhoeffer, who believes Christ alone may rightly pray these petitions. A fifth variant here is the postmodern position, which says that the privileged and powerful may not invoke these curses on their own behalf, but only the marginalized or those who pray in solidarity with and for them.

Jenkins argues that any solution must begin with reading the book of Psalms contextually, not in light of materials outside the Psalter itself (whether Abrahamic Covenant, ANE, NT assumptions, or theology), but by reading the psalms in their sequential order. He continues, "To ignore the proper sequence of Psalms is, then, debilitating to the reader" (p. 32). Concerning the superscriptions (which inevitably one must account for in some way), Jenkins says, "I would argue that *ledavid* does not identify David as the author" (p. 34) but that "David can serve as Israel's ethical tutor" (p. 35). Then, following Wilson, he believes the macrostructure of the Psalter points to the national crisis of exile (Books IV and V), and he appropriates Wilson's cautionary advice: "We should instead focus on detailed rhetorical connections between psalms to discern editorial intent" (p. 39).

So how do these priorities and interests play into analyzing imprecatory psalms? Jenkins begins demonstrating this by offering a close reading of Psalms 1–2, widely acknowledged as the introductory frontispiece to the entire book (pp. 45–74). A key point of his argument here lies in pointing out that the kings of the earth who oppose Yahweh and his anointed and therefore are deserving of the outpoured wrath of the king-son may receive a reprieve through repentance by submitting to and giving homage to the son (2:10–12). In other words, their judgment is not a *fait accompli*, but conditioned upon whether they will repent: "Abandon (עבד) or *Abaddon* (אבד)" (p. 69). Indeed, if they repent, they are even retained in their royal positions over their own nations.

Jenkins then traces close connections between Psalms 1–2 and Psalm 3. Looking at the superscription and comparing it with its historical situation in 2 Samuel in which David is forced to flee from his enemy, his son Absalom, we see David was not seeking for vengeance. Aware of his own sin in the Bathsheba and Uriah scandals, David seeks refuge (cf. Ps 2:12). Realizing he is unworthy of standing on any moral ground higher than Absalom's, he does not wish or pray for Absalom's destruction. Instead, when David calls upon God to "break their fangs," he has in mind their disarmament ("teeth" = weaponry). Jenkins proposes that it is only with this third psalm that we have a full introduction to the Psalter whereby we encounter a paradigm for imprecations: these are prayers expressing desire that enemies be de-weaponized, and if they repent, they are to be incorporated fully into the worshiping community. This latter solution is then emphasized in Book Five of the Psalter, the conversion of all the earth into the willing, joyous acknowledgment that Yahweh rules.

The "notorious" (p. 261) Psalm 137, with the dashing of Babylonian babies upon the rocks, according to Jenkins, is explained in light of "David's Response" in Psalms 138–145, which is universal in its scope of worship and blessing.

By way of evaluation, Jenkins excels in his overview of the history of the problem. He ably demonstrates how and why Psalm 3 is so critical to interpreting the whole book when it is read in connection with Psalms 1–2. He consistently applies a canonical approach of attending to larger patterns within the Psalms, from contiguous psalms to the macrostructure, and offers numerous significant insights. For example, he rightly points out that the dashing of the Babylonian babies is not an imperative, but rather states what God had already prophesied regarding Edom and Babylon—this is not a wish, but a confident announcement to the taunting enemies of their divinely appointed destiny should they not repent. And he helpfully raises and answers five questions (pp. 268–74) raised by imprecations.

Nevertheless, weaknesses remain. After arguing that the superscription "of David" does not necessitate seeing David Ben-Jesse as author, he persists in using the name as if David were author, as in "*David's* Response" (p. 234) to Psalm 137, which he dates after the empire had been overthrown by Persia but before the final destruction of the city. This is clearly anachronistic. Despite citing Wilson's caution that we should focus on *editorial intent*, he persists in using "David" as if we are seeking his intent, an oversight with significant ramifications that undercuts his argument, unmitigated by the typological (p. 265) identification that he does not define or explain. Another questionable move is his proposal that by describing the dashing of the Babylonian babies, the psalmist refers only to the heirs of the throne, not all the babies (though lacking any textual support for this synecdoche).

There are other flaws, but one other point that requires mention. Jenkins claims that the "overall message of Book V [is] the inclusion, on a global scale, of repentant sinners from among the nations" (p. 263), and that "Psalm 149 is the final word on *unrepentant nations,* while Psalm 150 describes all foreign repentant nations and kings" (p. 263, emphasis his). This is, generously put, an overstatement. Though the word root for "repent" (שוב) appears many times in the Psalms, it is *never* used of foreign nations or kings. The key element of his thesis rests squarely upon a conditionality of the imprecations focused on "repentance," but the text does not provide warrant for doing so. The author even goes so far as to hold that imprecatory psalms display "*Love* for Enemies in Hard Places" (the subtitle of the book), a further overreach.

In summation, this is an important read for any study of the imprecatory psalms, but certainly not a panacean solution to the theological problem.

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Reading the Prophets as Christian Scripture: A Literary, Canonical, and Theological Introduction. By Eric J. Tully. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2022, 409 pp., $49.99.

This book's title captures the gargantuan task of prophetic studies, and Eric Tully engages it with a vim and vigor that supply the reader with a well-written text, numerous tables, stick-figure illustrations, sidebars, questions, maps, and photos. All the accoutrements for learning and instruction are here, and the author demonstrates admirably his grasp of the prophets and their gripping messages and roles in ancient Israel. Abraham Heschel said, "Being a prophet is both a distinction and an affliction," and Tully exhibits the many dimensions of this apt description.

The text is divided into three parts. Part 1 puts the prophetic movement in its theological (chap. 2) and historical (chap. 3) contexts. Theologically, Tully supplies an extended and exceptionally helpful log of the OT covenants, laying the foundation for understanding the prophets as covenant interpreters, concluding, as one would expect, with a statement on "The Covenants and Christ." Contextually, the text lays out the historical lines of the prophetic movement from Moses to the postexilic period, stationing the prophets in their historical niches as the story moves along.

Part 2 shifts the focus to the OT prophets as spokespersons for a religious movement, subdividing this section into five chapters that deal with the role of the true prophets (chap. 4), the false prophets and the nations (chap. 5), the message of the prophets (chap. 6), prophetic strategies (chap. 7), and the process of the oral prophetic word on its way to becoming a written record (chap. 8). While much in this section commends itself to teachers, students, and laity, the author's devotion of a whole chapter to the phenomenon of false prophecy is by itself a most worthy quality of this study. The images and information about this counterfeiting movement cast light on how deceptively influential the false prophets were, a sketch that books on prophecy do not often provide. The same could be said for the attention Tully gives to the process by which the oral prophetic word became the written prophetic word (chap. 8). Even though, as he acknowledges, the process was different from one prophet to another, the seven-event development from oral to written word provides a template on which to discuss this important dimension of prophetic studies. Perhaps the author could have emphasized more strongly a point he certainly assents to, that the editorial process occurs under the superintendence of the Holy Spirit, as do the prophet's initial words (the Psalms are a good place to identify and study a similar, though divergent, editorial process). Often in studies of this nature, authors pay lip service to this intriguing topic and leave the rest to the readers' imagination.

Part 3 turns the attention of this study to the prophetic books themselves, both major and minor prophets, and here our author establishes a format that he consistently follows to lay out his interpretation of the prophetic books themselves: Orientation (history and literary structure), Exploration (textual discussion), and Implementation (application to human life, Christian implications, etc.). Each chapter concludes with a few questions, generally based on the discussion of that chapter's prophet. Supported by sidebars, charts, maps, and other visuals, Tully's analy-

sis of each prophetic book (Exploration) section by section gets to the substance of the text while not allowing the reader to forget that the prophetic voice is that of a real person in real time and place, and that the God of Scripture superintends the entire process. He uses the sidebars cleverly to enhance information that might overburden the text, and his maps are uncluttered and clear as they illustrate geographically and strategically where the movements of the prophets and their hearers take place. They are a reminder that in the OT, and in the prophets particularly, geography, history, and theology work as companion forces, Amos being an excellent illustration. Tully weaves together those components almost seamlessly.

The title of this book, *Reading the Prophets as Christian Scripture*, as indicated above, suggests a colossal task, one that the author discusses only briefly in the introduction (pp. 1–3), anchoring his understanding largely in the NT use of the OT and the church's acceptance of the Hebrew Scriptures as canonical. By his own admission, he has given a lot of thought to the word "as," and the reader will need to consider how he, both by design and practice, lays out his thoughts for his readership. I have detected the unwritten answer to my inquiry in the following features of this study: Canonical Connections to the NT (e.g., "A New Covenant in My Blood," on Jeremiah's "new covenant," p. 192); Reception History (e.g., "A Modern Version of Amos 6:4–7," p. 281); contemporary stories to illustrate the prophetic text (e.g., the Christopher Watts story, p. 297); sidebars explaining memorable and key texts (e.g., "They Covet Fields and Seize Them" on Micah 2:2, p. 313).

Finally, and I cannot say this without a deep sense of exultation and gratitude, Tully's methodology does not allow the NT to preempt the prophetic message. His respect for the prophets as messengers of God in their own context and theological world dictates that restraint. At the same time, I come away from this excellent study of the prophets with the distinct feeling that something more should be said behind the *as*. Perhaps this is more a product of my own debt to my Jewish teachers—may their memory be a blessing!—but I sense that it is much deeper than that. Could it be more emotional than rational that I am still trying to compensate for (or correct, if that is permissible to say) the remnants of neo-marcionism that have raised their ugly heads in the American Christian church in recent years? As I dig deeper into my own subconscious mind, I am confident my commitment to the biblical canon as the Christian Church has decided it demands that we renew our commitment to describing and defining what should follow the *as* so that the OT prophetic message "*as Christian Scripture*" should acquire a clarity that is needed in our time and circumstances. It is not sufficient to show how the ethical teachings of the prophets can be applied to our own culture and world, though Tully's work does that and much more. The thought that really nurtures the urgency that drives these comments is that we need a renascence of canonical studies. Tully's book has both pricked my conscience and provided a model that can help us see the way.

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A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ecclesiastes, vol. 2: Ecclesiastes 5:7–12:14. By Stuart Weeks. London: T&T Clark, 2022, xlv + 698 pp., $100.00.

The second volume of Stuart Weeks's commentary on Ecclesiastes continues the strengths of volume 1. Weeks offers new interpretations of the Hebrew text, as well as in-depth discussion of ancient manuscripts and versions. Emendations of the consonantal text are minimal (p. xii), he offers a paraphrase of Ecclesiastes (pp. xv–xxiii), and the bibliography of volume 1 is augmented with additional works that are cited in volume 2 (pp. xxiv–xliv). Volume 2 is intended to be read in light of the introduction in the first volume. Each passage of the text is organized with a translation, a generalized commentary, a specific commentary on words or phrases, and then detailed notes that give a thorough treatment of textual issues, including discussion of the translations of ancient versions.

Weeks offers an interesting interpretation of Ecclesiastes 5:12 [MT 5:11]. Usually interpreters attribute the lack of sleep for a rich person to either worries about riches or because he has eaten too much food. If it is the former, Weeks notes, then how much a poor person eats is irrelevant to the argument (p. 10). If it is the latter, then the contrast should be with a poor person who has eaten little; but the text specifies that the poor may have eaten much. Weeks offers two possible alternative interpretations based on the ambiguity of the Hebrew. The first is that the rich man is not kept awake by the quantity of food but "by his desire to find an elusive satisfaction" (p. 11). The second is that the insatiable appetites of the rich man keep the servant awake (because the servant cannot satisfy his master). Here Weeks follows Symmachus who takes *śāḇā* ʿ as a verb ("to satisfy") rather than a noun ("abundance"). The second interpretation Weeks offers assumes the first character serves the second character, which is not necessarily the case. It may be that Ecclesiastes writes of a random worker and a random rich person. The first interpretation fits with Qoheleth's idea of the general lack of satisfaction that riches can offer, but so does the usual interpretation that the rich person cannot sleep because of quantity of food. Weeks rejects the idea that only the rich can get indigestion (p. 11); but the nonrich character is specifically a worker (Weeks translates as "underling," p. 6), implying that indigestion would be less likely as more calories are being burned.

One of the strengths of Weeks's scholarship is suggesting rhetorical questions, since questions are not always marked in Hebrew. In volume 1, Weeks convincingly suggested a rhetorical question for Ecclesiastes 1:8, "When all words are worn out, can a man no longer speak?" (1:303). Another opportunity to find a rhetorical question would be Ecclesiastes 7:1–3, "Is the day of death better than the day of birth?" Weeks does not take this opportunity in chapter 7, but he achieves a similar result by seeing a kind of parody that is strengthened by a pseudo-wisdom format of short sayings in this chapter (pp. 143–144, 147). In this section, Weeks also offers a pleasing rendition of the alliteration in verse 6: "sticks beneath the skillet" (pp. 140, 145, 151).

Some important themes in Ecclesiastes are highlighted in Weeks's discussion of Ecclesiastes 8:10–17. Humans are limited, as is wisdom, in particular the human

ability to understand divine justice. This relates to Qoheleth's commendation of enjoyment. Weeks writes, "Ultimately, humans can do no more than seek the one good that is guaranteed—pleasure in their life and work—because the very way that God works tends to obstruct any human understanding of his work" (p. 358).

Weeks's discussion in this section also illustrates a couple of the characteristics of his interpretative methodology, namely the importance of context, the identification of connections with other biblical contexts, and his judicious use of emendation. He contrasts Ecclesiastes 8:10–17 with Psalm 37:25 ("I have not seen the righteous forsaken") and connects it with the book of Job (where characters "struggle to interpret the evidence of divine retribution," p. 360). The similarities with Malachi 3:15 are also highlighted (the rebellious seem to be blessed). Weeks does not resort to emendation quickly, but in his discussion of Ecclesiastes 8:10, he translates, "And then I saw wicked people who approach and enter a holy place" (p. 359; cf. KJV, "I saw the wicked buried"). Here Weeks emends *qbrym*, "buried" or "tombs," to *qrbym,* "approaching" (p. 361).

Weeks identifies an interesting cultural parallel that may illuminate the numerical saying of Ecclesiastes 11:2. Rejecting the recently more popular idea of the diversification of an investment portfolio (p. 553; cf. the change in NIV 2011), he notes a type of bread found in Pompeii and Herculaneum called *panis quadratus*. Despite the name, the bread was scored for ease of breaking into eight pieces. Thus "give a piece to seven or even eight" could be a suggestion to "give most—or even all—of it" (p. 556, citing Jacques de Martin, 1730).

Weeks documents the metaphorical interpretations of Ecclesiastes 12:2–8 in a helpful chart (pp. 602–3) but abandons the old-age allegories in favor of a more literal interpretation focused on death. In his discussion of the historical (and enduring) allegorical interpretation, he is one of few commentators to mention an alternate interpretation noted by Jerome, namely the theme of war, especially the destruction of Jerusalem and the Babylonian captivity (p. 604). In the end, Weeks follows the general approach of C. Taylor (*The Dirge of Coheleth*, 1874), a literal approach (p. 606). Ecclesiastes 12:2–8 has some of the most difficult language in the book ("ambiguous and obscure," p. 609) and Weeks does a good job of documenting various possibilities. Though he recognizes a "large and prosperous household" (p. 609), Weeks does not consider the possibility that it could be the demise of the royal house or nation in mind. Thus, he rejects the important connection of women looking out the window with the loss of kingdoms in the stories of Sisera's mother, Michal, and Jezebel (v. 3, p. 623). Along these lines, a number of other possible connections are considered but rejected, including the images of a desolate land in Jeremiah 25:10 (millstones quiet and lamps extinguished); the alternate translation of "almond" ("watcher," used in Jeremiah 1:11–12 for an invasion, and different vocabulary is used for a military watchman, pp. 636–37); "silver cord" could be "silver portion" (cf. Josh 17:5), which is plundered, not snapped (pp. 601, 646); and the gold bowl could have "run away" to a conquering nation (p. 648). These elements and the eschatological overtones in Ecclesiastes 12:2 (cf. also 11:2) suggest that Qoheleth could be concerned with death on a national level, a possibility Weeks did not consider, despite his attempt to offer a literal interpretation.

Traditionally interpreters have viewed Ecclesiastes 12:9–14 as an epilogue added by a secondary author. Weeks follows a growing trend that sees this as part of the original composition. As outlined in his introduction (in volume 1), he does this by seeing the whole book as the product of a single author who used the Qoheleth character to make a point (without necessarily agreeing with all the views of this character). The epilogue, according to Weeks, begins by suspending the storyline so that the author can address the audience in another voice, a voice that agrees with much of Qoheleth's monologue but also contradicts the whole enterprise. Then as the epilogue continues, the author introduces another voice that defuses the tension by arguing that Qoheleth "was really just one of many writers" (p. 663), leaving readers to make their own decision. The scenario Weeks presents lands on an outcome similar to the older view of several additions to the book. Since both viewpoints are theoretical, readers are once again left to make their own decision. Weeks ends his book with his characteristic detailed analysis of the text, giving his readers another opportunity to rethink the received interpretations of Ecclesiastes in the light of solid exegetical evidence.

These two volumes on Ecclesiastes will be important reading for any future analysis of Ecclesiastes for many years to come.

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Now and Not Yet: Theology and Mission in Ezra-Nehemiah. By Dean R. Ulrich. New Studies in Biblical Theology. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2021, 184 pp. $28.00 paper.

Dean Ulrich earned doctorates from Westminster Theological Seminary and North-West University in South Africa. He has taught at Trinity School for Ministry, China Reformed Theological Seminary, and Belhaven University. He has also published works on the books of Ruth and Daniel. The Reformed perspective in his training and places of service is reflected in his writing. *Now and Not Yet* is the fifty-seventh title in the New Studies in Biblical Theology series, and addresses Ezra and Nehemiah from a biblical theological perspective. Therefore, this volume does not have lengthy discussions about authorship, time of writing, variant readings, grammatical points, or verse-by-verse exposition that one might expect in a typical commentary, although Ulrich does address all these issues briefly.

Ulrich helpfully divides the content of these two biblical books into the return from the exile, rebuilding the temple, rebuilding the people, and rebuilding the wall. While addressing the work of Ezra and Nehemiah, Ulrich does not emphasize the leadership lessons that some commentaries identify from the example of these two OT heroes. While Ulrich's purpose is beyond these practical lessons, some mention of them may have been helpful. The author also explains in numerous sections how Jesus parallels or fulfills aspects of spiritual needs in Ezra-Nehemiah, more so than one might expect in an OT commentary. However, Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of the "not yet" in the text. Ulrich explains that some otherwise disconnected de-

scriptions in the text (lengthy lists of the families returning from the exile and itemizing the temple vessels returned to Jerusalem) are ways of underscoring God's faithfulness. These less scintillating sections communicated to the people of Israel that preexilic promises God made to Israel also pertained to postexilic Israelites.

Ulrich's thesis is that Ezra-Nehemiah, which he takes together as a unified narrative, has elements of "now" (God is acting in that historical situation) and of "not yet" (a glimpse of what God will do in the eschatological future). Both elements address the mission of God's people then and now. The mission then was for God's people to be a kingdom of priests, a redeemed people to exemplify God's grace to the nations, a Davidic kingdom with God-honoring temple worship, and a faithful people who would draw people to God. To fulfill this covenant, the community of the redeemed should model a transformed community that practices compassion and justice and obeys God's law faithfully. The celebration upon the completion of the wall in Nehemiah 12 indicates a partial success in this effort as the people pledged to obey the covenant. However, despite some progress in these areas, Nehemiah 13 records disappointing events that indicated the people were not keeping the covenant. The particular concerns noted by Nehemiah and some of the prophets concerned their failure to keep pagans from polluting the holiness of the temple, a failure to tithe, failure to keep the Sabbath, and compromise through interfaith marriage. Ulrich examines the ethical question of interfaith marriage rather closely, tying it to the divine mission. As the people had learned through the negative example of Solomon, interfaith marriage compromised the mission of God's people being an exemplar and blessing to all the nations. All these examples of covenant infidelity indicate the incompleteness of the "now." In the future, however, the law would be written on the hearts of God's people, a Davidic king would reign, and an even more glorious temple would be built.

This is an intriguing volume with thoughtful insights on Ezra-Nehemiah. It is well researched and well written, enhanced further by indexes of Scripture references and authors and by a helpful bibliography. *Now and Not Yet* would be a valuable addition to any pastor or Old Testament specialist's library.

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Ruth: A Guide to Reading Biblical Hebrew. By Adam J. Howell. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Academic, 2022, xi + 318 pp., $32.99 paper.

The fascinating OT short story we call the book of Ruth is well served by commentaries, as the following partial list indicates: A. Graeme Auld (1984, Daily Study Bible); Daniel I. Block (1999, New American Commentary; 2015, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the OT); Frederic W. Bush (1996, Word Biblical Commentary); Edward F. Campbell (1975, Anchor Bible); Robert B. Chisholm (2013, Kregel Exegetical Commentary); Iain M. Duguid (2005, Reformed Expository Commentary); Tamara Cohn Eskenazi and Tikva Frymer-Kensky (2011, JPS Bible Commentary); Mary J. Evans (2017, Tyndale OT Commentaries); L. Daniel Hawk

(2015, Apollos OT Commentary); Robert D. Holmstedt (2010, Baylor Handbook on the Hebrew Bible); Robert L. Hubbard Jr. (1988, New International Commentary on the OT); Paul Joüon (1924); André LaCocque (2004, Continental Commentary); Kirsten Nielsen (1997, OT Library); Kandy Queen-Sutherland (2016, Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary); Katharine Doob Sakenfeld (1999, Interpretation); Jack M. Sasson (2nd ed., 1995); Jeremy Schipper (2016, Anchor Yale Bible); John R. Wilch (2010, Concordia Hebrew Reader); and K. Lawson Younger Jr. (rev. ed., 2020, NIV Application Commentary).

In the well-written volume under review, Adam J. Howell provides a helpful treatment of the book of Ruth, one that has a distinctly grammatical emphasis. He writes for students of the Hebrew text, focusing primarily on matters of morphology, syntax, and English translation equivalencies. Only occasionally does he give attention to larger exegetical issues such as critical method, history of interpretation, literary style, and biblical theology. The author organizes his comments around fourteen pericopes of the book of Ruth, commenting on words, phrases, and clauses in the Hebrew text. His comments are judicious and insightful. There is only limited engagement with other interpreters of the book of Ruth. A glossary offers brief explanations of grammatical terminology used throughout the volume. There is also a table of Masoretic accents (disjunctive and conjunctive) for Hebrew prose and poetry. Readers will find this information helpful since the author frequently points to exegetical significance for the Masoretic accents. Seminary students who wish to develop skill in grammatical exegesis and pastors wishing to improve their facility with the Hebrew text will find this volume useful. It provides a convincing illustration of the contribution that exegesis of the Hebrew text can make for practical exposition of biblical literature. My reservations are minor and are not intended to detract from this helpful volume.

First, one wonders whether this volume is actually a guide to *reading* Biblical Hebrew, as the subtitle suggests. It could perhaps better be characterized as a guide to *translating* Biblical Hebrew, since throughout the volume the author stresses how Hebrew linguistic structures can best be expressed in English translation. This of course is a beneficial process, especially for those who may need help in expressing those equivalencies. But translating an ancient text and reading that text are not exactly the same thing. Translation is usually undertaken to make a text accessible to those who are not able to read the original language (or in the case of students, to demonstrate they have a grasp of what the text is saying). With the interests of such readers in mind, we polish and refine renderings so that they express the meaning of the source text as clearly as possible in the target language. Reading, on the other hand, does not necessarily require translation into another language or converting linguistic idioms to corresponding expressions of a target language. Instead, in reading we mentally comprehend the linguistic data of the text without mechanically formulating precise English equivalencies. While this volume provides helpful guidance on how to render Hebrew syntactical structures in English, it does not focus on developing Hebrew reading proficiency as such.

Second, we may note that the author adopts terminology for describing Hebrew verbal forms that some readers may not prefer. Since the time of Heinrich

Ewald (1803–1875) it has been common to use the aspectual terms *perfect* and *imperfect* to describe the Hebrew verbal conjugations. However, some Semitists (e.g., Paul Joüon) argue for a mainly temporal understanding of the Hebrew verbal system. An argument can therefore be made for preferring neutral labels (e.g., *qatal*, *yiqtol*, *wayyiqtol*, etc.) over the aspectual terms *perfect* and *imperfect*. While acknowledging that "there are good reasons to abandon perfect/imperfect terminology," the author decides that there is "no reason to jettison [these terms] altogether" (p. 4). Perhaps so, but this terminological distinction underlies very different understandings of how the Hebrew verbal system operates.

One can also take exception with the author's expression *imperfect* + *waw consecutive*. He speaks of the *waw* consecutive as "flipping" the tense of the imperfect so that it functions as a simple past/perfective (p. 14). This may not be the best way to describe the prefix form of the verb. Ancient Semitic languages had both a long prefix verbal form and a short one. With the loss of final short vowels toward the end of the second millennium BCE, these two forms often merged. However, from a historical and functional point of view, they are separate forms. The short form (*yaqtul*) is a preterite that functions as a simple past tense, while the long form (*yaqtulu*) normally serves as a future (or "imperfect") tense. To call the preterite form an imperfect seems to confuse the historical issues underlying these forms.

Third, there is a good deal of repetition in dealing with morphological analysis. The author is aware of this repetition, finding it helpful for pedagogical reasons (pp. 8–9). In most instances, I tend to agree. But how many times must the common verb *wayyo'mer* ("and he said") be parsed before readers can be expected to recognize it? After encountering the morphological details for this verb more times than seem necessary, a type of reader distraction sets in.

Fourth, there may be an overemphasis on the Masoretic accents as a guide to grammatical exegesis of the Hebrew text. These accents do provide insight into how medieval Jewish scholars understood the biblical text. But this understanding should not necessarily be viewed as normative or correct. As the author acknowledges, "The accent system is neither inspired nor authoritative," and in fact, he cautions against putting too much weight on it (pp. 8, 208). The accentual system provides us with *an* understanding of the text, but it is not necessarily *the* correct understanding. My concern is that students may develop a biased impression that Masoretic accents have more weight than is required.

Fifth, one sometimes wishes for greater precision or detail in linguistic explanations. For example, discussion of the Qal passive (pp. 295–96) could benefit from a more robust description of this old feature of the verbal system that had largely disappeared in Biblical Hebrew except for the Qal passive participle. Likewise, the explanation of *Shaddai* (p. 91) is overly brief and lacking in linguistic detail and interpretive options that students might find helpful. Further, the author seems to overwork the syntactical category of possession, using it as a sort of catch-all category for various genitive relationships that should be distinguished. What he calls "possession" at times would better be classified as subjective genitive (though he regards this term as inappropriate in Hebrew studies) or genitive of family relationship, leaving possession as a category for describing ownership.

Sixth, alternative interpretations of the grammar sometimes suggest themselves. For example, in Ruth 1:10 should the imperfective verb *nāšûb* be understood as indicating future certainty ("We *will* return"), or is the verb desiderative in nuance, indicating desire ("We *want to* return")? Since the verbal action remains unfulfilled in Orpah's case, it seems best to interpret it as indicating desire rather than certainty. In 3:2, rather than taking the participle *zōreh* to indicate that Boaz is in the act of winnowing, or that he habitually winnowed at night, it seems better to take it as *futurum instans*, indicating what he is *going to do* later that evening. In the same verse, it does not seem likely that *'et* marks an adverbial accusative of place (p. 189). Rather, *'et* marks the definite direct object, and "threshing floor" here is a metonymy standing for the grain that is on the threshing floor. In 4:5, following the Masoretic text, the author explains *mē'ēt* as the *min* preposition plus the direct object marker *'et*, yielding the meaning "*even* Ruth the Moabitess." More likely, *ûmē'ēt* is an early scribal corruption of *gām* ("also") and *'et* (direct object marker), with no *min* preposition, as is borne out by the similar language in 4:10. This solution resolves the syntactical difficulty with the preposition *min* that encumbers the other interpretation. In 4:6, rather than understanding the perfect verb *mākĕrâ* as a present progressive (Naomi "*is selling*"), it seems better to take it as a perfect of resolve (Naomi "*has resolved to sell*").

These are minor quibbles. Overall, this is a helpful volume that will encourage careful analysis of the Hebrew text of the book of Ruth, especially regarding matters of morphology and syntax. I am pleased to recommend it, especially for seminary students, pastors, and others interested in accurately understanding the Hebrew text. For a full-orbed exegesis of the book of Ruth, students will need to complement this volume with other studies that deal more fully with things such as literary criticism, historical and cultural backgrounds, the history of interpretation, and biblical theology.

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The Gospel of John: A Theological Commentary. By David F. Ford. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2021, xii + 484 pp., $52.99.

In this contribution to theological interpretation, David Ford, Anglican theologian and fellow at Cambridge University, has provided a wholistic approach to the interpretation of the Gospel of John, taking it seriously as a narrative whole, and to its place in God's grand narrative of redemption, which is Christian Scripture. Exegetically sound, while not focusing primarily on a detailed exegesis of the text, Ford's commentary is rich in theological insights and practical in its application of John's purpose to develop and grow faith in his readers.

In his introduction, Ford eschews the typical discussion of introductory issues of authorship, date, provenance, and audience, exploring instead the question of how John intended his narrative to be read. He identifies the central theme of Jesus's identity and explores the storyline, which he recognizes as open-ended, still

being played out in the lives of readers today. He emphasizes the intertextuality of this Gospel with the Septuagint and the Synoptics, or at least the tradition reflected in their content. To give just one example, in chapter 4, Ford's discussion of the water imagery in Jesus's encounter with the woman at the well draws on texts from Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the Psalms, Song of Songs, and intertestamental literature.

Instead of focusing on the popular academic construct of the Johannine community, Ford chooses instead to focus on what the narrative itself emphasizes, the people surrounding Jesus and the believing community he initiated that continues today. Without ignoring the first-century context for this Gospel, he emphasizes the contemporary relevance of Jesus, his work, and his ongoing presence through the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers today. He recognizes the identity of Jesus as the primary focus of this work. This is established in chapter 1, then progressively expanded throughout the remaining chapters.

The section on the Farewell Discourses of chapters 13–17 (understood as future-focused discipleship training) illustrates well the richness of the theological and practical spiritual insights in Ford's analysis of the Gospel. He asserts that the washing of the disciples' feet, like all the Johannine narrative, places Jesus's identity front and center. "If the hands that wash the disciple's feet (and are later nailed to the cross) are the hands into which 'all things' have been committed by God, then the footwashing reveals who Jesus is, who God is, and what their love looks like" (p. 255). He recognizes this episode's parallel to Jesus's response to the "who is greater" argument in the Lukan last supper narrative. The one who serves is greater, and Jesus came to serve.

In Jesus's promise to prepare a dwelling place in his Father's house in chapter 14, "my Father's House" is understood by Ford "as the place of God's presence and special closeness to God, as a microcosm symbolizing the entire creation, and as a focus of the community's covenantal bond with God and with one another, expressed above all in worship, sacrifice, and feasting, as a foretaste of heaven—but also with the postresurrection community in its intimate, familial, mutually indwelling relationship with God through Jesus and the Spirit in the ongoing drama" (p. 272).

In an interesting exegetical conclusion, Ford argues that in the famous "I am the vine" passage in chapter 15, ἄμπελος means vineyard, not vine, and κλῆμα is better translated vine, not branches, which he believes better fits the imagery and language. He traces the rich viticultural imagery in the OT, then introduces the language of love and friendship into Jesus's portrayal of relationship to him and to his Father. He understands chapter 16 as realistic preparation for the trauma of the cross through the encouragement of the promise of the Spirit. In Jesus's prayer in chapter 17, Ford finds the "culmination of the most important and profound themes in the Gospel" summed up in what he labels "The Summit of Love" (p. 328). In its final petition (v. 26) Jesus's identity is intertwined with ours, "*knowing and known, intimately loving and loved, breathing his Spirit into us, uniting us in community, sending us as he was sent, and praying like this*" (p. 353, italics original).

Ford sees Jesus's prayer in chapter 17 as the transition between the meaning of the narrative story that is the first sixteen chapters and its final culmination in

Jesus's trial, arrest, death and resurrection in chapters 18–21. In his final actions fulfilling his mission, Jesus embodies and defines the words, signs, and events of the previous chapters, while initiating and determining the continuation of the "ongoing drama" in the lives of future disciples, including present readers (pp. 354–55). Jesus's bold declaration "I am" at his arrest contrasts with Peter's cowardly "I am not!" that follows.

Ford proposes rereading the prologue and the rest of chapter 1 as key to understanding the trial scenes and crucifixion of chapter 19. This is another example of how he never allows his readers to forget the larger story and its multifaceted dimensions and multiple interconnections. He designates the words Jesus spoke to his mother and the beloved disciple as "momentous" (p. 379), seeing them as summative of the linguistic connections to "receiving" at the footwashing, Jesus's teachings on love, and their eye-witness experience of his glory on the cross.

Ford's position on the miraculous events portrayed in this narrative is that they are "so bound up with assumptions about God's agency and freedom in relation to the world that it is undecidable by historical investigation" (p. 217). In addressing the water turning into wine in chapter 2 he states, "*It is as if our usual concept of the ordinary simply needs to be enlarged to take into account the reality of God and God's creativity, freedom, and generosity* (p. 65, italics original). In his discussion of Jesus's resurrection, he insists this is not a resuscitation, but "a God-sized event" (p. 396) focusing on who Jesus is, a question that is answered by Thomas's affirmation, "My Lord and my God!" However, he distinguishes the raising of Lazarus from Jesus's resurrection by designating it a resuscitation. He chooses not to elaborate on what he means by that, other than noting the distinction between Lazarus's need to be unbound, while Jesus's graveclothes were left behind.

A troubling issue is the frequency with which he references Jean Vanier (ten times in the author index), while revealing that he was discovered to have been a sexual abuser of women under his spiritual care. Ford acknowledges that including Vanier's insights was a difficult decision, but after consultation he retained them, deciding "they are not invalidated by what has been revealed about his behavior" (p. 440). I would disagree and suggest that any words of insight concerning this gospel of love, community, and redemption that are negated by inexcusable predatory behavior are counter to everything John's Gospel narrative is revealing about Jesus, God, and the community of believers.

Ford is to be commended for interpreting the whole of this Gospel narrative within its canonical text as received and read by the church throughout history. While acknowledging the scholarly debate and doubting its existence in the earliest manuscripts, he rightly gives the pericope of the woman caught in adultery (7:53–8:11) its place within this narrative. Also, unlike many interpreters, he accepts the legitimacy of the epilogue (chapter 21) for the completion of this narrative. He recognizes how what the prologue introduces culminates in the epilogue's emphases. These include the central focus on Jesus's identity as God and the redemptive drama initiated by the "Word become flesh." Ford emphasizes the open-ended nature of this chapter, and the whole narrative of John's Gospel, with final words about the limitless words and deeds of Jesus that could have been included. Ford

declares that this is the text's warning against an attempt to write a conclusion to Jesus's activity in history, which is still ongoing. Ford's analysis of John's Gospel is well worth careful reading and is a worthy supplement to the many more detailed exegetical commentaries on our shelves.

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I Alone Am Left: Elijah and the Remnant in Luke-Acts. By Jeremy D. Otten. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2021, xv + 227 pp., $29.00 paper.

As its subtitle makes clear, this revision of Jeremy Otten's doctoral dissertation (Wheaton, 2017) is a thematic study in the New Testament's use of the Old Testament, particularly the utilization of the Elijah narratives in Luke-Acts. Otten recognizes that Luke appeals to the Elijah narrative to develop his remnant theology. While other studies of Luke's remnant theology have focused on typological connections between Elijah and John the Baptist and/or between Elijah and Jesus (e.g., Conzelmann, Wink, Rowe, Brown, Fitzmyer, Marshall), Otten argues that Luke presses beyond a mere typologically prophetic view. Without denying that Luke acknowledges some fulfillment of Elijianic expectation in John the Baptist and in Jesus, Otten envisions something bigger and broader going on: he sees Luke connecting the Elijah narrative with Jesus's disciples as well.

To spell this out, Otten examines as a literary motif the references to the Elijah narrative in Luke-Acts. Because Elijah is commonly associated with the Old Testament concept of the remnant of God's people, Otten suggests that Luke appeals to the Elijah motif at the places in Luke-Acts where he wants to expound on his more developed remnant theology. Clearly defining his method as a narrative critical approach, Otten builds upon the recent work of scholars like Brodie (literary structure), Öhler (character function), Nolland (repeated verbal formulae), and Evans (thematic approach). In doing so, Otten moves from the general to the specific. After his introductory chapter on the goals and methodology of his task (chap. 1), he offers an overarching examination of the concept of the remnant in the Old Testament and in Second Temple Judaism (chap. 2). Next, he offers more specific examinations of Elijah and remnant theology in the Old Testament (chap. 3) and in Second Temple Judaism and the New Testament (chap. 4). He then investigates the Elijah motif in Luke-Acts in correspondence with Luke's character connections: Elijah and John the Baptist (chap. 5), Elijah and Jesus (chap. 6), and Elijah and the disciples (chap. 7). A brief concluding chapter offers a summary of the book and a few implications of the study (chap. 8), and an appendix sketches the possible allusions to the Elijah-Elisha narrative in Luke's Gospel (but interestingly not in Acts).

Perhaps most helpful in Otten's approach is his identification of four features of remnant theology in OT Israel and Second Temple Judaism (chap. 2) that shed light on Luke's use of the Elijah narrative. Otten summarizes these features of remnant thinking (perhaps with all-too-tidy alliteration) as the *removal* of many through divine judgment, the *remainder* of some by God's gracious provision, the

hope of *renewal* in the future, and a *reaching out* to other nations as a regular consequence of the renewal. This multifaceted rubric is helpful because it provides space for tension in Scripture's various discussions of the remnant: "In other words, remnant discourse can be simultaneously 'against' Israel (as she presently is) and 'for' Israel (as she ought to be, will be, and presently is, at least in part)" (p. 27). And as demonstrated in the study, these facets of remnant thinking recur in references to Elijah in the ancient literature and in Luke-Acts.

Unsurprisingly, the three key Old Testament texts examined to assess Elijah as a model of the remnant are the Mount Carmel narrative (1 Kgs 18:16–46), the Mount Horeb account (1 Kgs 19:1–18), and the conclusion of Malachi (Mal 3:23–24) (chap. 3). Otten suggests that the two 1 Kings episodes are so dramatically tied to the remnant concept that other allusions to Elijah sufficiently evoke the concept by association. Accustomed as they might be to understanding Elijah as a pouting prophet feeling sorry for himself and arrogantly overestimating his solitary representation of the faithful, some readers may not appreciate Otten's sympathetic reading of the Mount Horeb account viewing Elijah as a faithful and reliable figure (pp. 38–44). This sympathetic reading of 1 Kings 19 fits the biblical-theological arc to the Malachi 3 passage—the only place Elijah is mentioned in the Old Testament outside of the Historical Books—that establishes the eschatological expectation of Elijah's return as a messenger gathering the remnant. This picture of Elijah as the quintessential remnant figure around whom the righteous remnant is to be gathered is rather (even if not perfectly) consistent in the literature of Second Temple Judaism and the New Testament (chap. 4).

In searching out Luke's connection of John the Baptist to Elijah (Luke 1:5–17, 67–79; 3:1–20; 7:18–35), Otten uncovers the remnant themes of *removal*, *remainder*, and *renewal* (chap. 5). The fourth remnant theme is linked more with Jesus and the disciples. Otten finds Luke's connection of Jesus to Elijah both in his specific acts (e.g., political and religious confrontations, miraculous healings and food provision, raising a widow's dead son) and in the sweep of his whole story as a miracle-working prophet who leaves his spirit with his followers as he ascends into heaven (Luke 4:16–30; 7:1–17; 9:1–62; 24:51; Acts 1:1–11). Unconcerned to keep John the Baptist and Jesus separate in his use of Elijah imagery, Luke's blurring of the image serves John's Elijianic question of Jesus, "Are you the one who is to come?" (7:19)—a question Luke wants his audience to be asking as well. Jesus is the ultimate Elijah figure in that he is the core of the remnant, gathering to himself the community of the faithful repentant ones who will carry out Israel's mission of *reaching out* to the nations (chap. 6).

Most distinctive in Otten's study is his uncovering of Luke's connection of the disciples to the Elijianic remnant theme (chap. 7). Tracing the Elijah links to the disciples (Luke 9:52; 10:1–16; Acts 8:26–40; 9:32–43; 10:1–48; 20:7–12), the four features of remnant theology come to a climax. Thus, Luke's portrayal of John maximizes the themes of the *removal* of the wicked and the search for the *remainder*; Luke's portrayal of Jesus maximizes theme of the hope of *renewal* and launches a theme of *reaching out*, which is embodied in the ministry of the disciples.

While naturally focused on Lukan theology, Otten's work is an easily accessible entrée into the study of remnant theology in general. While appreciating the work of those who have gone before him in examining Luke's use of the Elijah narrative, Otten presses ahead with helpful observations that ring true in understanding Luke to do more with the Old Testament than identifying proof-from-prophecy typological fulfillments. Otten is aware of counterclaims and tempered in his own assertions; his argument is reasoned and his presentation circumspect. Naturally, those interested in exploring Lukan theology will be drawn to this book. But it also contributes to the study of the New Testament use of the Old and will be of even greater interest to those exploring the theological concept of the remnant in the whole of Scripture.

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Paul on Identity: Theology as Politics. By Troels Engberg-Pedersen. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2021, x + 234 pp., $27.00.

Troels Engberg-Pedersen's book, *Paul on Identity*, attempts to summarize Paul's understanding of identity and demonstrate its implications for contemporary American politics. Engberg-Pedersen is a well-read and seasoned scholar, and that mastery is evident in this book, even though it is not heavily footnoted. His target audience is quite broad, including experts and nonexperts, believers and unbelievers (p. 2). Engberg-Pedersen views Paul as a well-educated genius who, even with his Christ-belief, remained within Judaism. He was substantially influenced by Stoicism, perhaps encountering it in Tarsus (p. 38) and had an apocalyptic view of God's near intervention. Even though Engberg-Pedersen regards Paul as a genius, he also understands him as a man of his time and thus sometimes flawed and wrong. For example, Engberg-Pedersen states Paul's central gospel message clearly and then claims, "Modern Christians confess all of this in the Christian creed, including those Christians (like myself) who cannot believe it in the literal sense in which it was surely meant by Paul" (p. 5; cf. p. 74). Nevertheless, he insists that to read Paul fairly we must accept that he believed these things and read him on his own terms (p. 5). The intention of the book is to apply Paul's theology to modern politics, but some might question why that is a relevant endeavor given the author's presuppositions about Paul. His response is that Paul was undoubtedly an influential genius, and geniuses deserve to be read.

Engberg-Pedersen aims to summarize Paul's approach to identity and apply that conception to the current American political context; thus, he takes Paul's religious concept and transfers its application to the modern secular, democratic, political context. Central to his understanding of Paul is the concept of dual identity. According to him, Paul understands Christ-believers, who are radically changed and are now new creations, to have both pneumatic and sarkic identities. The pneumatic identity is the result of Christ-belief and is the essential, primary, or higher identity that is shared universally by Christ-believers. The sarkic identity constitutes one's

secondary identity and is diverse even for Christ-believers. Much that constitutes this secondary identity (e.g., social status, ethnicity, sex, etc.) is considered to be adiaphora or matters of indifference. Communities face the challenge of integrating diverse sarkic identities in the universal pneumatic identity. In Galatians 5:6, among other places, Paul presents love as the key to bridging these tensions in community.

The book is arranged with six chapters falling evenly into three major sections: the agenda, the opposition, and the persuasion. Chapter 1, "Paul's Agenda: The New Creation," describes Paul's theology focused on pneuma, apocalypticism, kingdom, and the resurrection of Jesus Messiah. Chapter 2, "Paul's Agenda: Community in Love and Freedom," describes how the new creation Christ-believer, empowered by the pneuma, is called to live ethically, especially with love. In chapter 3, "The Opposition: Christ Believers, Jews, and Pagans," Engberg-Pedersen offers his view on the controversial topic of the relationship between Christ-believing Jews and non-Jews. As far as salvation and identity are concerned, the only thing that matters for both groups is Christ-faith. While Christ-believing Jews might continue their Jewish observances as a "lower-level" identity, they must not insist that non-Jewish Christ-believers hold to those Jewish customs. While chapter 3 focused on ethnic identity, chapter 4, "The Opposition: Masters and Slaves, Men and Women, Sex, and the Rest of the World," focuses on social and sexual relationships. He understands Paul to affirm the legitimacy of slavery, inferiority of women, and illegitimacy of homosexuality, among other things. But "just as we cannot immediately make Paul's theology our own, so it is with his ethics" (p. 129). Engberg-Pedersen considers many of Paul's ethical positions as untenable and regrettable. Chapter 5, "The Persuasion: Integration," describes Paul's rhetorical brilliance in showing Christ-believers that they are part of a movement much larger than themselves and in appealing to his own example. While chapter 5 described Paul's rhetoric employed to integrate Christ-believers into community, chapter 6, "The Persuasion: Exclusion," describes Paul's rhetoric employed to reject or exclude those who are opponents of the community, those not "in Christ."

While analysis in these six chapters makes up the bulk of the book, Engberg-Pedersen's aim comes out in the conclusion, in which he applies Paul's thought to contemporary life. He draws on the work of philosophers and political scientists to see how Paul could speak to our contemporary context. He thinks that the problem facing modern democracies is the relationship between identity politics and national identity, and he sees in Paul a paradigm for navigating this challenge. "What is particularly beautiful, however, about applying the Pauline model is that it holds the two levels tightly together, since (as we have seen) what is placed at the top level (the national identity) logically grounds the legitimacy of what is placed at the lower level (the various diverse identities)" (p. 210).

Engberg-Pedersen is to be applauded for his careful analysis of Paul. I appreciate his disposition to read Paul on his own terms, to synthesize his theological and ethical framework, and then to apply Paul's theology to our own context. The book contains numerous block quotations from Paul himself followed by Engberg-Pedersen's analysis. Though the book is not heavily footnoted, Engberg-Pedersen is clearly conversant with the major works on Paul and the key interpretive issues.

As an accessible book, he does not often provide the reader insight into these differing views; rather, he offers some of his key conclusions without argumentation (e.g., accepting only seven Pauline letters). This is a reasonable approach, given his target audience.

Engberg-Pedersen and readers of this journal operate from different understandings of Scripture and its authority. As an author, he has stated his positions as presuppositions; so I will critique two other issues, one interpretive and the other methodological. From an interpretive standpoint, I am not convinced that Paul operated with an understanding of pneumatic (shared by all Christians) and sarkic (accounting for the differences even among Christians) identities. The concept of identity probably was not on Paul's mind as much as it is for modern readers. Even more, I am not convinced that "sarkic" is a neutral term to describe bodily existence. Certainly "flesh" can be merely a descriptor of physicality (e.g., Rom 1:3; 11:14; 1 Cor 1:29; 15:39), but often it is laden with the negative connotations of the sinful human condition apart from God (e.g., Rom 7:5, 18; Gal 4:39; 5:16; 5:24). To make his point, Engberg-Pedersen tends to downplay the often-present connotations of *sarx* being sinful.

From a methodological standpoint, Engberg-Pedersen did not articulate his paradigm for accepting or rejecting certain theological or ethical ideas from Paul. What are the criteria for deciding what aspects of Paul's thought are to be discarded as misunderstandings of his time? And what aspects of Paul's thought should be given consideration for governing how we think today? This problem is predictable when Paul's view is dissonant with the current cultural approach, for example, with the issue of homosexuality: "We cannot accept his view of homosexual practice. And we cannot accept what is in fact a strongly distancing view of society as such. Basically, we cannot accept his negative view of the flesh and body and of the social practices in which our bodies are engaged" (p. 130). In this quote, we see how his methodology has shaped his interpretation of Paul. He begins with ethical presuppositions from his own context that shape the way that he reads Paul. The challenge with this à la carte approach to Paul is that the careful textual analysis that Engberg-Pedersen undertakes becomes subservient to his predetermined conclusions about what is good and right.

I applaud Engberg-Pedersen's disposition to understand Paul rightly and to have Paul's thought shape current activities, including political activities. While I think some of his presuppositions have undercut the applicability of Paul to our current context, his book is insightful and worth reading. In addition to some methodological questions, evangelicals will question the authority with which Paul might speak if we do not accept the truthfulness of the historical realities that Paul claims.

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The Concept of Canon in the Reception of the Epistle to the Hebrews. By David Young. Library of New Testament Studies 658. London: T&T Clark, 2022, xiii + 161 pp., $115.00.

In this detailed study, David Young seeks to answer the following questions: How was the letter to the Hebrews received in early Christianity? And further, what does this reception history say about the concept of canon in this era? To answer these questions, Young first sets the parameters of his study and signals his approach to the reception of biblical literature in the history of early Christianity. Mindful of the methodological mistake of anachronistically importing categories developed in later centuries into the examination of earlier evidence, Young prioritizes social and material explanations for the distinctive reception of Hebrews in early Christianity.

Drawing on recent historical reconstructions, Young argues that the typical model of the letter's early acceptance in the East and a gradual subsequent acceptance in the West is an argument from silence that does not account for the ambiguity of the evidence (pp. 3–14). Hebrews is utilized in various ways in both the East and the West, and the eventual assessment of figures like Jerome and Augustine draws upon a well-established reception of the letter: "an acceptance of Hebrews with questions about its authorship" (p. 13).

In the second and third centuries, Young insists, discussions of Hebrews did not include the notions of canonical status or scriptural authority (i.e., they did not focus on whether Hebrews was "in or out" of the accepted canonical lists). Rather, "the utility of the text of Hebrews to an author's rhetorical aims appears to be the critical factor in Hebrews' reception among patristic authors prior to the fourth century" (p. 49). Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen utilize Hebrews in relatively divergent ways (pp. 55–72). These theologians do not "concern themselves with the question of acceptance or rejection," but rather "exhibit nuance and complexity in their selection of passages from Hebrews, their interpretation of those passages, their opinions about Hebrews' authorship," as well as the interrelationship of these inquiries (p. 55).

In perhaps the strongest part of his monograph, Young shifts from the direct discussion of Hebrews by individuals to an examination of the manuscripts of the letter and what they can tell us about their reception (chaps. 4–5). Noting that "the vast majority of manuscripts that include Hebrews attest to a close relationship between the epistle and the *corpus Paulinum*," Young argues that the key factor in the reception and reproduction of Hebrews was not "canonical status" but rather the letter's relationship to a given edition of Paul's letters (p. 77). Because editions of ancient texts indicated at least some deliberation and intentional arrangement by a given compiler (pp. 77–81), the position of Hebrews at the end of Paul's letter collection (i.e., after Philemon) in the manuscript tradition was most likely due to the prevailing "hesitancy" about Pauline authorship.

For Young, the reason for this hesitancy is that early Latin translations of the Pauline corpus likely omitted Hebrews. Consequently, it is likely that "Latin-speaking Christians who encountered these early Latin editions of Paul that did not

include Hebrews had no reason to associate the treatise with Paul" (p. 106). During the "wider push toward Latinity in the imperial administration of the fourth century," there was a move "to systematize Latin editions of Paul in consultation with Greek editions" (p. 106).

Several social factors prompted the rise of "Latinity" in the Greco-Roman world such as increased patronage for translation projects (pp. 114–28), and these cultural forces created the impetus to produce editions of Paul's letters that reflected both the Greek and Latin manuscript traditions. In light of these factors, Young concludes that "the editorial reconciliation of these different traditions provides a plausible explanation for the placement of Hebrews at the end of the Pauline corpus, an editorial decision consistent with Hebrews' questionable Pauline status and one that would determine its place in the vast majority of the subsequent manuscript tradition as well as modern print editions of the Bible" (p. 128).

This volume demonstrates that the reception of Hebrews is a kind of open window into the complex use and nonlinear circulation of scriptural texts in early Christianity. Young's detailed interaction with figures in the second through fourth centuries also helpfully shows the difficulty of extrapolating a given historical writer's comprehensive position on the concept of canon.

Young's broader argument about the status and role of authoritative writings in the earliest churches will be most compelling to those who share his understanding of the development of the concept of canon in the first through third centuries (his central claim here is that there was *not* a coherent concept of canon prior to the fourth century intellectual debates among ecclesial theologians). However, I am not sure he has demonstrated that a stable or authoritative collection of texts was absent or irrelevant for theologians in earlier eras. For instance, the early circulation of a "core collection" of apostolic writings, the phenomenon of widespread liturgical usage, and the impact of Irenaeus's categories for the shape and status of biblical texts collectively represent a chapter in the story of early Christianity that Young acknowledges but does not integrate into his study. These alternate lines of inquiry, however, admittedly tap into a much more complex debate in biblical studies that involves a host of critical historiographical decisions. On balance, Young's treatment of the reception of Hebrews, along with his careful methodological parameters, make this volume an interesting and substantive contribution to the field.

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The Joy of Hearing: A Theology of the Book of Revelation. By Thomas R. Schreiner. New Testament Theology. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021, 202 pp., $19.99 paper.

For many Christians, what Revelation has to say about theology is limited to the timing of Christ's return and the nature of world events prior to it. Revelation, however, has far more to say, and perhaps few teachers today are as qualified as Thomas R. Schreiner to write a book to demonstrate this reality. He has written extensively on biblical theology throughout his career. He has also written a com-

mentary on Revelation and is currently finishing another. With this experience under his belt, Schreiner gives to us *The Joy of Hearing*, the first book in Crossway's New Testament Theology series.

Schreiner organizes this book into seven chapters, each covering a theological theme in Revelation. Before the main body, he offers in the introduction a brief overview of Revelation's historical setting and literary genre. He locates the historical setting under the reign of Domitian, and he explains Revelation's epistolary, prophetic, and apocalyptic character. He gives special attention to Revelation's apocalyptic genre, indicating that it is particularly important for understanding the book's symbolism properly.

In chapter 1, Schreiner identifies and analyzes the characters in Revelation who oppose God and his people. He identifies the "earth dwellers" as unbelievers, the first beast as the Roman Empire, the second beast as the imperial cult, "Babylon the Harlot" as the city of Rome, and the dragon as Satan. He explains that Revelation portrays a cosmic war between God and Satan, and that "the Roman Empire, the Roman religion, and the great city of Rome are not neutral entities. They have thrown in their lot with the dragon" (p. 44).

Chapter 2 is about the saints. Here, Schreiner demonstrates Revelation's depiction of "the commitment that marks out those who belong to God" (p. 66). He does so by commenting on how "the seven 'blessed' sayings" and "the conquering statements" throughout Revelation "point to the eschatological reward" (p. 47) and exhort believers to persevere to the end. He interprets "the great tribulation" as taking place from the resurrection to the return of Christ, and the saints as being commanded to persevere in faithfulness through the various persecutions that they face within it. The reward for their faithful perseverance is final salvation.

In chapter 3, Schreiner examines Revelation's portrayal of God's sovereignty, holiness, and judgment. First, he demonstrates God's sovereignty in Revelation's use of "throne," ἐδόθη ("it was given"), and different titles for God (e.g., "the Alpha and the Omega"). Then he discusses the imagery of the throne room scene in Revelation 4 as an illustration of God's holiness. Lastly, he explains Revelation's portrayal of God's judgment by commenting on the seal, trumpet, and bowl judgments. He also references the judgment on Babylon, Jesus's return on a white horse, and the great white throne.

Schreiner introduces chapter 4 by stating from the outset that it is his longest chapter, for it covers Jesus, "the center of Revelation" (p. 103). This chapter is divided into six sections. First, he discusses Jesus's divinity in the "grace wish" and his appearance in Revelation 1, as well as various "convergences in which God and Jesus are given the same status" (p. 108) throughout the book. Second, he surveys several passages, mainly Revelation 5, to illustrate how Revelation portrays Jesus's saving work. Third, he interprets the sealing and the washing of the 144,000 as Christ's protection of all the redeemed from the impending wrath of God. Fourth, he reads Revelation 12 as signifying how Christ defeated Satan through his atoning death. Fifth, he discerns Revelation's emphasis on the imminence of Jesus's return and addresses how interpreters handle the eschatological tension this emphasis

creates. Lastly, he comments on how Revelation's depictions of Jesus's return portray his role in final judgment.

Chapter 5, in which Schreiner discusses the Holy Spirit, is much shorter. He explains the Spirit's role in revealing the message of the book's prophecy to John and its recipients. This role is made evident in how John is "in the Spirit" at "key junctures" (p. 141) in the book and how Christ's messages to the seven churches are distinguished as "what the Spirit says to the churches." He also defends his interpretation of the references to "the seven spirits" throughout Revelation as referring to the Spirit.

In chapter 6, Schreiner examines Revelation's depiction of the new creation as the "new Jerusalem" and the new temple. He discusses the OT background for the imagery as well as its figurative nature. He explains that the temple imagery is not to be interpreted literally, but rather as signifying God's presence in the new creation. Likewise, he clarifies the figurative nature of the city's walls, gates, and measurements as conveying the safety and security of the new creation. He also demonstrates briefly how the new creation in Revelation denotes not only a place, but a people as well.

In chapter 7, Schreiner deviates from the approach taken in the previous six chapters to discuss postmillennialism, premillennialism, and amillennialism. He surveys evidence for each of the positions, as well as some of their potential shortcomings. He gives only brief attention to postmillennialism "since few advocate this reading today" (p. 163). Ultimately, between premillennialism and amillennialism, he leaves his own position ambiguous, stating that amillennialism "has many strengths since it fits with the reading of the entirety of the Scriptures, but the premillennial position in many ways seems to be the more natural way to explain Revelation 20" (p. 178).

Prior to *The Joy of Hearing*, the few existing book-length treatments of the theology of Revelation were too technical to reach a wide-ranging audience. This book takes the same biblical-theological approach that has made its mark in recent Revelation scholarship and presents it in a way that is both very readable and highly pastoral. Schreiner also demonstrates in this book an awareness of the relevant exegetical debates, sensitivity to the Revelation's symbolic imagery, and familiarity with the text's intricate use of the OT. He also proves himself to be respectful toward those interpreters with positions that differ from his own.

I wonder if the introduction could have benefited from including coverage of the different interpretive approaches to Revelation. It is evident that Schreiner takes an eclectic approach, but I anticipate that the book will probably be of interest to readers who have not yet learned, perhaps through a Bible college course, that Revelation can be approached in ways that are not predominantly futurist. Perhaps explanation of these approaches would help Schreiner's readers, especially his less experienced ones, understand and appreciate his eclectic interpretation of Revelation even more than they already will.

This point of consideration aside, I could not commend *The Joy of Hearing* highly enough. The intended audience for this series is students, preachers, and interested laypeople, and Schreiner has produced a work that is tailor-made for

such readers in its relevance and readability. As Schreiner demonstrates masterfully, joy awaits those who hear the message of Revelation and persevere in it. My hope, and expectation, is that this book will be read widely, and that, subsequently, this book will prove to be a means by which many in the body of Christ will experience the joy of hearing.

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Reading the Bible Theologically. By Darren Sarisky. Current Issues in Theology 13. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019, xix + 407 pp., $27.00 paper.

Theological approaches to biblical interpretation have garnered considerable interest of late. Scholarship in this arena has generated manifold perspectives; yet in a number of cases the resulting proposals have failed to win support from key stakeholders. Sarisky's book enters into this sometimes contentious discussion poised to achieve its aim of moving the conversation a "step forward" (p. xiii).

The volume's overarching goal is to consider how Christian theological commitments should impact the interpretation of Scripture. In pursuing this objective, Sarisky seeks to avoid two common interpretive pitfalls. He calls the first "ahistorical dualism," namely, an expositional ethos in which doctrinal considerations are valued at the expense of historical and philological expertise (pp. 248–50). He refers to the second pitfall as "the dualism of the immanent frame" (pp. 259–60), denoting an interpretive approach that is reductively historicist such that theological considerations are largely marginalized—whether wittingly or unwittingly.

The book opens with a 72-page introduction. A highlight of this section is its typology of four extant ways of delineating the relationship between theology and the Bible. The first assigns a passive role to theology and is associated with the legacy of James Barr. The latter three types call for theology to be more active in interpretation and are associated with Ulrich Luz (*Wirkungsgeschichte*), Stephen Fowl, and Jean-Luc Marion. To differing degrees, Sarisky is dissatisfied with all four options. He thus offers an alternative.

The alternative begins to take shape in Part 1 (chapters 1–2). Here, Sarisky engages with Augustine as a promising resource, giving special attention to his ideas about those who study Scripture (i.e., Augustine's theological assessment of readers) and his semiotic appraisal of the canon. For the bishop, the various books of the Old and New Testament function "as a set of signs directing [our] attention to the triune God" (p. 94). The upshot is that Augustine's hermeneutic is *substantive,* meaning that the Bible is to be exposited with an eye to its *res*, that is, the reality of God it is purposed to illumine (pp. 103–5).

In Part 2, Sarisky transitions to a constructive proposal. He begins with a case study of Baruch Spinoza's (naturalistic) interpretive program (chapter 3) to demonstrate what theological interpretation *is not*. This discussion plays an important role in demonstrating why theology needs to shape the way the Bible is read.

Chapter 4 focuses on the *readers* of the Bible and especially their formation for interpreting it well. Sarisky underscores the church's role in nurturing readers toward a "receptivity" to the theological claims of Scripture (p. 189). This receptivity is to be understood not as a "pious gloss" but as a salutary "capacity" (p. 290). Chapter 5 offers a theological account of the *text* of Scripture. Drawing from Augustine's semiotic theory, Sarisky deploys the notion of "signification" as a "key middle term" for linking up "what is written in the text and what the text is written about" (p. 268). Along the way, he contends that a "background conception" of God—a particular "pre-understanding"—is necessary to engage the canon in a manner that does not miss the reality to which it points (pp. 274–75). In arguing this, Sarisky stresses that such a preunderstanding does not mean that interpretive conclusions are somehow predetermined (pp. 281–83); likewise, it does not negate the value of historically diligent exegesis. In this sense, what Sarisky envisions should not be associated with the approach of Stanley Hauerwas's commentary on Matthew (Brazos, 2006), which is critiqued (pp. 252–59).

In chapter 6, Sarisky offers broad, concrete strategies for reading the Bible theologically. Taking his cue from Karl Barth's three levels of reading, Sarisky purposes three key interpretive stages: *explicatio*, *meditatio*, and *applicatio*. In *explicatio*, one "observes the sense of the written word," paying close attention to the cultural, social, and political circumstances of the text (p. 297). In *meditatio*, one reflects on the text with a determination to begin to think within its framework. The aim is for the text's perspective to be adopted as the reader's perceptive—to see one's "own point of view" subordinated "to that of the text" (p. 309). Sarisky's exposition of this theme is clear and compelling. In *applicatio*, the text's language/perspective is "actively mobilized … to perform discrete functions" within the reader's context (p. 319). The Barmen Declaration is featured as an example. Though none of the biblical passages cited in it mentions the threat to which it was responding, the Barmen Declaration was framed as needing to be said on biblical grounds in view of the situation it sought to address. For Sarisky, this is what *applicatio* looks like.

A robust conclusion takes up the allegation that theological interpretation "licenses eisegesis" (p. 333). In treating this familiar grievance, Sarisky perceptively notes that charges of eisegesis are often premised on naturalistic assumptions. The upshot is that what may be regarded as an eisegetical conclusion within a naturalistic framework may stand as a properly exegetical one within a theological hermeneutic. This discussion should give biblical scholars—certainly those who are confessional—pause to interrogate the metaphysical presuppositions that may very well undergird their criticisms of theologically attuned exposition.

Two major strengths of this volume stand out. First, Sarisky offers a cogent defense of the need for a theological preunderstanding of Scripture. Such a pronouncement, of course, risks offending Protestant sensibilities inasmuch as it brings to mind the Roman Catholic view of the co-authority of tradition. Yet, Sarisky advances this theme in a manner that makes it easy to recognize why sound biblical exposition requires more than simply attention to exegetical procedure. In doing so, he pinpoints the way in which expositing Scripture out of a theological orientation can in fact be—contra James Barr and others—an asset rather than a

liability for interpretation. Second, Sarisky attempts to upend the sentiment (one that theologians are perhaps prone to hold) that historically conscientious interpretation can only be the product of a naturalistic worldview. To the contrary, as he stresses, there "are other ways to ground" the use (and value) of historical critical tools in expositing the Bible (p. 170).

At the same time, Sarisky does not elaborate this claim and its wider implications; indeed, elaboration on how a theological appraisal of the canon might license the use of historical-critical methods would have been much appreciated. Likewise, more detailed reflection on how such methods, as situated within a theological account of Scripture, might "be turned to good ends" would have been welcomed (p. 186). In a book whose claims are generally spelled out with impressive precision, the comparatively limited treatment of these key assertions is odd and makes for a vulnerability in its overall proposal. That said, perhaps such omissions will be met with an article or another monograph? Were this to come to pass, we would undoubtedly once again be well-served by Sarisky's orderly, learned, and creative thinking on how to synthesize theological commitment and historical method in the work of interpretation.

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Refusing to Kiss the Slipper: Opposition to Calvinism in the Francophone Reformation. By Michael W. Bruening. New York: Oxford University Press, 2021, xv + 361 pp., $99.00.

Michael W. Bruening is a professor of history and political science at Missouri University of Science and Technology. His research focuses on the Protestant Reformation in the francophone world. His previous publications include *Calvinism's First Battleground* (Springer, 2005) and an edited version of Pierre Viret's correspondence, *Epistolae Petri Vireti* (Droz, 2012). In *Refusing to Kiss the Slipper*, Bruening offers a compelling account of the Protestant networks that opposed John Calvin and his reforming agenda. Bruening argues that the history of the French Reformation has been written by the "winners," specifically noting the influence of Theodore Beza's *Life of Calvin* and *Ecclesiastical History* on French Reformed historiography. Therefore, he states that "the present book seeks to introduce, by contrast, a history of the losers" (p. 3). The book reveals the various relationships and events that unified Calvin's opponents.

The chief aim of this work is to highlight the significance of French Protestants who have often been overlooked. Instead of identifying French Reformed thought with Calvin and Beza, this book displays the importance of anti-Calvinist Protestants who formed their own movements alongside those of the Genevan reformers. When treated in scholarly literature, the members of these networks have often been portrayed as unorganized individuals working alone. Yet Bruening demonstrates that Calvin's opponents often worked together and created their own movements. He allows the anti-Calvinists to speak for themselves and analyzes their correspondence in order to argue for their interconnected nature.

The book is split into eight chapters. The first two chapters tell the story of the early French Reformation and the formation of Calvinistic networks. The final six chapters demonstrate the development of the opponents to Calvinism, both within France and in the surrounding francophone regions. Special attention is given to Sebastian Castellio and his influence. Bruening also presents the ways that anti-Calvinists within France found themselves echoing the reforming agenda of the early French evangelical movement. The organization of the book is excellent. By examining the context of the early French reformation, and the ways in which the early reformers splintered into different sects, Bruening can trace the formation of competing Protestant networks.

Much of the material in the first two chapters is what one would find in a "typical" French Reformation history. The material is not groundbreaking, but it is foundational to the rest of the book. The first chapter tells the story of the French reform movement at Meaux and focuses on the group of reformers surrounding Marguerite de Navarre. This network included forerunners to both Calvinism and anti-Calvinism. Bruening illustrates that the goal of this network was to reform the Roman Catholic Church from within, at the diocesan level. Therefore, he also highlights the political developments that shaped this movement within France during the 1520s and 1530s.

The second chapter, titled "The Formation of Farellian and Calvinist Networks," demonstrates the consolidation of the Calvinist movement within the francophone world. Yet one of the most important insights from this chapter is the importance of Guillaume Farel. Recent scholarship has begun to highlight the importance of Farel to the formation of "Calvinism," and Bruening expands on these developments to make an excellent case for Farel's significance. In much French Reformed historiography, Farel is given only brief mention, citing his membership in the circle of Marguerite de Navarre and later as the man who called Calvin to Geneva. Bruening fills in gaps in this narrative, displaying the ways in which Farel's early career, his immense contacts throughout Europe, and his distinct, feisty personality were highly influential in the formation of Calvinism.

Chapters 3 and 4 focus upon anti-Calvinism in francophone Switzerland. In these chapters, Bruening establishes the importance of the Swiss regions to the overall course of the francophone reformation. He points out that over the course of the 1530s and 1540s, Calvinists became leaders of Swiss cities such as Geneva (Calvin), Neuchâtel (Farel), and Laussane (Viret). At the same time other Swiss cities, such as Yverdon, Morges, and Montbeliard, became Protestant yet were led by distinctly anti-Calvinist pastors. Therefore, within the Swiss lands, both Calvinism and anti-Calvinism formed alongside one another, each taking control of specific areas. These chapters also indicate that Calvinists faced opposition from the very beginning. Bruening highlights the ways in which Calvin, Farel, and Viret struggled to implement their reforming agenda and even faced rebuke/exile at times. In these chapters one sees that anti-Calvinist Protestants formed a robust movement of their own throughout francophone Switzerland.

The next two chapters describe the thought and legacy of Sebastian Castellio, who emerged as one of Calvin's chief critics, arguing famously for religious tolera-

tion in the wake of Michael Servetus's execution. Bruening highlights the fact that while Castellio's doctrinal differences with Calvin were immense, there was also a personal element to their feud. Castellio had been involved in Geneva in the early 1540s, yet he was rejected for a pastoral post in the city. Bruening demonstrates that after this slight, Castellio's doctrine grew further and further away from Calvinist orthodoxy.

After focusing specifically on Castellio in chapter 5, chapter 6 highlights the burgeoning of "Castellianism" throughout the francophone world. Bruening states that these anti-Calvinist networks were brought together through "support for religious toleration, opposition to the doctrine of double predestination, and an emphasis on personal piety, together with criticism of the Calvinists insistence on consistorial discipline" (p. 187). The chapter goes on to show that while Calvin and his friends gained power within Geneva throughout the 1550s, this network of anti-Calvinists was also successful in repelling the Calvinists in their lands. Through rigorous, primary source research, Bruening reinforces his thesis that Calvin's opponents were organized and powerful.

It is worth noting that Michael Bruening is currently working to publish an edited, open-access version of Sebastian Castellio's correspondence. It is no surprise, then, that Bruening demonstrates a mastery of Castellio's life, thought, and influence. Bruening avoids the pitfalls of treating Castellio hagiographically, as the lone voice advocating for modern toleration, while also demonstrating the limits of his influence. In a work focused on Calvin's opponents, Bruening deftly displays the large role that Castellio played in the formation of anti-Calvinist movements.

The final two chapters return the narrative to France, describing anti-Calvinist Protestantism at work within the French mainland. Bruening explains how, starting the 1550s, many of the battles that had been fought between Calvinists and anti-Calvinists in Switzerland began to take place among the Protestants within France. By examining the key figures working for French reform and their individual doctrinal affiliations, Bruening displays how they were often unified in their anti-Calvinism but had disparate visions for church reform and ecclesiology. These disparate visions are revisited in the conclusion of the book under the heading "Why Did the Calvinists Win?" While the anti-Calvinists were united in their opposition to much of the Calvinistic reforming agenda, they were ultimately defeated by their inability to put forward their own unified vision for church reform.

In returning to the movement within France, Bruening convincingly argues that many French reformers saw themselves as heirs to the early French reform movement. He demonstrates that their efforts shared many of the characteristics of Marguerite de Navarre's reforming network of the 1520s. Therefore, these final chapters help tie the argument of the book together. In the same way that Calvinist and anti-Calvinist networks were forming alongside one another in francophone Switzerland, those divergent Protestant movements formed opposing factions within France throughout the second half of the sixteenth century.

Over the course of these final chapters, Bruening highlights the importance of Theodore Beza in continuing the legacy of Calvinism within French Protestantism. In the wake of Calvin's death, Beza became the leader in Geneva and pub-

lished polemics in defense of Calvinistic reform in France. In highlighting Beza, Bruening reminds readers of the early portions of the book in which Guillaume Farel's significance is on display. As Bruening states in his conclusion, "It was Guillaume Farel who set the stage for what would become the Calvinist agenda" (p. 299). Therefore, a crucial thread of argument throughout the book is that while anti-Calvinists harbored much personal antipathy for Calvin himself, certain figures surrounding Calvin, namely Farel and Beza, were highly active in the formation, dissemination, and polemics of Calvinism.

Overall, *Refusing to Kiss the Slipper* is a well-researched and interesting study of anti-Calvinist Protestants in the sixteenth century. Two specific insights stand out. First, the author helpfully demonstrates the importance of networking in the formation of both Calvinism and anti-Calvinism. The book includes two tables (pp. 62, 301) that display the interconnected nature of both the Calvinists and their opponents. One of Bruening's stated goals is to treat "Calvin's evangelical opponents together, not as a collection of distinct voices but as networks of opposition" (p. 4). He accomplishes this goal by a rigorous analysis of primary sources, specifically analyzing personal correspondence. Bruening's expertise with regard to the correspondence of Pierre Viret and Sebastian Castellio is evident, and it allows the book to manifest the connected nature of Calvin's friends and enemies.

A second insight is the role that personal connections played in the formation of Protestant networks. Bruening states that too often "the Reformation is treated exclusively as a history of doctrines, and though doctrine was, of course, important, emotional responses driven by personal friendships and animosities often accompanied—and in some cases drove—the doctrinal differences" (p. 6). The book demonstrates that many of Calvin's opponents were his one-time allies who fell out with him. These opponents often viewed their disagreement with Calvin as minor, only to then feel the wrath of Calvin and his circle. Throughout the work, Bruening does not minimize the importance of doctrinal disagreements, but he does weave personal relationships and emotional responses into his analysis of doctrinal divisions. Thus, he reveals that the anti-Calvinist networks were often held together by shared antipathy toward Calvin or Geneva rather than a shared set of doctrines or reforming goals.

If any aspect of the book deserves further scrutiny, it is the use of the term *Nicodemite* (and its cognates). The author seems to use this label for anyone with Protestant sympathies who lived within Catholic lands. However, this usage seems broad, especially given Calvin and Farel's arguments against Nicodemism. Their chief argument against the Nicodemites is that they hide their Protestant convictions while participating in Catholic ceremonies. In many cases, however, Bruening attaches the label *Nicodemite* to individuals yet goes on to display how they openly professed Protestant (yet anti-Calvinist) sympathies. In his polemics against Nicodemism, Calvin is primarily concerned with secrecy and the hiding of one's convictions. Therefore, Bruening's use of the term is confusing.

Overall, this is a minor issue. Bruening is careful in his use of terminology, especially given that his purpose is to write against the grain of traditional historiography. He resists using terms that may reinforce the Calvinist historiographical nar-

rative. For example, rather than just using the term *Huguenot* to describe all French Protestants, Bruening uses the expression *Gallican Evangelical* to describe anti-Calvinists while reserving the term *Calvinist* to describe only those who followed Geneva's lead. Overall, the author is careful about his use of terms, and he allows individual figures to speak for themselves.

The introduction to *Refusing to Kiss the Slipper* explains that the historiography of the French Reformation takes Calvinist hegemony and influence for granted. Therefore, readers are expected to have a certain level of background knowledge about such sources and their overarching view of Calvin/Calvinism. Bruening's goal, then, is that readers might "begin to redress the overwhelming bias in favor of the Calvinists that has prevailed for over four hundred years" (p. 8). His excellent work accomplishes its stated goals. It displays the nature of robust, anti-Calvinist networks that shaped the francophone context in the sixteenth century. For those interested in the details of Reformation history, this work offers a well-researched and organized study of the francophone Reformation from the perspective of Calvin's opponents.

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