

Book Reviews

Ruth A. TUCKER. *Parade of Faith: A Biographical History of the Christian Church*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011. 509 pp. \$39.99.

Tucker states in the beginning of her volume, “The history of Christianity is a fascinating narrative, roiling with legends and lies, facts and figures, daring feats and disputations. Wild and well-nigh impenetrable, it snares the unsuspecting by its captivating content” (11). With this view of history in mind, then, Tucker seeks to give a biographically chronological history of the Christian church. That is to say, she selects, as she admits, with subjectivity, various individuals from certain times or loosely defined epochs and gives often very brief introductions to their lives and thoughts.

The volume is broken into two parts. The first begins in the first century in the NT, looking at figures like the Apostles and ends in the late seventeenth century with the Magisterial reforms (read the Protestant reformation). In the second part, she picks the story up with the Anabaptists and Catholic reformation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and continues on until the twenty-first century.

Each chapter begins with a personal reflection by Tucker on some person or event that is discussed in the chapter that follows. Internally, the chapters each include various sidebars addressing issues such as, historical context, extra individuals not covered in the chapter, and everyday life in the period, and ends with a series of questions in what she calls the What if section. These questions are designed to cause the reader to consider what might have happened had historical events gone differently. Finally, each chapter is completed then with an attenuated bibliography of usually no more than fifteen sources. The bibliography is not intended as a sources cited list but a further reading list for those interested in delving deeper.

The volume’s main strength is that it is written in an easy style that makes it accessible to all readers. Even the dual column, dictionary style nature of each page is surmounted by Tucker’s ease of writing. Her personal stories, while sometimes irrelevant for someone seeking specific information about a person or event in Christian history, can help connect those who may struggle with studying history by showing them the applicability of these people and events to one’s own life. Readers are left with an understanding of both the individuals and

events discussed as well as how those people and places might be important in everyday Christian life.

One of the biggest weaknesses of this volume, however, is that she does not intend for this work to be exhaustive, nor does she fill it with footnotes and bibliographies. This is to make the book more accessible. This lack of citations does cause problems. For example, she calls, “Pelagius, a devout and stout British monk, also born in 354” (93). Her lack of citations does not evidence if she is aware that Pelagius’s birthplace and date are highly contended. Similarly, she writes that Æthelbert, king of Kent when Augustine of Canterbury arrives in England, is Scottish, when actually Kent is approximately four hundred miles south of modern day Scotland. The reader cannot be certain why she makes such a simple mistake.

Another problem area in this volume is where the author chooses to place individuals or movements in her various chapters. Tucker’s fourth chapter is supposedly about the Desert Fathers. This chapter finds no mention of Palladius and his *Lausaic History*—a history of the Desert Fathers and Mothers—nor does it see mention of John Cassian’s *Institutes or Conferences*—learning and teaching he claims to have received from various Desert Fathers. Also, it is in this chapter where we find Augustine and Ambrose. While both ascetic individuals, neither were properly monks, and even if one were to contend that they were, neither ever lived in the Egyptian desert.

The movement, however, that is most misplaced is that of the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement. Tucker’s twentieth chapter is a survey of individuals and societies that were formed in the nineteenth century. The Stone-Campbell Movement, however, receives no attention in this chapter. This would have, perhaps, been forgivable. However, Tucker reserves her comments about the movement for her twenty-second chapter entitled “Fragmentation and Revival.” Here she takes a quote from Campbell out of context, saying, “Campbell pleaded for Christian unity founded on the ‘testimony of the Apostles’ alone” (438). For this reason she calls the movement a mere search for primitivism. The quote comes from Campbell’s *Foundation of Christian Union* where he states that the unity of all believers must be founded on the truth (of the Apostle’s testimony) so that the whole world may hear the gospel of Christ and come to salvation. She then finishes by saying that Campbell, so keen on unity, could not keep “his own movement from fragmenting, frequently over minor differences” (438). She apparently fails to note that Campbell died before any of the breaks within the movement became permanent. Only one, in fact, was even under way while Campbell was still alive.

Tucker states that her purpose for her work is mainly, “as an introductory

college and seminary text—especially for those studying for ministry or already involved in ministry” (12). The volume’s lack of citations and problem areas, however, make it more useful as an introduction for those who might not be ministers or theologians but do want to know something about Church history. For both purposes, her own and the one this reviewer presents, Justo Gonzales’ two-part *Story of Christianity* (Harper One, 2010) would be better suited.

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James R. PAYTON, Jr. *Getting the Reformation Wrong: Correcting Some Misunderstandings*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2010. 272 pp. \$23.00.

Payton chose a title that is clear and gets to the point of what he is attempting to accomplish with this volume. Coming from a position of faith, as a “committed evangelical Protestant” (17), he seeks a similar target audience of those who are interested in “their roots” and who “look positively” on the Reformation (13). Then he sets about the task of correcting certain historical and theological misunderstandings of some who have had a measure of acquaintance with the Reformation.

Each chapter deals with a particular misconception that merits exposure and elimination. The first is the problem of “overlooking or neglecting” the “historical rootedness” of the Reformation (23). The “Medieval Call for Reform” is designed to address that lacuna. Payton proposes a “thirteenth-century zenith” for church and society in the Middle Ages. After that time a variety of sociological, ecclesiastical, political, and educational forces came into play that “pushed” society in the direction of reform. In chapter two, Payton analyzes the relationship between the Renaissance and the Reformation. The mistake, it is said, is in seeing the Renaissance as a foe of the Reformation.

The “misunderstanding” of the third chapter is the idea of a rapid crystallization of Luther’s thoughts and an immediate uniform response to them. Conversely, Payton shows it was a long process and that many people in different camps misunderstood and even misappropriated Luther for their own agendas. Chapter four demonstrates that the Reformers often disagreed with each other in theology and action, rather than the “commonly” misunderstood idea of their near unanimity across the board. According to Payton, “one of the most glaring and striking ways of getting the Reformation wrong” involves its essen-

tial slogan—“justification by faith alone” (131). Chapter five asserts that the Reformers never meant to advocate a “faith alone” that would mean the absence of love and good works. Similarly, in chapter six, another great Reformation slogan—*sola scriptura*—contrary to popular belief, does not mean “Scripture good; tradition bad” (133). Payton concludes that for Luther, while Scripture was the only *unquestioned* religious authority, it was not the *only* religious authority. Other significant authorities were the church fathers, the ancient creeds, and the ecumenical councils when they “stood faithfully with Scripture” (142).

With the seventh chapter, Payton shows that the Anabaptists have been misunderstood. He claims there are three necessary correctives: 1) Anabaptist believers’ baptism should be understood as disciples’ baptism; 2) early Anabaptists should be distinguished from contemporary Anabaptists; 3) the Zurich brand of Anabaptism is insufficient to cover all the varieties of Anabaptism. The eighth chapter is about reform within the Roman Catholic Church. Payton contends it was not merely a reaction to Protestantism, but that the reform came “both before and apart from” the Protestant Reformation (174). He also describes it as “serious and vibrant Catholic Reform” (175). The misunderstanding of the ninth chapter is that scholars and historians of the Reformation generally have not made a sufficient distinction between the theology of the original Reformers and those scholastic reformers that allegedly built upon their ideas. Payton thus sees Protestant scholasticism as a “significant shift from the Protestant Reformation” (195).

The tenth chapter is a call to answer a question through sixteenth-century eyes rather than twenty-first. The question is whether or not the Reformation was a success. Payton suggests it is important to answer that through the perspectives of the early Reformers themselves—according to their own expectations. He makes his case by assessing the following people and groups, one by one: the Anabaptists, Martin Luther, Philip Melancthon, Ulrich Zwingli and Johannes Oecolampadius, Martin Bucer, John Calvin, and the Jesuits. Brevity requires this somewhat oversimplified summary from Payton: “The claim . . . that it was a success . . . is hard to sustain if the whole story of the Reformation is kept in mind” (233). The Jesuits are the only exception! (223). Payton again wants to set forth the perspective of the Reformers in the next chapter when he asks whether or not the Reformation should be considered a norm—a kind of “golden age” that should be emulated today (234-235). The corrective comes by understanding that the Reformers themselves thought of the ancient church (esp. the Church Fathers and the “patristic consensus”) as the true golden era (244).

The final chapter is Payton’s assessment of the Reformation as both “triumph and tragedy”—as the chapter title indicates. Basically, the “triumph” was

making “divine grace central, rather than focusing on human accomplishment” (250). The “tragedy” was all the division that came out of the Reformation, especially as Protestant scholasticism “exacerbated the situation” (252).

This volume has much to commend. The writing style is clear and the content is well structured. A wide variety of facts about the Reformation are brought to bear as one might expect for so broad a topic. Also, it is refreshing to see a Christian historian who is not reticent to reveal his faith posture, along with the fact that he is sympathetic to his subject matter, and yet, generally speaking, he is willing to include ecclesiastical information that is not flattering to the historical character of the church—both Catholic and Protestant. While there is no “groundbreaking” information here, that doesn’t seem to be the author’s intent. By including sometimes-neglected historical material, Payton has done his readers a service by providing a more “nuanced” or “balanced” approach to dissecting the Reformation—perhaps serving as an eye-opener to some, and a reminder for others.

There are some deficiencies, however. A couple of them have to do with some understandings of history as a discipline. In the Introduction, Payton relates how his courses of study had been entirely in the area of church history until he was forced to become a “legitimate historian (and not just a religion expert)” during his doctoral studies, having to do work “in two minor fields outside church history” (18). It appears he has bought into the false dichotomy created by the secular world (and, unfortunately, often adhered to by the “sacred”) that there is church history or biblical history and then there is *real* history—the history without God or supernatural activity in the mix. If nothing else, the Incarnation and the Resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth demonstrate otherwise.

Second, Payton uses too broad a brush to paint ancient historians’ way of crafting their work. He claims that with the exception of Herodotus, they were not “particularly concerned” to present the facts. They were more into “entertaining and instructing.” In fact, he says, this “old pattern persisted down to the early modern world” (55). Even if that were largely true (a questionable assertion by itself), where would that put the authors of biblical history?

Third, Payton’s analysis of the Anabaptists leaves something to be desired, perhaps especially from the viewpoint of those of Stone-Campbell heritage, who tend to be more sympathetic toward the Anabaptists. Basically, Payton claims that in the eyes of sixteenth-century contemporaries (Catholic and Protestant), the Anabaptists were not simply making better personal spiritual decisions for themselves, they were indicting the time-honored established way of life. Payton says, “It inevitably also entailed a stinging indictment of the Christian faith of

others and of the legitimacy of the civil state.” He concludes, “Allowing Anabaptism would have been devastating to church, society and government as then constituted” (165). But might not the Roman Catholics have said this against the Protestants? The Catholics certainly held Luther, Calvin, et al. to be highly disruptive of life as it had been constituted for centuries, and subsequently many religious wars between them bore that out.

Payton rightly notes that historian Von Ranke’s overly optimistic view of being able to do history in a completely objective manner has been dismissed (58), but it should be mentioned that the widespread “historiographics of suspicion” is equally, if not more, unbalanced in the opposite direction. Payton gives too much credence to the “success” of the Roman Catholic Reformation. Concerning their reform in Spain, Payton claims that “Catholic Reform there had answered the concerns, and the further emphases of the Protestant movement had little appeal” (177). If true, it would seem appropriate to ask if their “concerns” were sufficient; i.e., what about justification by faith, the papacy, the worship of Mary and the saints, transubstantiation, etc.? Also, Payton suggests that twenty-first-century Christians should agree with the sixteenth-century Reformers in accepting the church fathers, the ancient creeds, and the ecumenical councils as indispensable sources of authority (157). I would go so far as to say that those sources should not be ignored and should be respected, but with many Restoration Movement advocates, I would suggest we keep our current freedom from having to be “reshackled” to them (which ones?) as *authoritative*.

In spite of the foregoing comments, Payton’s book merits a perusal for its overall helpful reminders and thought-provoking nuanced analyses of the Reformation. Therefore, I would recommend it as a solid secondary or supplemental source for Reformation studies at the college or graduate level.

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Ellen T. CHARRY. *God and the Art of Happiness*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010. 299 pp. \$35.00.

In a 1991 *Rolling Stone* interview, Bob Dylan was asked if he was happy. He retorted that happiness is a “yuppie word,” and that he preferred the categories of blessed and unblessed to those of happiness and unhappiness. Ellen Charry also worries about construals of happiness that are not situated in a “spiritual-moral framework” (xii). In fact, her goal is nothing less than to reclaim happi-

ness from the very “secular captivity” (xii) that presumably motivated Dylan’s disparaging remarks. In the end, Charry and Dylan converge, inasmuch as the former offers a vision of happiness that she dubs “asherism,” taken from the Hebrew word *asher*, which can be rendered “blessed” in English. However, unlike Dylan, she is sanguine that the category of happiness is viable, provided that it is “theologically qualified” (275).

Charry, however, does not simply cheer for the home team—far from it. Secular notions of happiness may founder, but that does not mean that Christians (Charry singles out western Christians, though it is not clear how eastern Christians are superior) have adequately addressed happiness as a temporal good. Western Christian theology, according to Charry, has tended to take temporal flourishing off the theological table in order to make room for the sumptuous fare of the eschatological banquet. What the western theological tradition has for the most part missed, and what Charry contends, is that “happiness is a realizing eschatology with salvation centered in sanctification” (x).

Thus, this volume does not only offer an alternative to inadequate secular understandings of happiness. It is also a theological intervention meant to repair and reorient Christian discourse about happiness, and an auspicious intervention at that, because at present “Christianity is in an upbeat mood” (xii). What is more, Charry conceives the present work as a contribution toward her larger project of reclaiming the spiritual vocation of theology, which she contends has been suppressed for most of the post-Reformation epoch due to exclusive fixation on theology’s intellectual coherence. A genuinely Christian doctrine of happiness, Charry insists, should not only be intellectually satisfying, but actually beatifying. Doctrines do not just assert, but also affect, what is the case.

Charry’s book is neatly divided in half. The first half, Part I, is a survey of selected thinkers, a few pagans but mainly Christians, on happiness. She devotes individual chapters to Augustine, Boethius, Thomas Aquinas, and the Anglican divine Joseph Butler (she does not explain why she concludes her historical survey with Butler, who died in 1752). Charry singles out these authors because she thinks that each of them captured something important about happiness, although she finds inadequacies in their overall accounts of happiness. Her treatments of these authors do not purport to break new ground, anchored as they are in English translations of the primary works (with the exception of Butler) and recent (almost exclusively Anglophone) scholarship on them. Charry herself grants that readers may skip this section and proceed to Part II if their primary interest is her constructive proposal. Indeed, this reviewer agrees that the survey offered in Part I is not vital for the comprehension or appreciation of the proposal fleshed out in Part II. One cannot help but ask, then, whether Part I, at

least in its current, 150-page form, is an integral part of the book, or rather forms a sort of displaced appendix to the constructive proposal found in Part II.

In Part II Charry unfurls her vision of asherism, which she defines as a “biblical doctrine of happiness in which salvation is maturing in the wisdom of divine love” (x-xi). Put differently, asherism is the view that God intends for human beings to cultivate happiness progressively by learning to love properly, thereby effecting both personal and communal flourishing. She begins by explicating the doctrinal foundations of the concept, goes on to inspect relevant biblical texts (the Pentateuch, the Psalms, Proverbs, and the Gospel of John each are allotted a chapter), and concludes by giving some concrete examples of how asherism has been instantiated in the lives of Christians (it is not clear whether her examples are fictional).

Her account of asherism is rich in biblical and pastoral insights, and it is theologically provocative as well, for she is not only expounding a Christian doctrine of happiness, but also a soteriology, as the definition of asherism above suggests. Given the ambition of her proposal, few readers will find themselves in total agreement, but equally few will go away unedified. This book is highly recommended for pastors’ and seminary libraries, and its reasonable price makes it affordable for both.

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Michael HORTON. *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011. 1052 pp. \$49.99.

Written as a comprehensive textbook of Christian systematic theology from a Reformed perspective, this volume expounds Christian doctrine under six broad headings: knowing God, God’s being, creation and providence, Christ and salvation, the church and the Christian life, and eschatology. In each area Horton brings to bear what he calls the “covenantal model” of the God-world relationship in opposition to other models that either confuse God and the world or view them as totally unrelated. In Part I, Horton discusses the source of Christian knowledge of God, which is divine revelation. Using Eastern Orthodox theology’s distinction between the essence of God and the uncreated energies of God (which are neither God’s creatures nor God’s essence), the author attempts to mediate the extremes of mere propositional revelation (fun-

damentalism) and revelation as subjective feeling (Liberalism). Scripture is the inspired and inerrant record, simultaneously human and divine, of the uncreated energies of God through which he reveals himself. While maintaining that Scripture is the unique source and norm for theology, Horton criticizes “biblicism,” which identifies doctrine with the mere words of Scripture. In seeking to appropriate Scripture for ever-changing contexts, theology also uses historic creeds and confessions, seminal theologians, and tradition as guides and conversation partners.

In Part Two, Horton defends the traditional divine attributes (simplicity, immutability, and others) against such modern critiques as arise from process, openness, and Neo-Hegelian theologians, again using the Eastern distinction between divine essence and energies. This section includes a helpful historical and systematic treatment of the doctrine of the Trinity, including the contributions of the Reformed tradition.

Part Three deals with issues associated with creation, defending a traditional Reformed, but not “hypercalvinist,” view of predestination, providence, human nature, and the Fall. Interestingly, Horton argues for a historical Adam and Eve who fell into sin even though he asserts that the language of the creation accounts (for example, the “days”) is “analogous” and denies that the Bible intends to teach science.

Horton begins his Christology (Part Four) with a study of the NT titles applied to the person of Christ, develops it as a history tension between the extremes of denial of the divinity and denial of the humanity culminating in the two-natures formula canonized in the Council of Chalcedon (451). Horton unfolds the work of Christ in the classic Protestant “three offices” rubric, prophet, priest, and king, and the “the two states” understanding of Christ’s administration of the offices. Horton deals in this section with election and calling, and, though rejecting some of the misleading terminology of earlier eras (e.g., irresistible grace), he maintains the distinction between those for whom Christ died, who will be called “effectually,” and those for whom Christ’s work will not be applied “effectually.” All God’s elect will be saved, and those whom he left unelected will justly perish.

In the 350 pages of Part 5, Horton deals with the work of the Spirit, the Christian’s union with Christ, sanctification, the doctrine of the church, and the means of grace. Once again Horton uses the Eastern distinction between essence and energy in God, this time to illuminate the relationship established in the union of the Christian with Christ. Horton defends the Reformation’s understanding of forensic justification and imputed righteousness; however, using modern speech act theory he attempts to insert an element of realism into

God's declaration of righteousness. The author distinguishes between the definitive, progressive, and eschatological aspects of sanctification and attempts to steer a middle course between legalism and antinomianism.

In a chapter on glorification, Horton distinguishes between the Eastern view as *theosis* (becoming divine) and the Reformed view of glorification as becoming fully and truly human through the eschatological outpouring of the Spirit. Avoiding the extremes of Roman Catholic ecclesiology, on the one hand, and Anabaptist ecclesiology on the other, Horton advocates a covenant model of the visible church, which includes the children of Christians, is presbyterian in governance, and maintains the distinction between the ordained "deliverers" and the lay "receivers." He provides an ecumenically aware but distinctly Protestant interpretation of the marks of the church: one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. Following Calvin's lead, Horton avoids an extreme realist or pure symbolic interpretation of the two Protestant sacraments, baptism and the Lord's Supper. The sacraments, as covenant signs, are genuine means of divine grace in which God actually confers the grace signified by the external sign. Horton defends the frequent observance of the Lord's Supper, and, consistent with his covenant approach to ecclesiology and following the analogy of circumcision, defends infant baptism. Along the way he offers some pointed criticisms of the contemporary "missional" view of the church.

In Part 6 Horton addresses the syndrome of issues associated with "last things." He rejects both extreme dualist and materialist views of the soul, arguing instead that, though soul and body belong together, God can and does sustain the soul in existence after death for a time until the resurrection of the dead. Since he does not label his view of the soul, we can call it soft dualism. After an extensive historical survey of the issue, he opts for amillennialism and rejects pre- and postmillennialism. In his last chapter Horton defends the judgment and wrath of God expressed finally in hell understood as eternal conscious torment and rejects all forms of universalism and annihilationism.

Horton has penned a very good volume. I recommend it for graduate students, ministers, and anyone interested in gaining deeper understanding of their faith. Though student friendly, it's written at too high a level for undergraduate classes. It's divided into 29 chapters, with discussion questions at the end of every chapter. It contains a glossary, scripture index, name index, and subject index. It is orthodox, evangelical, and Reformed, but not cold, narrow, or defensively confessional. It is anything but intramural, engaging as it does Roman Catholic and Orthodox, liberal and conservative, ancient and modern theologians. Horton is firm and clear in affirmations but charitable and fair to those with whom he disagrees. The book is thoughtful but not ponderous,

scholarly but not pedantic, and well-documented but not distractingly so. It is contemporary Reformed theology at its best.

Stone-Campbell Movement readers will disagree with Horton at those points where they disagree with the Reformed tradition in general: especially on limited atonement, unconditional election/reprobation, infant baptism. Stone-Campbell folks won't reject Horton on these points because they hold to an Arminian theory of election and free will but because they detect a theological construct that goes beyond what is clearly stated in Scripture. On the other hand, Stone-Campbell people will hear many echoes of their tradition in Horton's defense of the church and the sacraments against churchless evangelicals.

I will make only one general theological criticism. In my view Horton's frequent use of the Eastern distinction between the divine essence and the divine energies raises more questions than it provides answers. Horton criticizes theologians who conceive the God-world relation in a neoplatonic way. Yet, the very notion of distinguishing between the divine essence and the divine energies presupposes the neoplatonic way of conceiving the problem of mediation between "the one and the many," that is, how does God relate directly to the world without involving the divine essence in change and relational dependence? To place the divine energies between the essence of God and the created world uses the energies as mediators rather than maintaining the sufficiency of the one Mediator who is the Word/Son of God. At this point it seems to me that Horton departs from his covenantal/narrative model of theology and retreats into the "overcoming estrangement" model.

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Steven R. GUTHRIE. *Creator Spirit: The Holy Spirit and the Art of Becoming Human.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011. 222 pp. \$24.99.

When I create something extra to make a worship service special, invariably someone will come up after the service and say something like "the Spirit really moved this morning; that was magnificent." And when worship and arts pastors get together, we tell some version of the following joke: It was late at night, and my phone rang. A guy I've played with once or twice is on the other end. "Kyle, Kyle," he says, "God just gave me a song, and you should use it this Sunday."

“What’s it called?” I ask. “I saw God standing in the Colorado River. . . .” I reply, “No, He didn’t. I’ve heard His stuff, and He writes better than that.”

Plenty of Christians who experience art interpret its impact through the lens and language of the Holy Spirit; meanwhile professional artists often view their work through the lens and language of craft, wary of trumpeting any association inaccurately. Who’s right? What is the true relationship between the Holy Spirit and creative pursuits?

Guthrie, director of the Religion and the Arts program at Belmont University, has published his most recent volume, which mines this territory for insights and conclusions regarding the role of the Holy Spirit in artistry. This volume belies its origins: formed in an undergraduate reading course exploring the topic of aesthetic pneumatology. The course contained multiple readings of Athanasius, Gregory of Nazianzus, Aquinas and Plato, as nearly every chapter and point begins with a classical text on beauty. Contemporary authors and artists are present as well: thinkers like Tolstoy and Volst, philosopher artists like Kandinsky, Coltrane, and Schoenberg, alongside old standbys like C.S. Lewis and Wendell Berry.

The underlying challenge in a work like this is that the interdisciplinary nature of the topic makes evaluation difficult. Readers well-versed in pneumatology will find new ideas and authors from the realm of aesthetics and musicology: famous philosopher-artists who are quoted often in such discussions. Readers well-versed in aesthetic theory will encounter new authors, scholarship, and vocabulary.

The work repeatedly makes use of a few select authors on which to base its exploratory points; Guthrie demonstrates that he is extremely well versed in Volst, Plato, and Aquinas. The Plato and Aquinas readings give the argument an almost antiquarian air. Though in the context of an undergraduate or survey course, it seems well grounded. About two-thirds through the volume, the reader winds up in an incredibly interesting discourse on contemporary musicology, which seems out of place. It does speak to what most of the audience is probably searching for: a better understanding of the relationship between the Holy Spirit and music for the sake of shaping corporate worship.

Theology of the Arts is often overwhelmingly concerned with fine arts like painting and sculpture and seems to rise out of the discipline of art theory. Meanwhile, the most regularly occurring creative output in an evangelical congregation is the musical offerings of a weekly worship service. Guthrie’s inclusion of the musicology in his discourse helps to fill the gap between these traditions. However, many readers may be so alarmed by the overtly deconstructionist theories he references that they miss his biblical conclusions.

That said, I wonder if a supplemental grounding in musicology would be more helpful for readers new to the topic.

While *SCJ*'s readers are more thoughtful and better-read than their contemporaries in church and ministry leadership, I'd guess the musicological essays of Slonimsky never made their reading list, and they might find such groundwork helpful in evaluating Guthrie's argument. My favorite attribute of this work is that Guthrie consistently points toward a third way of experiencing and exploring art, through the spirit, in a way that honors Christ. His writing is clear as he examines various traditional and contemporary understandings on the Holy Spirit's role in our lives, communities, and creative output. Guthrie draws helpful distinctions that both recognize the complexities of the subject and point toward a workable model of engagement with the Holy Spirit.

Readers will find that a transformational reading of Revelation is central to Guthrie's closing argument. Like the rest of his contemporaries from the Institute of Theology, Imagination, and the Arts at St. Andrew's University in Scotland, the argument for the value of human endeavors is greatly strengthened by (and indeed relies on) a postmillennial reading of the end times that does not see an impending annihilation of human society prior to society's entrance into the New Jerusalem. Guthrie explains his point of view on the matter on page 193.

Overwhelmingly, this work centers on the similarities between the roles of the Holy Spirit and of art. Both are essential to human flourishing, and religious and secular attempts to stifle a member of the duo denies a small part of God's design for human society. Guthrie explores the Holy Spirit's role in restoring broken hearts, broken lives, and broken societies at length. In sum this volume is a valuable part of the canon of works exploring aesthetic theology from an evangelical protestant perspective.

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**John W. LOFTUS, ed. *The Christian Delusion: Why Faith Fails*.
New York: Prometheus, 2010. 422 pp. \$21.00.**

Since the debut of *Why I Became an Atheist: A Former Preacher Rejects Christianity* (Prometheus, 2008), author and blogger Loftus has continued to write prolifically—both for his own blog (debunkingchristianity.blogspot.com) and in several additional book publications. The volume reviewed here has since

been followed by two more offerings from Prometheus Books—*The End of Christianity* (2011) and a second edition of *Why I Became an Atheist* (2012)—and the forthcoming *God or Godless?* (Baker, 2013), which will be a printed debate with Christian scholar Randal Rauser. There may also be another Prometheus offering in the works that will expand on Loftus’s signature *Outsider Test for Faith*. In short, Loftus is not going to stop attacking the faith anytime soon. However, since Loftus comes from a Stone-Campbell heritage (studying under James Strauss and William Lane Craig) and once preached in churches of this perspective, it is unlikely that faithful scholars of this heritage will stop engaging and responding to him either.

The volume under review here represents Loftus’s second title for Prometheus and his first attempt to collect the essays of a number of like-minded skeptics. Here, he primarily assumes the role of editor for other contributors such as Hector Avalos and Richard Carrier, though he does contribute more entries (four of them) than any other writer. The volume was marketed as both a fitting sequel to *Why I Became an Atheist* and a cohesive set of arguments against the Christian faith. Although it really is neither of these things, the volume does allow a marriage between blog-style presentation and unusually substantial content that provides a comfortable and familiar format for Loftus to work in.

In an effort to provide some direction to this collection of essays, Loftus has arranged them under five headings. These five parts are: “Why Faith Fails,” “Why the Bible Is Not God’s Word,” “Why the Christian God Is Not Perfectly Good,” “Why Jesus Is Not the Risen Son of God,” and “Why Society Does Not Depend on Christian Faith.” At once, readers can see that Loftus and company are not concerned with broad philosophical arguments over God’s existence but instead are more narrowly focused on criticizing Christianity’s theology and Scripture, often with the more acute task of responding to the views of Christian apologists. This approach is consistent with Loftus’s view of his role as standing in the gap between Christians and atheists. He wants to be the atheist that engages the arguments of Christian scholars rather than dismissing them, and he wants Christians to return the favor. Like all of Loftus’s efforts, this volume aims at the college-level reader, and hopes many of those readers will have some amount of biblical education. The titles of each chapter convey a sort of scientific approach to dealing with the subject matter. Unlike much of the popular work from Harris, Dawkins, or Hitchens, Loftus and his fellow contributors begin with a Christian perspective as their hypothesis, subject it to scrutiny, and hope their criticisms are convincing enough to debunk it. For example, Hector

Avalos's chapter "Yahweh Is a Moral Monster" uses Paul Copan's apologetics as the starting point before arguing against the validity of his OT defenses.

"Why Faith Fails," the first section, features essays Loftus hopes will bolster his core argument that Christianity is merely a product of culture and the human brain's inherent irrationality. It closes with Loftus's chapter, "The Outsider Test for Faith Revisited," which summarizes the first three chapters and restates his position that "believers should approach all religious faiths equally with the same level of skepticism" (85). The second section, "Why the Bible Is Not God's Word," employs higher criticism of the Bible in an attempt to show that divine inspiration had no role in its creation or collection. Part three features only two chapters that try to demonstrate "Why the Christian God Is Not Perfectly Good." The first features Avalos's biblical criticisms of the God of the OT (and Copan's defenses of him) and the second is a more unique philosophical argument from Loftus in which he pursues the problem of evil from the angle of nonhuman animal suffering. The fourth section features essays that defy claims of Jesus' divinity and resurrection. Highlights include Richard Carrier's assessment that Jesus' resurrection "is an extraordinary claim, and thus requires extraordinary evidence" (299) and Loftus's critique of the apocalyptic expectations of Jesus and Paul. The final section serves mostly as a defense of the non-Christian worldview. The three chapters there feature Avalos denying atheistic influence on the Holocaust, while Richard Carrier denies Christian influence on modern science and David Eller denies its influence on morality.

While each chapter is more a unique topical discussion than a continuing line of argument, this is not necessarily a bad thing for readers. The shifting focus of the book and its many authors keeps things fresh and interesting until the end. The rapidly changing topics of discussion do not always build upon one another, but the variety does help sustain interest. And although the chapters may not be interrelated or amount to more than their sum, each line of argument is at least consistently lucid and individually focused. Although some of the writers represented in this volume can be venomous toward Christianity, the pleasant distinction of Loftus's work is that he *does* allow (unlike the bestselling New Atheists) that Christianity has some arguments on its side.

The essential weakness of this volume is the same suffered by many edited anthologies: the quality of every essay is not consistent. In particular, the fifth section of the book could have been entirely scrapped. After spending over 300 pages criticizing Christian theology and challenging scriptural authority, attacking the social influences of the religion seemed a petty diversion. In particular, Hector Avalos's chapter concerning the cultural origins of the Holocaust amounts to little more than mudslinging. (Regardless of who started the blame

game over the Nazis, someone needs to stop it.) Those already acquainted with basic secular arguments against the faith will not find much original material here (complaints of not enough evidence for the Resurrection, the delayed second coming of Jesus, the unbecoming traits of OT's deity). It is also unlikely that this volume will be as convincing to believers as Loftus hopes.

Though readers of *SCJ* will undoubtedly find the content of this volume objectionable, they should (in the opinion of this reviewer) appreciate the general approach of Loftus and company. While Loftus's low view of Christianity will continue to disappoint the faithful, he is part of a long-overdue movement (on both sides of the debate) away from blind apologetics and generic arguments, and toward something more communicative, engaging, and human. Much of the material in this volume represents responses to real Christian scholarship. Believers should congratulate such honest disagreements that acknowledge Christian academia and return the favor, as it appears Randal Rauser will be doing in the forthcoming *God or Godless?* (Baker, 2013). In an age of inflammatory sound bites and dismissive tactics, scholars from both sides can agree with and encourage Loftus's clear preference for polite and intelligent discourse.

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Walter H. WAGNER, *Opening the Qur'an: Introducing Islam's Holy Book*. Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 2008. 557 pp. \$45.00.

Wagner introduces much more than just a book, he opens the reader to a world of historical context, culture, and some fifteen hundred years of interpretation. After a very thorough and insightful study of the Qur'an, the author concludes that for both Muslims and non-Muslims "The Qur'an is an open book. . . . It will continue to inspire, confuse, and offend those who seek to understand it" (398). The inspirational nature of the Qur'an is effectively dealt with by Wagner in that he skillfully presents the Qur'an from the perspective of the committed Muslim rather than a more purely analytical study. This in itself is not commonly done in introductions to the Qur'an and thus gives a deeper insight for even those who are familiar with Islam's holy book.

The very reading of the Qur'an is a form of worship and is best entered into as a living dialog with "a person," with the Qur'an taking on a separate identity from and almost equality with Allah. Some hadiths even imply that the

Qur'an is co-eternal with Allah. This perspective elevates the sacred nature of the Qur'an a step above that allotted to the holy books of other religions. In comparison, the Bible is the inspired, authoritative Word of God but has been "filtered" through human hands and is equally translated into any and all languages, being only the material means of communicating God's Word. In contrast, due to the sacred nature of the Qur'an, the language, Arabic, is not just the means, it is in itself the sacred language—any translation is a distortion of the sacred, perhaps not enough to jeopardize entry into the "eternal Garden of the blessed," but nonetheless a spiritual hindrance.

In regard to this sacred nature of the text, Wagner prefers to use the term "aya" rather than "words": "Because *aya* can mean 'sign' or 'pointer' the words of the Qur'an are more than words in a surah [chapter]. Each *aya* is a sign pointing to God's One-Only-ness and purposes, and each surah is a step toward coming to know, surrender to, and do God's will" (141). Whatever difficulties may arise regarding the text of the Qur'an, for the committed Muslim, it would be a sacrilege to allow anything to distract one from reading as an act of worship.

Despite such an intense level of sacredness, the dictated message from Allah through Gabriel to Mohammad, does create confusion when the precise meaning of the words, or "ayas" are not clearly discernible. Wagner draws from both non-Muslim and Muslim scholars in dealing with passages that have been interpreted quite differently, based on modern historical-critical analysis as well as on the various Sunni and Shi'a traditions. Many of these are parts of the Qur'an that ". . . offend those who seek to understand it," such as Jihad, role of women and Shari'ah, among others. For example, much space is given to analyzing how Jihad is to be understood: a struggle of faith that can be expressed in using violence to defend the faith or just an internal, spiritual struggle? Wagner concludes that it depends on the hermeneutic of the reader, which can be divided into three basic perspectives: 1) historical context, that is, Jihad was a spiritual struggle that in the early years could be practiced with violence to defend the faith, but once the faith was established, it was no longer necessary to use violence, thus becoming an internal, spiritual struggle; 2) continuing as both an internal as well as external expression if the faith is threatened; 3) purely an internal, spiritual struggle. Wagner suggests that the second is most problematic and least popular among modern Muslims, but nonetheless it would be difficult to completely dismiss this as absolutely baseless.

So how should Christians view the Qur'an? Wagner asserts that there are basically three perspectives: exclusivist (Christianity is the only true religion and way of salvation), inclusivist (Christianity, Judaism, and Islam worship the same God, therefore salvation may be open to all of them, though Christianity is the

clearest way to salvation), and pluralist (all expressions of “religion” have enough value to provide some dimension of salvation to all good people). Wagner confesses that the Qur‘an holds some “key areas [of] God’s ways and truth” and thus can be read for spiritual profit by Christians and all readers. He concludes rather equivocally, “I am still pondering how far and with what reservations and affirmations that response reaches” (15).

Weighing in at 560 pages, this is a hefty volume, but the depth and breadth of subject treatment justifies its length. Of the many books on the market today that seek to explain the Qur‘an, Wagner’s will remain one of the most thorough.

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John KALTNER. *Introducing the Qur‘an for Today’s Reader*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011. 248 pp. \$25.00.

Through a careful study of the heart and soul of Islam, the Qur‘an, Kaltner seeks to provide a guide to a balanced understanding of the Islamic faith, especially for the uninformed but deeply troubled Westerner. As a professor of Muslim-Christian Relations at Rhodes College in Memphis, Tennessee, Kaltner does an admirable job in explaining the quranic text along with the various interpretations of key concepts that have developed over the centuries.

After giving a brief but meaningful introduction to the basic elements of the origin, structure, and transmission of the Qur‘an, he explains how the Qur‘an addresses topics of particular interest and import for the contemporary global community: Natural Environment, Family Matters, Gender and Sexuality, Muslim/Non-Muslim Relations, *Jihad*, Violence and War, and Death and the Afterlife.

The author notes that the quranic revelation is inextricably intertwined with the language in which it was delivered, Arabic. Skilled in Arabic, Kaltner is adept at exposing the often ambiguous linguistics of a language that is given to more poetic-like expressions than found in western languages. This is, of course, not new as he cites numerous Muslim authors and non-Muslim scholars in giving examples of the difficulties of determining the exact meaning of certain words. This becomes particularly problematic with words like *Jihad*, for example. Does it mean a spiritual struggle and/or also a legitimate use of violence to defend or propagate the faith? Two of seven chapters are devoted to the question of the legitimization of violence in religious matters. Not only is the exact meaning of

the word *Jihad* difficult to define, it appears to be used in a figurative, spiritual sense in some verses, while others clearly use it in a literal, violent sense. Again, scholars both ancient and modern, believers and nonbelievers, have interpreted the same texts in different ways.

This type of ambiguity occurs with some frequency throughout the Qur'an, both textually and theologically, as Kaltner frequently notes. He carefully sides with the Islamic scholars who play down the passages that "imply" using violence in the modern world by interpreting the Qur'an contextually, that is, historical context determines practical application. When historical circumstances change, literal interpretation is also changed. In the early days when Islam was literally fighting for its life, severe measures were necessary for survival. After it was established, more moderate diplomatic measures displaced the violence of the past. Thus the "violent wording" of certain passages needs to be interpreted figuratively for contemporary society. Kaltner cites Osama Ben Laden as an example of an extreme Islamist who does not balance the many passages of moderation with the few that imply actual violence, also missing the importance of interpreting such passages contextually, thus coming up with an interpretation "out of context."

However, at the end of a rather lengthy and thorough analysis of war and violence in the Qur'an, Kaltner cannot bring himself to say that the Qur'an prohibits violence for the Islamic cause, but rather equivocates, leaving room for at least some legitimacy for divinely sanctioned violence: "In light of that changed set of circumstances, what the Qur'an teaches about why and how Muslims may engage in warfare has less relevance today" (214). In a world of heightened emotion and devotion "less relevance" is hardly the diplomatic term needed.

Regarding the topic of divinely sanctioned violence, Kaltner lumps the Qur'an and the Bible together, stating that in both, "violence is permitted and legitimated" (197). However, never does he distinguish between the teachings of the OT and those of the NT regarding the use of violence. With such a critical comparison it is more than a small oversight to leave this unaddressed. Or do we assume from his frequent Islamic-biblical comparisons that Christians can also use violence to defend or promote the Kingdom?

The "contextual interpretation" is also known as "abrogation." In addressing this, Kaltner notes that the Qur'an "appears to contradict itself . . . suggest[ing] that God's will is subject to change or is imperfect" (21). The Qur'anic answer is articulated through the following verse 2:106: "Whatever revelation we abrogate [*nansakh*] or cause to be forgotten We replace with something better or similar to it. Do you (*Muhammad*) not know that God has power over everything?" Critics who see Islam as archaic, violent, and medieval, do not

understand the theory of Qur'anic contextuality, at least so claim the moderate, liberal Islamic scholars.

Over all, Kaltner gives a very detailed and thorough analysis of how the Qur'an addresses the topics he chose to include in his volume. Although he presents differing interpretations on controversial issues, he definitely sides with the more liberal, moderate, and humanist scholars. His purpose is to promote good relations—best achieved by downplaying the controversial—but what if the controversial also includes the essentials of faith?

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David SEHAT. *The Myth of American Religious Freedom*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. 356 pp. \$29.95.

Sehat, Professor of History at Georgia State University, argues that the current disagreements occurring between conservatives and progressives in the political arena revolving around the place of religion in American society are based upon three false historical premises. These three myths, as Sehat calls them, warp all current discourse to the point where only an impasse is possible regarding this important issue. Sehat identifies these three historical untruths: the myth of the separation of church and state, the myth of religious decline, and the myth of exceptional religious liberty. Sehat focuses most of his attention on the ideas of exceptional religious freedom and the separation of church and state.

Sehat divides the volume into four parts. Part one focuses on deconstructing the idea that Madison and Jefferson were immediately successful in their bid to disestablish religion in the United States, and chronicles the development of a “moral establishment” that overtly shaped state and federal laws to coercively enforce Christian moral precepts. Part two showcases how two of the most important and divisive social issues of the 19th century, slavery and women's suffrage, created and subsequently enlarged fissures and opposition to the moral establishment created by conservative Christians. Part three examines the retrenchment of the moral establishment after the Civil War, and argues among other things that the failure of a Northern moral establishment allowed those of the Southern moral establishment to impose many of their ideas on America, including the practice of racial segregation. Sehat also argues in part three that this moral establishment was responsible for slowing the advance of women's

rights, and that the establishment consistently fought against minority religious rights throughout the 19th century. Part four details the eventual decline of power of the moral establishment through the fundamentalist/modernist controversy, and chronicles legal challenges to the establishment that came to a head through the embracing of the concept of the right to privacy, originally championed by attorney and later Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis.

Sehat's writing is highly readable and his arguments are convincing and sound. However, his tone at times is pointedly negative towards Christianity in general and evangelicals in particular. Sehat's inimical tone is often distracting and detracts from this otherwise finely written book. While Sehat indicates in his preface that he is a former evangelical and lacks "animus against religious institutions," it is apparent that his experience and research has left him with a bad taste in his mouth towards conservative Christianity.

While Sehat does an excellent job of describing the moral establishment and opposition to it by freethinkers, atheists, and liberal Christians—and he briefly highlights the tendency of the moral establishment to suppress minority religious rights—he generally misses the opportunity to depict and analyze dissent by more conservative Christian groups. For example, while Sehat briefly mentions Alexander Campbell and his opposition to the moral establishment with regard to creating and sustaining Sabbath laws in the United States, he fails to take notice of the anti-establishmentarianism of David Lipscomb, whose ideas regarding government and the moral establishment clearly echo the thought of William Lloyd Garrison at several key points. Additionally, while Sehat spends several pages on the suppression of Mormon polygamy as an example of the moral establishment's disregard for the religious rights of minority groups, he does not embrace the opportunity to examine the treatment of the Latter Day Saints before the death of Joseph Smith, which could have provided him with additional compelling arguments against the myth of exceptional religious liberty.

In spite of these few limitations, Sehat has provided us with an interesting, well-analyzed, and convincing text that makes important contributions to American Religious History. Anyone with an interest in the current debate about the relationship between church and state should make sure to read this volume.

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Luke BELL. *Baptizing Harry Potter: A Christian Reading of J.K. Rowling.* Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 2010. 224 pp. \$16.00.

In the preface, Bell identifies himself as a monk, adding “I have dedicated my life to what is beyond what can normally be seen. I live for the supernatural.” The author is indeed a Benedictine monk at Quarr Abbey on the Isle of Wight in England. This, as the saying goes, explains a lot. Bell identifies and convincingly clarifies numerous and pervasive connections between the Harry Potter narrative and spiritual truths. This volume changes how a Christian understands Harry Potter.

Bell does not refute directly the arguments of those Christians who reject Harry Potter as promoting the occult. Instead, after a brief acknowledgement of the existence of this concern, the author proceeds to indicate and illuminate literary structures, plot turns, characterizations, and themes that together construct an interpretation of the Potter texts as deeply rooted in Christian tradition and theological truths. This impeccably end-noted text is organized by themes and sub-themes, supported by numerous examples from the Potter texts, as well as references to Scripture, church history, classic authors such as Shakespeare, Lewis, and Milton, and, as if to remind a reader of the author’s particular perspective, occasional allusions to life as a monk.

Readers who have already pondered the parallels between Harry Potter and Christian truths will find familiar Bell’s consideration of Harry and Dumbledore’s placement as literary Christ figures and their opposition to the evil Lord Voldemort’s Satan figure. Harry’s willing sacrifice of himself to save his friends, his literary death and resurrection, and the power of love over evil and death are subjects of some of the longer chapters. Bell also identifies and explains many less obvious instances in which the Potter books mirror Christian truths. Free will and determinism, God’s willingness to use the weakness of humans to demonstrate his power, the nature of evil, the meaning of death, humility, truthfulness, and purity of heart are some of the themes explored in this book. Bell does a good job addressing the relationship between a literary Christ figure and the real Christ that may help uncomfortable Harry Potter readers to understand how Harry or Dumbledore, both flawed characters, can nonetheless function as literary Christ figures. My favorite chapter is “A Pretty Boring Life,” which illustrates how instances of hiddenness, ordinariness, and obscurity construct a powerful theme on the virtue of humility.

I offer only two minor criticisms regarding Bell’s interpretations of Rowling’s work. First, although Rowling has not yet disclosed her motivation for creating a narrative so full of Christian allusions and values, Bell asserts that “She does this, not as one consciously deciding to be a spokeswoman for

Christianity, but rather as one who is deeply imbued with the values of a civilization that has its roots in Christian history” (135). He could very well be correct, but Rowling has not offered any definitive thoughts regarding this. And second, Bell interprets the etymology of *Voldemort* from the Latin, *vol* = will or wish, and *mort* = death, resulting with “one who wishes for death.” More commonly taken as an interpretation for *Voldemort* is the French *vol* = flight or fleeing, resulting with “one who flees death,” which would be more consistent with the rest of Bell’s analysis of Voldemort than is “one who wishes for death.”

This book is an excellent reference for ministers or teachers of youth and young adults. Current young adults were the front line of Harry Potter readers who waited anxiously for each new volume to be published, and they find a lot of meaning (not just nostalgia) in the adventures of Harry and his friends. Any enthusiastic Christian Harry Potter reader will appreciate Bell’s connections between this much-loved fantasy world and important elements of Christian faith. Even an open-minded doubter of the value of Rowling’s work will find much to consider. Anyone who reads this volume will not be able to re-read the Harry Potter series without new awareness of its clear Christian elements.

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Ken JACKSON and Arthur F. MAROTTI. *Shakespeare and Religion: Early Modern and Postmodern Perspectives*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2011. 306 pp. \$38.00.

Outside of William Shakespeare’s unparalleled literary career, not much is known about him aside from his birth date, his brief acting career, and his strong dislike of lawyers. A clear, religious affiliation is among the facts of his life that are forever shrouded in mystery. But the topic of religion is a perennial one and its recent resurgence in academia has kindled the desire to understand its influence on Shakespeare. How did religion(s) and religious issues specifically affect the bard—if at all? This volume is a collection of essays that explore such issues.

The work is organized into two parts: those that interpret religious influence in drama favoring, but not void of theoretical influence, an Early Modern or Elizabethan cultural context, while the latter half of the book, still possessing traits of historical interpretation, favors a more transhistorical or theoretically geared model—specifically deconstruction. The combination of interpreting a play in light of its cultural context and Jacques Derrida’s deconstruction is per-

haps why the editors feel this current collection has moved beyond New Historicism—or even offered something new. These essays offer nothing original except for adding deconstruction in their cultural studies. Whether these scholars are on the brink of some new theory or not, is ultimately beside the point. The point is that this is yet another attempt in the overall tiring trend of focusing critical attention on how economics, society, politics, history, gender studies, religious liturgy, and so on do more to shape Shakespearean drama—than the creative genius of Shakespeare himself.

While these are secular critics dealing with a (debatably) secular writer, it is important for the Christian church to remember that New Historicism can just as easily be applied to the Bible. Arguing that Grecian “social energy” had more influence in *Romans* than an inspired Paul marginalizes the epistle’s timeless and transcendent value. In other words, it makes literature a footnote to history. But this is clearly not the case, because people all over the world can *accurately* read and *understand* Shakespeare and the Bible with little to no knowledge of the social contexts in which they were produced.

Still, Shakespeare’s attitude toward religion is an interesting and timely topic. Sadly, the authors in this essay focus their attention on culture and theory rather than the dramatist’s work. In particular, Gary Kuchar’s essay titled “Decorum and the Politics of Ceremony in Shakespeare’s *Titus Andronicus*” argues the social turbulence of Titus’s Rome and Shakespeare’s England is the result of contradictory and problematic church liturgy—a liturgy that actually provokes the violence and unrest it was meant to contain. One of the main church tensions felt by all Elizabethans was the tension between the partisan views of religious conservatives and reformers. This division was started after Henry VIII left the Catholic Church. This explains, according to Kuchar, Thomas Cranmer’s challenging position to create an edifying liturgy that could unite a polarized society, while also avoiding relativism. The result is a society that increases the church’s power to institute liturgy, while also increasing the individual’s ability to resist such power. Kuchar uses deconstruction to explain Cranmer’s method: his prayer book oscillated the location of authority between the individual and the church. On the one hand, religious issues rest in personal judgment—citizens have their own choice of ceremony to abide by. On the other hand, true holiness can only be obtained following the objective order of God’s will. Whose authority is more valid: the states or the individual’s? Kuchar makes a case that this same uncertainty is the influencing force that drove people to political violence in England in the same way it drove characters to violence in *Titus Andronicus*.

This social criticism produces a grievous misreading of *Titus Andronicus*. It

is clear from the start that Kuchar only cherry-picks this play for details that will support his thesis: to start, he only discusses the first and final acts. He also excludes the pivotal character Aaron from his analysis. Aaron is significant because he is one of the *real* causes of all this mayhem. He murders Bassianus (the emperor's brother) and pins it on two of Titus's sons Quintus and Martius. He then lies to Titus saying the emperor will acquit Quintus and Martius if Titus chops his hand off. Aaron for no other motive than his own amusement returns to Titus his severed hand as well as the severed heads of his two sons. In act five, Aaron confesses that he has done a thousand dreadful things and the only thing that grieves him is that he cannot do ten thousand more. Meanwhile, Tamora's sons Demetrius and Chiron rape Lavinia—then they cut out her tongue and cut off her hands so she cannot report them. Titus resolves to plot revenge, but first he collects severed body parts. Titus uses his one hand to carry one head; since Lavinia has no hands, Titus tells her to carry his severed hand in her mouth—the play does venture into the absurd. Before stabbing Tamora to death, Titus kills Lavinia because her mutilated presence causes him too much grief. This all takes place after he slits Demetrius and Chiron's throats and feeds them to Tamora in the form of meat pies.

To effectively argue that the play's conflict is spawned from problematic ritual liturgy, one must overlook the glaring fact that this play is a vengeance-laden bloodbath executed by capricious, sociopathic characters. It is an untenable stretch to make ill-defined liturgy in Elizabethan England totally (or even partially) responsible for the gore in this play. Beyond considering the comical effects of exaggerated gore as in *The Itchy and Scratchy Show*, *Kill Bill*, *South Park*, *Zombie* movies, and so on, there are no potential religious or human issues in this play—at least no issues of any depth. And it is only the cultural critic that will give this play any merit since it is generally regarded, by the likes of T.S. Eliot and Dr. Johnson as Shakespeare's worst play.

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Gary L. COLLEDGE. *God and Charles Dickens: Discovering the Christian Voice of a Classic Author.* Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2012. 224 pp. \$19.99.

Colledge draws from segments of Charles Dickens's novels, letters, and journals to systematically piece together a portrait of Dickens's religious beliefs.

Colledge surveys the broad scope of Dickens's work, looking for nuggets of writing that illuminate the writer's attitude toward Christianity.

Those who are a part of or who are sympathetic toward the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement will quickly find a lot in common with this classic writer, who was highly critical of the church. For one, superficial clergymen were often targets of his scathing satire. Most memorably perhaps is the reverend Chadband from *Bleak House*. Chadband is a man who loves to hear himself talk and will consume a page of oration without having said anything at all. Colledge dedicates a whole chapter of this volume to illustrating Dickens's impatience with the church. He really did not have much use for it at all, and was highly critical of its ostentation and what he thought were pointless rituals. What also bothered him were those who directed philanthropic efforts to foreign countries. Dickens thought it was a great misdirection to invest time resolving issues so far away when there was equal and urgent need in one's own neighborhood. In *Bleak House*, Mrs. Jellyby is consumed with her Africa mission, despite the fact that her children are uncared for, her house is filthy, and it is driving her family to bankruptcy.

Dickens, though not much of a Bible scholar, did possess a solid understanding of academic trends during his lifetime. He strongly disliked Calvinism because of its tendency to emphasize the wrath of God. Depicting God as a father figure took precedence for Dickens who felt people would respond better to love rather than wrathful images constructed by human imagination. Colledge offers multiple quotes of characters from *Oliver Twist*, *Bleak House*, *Barnaby Rudge*, and *Great Expectations* who announce their faith in providence. Colledge is careful not to interpret these quotes; rather he presents them as evidence to construct what Dickens did believe about God—which is that he was in control of an ultimately just universe. Beyond this, Dickens may not have been much into theology. The author develops an analogy of dung beetles developing a discipline about humans and calling it humanology. This is probably close to how Dickens felt: that theology is certainly not useless, but it also must not be an end in itself.

In another chapter, Colledge steps outside the writing of Dickens and gives readers a snapshot of his life. Dickens did not just criticize; he devoutly practiced what he believed. Dickens kept a highly rigid schedule. Each day was packed with tasks—from writing to family time—and he accomplished them all by maintaining a rigid schedule. When he was not writing or tending his family, Dickens was an active member in his community working hard to raise funds for those in need and to do what he could to alleviate the suffering of others: ultimately, his aim was to follow sincerely Christ's example as best he could.

Dickens's views of Jesus can be found in a small book he had written for his children titled *The Life of Our Lord*. It was never intended for a public audience and so it was not published until after the death of Dickens's eldest child. What Colledge highlights is how strongly the centrality of Christ is portrayed. In fact, learning from and following Jesus is the only part of religious exercise that seemed to matter to Dickens, and *The Life of Our Lord* makes it clear that Dickens wanted to impart this value to his children—and his vigilance in sincerely imitating Jesus shows how he wanted to impart such values to those around him. This is a very readable volume that would be of interest to Dickens scholars, casual readers, or anyone wishing to share or imitate Dickens's genuine Christianity.

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Jeff VAN DUZER. *Why Business Matters to God: And What Still Needs to Be Fixed.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2010. 206 pp. \$20.00.

Van Duzer is dean of the School of Business and Economics at Seattle Pacific University. Van Duzer applies a theological framework to highlight part of our world not often spotlighted: businesses and business people. He gives the reader an overview of business, showing how creation, Fall, redemption, and consummation are each reflected in business. He writes from the position of not only an academic but also a career lawyer and businessperson of 20 years.

First, Van Duzer sets the stage and repeals the notion that business owners are “second-class” Christians, especially when compared to people in vocations such as ministry or service jobs. Instead he rightly states, “businessmen and businesswomen can do kingdom work in their daily material jobs” (118) and “a Christian business person seeks to serve a hurting world by providing it with the material goods and services that will enable it to prosper” (48). Not only does God have a purpose for business people, but he also has a goal and purpose for organizations. With that view Van Duzer states (and consistently reaffirms throughout the book) that “there are two legitimate, first-order purposes of business: as stewards of God’s creation, business leaders should manage their businesses (1) to flourish, and (2) to provide opportunities for meaningful work that will allow employees to express their God-given creativity” (25). It is in these areas that we reflect the act of Creation.

At the very beginning of the volume, Van Duzer makes a key repositioning of how readers view business by stating that the first-order purpose of business is serving its employees and customers, not profit. Instead, profit exists so that a business can continue to grow and serve. Simply stated, the purpose of a business is not profit, it is service. He quickly agrees with the phrase “no margin, no mission” and is clearly not advocating for businesses to be non-profits, but says that this key section will be difficult for those in business to hear and agree with.

Van Duzer then addresses the Fall, and specifically how the results of the Fall are reflected in business ethics and sustainability. Using examples, he looks at the gray areas of decision-making where right or wrong answers are not clear. He addresses fairness, which has many applications for sustainability. This is not only about livable wages but about hours that allow employees to live lives of meaning. Sustainability includes using product pricing that does not charge such a premium that it will eventually drain the community of all resources. Lastly, he addresses the fact that to operate in business as a Christian means one cannot always follow the market trends and choosing to operate in this manner is a constraint that focuses one on discovering innovative and creative solutions that serve its customers and employees. To close, Van Duzer issues the following statement, “What we cannot do, however, is to equate market forces with God's perfect will. It will not suffice for Christians in business who are committed to the kingdom of God to always follow the market” (79).

Van Duzer then takes readers to the book of Revelation, and helps us understand that, via Redemption, we know and are promised that God will prevail. With that in mind, “Christians engage in business with a sense of hope and meaning” (97) because we know that we are working toward the kingdom promise. Van Duzer is clear that God does not promise success (indeed many businesses run by Christians fail), but that businesses viewed as tools of God can be filled with hope and optimism. Van Duzer shares what I find to be a phenomenal mission statement,

It may be hard to get excited about going to work if we do so ultimately just to maximize the return on shareholders' investments. By contrast, when we as Christians in business orient our work toward serving the community, we have the assurance that we are working for a higher purpose, in fact for the highest purpose. Each day we are fashioning the raw materials that God will massage into building blocks for the coming kingdom. We are participating in returning God's shalom to the world. The end of the story assures us that as we align with God's work we can work with the twin assurances that the shalom we are seeking will be established and that our work matters. And that ought to get us out of the bed in the morning. (99)

In the final section of the framework, Consummation, Van Duzer addresses the role of the Holy Spirit in business. Not something often talked about, Van Duzer adamantly states that the “work of Christians in business is to be enabled by the discernment and the power of the Holy Spirit” (117). This is quite the novel idea as there are many decision-making frameworks that are used in business. Often thoughts of the Holy Spirit are confined to “spiritual” activities, not the day-to-day of business. This is a statement that may be novel to readers, but his assertion is correct. If businesspeople are called to be God’s stewards in business, it means that his hand and the Holy Spirit can be sought for guidance on key decisions, and for power in difficult situations. Success is not guaranteed but access to the Holy Spirit is and “because of Christ’s life, death and resurrection . . . we can be led and empowered by the Holy Spirit” (123).

Van Duzer brings about the intersection of business and faith in a clear and compelling manner. He highlights how faith must integrate with the life and organization of a businessperson. He also reorients why businesses exist, not for profit but to serve a purpose both for the community they operate in and for its employees. However, Van Duzer carries this purpose mandate a step too far and states, “Rather than simply adding to a community’s stockpile of available goods, Christians in business will need to look for opportunities where the service or product that they provide should seek to serve its community by providing not only additive products but also products that reach back and help to redeem broken situations” (114). While it is true that a Christian business should never engage in illegal and immoral businesses, Van Duzer is contradicting himself by relegating Christians in business to “second class” if their product is not restorative or healing since he has stated the purpose of business is for its employees.

Van Duzer has given us a new paradigm for business and a framework to review it. This book is well suited for undergraduate business classes as students explore and learn about being a Christian in business as well as a Christian business owner. Pastors would gain to read this volume, as it would help them prepare and counsel those in their churches who are in business. Van Duzer has shown that a different way of looking at Christians in business is not only beneficial, but necessary.

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Ben WITHERINGTON. *Is There a Doctor in the House? An Insider's Story and Advice on Becoming a Bible Scholar.* **Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011. 156 pp. \$18.99.**

This popular-level volume by NT professor Ben Witherington is “something of a how-to guide to becoming a budding Bible scholar” (23). In hopes of encouraging readers to pursue their calling “without any illusions that it will be easy,” Witherington uses his own experiences in becoming a biblical scholar as the basis for advice to those considering a similar professional path (151). It is a quick read written in a casual tone, and much of the advice is anecdotal.

He begins by describing the differences between a student, a teacher, and a scholar; while his advice may be helpful to the former two categories, he is writing primarily for those wanting to become well-published Bible scholars (chapter 1). He then discusses some aspects involved in choosing a school, program, and mentor: the differences between schools in the UK and North America, how to choose a publisher for a dissertation, and what a relationship with a mentor should look like (chapter 2). In chapters 3–6 and 8 Witherington describes several components of biblical scholarship such as reading both primary and secondary sources in their original languages, studying the historical context of the Bible, having literary sensitivity, knowing theology and ethics, and the basics of hermeneutics and interpretation. These chapters dispel the naïve notion that being a biblical scholar only requires you to know the Bible well.

Witherington then discusses the Bible scholar's ability to research, write, lecture, and teach (chapters 7 and 9). This includes a list of ways to become a better researcher and writer, a discussion of the pressure to publish, and the need to be a “general practitioner” since many will be expected to teach classes outside of their immediate area of expertise. Witherington concludes with chapters on the importance of the character of a Bible scholar (chapter 10), the sacrifices required of a Bible scholar (chapter 10), how to plan ahead during graduate school (appendix 1), and a list of Wesley's series of classic Christian works for his preachers (appendix 2).

One of Witherington's strengths is his willingness to be candid about the requirements of becoming a biblical scholar. For example, he tells the readers that if they are not gifted in languages or willing to work diligently on them, they should “abandon any hope at becoming a good biblical scholar. . . . You cannot get around the language requirement” (42). Likewise, his tips on becoming a better researcher and writer (84–86) and his list of useful monographs to read before starting the doctoral process (147–148) would be especially helpful for upper-level undergraduates or master's students who are serious about becoming biblical scholars.

Witherington describes his audience as those who want to become biblical scholars, and he writes for people in several different stages of that process. While this strategy makes his book appeal to a wider audience, it also makes parts of the book irrelevant to certain sectors of the audience. For example, chapters 3–5 are aimed at undergraduates (or possibly master’s students without previous theological training). Here he describes the dangers of relying solely on English translations, defines words like “hermeneutics,” and stresses the importance of understanding genre for interpreting the Bible. Those students further along in the process of becoming a biblical scholar would find those chapters rudimentary and not particularly helpful. Chapter 2 (choosing a school, program, and mentor) and appendix 1 (what to do during graduate school), however, would be relevant for students more advanced than undergraduates. This attempt to appeal to a broad audience results in a book that few would find beneficial cover-to-cover.

Further, since Witherington is aiming at such a broad audience and presumably attempting to keep the book relatively short, he often only scratches the surface of the issues. For example, when talking about mentors, he encourages readers to develop their own voice and advises against becoming too personal with the mentor. These are fine pieces of advice, but readers would also benefit from advice on what makes a good mentor (willingness to invest in students) and how to choose a good mentor (talking with the mentor’s current students or meeting with the mentor at a professional conference). Additionally, much more should be said about the differences between programs in North America and in the UK (the pros and cons of a program that requires coursework and exams) and between an M.Div. and an M.A.—and I found some of his views on these differences questionable or unclear. For instance, does it really cost less to do a Ph.D. in the UK (27)? Maybe, if the student completes it in 3 years instead of the 6 it may take in North America, but this does not account for the difficulty in acquiring funding abroad. Of course, good readers will remember that this volume is based on Witherington’s own experience and thus may not always prove true for them. Ultimately, while this would have changed the tone of the writing, the volume would have been stronger with fewer personal stories and more information about the process in general.

This volume (or portions of it) would be valuable for an Introduction to Graduate Studies course, particularly as an option for those who may be interested in becoming Bible scholars. More than that, however, it would be a nice volume for professors to recommend to their students who show interest in becoming a scholar, though I would recommend (as I suspect Witherington would!) that those students talk with other scholars with different experiences

(who earned their Ph.D. in an American program) as a supplement to Witherington’s work. Despite some of its shortcomings, this volume is nonetheless a step toward meeting the needs of those students considering the path of biblical scholarship.

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William D. HENARD and Adam W. GREENWAY, eds.

Evangelicals Engaging Emergent: A Discussion of the Emergent Church Movement. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2009. 344 pp. \$24.99.

In reading this collection of essays, I was reminded of the somewhat famous lifeboat spat between Margaret ‘Molly’ Brown and quartermaster Robert Hitchens in the icy Atlantic waters. Brown, a brash woman who represented new money, pleaded with the staid Hitchens to take their craft back toward the wreckage of the Titanic in order to save all that they could. Hitchens, an experienced seaman, hotly refused her pleadings fearing that attempts to save others might result in their own deaths. This testy confrontation aboard lifeboat #6 well illustrates the tension that the Emergent have created within the Evangelical community, and this collection of essays reflects this tension as well.

Molly Brown, in the above analogy, represents the Emergent Church—an increasingly loose network of “relevants, reconstructionists, and revisionists” who are all seeking to repurpose and reimagine the mission of the church. Should not Christians engage in thoughtful, caring relationships with the lost and dying? Should they not listen and seek to understand the plight and cries of the world? The Emergent see themselves as rescuers, and they like Molly Brown are frustrated that they do not have full control of the rudder.

Essayists in this collection like Norman Geisler, Douglas Blount, and Jim Shaddix take the position of Quartermaster Hitchens seeing little of redeemable value in the hermeneutics, views of Scripture, or preaching among the Emergent. To these authors, the pleas of the Emergent must be rejected wholesale and seen for what they are: a poorly thought out, liberal, passing fad that contributes little to the health of the church.

Along the same lines, author Daniel Akin greatly questions the moral and ethical basis of many of the Emergent leaders because they lack respect for “traditional Christian ethics.” However, Akin’s test case for the lack of strong bib-

lical ethics among the Emergent is alcohol abstinence, a topic that continues to draw a wide variety of opinions across Christianity as a whole.

Nevertheless, not every voice in this volume is hostile toward the Emergent. The essays by Ed Stetzer and Mark DeVine are helpful because they survey the movement, its brief history, and include many personal stories where Stetzer and DeVine have engaged the Emergents in friendly conversation. These authors remain wary of unorthodox thinking that would question traditional Christian teaching and practice, but they appreciate the Emergent efforts to contextualize the presentation of the gospel in a modern/postmodern setting.

On the whole, this volume adequately introduces the reader to a myriad of Emergent voices from the more brazen Brian McClaren, Doug Pagitt, Rob Bell, and Karen Ward to the surprisingly more orthodox and softer spoken, Mark Driscoll and Dan Kimball. Also in reading these essays, one can identify “friends of the Emergent” such as Eddie Gibbs, Alan Hirsh, Donald Miller, and Scot McKnight to name a few. Readers who are looking to better understand the Emergent will find this volume helpful. It builds upon and vastly improves upon D. A. Carson’s *Becoming Conversant with the Emergent Church* (2005).

To return to the metaphor, the Emergent/Evangelical conversation is a practical one that is taking place in a lifeboat. What should be done as the church views a sinking world? How close should it come to the wreckage? Should Christians risk taking on water or swimming in icy waters for the sake of the good news? How are preaching, ecclesiology, philosophy, worldview, ethics, and evangelism challenged by present cultural context? Readers can enter into this discussion as they engage Emergents and their friends.

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Israel GALINDO and Marty C. CANADAY. *Planning for Christian Education Formation: A Community of Faith Approach*. St. Louis: Chalice, 2010. 137 pp. \$16.99.

“Don’t judge a book by its cover” has become cliché in today’s vernacular. However, it is indeed a genuine sentiment when examining Galindo and Canaday’s volume. Coming in at under 140 pages, one would assume from the outside that it is but a cursory overview of the planning process innate to an effective and efficient Christian education ministry. The volume is in fact a quite

detailed treatment of the relationship between the theology and life of the church as an intentional formative process called *planning*.

The volume is divided into three sections. The first section, comprised of the first two chapters, embeds the planning process within a theological framework, primarily ecclesiology. The volume's subtitle, *A Community of Faith Approach*, is explanatory of this section. It addresses the question: How does a congregation become a faith community? How can a congregation intentionally engage a maturing process that eventually transforms it into a distinctively Christian community? Planning.

The volume's second section, Chapters 3–6, provides most of the substance of the planning process, essentially focused on two elements: the Christian education leadership team and educational approaches to the formation of Christian communities. The Christian leadership team is described in Chapters 3–4, but is illustrated in two diagrams demonstrating the increasing complexity of the team's structure and responsibilities, beginning with a basic diagram (39). It is further developed through page 42 adding insights, relationships, and teams within the team (i.e., committees and councils). The latter two chapters of the section, 5–6, describe in detail the contributions education makes toward personal and corporate faith formation. Education is not limited to Sunday school or classroom settings, but is given the appropriate spectrum of approaches, ranging from formal (schooling) to informal (experience). This is illustrated with a diagram that summarizes the entirety of a congregation's education ministry as it relates to the formation of the faith community (63). Chapter 5 also provides a table explaining these educational elements, and an assessment tool for use with your own congregation. Chapter 6 concludes the section, explaining how this process can be tied to the Christian calendar, integrating the intentional planning aspect of ministry into the natural flow of the Christian year. However, even though the planning process is tied to the Christian calendar, congregations that do not follow it can still make effective use of this volume. It is a creative integration of planning, but not an essential one.

The final section addresses strategic planning, discussing assessment and the implementation of changes to the congregation. Most books on planning or congregational ministry omit the idea of assessment. However, Galindo and Canaday embrace it as an essential aspect of the planning process and the intentional formation of a faith community. Likewise, if a congregation is to transform into a community of faith, change is natural, essential, and inevitable. Hence, the final section links assessment with change for intentional planning.

This volume is excellent for anyone studying or serving in Christian education, Church leadership, or spiritual formation. It is concise, and yet treats the

subject with unexpected depth. It would serve well as a classroom textbook or could be used with a congregational leadership team or Christian education task force. This volume is by no means exhaustive as an administrative manual. For example there is an incomplete treatment of mission, vision, or values; but it does not purport to be such. It indeed addresses the subject of planning and congregational formation with admirable zeal and insight, which is its intended use. Galindo and Canaday are to be commended.

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Walter BRUEGGEMANN. *The Collected Sermons of Walter Brueggemann.* Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2011.
366 pp. \$30.00.

How does one critique a master? One of the little “treats” that I give my preaching students is that I will preach for them a couple of times per course, allowing them to critique my sermon. I find that it is beneficial both to them as students and to me as a preacher. I do so not because I consider myself a master but because I am still learning how to preach well. One of my mentors in college told me that a preacher really does not start preaching until he (or she) is 40. I still have a few years to go before I reach that magical number of homiletical maturity, so I think it is safe to say that I am still a student of preaching (much like a martial arts student only begins “learning” the discipline when a black belt rank is achieved).

Thus, how does a *gup* (which is Korean for “student”) critique the style of a *dan* (Korean equivalent to “rank holder”)? Yet, that is exactly what I have been asked to do in this review with the latest volume from Westminster John Knox’s series of collected sermons. The series started in 2008 with one collection of sermons from William Sloane Coffin, and a new volume has been released each year since. The other volumes in this series include a second collection from Coffin (2009), William Willimon (2010), and Fred Craddock (2011). Needless to say, the modern masters of preaching are being honored in a way that benefits those of us who continue in their footsteps.

In particular, this volume contains sixty-seven of Walter Brueggemann’s personally selected sermons. In many ways, they have been selected not to display the best of Brueggemann’s preaching (for that would contradict his hum-

ble nature) but to display his growth as a preacher and communicator. In his opening comments he writes,

For those of us who preach, the act of preaching and the craft of the sermon constitute an endless challenge and something of a puzzle, albeit a deeply serious puzzle. We keep at it, but continue to wonder how the good news of God’s love and the serious summons of God’s will are transmitted, uttered, and received in our foolishness (xxiii).

He then lays out, in true Brueggemann style, four “accents” that explain his growth in the practice of preaching: 1) trust the text to do its own work, 2) be willing to “imagine” with the text and the congregation, 3) preaching contests contemporary culture, and 4) preaching mediates the kingdom of God into the here-and-now. With these concepts before the reader, Brueggemann begins on Christmas Eve 1972, in the wake of the Saigon bombings and leads the reader not on a chronology of the best sermons he has ever preached but on a forty-year spiritual journey in which the recorded sermons serve as a type of journal. It is a journey that can be summed up in the words of his son Jim who had written a Christmas play for that important 1972 sermon: “Hey, this has been a neat story, huh? It really is a neat story, and it’s for you” (5). At the end of this volume, there is little that can better be said about having spent time with this master preacher.

However, a review of this nature would not be complete without some words of caution. And these words of caution are offered in the hopes that readers will see this book for what it is, rather than what it is not. First, these sermons are not being offered as shortcuts for the busy minister. As Bob Reid and Lucy Hogan note in their new book *The Six Deadly Sins of Preaching*, plagiarism of any kind, especially in preaching, is “an ethical failure” (3). These sermons reveal Brueggemann’s spiritual journey. They provide us with incredible insight, yet they are to be left to stand on their own.

Second, as is Brueggemann’s practice, these sermons follow the lectionary. Following the lectionary can be a valuable practice (one that I encourage). However, if we are unaccustomed to it, we may find the text selections odd and unconnected. Yet, read them anyway, and see how this master weaves together the story of God at work in the world. In the end, you will be blessed by having sat at the feet of “Pastor” Brueggemann, for in these sermons we hear the transforming word of God and are transformed as a result.

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Douglas S. HUFFMAN, ed. *Christian Contours: How a Biblical Worldview Shapes the Mind and Heart.* Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011. 236 pp. \$22.99.

Huffman, professor and associate dean of biblical and theological studies at Biola University, together with a team of professors from Northwestern College in Minnesota have produced a concise introductory volume which uses “the tool of worldview thinking” and “aims to support successful Christian living in the world of competing worldviews” (17).

The volume is divided into two parts and has three useful appendices. Part 1, “Worldview Thinking and the Biblical Worldview,” is comprised of the book’s first four chapters. In Chapter 1, “What Is a Worldview?” Randy W. Nelson defines a worldview as “a conceptual framework that allows us to make sense of reality” which also serves as “a guide for behavior” (26, 27). In Chapter 2, “Is There Just One Biblical Worldview?” Huffman adduces five lines of argument to support his contention that there is in fact only one accurate biblical worldview. While admitting, “none of us fully grasps the biblical worldview,” Huffman says that “the biblical worldview is Christ’s view of the world” and that it is incumbent upon all believers to strive to have this one biblical worldview (48). Chapter 3, “What Is the Relationship of Worldviews to Truth?” by Walter J. Schultz is the most philosophically sophisticated chapter in the book. Here Schultz argues that (1) “truth is God’s knowledge of himself and of creation” and (2) “a belief . . . is true when it is something God knows” (59). He then answers the question posed by the chapter’s title by asserting, “A person’s worldview, therefore, is related to truth solely by God’s acting. Our beliefs are true and constitute knowledge only when they correspond with God’s representations as they are produced in us by God” (64). In chapter 4, “What Is the Biblical Worldview?” Huffman and Paul Kjoss Helseth give a primer of the basic Christian beliefs that constitute the biblical worldview through the lens of “five worldview core belief areas” which are theology, anthropology, ethics, soteriology, and epistemology (70).

The second part of the book, “Worldview Thinking and Personal Responsibility,” is also comprised of four chapters. In chapter 5, “How Do We Handle Disagreements between Christians Regarding Worldview?” Daryl N. Aaron articulates six principles for navigating such disagreements in a Christ-like way based on his readings of 1 Corinthians 8–10, Ephesians 4:1–16, and 2 Timothy 2:23–26. Chapter 6, “How Do I Maintain the Biblical Worldview When I See That I Am Inconsistent?” by Mark H. Muska contains a helpful discussion of what Muska calls “submerged beliefs” which are the beliefs we hold

beneath the level of our self-awareness and which are only revealed when we act in ways that contradict our stated convictions. In Chapter 7, “How Can I Live the Biblical Worldview in a Culture That Does Not Share It?” Ardel B. Canaday adopts a posture of combat (114-115) toward prevailing culture and identifies what he considers to be “pluralism’s rules of engagement” which are (1) “values” as pluralism’s “self-defined morality,” (2) “uncertainty” as pluralism’s “mark of humility,” (3) “tolerance” as pluralism’s “dogma,” and (4) “political correctness” as pluralism’s “speech code.” Finally in Chapter 8, “How Can I Share My Faith and Encourage Others to Adopt the Biblical Worldview?” James G. Raymo and Dale R. Hutchcraft give cursory discussions of apologetics and contextualization as guides for engaging in evangelism.

After a brief conclusion written by Huffman, Appendix A presents a chart comparing the positions of six prominent worldviews in the “areas of core belief” (given above) to the positions of the Christian worldview in these same areas. Appendix B is a list of “Christian professional organizations” that support Christian worldview integration in various disciplines and professions. Lastly, there is an annotated bibliography of works that address living out the Christian worldview within the various disciplines and professions.

The greatest strength of this volume is its welcome emphasis on how the biblical worldview “guides behavior” as well as enabling one to properly understand reality. In this regard, the most important contributions to Christian worldview thinking and living that this volume has to make come from Chapter 5 by Daryl Aaron and Chapter 6 by Mark Muska. In particular, the principles for handling disagreement between Christians offered by Aaron are very valuable and could be fruitfully applied to disagreements in the classroom between faculty members, between church leaders and/or congregation members, and between denominations. Also, though limited in scope (the organizations and books listed are primarily evangelical) the appendices are a helpful collection of resources.

A principal weakness of this text, which will be troubling to many *Stone-Campbell Journal* readers, is its Calvinistic tone. This is most prominent in the chapter on the relationship between worldviews and truth by Schultz. Here Schultz explicitly states that “a person’s worldview . . . is related to truth solely by God’s acting,” and “our beliefs are true . . . when they correspond with God’s representations as they are produced in us by God” (64). Schultz also approvingly quotes Lorraine Boettner to the effect that God “very obviously predetermined every event which would happen when He chose this [the actual world with its history] plan” (63). Further, in chapter four, Helseth and Huffman assume a Calvinistic understanding of the perseverance of believers as part and parcel of the Christian worldview (79).

It is not my intention here to critique Calvinism, but it is necessary to question its blatant inclusion in a volume that is supposed to be about *the* Christian worldview, not the *Reformed Christian* worldview (see pages 37-42 by Huffman). One of the greatest strengths of worldview thinking is its ability to make plain the large swaths of common ground that underlie and unite all of the great Christian traditions. Reformed commitments, such as the authors articulate in this volume, are not part of that common ground and are not necessarily aspects of *the* Christian worldview. The inclusion of these Calvinistic elements lessens the value of this volume as an introduction to worldview thinking and living for those outside the Reformed tradition.

A second and more minor criticism is that the volume does not actually go very far in demonstrating how the biblical worldview enables “successful Christian living in the world of competing worldviews.” While the appendices point to resources that address the application of the biblical worldview to issues such as education and biomedical ethics, it would have been helpful for this text to have had at least one chapter dealing with an issue (say, political science) so that readers could see how the authors’ approach to worldview thinking supports faithful Christian living in an arena where non-Christian worldviews have primacy.

In my estimation, this volume is not substantial enough for use in an undergraduate course on worldview studies, and I do not recommend it for such. The book could be used in a high school or adult Sunday school class or small group, though teachers in non-Reformed settings will need to be able to help students distinguish between narrow Calvinism and the much broader commitments which all who embrace the Christian worldview share.

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Richard ROHR. *A Lever and a Place to Stand: The Contemplative Stance, the Active Prayer.* Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 2011. 128 pp. \$15.00.

Rohr is a Franciscan Friar and Roman Catholic priest as well as the founding director of the Center for Action and Contemplation in Albuquerque, New Mexico. This volume stems from Rohr’s lectures at the 2005 John Main Seminar hosted by the World Community for Christian Meditation in London.

The title of this volume comes from a saying of the Greek philosopher and mathematician Archimedes, “Give me a lever and a place to stand and I will

move the world” (1). Archimedes realized that if a lever was properly balanced on the right fulcrum, “it could move proportionally much greater weights than the force actually applied” (1). So Archimedes postulated that if the earth was a certain distance away from his fixed point, then his small weight could be magnified many times and he could move the earth with a lever. Rohr sees this as a metaphor for how Christians should understand the relation of contemplation and action.

Rohr argues that contemplation is the fixed point, the place where Christians should stand. Contemplation requires some distance from the world for prayer and meditation, but it also has a practical component that “does not require life in a monastery” (2). As illustrations of what he means by contemplation, Rohr points to figures like St. Francis and Thomas Merton, who were “at the same time both radically critical of consumer culture and also in love with the world” (2). Rohr argues that by finding this critical place to stand, we can better move within the world. So instead of seeing action and contemplation as conflicting stances, Rohr argues they should be a “Unified Field.”

Rohr argues we must live with the paradox of action and contemplation, saying “*yes* to life” and “*no* to injustice” (15). This means that Christians should not root their identities in nation of origin or political party affiliation but instead as those who are a new creation. This includes not just seeing religion as a system of belief and belonging, but as something that leads to the type of transformation and restorative justice that Jesus envisioned. Rohr argues that people are only able to enter into a relationship with God because of God’s graciousness. The life of the Unified Field includes following after Jesus, the Wounded Healer, and not scapegoating others.

Rohr argues that multiple levers exist by which Christians are active in the world: the charisms or gifts of the Spirit. He encourages Christians to patiently wait and pray for their charism. It was for this reason that he started the Center for Prayer and Contemplation, to teach contemplative prayer to activists. Rohr also advocates the reintroduction of initiation rites, based on the model of male initiation rites.

Rohr roots his emphasis upon action and contemplation in the Scriptures, focusing at different points on the letters of Paul, the Gospels, and the threefold division of the Hebrew Scriptures into Law, Prophets, and Wisdom. Rohr also depends upon early Christian writings like the *Didache* and *Shepherd of Hermas*, and the writings of Church Fathers like Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and Augustine, and later figures in church history like Thomas Aquinas and John Duns Scotus. Those from the Stone-Campbell Movement will also appreciate Rohr’s criticism of a passive dependence of the church upon clergy. Rohr instead

advocates teaching people to pray and faithfully advocate the gospel. Though a Roman Catholic, Rohr sympathizes with “emerging Christianity,” and even cites people like Brian McLaren.

Rohr’s theological assumptions may not please some within the Stone-Campbell Movement. For instance, he sympathizes greatly with liberation theology and he argues that the object of the atonement is humanity. Rohr also advocates for homosexuals within this work and elsewhere.

At the same time, readers should not dismiss Rohr just because they differ from him on these matters. He follows in the footsteps of figures like Thomas Merton in advocating the need to hold contemplation and action together. While the volume may be difficult to use for a Sunday School class or small group, it would benefit spiritual directors, pastors, and professors seeking to root the lives of their students in a life of prayer that leads to faithful witness.

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David NANTAIS. *Rock-a My Soul: An Invitation to Rock Your Religion.* Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2011. 184 pp. \$15.95.

It’s 2012, and technology has revolutionized the way ideas are spread. The internet has enabled ideas to find their audiences faster than ever before, and these audiences support the development of new authors. This volume is a terrific example of what is now possible.

Nantais is a campus minister, a former Jesuit, a rock and roll drummer, and an engaging essayist. For many years he has written music reviews, blog posts and magazine articles addressing the spiritual themes in rock music and their intersection with Catholic theology and practice.

After the success of Donald Miller’s *Blue Like Jazz* (Thomas Nelson, 2003), “spiritual memoirs” have greatly influenced what gets published and the style in which books are written. Nantais’s prose is incredibly self-referential and is best viewed as a participant in this new genre. In some ways, this book is a collection of long-form, footnoted blog posts in chronological order as he personally sorts through his own relationship to rock music and Catholic Christianity (as a Jesuit in a gigging rock band, it’s safe to say he’s intimately committed to both).

In case this topic is new to any *SCJ* readers, it’s a matter of historical fact that rock and roll is a direct descendant from American Evangelical Protes-

tantism: slaves in the American South merged the hymnody of their masters with the rhythm and tones of Africa, work songs beget the blues, spirituals beget gospel, black families moved from the south to Chicago, and the combination of these elements became rock and roll. Like it or not, popular song has *always* been a stepchild to Christian liturgy: most “Saturday night” musicians are also Sunday morning musicians, and many, many, popular musicians are pastors’ kids.

In the last generation, rock moved from pastime to de facto religion among parts of western society, and its impact and importance as a culture-shaping artifact is well worth the efforts of serious theologians. This field is rich with content and is frequently mined by publications such as *The Journal of Popular Music*, *the Journal of American Musicological Society*, *Christianity Today*, *Relevant*, and *Neue*.

This work is the logical outgrowth of a series of workshops Nantais conducts with high school students, and seems to be aimed at students seeking to explore their Catholic faith and their passion for rock and roll. For students new to a “faith and culture” topic this work is quite a gift, as Nantais carefully explores, and cheekily explains many of the connections between rock and the Christian Church. However, apart from his Catholic understanding of social justice and a brilliant commentary on masculine emotional vulnerability in rock, not much of what he offers is new. His best points are gleaned from theologians Tom Beaudoin, Clive Marsh, and Jeremy Begbie; and others who have already covered his personal conclusions, such as Bob Briner in *Roaring Lambs* (Zondervan, 1995).

I cannot recommend this book to anyone seeking a theology of rock—such a thesis is beyond the scope of the work. However, for students new to the conversation, this volume is a thorough introduction to an increasingly significant topic.

KYLE BAKER

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Elizabeth A. McCABE, ed. *Women in the Biblical World: A Survey of Old and New Testament Perspectives*. Vol. 2. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2011. 111 pp. \$23.00.

This collection of eight essays highlights the work of scholars in such diverse fields as biblical study, archaeology, ecology, and law. What unites them is a

common interest in the ways women are portrayed in the biblical text. Even so, the subtitle promises more than the book delivers, since a “survey” usually implies a comprehensive review, rather than a few scattered snapshots. Perhaps Volume One, which I have not seen, provides that broader perspective.

Chapter One, by Nathan E. Rutenbeck, reads the Judah-Tamar narrative in Genesis 38 against a longstanding tendency to see Tamar “as an arbitrary and unwilling participant in the grand design of Yahweh” [to assure that the line of Israel’s future kings runs through the tribe of Judah]. Rutenbeck sees Tamar, not only as the controlling figure in the narrative, but also as literally in control in every act of the unfolding drama with Judah. Tamar has the upper hand in all of her dealings with the ignorant, willful, and self-righteous Judah, who finally must acknowledge his paternity of her unborn child. “By pushing the climax to a high-stakes public confrontation, Tamar shows Judah with his pants down, giving no room to deny culpability” (6). Rutenbeck insists that Tamar adopted the role of “sex worker” rather than prostitute, since the former term “implies self-direction and the accomplishment of real labor, whereas the latter usually carries weighty connotations of victimization, violence, and social disease” (4). Since this distinction would not have been understood in antiquity, the use of this anachronism seems to me a case of allowing contemporary concerns to drive the interpretation of the text.

In Chapter Two, Tammi J. Schneider offers “a feminist Jewish hermeneutic of Deborah in Judges 4:4–5:31. In an approach she describes as “verbing the character,” Schneider looks at how a character in the text is described, when the character is subject of a verb, object of a verb or prepositional phrase, and what the relationship is of that character to others. So studied, Deborah is revealed to be a “fiery woman” (her translation of the phrase commonly rendered “wife of Lappidoth” [4:4]) skilled as a military commander, prophet, and judge, with attributes similar to both Moses and Miriam.

Rob Fleenor’s essay in Chapter Three shows how the portrayal of Manoah and his wife, the parents of Samson in Judges 13, subverts the expectations of the reader. Whereas one would expect the text to reinforce patriarchal ideals, Manoah is depicted as dimwitted, obtuse, and hesitating, whereas his wife is astute, insightful, and trustworthy.

Chapter Four is Elizabeth McCabe’s defense of Queen Vashti in an imagined trial of Vashti for her refusal to appear when summoned by the king to display her beauty to his subjects (Esther 1:10-12). By a close reading of the text in relation to Persian law, along with many hypothetical reasons why Vashti may have declined the king’s summons, McCabe attempts to refute the charge that the queen has been insubordinate.

Caitlin Norton recasts the tale of Job's wife in Chapter Five in order to show that, in her one line of speech ("curse/bless God and die," Job 2:9), she pushes Job "into initiating a dialogue with God, questioning the fairness of his condition and a deity who could punish those who have not cursed God" (57). Norton creates a farce, retelling the story of Job from his wife's point of view. The piece is more worthy of a Mel Brooks skit—God in "harem pants"; God who makes a side bet with Satan because "I could really use the money"—than of a book of serious scholarship.

In Chapter Six, William Baker's study of 1 Cor 11:2-16 attempts to answer the question whether the phrase *kata kephales echon* ("having down from head" or "having against head") in vv 4-5 refers to "hat or hair." He argues, convincingly in my judgment, that the covering referred to is a portion of the outer garment pulled up from the back to cover the head. Baker is less successful in drawing out the contemporary implications of this text. He concludes that women involved "in ministry and worship leadership" should be aware of cultural and churchly norms, dress in such a way as to honor their husbands (or men), and maintain the distinction between male and female clothing.

James Riley Estep surveys literature dealing with women's education in Greco-Roman society and the implications for our understanding of 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2. He suggests that references to women's learning and women's silence (1 Cor 14:34-35; 1 Tim 2:11-12) may refer to "congregational disruptions caused in part by educated upper-class women behaving as described in contemporary Roman literature" (90). Outside such an anomalous circumstance, Paul was quite happy to accept the voices of women who were his coworkers in the gospel.

Chapter Eight, by Frank Ritchel Ames and J. David Miller, is a republication of a piece that appeared originally in the journal *Restoration Quarterly*. This is a detailed treatment of Paul's instructions on prayer in 1 Tim 2:8-15 in light of the syncretistic worship practices of the devotees of Artemis, whose cult was of vast importance to the religious life of Ephesus. Ritchel and Miller conclude that much of the subject matter of the letter, and especially the prayer language, is written directly to oppose Artemisian influences on the Christians in Ephesus.

In terms of the quality of scholarship, this is a strikingly uneven collection. I think the essays by Schneider, Baker, and Estep are likely to have more staying power than the others, and the one by Norton seems to me a throw-away exercise. Readers interested in adding to their collection of studies of women in biblical literature may find the book useful.

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David Lyle JEFFREY, ed. *The King James Bible and the World It Made*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2011. 205 pp. \$24.99.

In 1912, Cleland Boyd McAfee proclaimed the King James Version of the Bible (KJV) “the Book of greatest literature,” “the Book of mightiest mortals,” and “the Book of governing history.” McAfee was a first rank Presbyterian theologian and hymn writer (“Near to the Heart of God”). His comments came at the end of a three-hundred-year run for the KJV, when perceptive church leaders could foresee a coming era of new English versions and translations.

This book, a collection of eight essays, is primarily a study of the one-hundred-years evaluation of the KJV between McAfee’s pronouncement about the KJV and its four hundredth anniversary in 2011. The authors are drawn from a circle of scholars at Baylor University, but include other well-known scholars: Alister McGrath, Mark Noll, and Robert Alter. The tone of the essays is comfortable for the general reader and does not often engage in technical translation discussions, making it an enjoyable read. In general, the essays are not concerned with the *nature* of the KJV, but rather the *influence* it has had on the British kingdom, the English-speaking world, and the broader world of multi-language Christianity.

This book is filled with many things that may surprise. Laura Knoppers makes a strong case for the KJV’s word choices as having been motivated by a desire to give the British monarchy a sense of legitimacy that comes from the Bible’s praise of the Davidic monarchy. Central to this was the KJV’s somewhat unnecessary use of the word “majesty,” an innovation in translation that paralleled the developing practice of referring to the king as “your majesty.” David Bebbington advises the reader that the KJV we know is really the 1769 edition published by Benjamin Blayney, which had 24,000 corrections from the 1611 original. Bebbington also notes that the designation of the KJV as the “Authorised Version” did not come into common use until the early nineteenth century due to printings made for the British and Foreign Bible Society.

McGrath’s essay exhibits deserved respect for the KJV, but also dispels some myths about its exalted language. McGrath contends that the KJV was “unnecessarily archaic in its language from the onset” (24). There were many factors in this, including the conservative nature of the translators and their reliance on earlier English Bibles such as Tyndale, Coverdale, and the Bishop’s Bible. For example, the borrowing of language from Tyndale meant that the KJV was using one-hundred-year-old expressions and verbal forms when it was released in 1611. McGrath’s terse advice is “when a translation itself requires translation, it is clearly time to move on” (24).

Essays by Lamin, Sanneh, and Philip Jenkins explore the influence of the

KJV on non-English speaking societies, particularly in Africa. Sanneh in particular has great esteem for the KJV, saying that the move from its lofty language to the many vernacular English translations of the twentieth century was the descent from a mountain to anthills. Sanneh tells the story of African Christians who understood the need for Bibles in their own languages, inspired by the sixteenth and seventeenth century British folks who appreciated the need for an English Bible in their day. Jenkins makes an interesting study of the influence of Martin Luther's fiddling with the canon on the KJV and how this has had lasting impact. The KJV included a translation of the books that Luther deemed to be apocryphal, but grouped them together between the Old Testament and the New Testament, making for easy removal by later editors. Luther also cast doubts on the value of four NT books: James, Hebrews, Jude, and Revelation. Ironically, these books Luther hated are loved in contemporary Africa (according to Jenkins); James because of its emphasis upon the transient nature of human existence and the need for practical living, Hebrews because of its tying of the sacrificial system to Christian theology (something the Africans appreciate), Jude because of its call for generational faithfulness, and Revelation because of its picture of faithful survival under hostile political situations.

I found the chapter by renowned scholar of Hebrew poetry Robert Alter to be the most interesting, and perhaps worth the price of the book by itself. Alter challenges the assumption that the KJV is a monument of eloquence. He does this on two fronts. First, Alter contends that what is seen as eloquence in English is sometimes imposed upon the text in an unnatural way, "the eloquence is more Jacobean than biblical" (139). Second, Alter sees the KJV as often being ineloquent, "the grandeur of the 1611 version is not infrequently interrupted by stylistic lapses, awkwardness, and patches of gratuitous wordiness" (146). Lest we judge him harshly, Alter admits his criticism may sound like "ungenerous carping."

The final chapter includes a review of the literature concerning the KJV in the last one hundred years. This is more than an annotated bibliography, but book-review-style treatments of thirty of the most significant contributions to KJV scholarship. All in all, this is a fitting ending for a well-done collection of essays.

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Richard BAUCKHAM. *The Bible and Ecology: Rediscovering the Community of Creation.* Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010. 226 pp. \$24.95.

Bauckham has written a valuable contribution to the burgeoning literature relating biblical interpretation and Christian theology to environmental concerns. The purpose of this work is to articulate “the Bible’s understanding of the place of humans within the rest of God’s creation” (preface). Bauckham’s subtitle, “Rediscovering the Community of Creation,” helpfully captures the main conclusion of his exegetical work: “All God’s creatures are first and foremost creatures, ourselves included. All earthly creatures share the same Earth; and all participate in an interrelated and interdependent community, oriented above all to God our common Creator” (64).

In chapter one, “Stewardship in Question,” Bauckham deals at length with the dominion granted to humans in the creation account in Genesis one and with the associated concept of “stewardship” which has played so significant a role in Christian environmental ethics. Here Bauckham takes into account several criticisms of stewardship and carefully reconsiders the dominion mandate within its immediate literary context and within the larger context of the narrative of Genesis and the Torah. Chapter two, “Putting Us in Our Place,” is a sustained treatment of God’s address to Job in Job 38–41. Bauckham sees God’s response to Job’s anguished questions as God putting Job in his place through a tour of “a vast panorama of the cosmos” which “deconstruct[s] and reorder[s] Job’s whole view of the world” (39). God’s address to Job, in Bauckham’s reading, then becomes a lens through which to glimpse humanity’s place within the community of creation. Chapter three, “The Community of Creation,” is primarily taken up with interpretation of and reflection on Psalm 104, Matt 6:25–33, and Psalm 148; and with the exposition of two scriptural themes—the praise which creation offers its Creator and the mourning of creation in response to human sin and divine judgment. Chapter four, “Where the Wild Things Are,” deals with the biblical attitude toward wilderness through reflection on the Garden of Eden, on the prophetic visions of a return to “ecotopia” at the eschaton, and on the significance of Jesus being “with the wild animals” during his wilderness temptations. Chapter five, “From Alpha to Omega,” concludes the book by focusing on the NT’s christological understanding of creation and history. The Christ-hymn in Colossians one, the prologue to John’s Gospel, and the book of Revelation are the texts which receive the most significant attention in this chapter.

This volume has three major strengths. First, Bauckham has arrived at a more contextually faithful understanding of dominion/stewardship, which does

justice both to human uniqueness and to human solidarity with the rest of creation. Bauckham writes:

Humans are not demi-gods with creative power, set like God above creation, but creatures like other creatures, dependent, like other creatures on the material world of which they are part, and immersed in a web of reciprocal relationships with other creatures. The unique tasks and roles of humans, given them in Genesis 1:26 and 28, are bound to be misunderstood and abused unless the fundamental solidarity of humans with the rest of creation is recognized as their context (27-28).

Second, Bauckham repeatedly calls attention to the fact that the biblical vision of creation is a *theocentric* one. That the Bible is a God-centered ‘book’ is relatively obvious, but somehow this often gets overlooked in biblical interpretation as exegetes and preachers look for what is of “practical significance” to humans. Similarly, discussions of the modern ecological crisis focus on the destruction of non-human nature and/or on the implications of this destruction for the human future. Each of these realities are important in themselves, but from the perspective of Christian theology, they are an incomplete telling of the ecological story. Bauckham corrects this deficiency by elucidating how the Scriptures repeatedly emphasize not the utility of creation for human purposes and not even creation’s own value independent of human needs, “but the value of all created things for God” (71). Third, and from a methodological point of view, Bauckham has restricted himself to exegesis. While Bauckham is clearly conversant with ecological science and environmental ethics, he does not attempt to be an ecologist or even an ethicist. Instead, this title is just what it purports to be: a volume about the ecological vision of the Bible—and this constrained focus makes Bauckham’s work all the more valuable.

Overall, I highly recommend this volume as a work that makes plain the much-overlooked scriptural vision of humans as unique yet dependent members of a created order which is oriented to its Creator. This book would be an excellent text for a class in ecotheology or Christian environmental ethics. It would also work well as a supplemental text in a class on Christianity and science, which would take into account ecological concerns. Lastly, this volume could also be used in an advanced Sunday school class seeking to understand what the Bible says about humanity’s relationship to the rest of creation.

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Paul COPAN. *Is God a Moral Monster? (Making Sense of the Old Testament God)*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011. 252 pp. \$14.99.

Copan has written this volume to answer the objections that the New Atheism movement in particular has lodged against the OT. The book has a far broader readership than this; in fact, outside of the chapters in Part 1 and Part 4, not a lot of the book specifically mentions the New Atheists. In truth, Copan's work can prove valuable to "new" Christians (old ones too) and to anyone who finds himself or herself mystified (and who hasn't?) by the content of certain portions of the OT and finds those portions especially offensive for whatever reason (too violent, sexist, exclusive, inconsistent, to name a few).

Following his initial assessment of the New Atheists in Part 1, Copan uses three chapters in Part 2 to probe the character of God as "gracious master or moral monster?" Significantly (and he does this elsewhere), Copan draws the reader to the crucified Christ as the ultimate response to any charge that God is a "moral monster." The cross is the ultimate "monstrosity."

The largest section of the book is Part 3 where Copan examines "life in the ancient Near East and in Israel." Such issues as food laws, treatment of women, slavery in Israel, and the "ethnic cleansing" of the Canaanites are all studied, keeping two perspectives in mind: 1) the ancient Near Eastern setting in which these laws must be viewed, and 2) the "big picture" of God's revelation of himself within all of Scripture. Clarifying the ancient Near Eastern setting is particularly necessary for appreciating what an improvement these laws were over their Near Eastern counterparts, though they were by no means perfect. Copan references the "hardness of heart" factor that affected the divorce legislation (Jesus' language in Matt 19:7,8) and applies it, legitimately, to other legislation.

A particularly intriguing discussion concerns the slaughter of the Canaanites. Copan makes a case that the *herem* command included "stereotypical language: 'all,' 'young and old,' and 'men and women.' The ban could be carried out even if women and children weren't present" (184). The command "was carried out in particular military or combatant settings" (*ibid.*) and was not aimed at the extermination of entire populations. "The greater concern was to destroy Canaanite religion, not Canaanites *per se*" (*ibid.*).

To Copan's credit, he includes a discussion of the position that the *herem* command was indeed meant to be a comprehensive, all-inclusive annihilation of the Canaanites. After all, the explanation that the *herem* is restricted and did not target women and children does not address the issue of women and children's deaths within other narratives (the punishments of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram in Numbers 16 and of Achan in Joshua 7). But such *herem* or *herem*-like scenarios as these are clearly limited to the OT period. The broader picture of the

NT must be included in a study of these narratives, a point that Copan stresses repeatedly in his study: “However we’re to interpret and respond to some of the baffling questions raised by the Old Testament, we shouldn’t stop with the Old Testament if we want a clearer revelation of the heart and character of God” (197).

Copan includes a series of study questions with each chapter—a very helpful feature in a book that is likely to raise many questions and generate further discussion. Endnotes rather than footnotes are a bit of an inconvenience, but not enough to affect the book’s overall value. This would be a terrific text to use in a number of Bible college or seminary classroom settings, including OT history, apologetics, and biblical background/cultural studies. (I’m considering using the book for a course in Deuteronomy I’m to teach during the spring semester of 2012.) I highly recommend it.

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Thomas R. SCHREINER. *40 Questions about Christians and Biblical Law.* 40 Questions Series. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2010. 256 pp. \$17.99.

The 40 Questions Series by Kregel seeks to divide topics into forty questions on which forty short essays—in the present case 3 to 8 pages each—can be devoted. Each section ends with a concise summary and a number of reflection questions.

That Schreiner is an NT scholar shows in his selection of topics. Only three of the forty essays focus on the meaning of the law in the OT itself, and even those approach the issue from a decidedly NT perspective. Schreiner argues that OT law was not “legalistic,” that is, it was not intended to allow people to earn a right standing before God, something God did for Israel before the law was given. Nor does the OT teach salvation by works. Salvation in both Testaments is by faith.

The bulk of the book is devoted to Paul’s view of the law. Schreiner is a well-known critic of the New Perspective on Paul, and devotes questions 4-8 to defining and rejecting it. While the New Perspective rightly observes that inclusion of the Gentiles was a major theme in Pauline theology and that the OT was not legalistic, Schreiner finds its reading of Jewish sources simplistic. Contrary to E. P. Sanders, et al., some Jews did hold that eschatological salvation was

based on weighing merits. Contra James Dunn and N. T. Wright, “works of law” is not limited to boundary markers (circumcision, Sabbath, food laws) that separate Jews from Gentiles, but to the entire law. It follows that New Perspective interpretations of law and righteousness are flawed. Paul is in fact critiquing Second Temple Judaism for its legalism, something Schreiner attempts to show by citing some extrabiblical evidence, but mostly by examining many specific Pauline texts. To Schreiner, Paul’s evidence in itself is conclusive and must not be rejected on the New Perspective’s inaccurate premise that Judaism was never legalistic.

In questions 9-17, Schreiner argues that in Paul the old covenant had an interim character and is no longer operative since the coming of Christ. Christians are not “under law” in redemptive historical terms since the new era of salvation has been inaugurated in Christ. Those who remain “under law” and apart from Christ are under God’s judgment, including Gentiles who have the law written on their hearts. While the law for the regenerate could guide and strengthen believers (Psalm 19, 119), for the unregenerate the law only reveals human sin and points them to Christ. Schreiner rejects the Westminster Confession’s division of the law into moral, ceremonial, and civil, though he affirms that many moral norms in the OT still apply under the New. He is closer to Luther’s rejection of the “third use of the law” for moral guidance for Christians than to Calvin who affirmed it, though Schreiner gives little guidance on how to know which norms from the OT still apply today other than explicit repetition. Christians are under the law of Christ, which is the law of love, of which other NT moral norms are an expression.

Questions 18-25 focus on justification, in which Schreiner defends the traditional Reformed view. Righteousness in Paul means God’s saving righteousness, addressing whether the defendant is innocent or guilty. Contra Augustine, justification does not mean “make righteous,” but refers to God as Judge declaring someone righteous or acquitted. “The righteousness of God” refers to a right standing before God acquired through *pistis Christou*, that is, “faith in Christ” (objective genitive). Those whom God justifies he also transforms, so they are empowered to please God, though this is subsequent to justification. Schreiner reconciles the tension between Paul and James on justification by works (James 2:24; Rom 3:28) by asserting that Paul rejects legalism, that salvation can be merited by works, while James rejects antinomianism, asserting instead that a true faith will produce good works. These assertions are not contradictory.

The remainder of the essays address law in the Gospels, Acts, and General Epistles (questions 26-36), practical questions concerning whether Christians

should keep Sunday as their Sabbath, should tithe, or follow Theonomy in reinstating OT civil laws (questions 37-39; “no” with some qualifications in each case), and the role of law in preaching (question 40). The law can be used to drive the unregenerate to Christ and can provide some moral admonition to believers. The book concludes with a four-page annotated bibliography and indices (Figures, Scripture, and Ancient Sources).

This series is meant to be nontechnical, though several of the scriptural discussions here are complex and challenging to follow. Nonetheless, Schreiner makes a clear, semi-popular presentation of his essentially Reformed view of the law and the NT that could easily serve as a contrasting textbook to N. T. Wright’s book *Justification: God’s Plan and Paul’s Vision* (Intervarsity, 2009).

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William LOADER. *The Pseudepigrapha on Sexuality: Attitudes towards Sexuality in Apocalypses, Testaments, Legends, Wisdom, and Related Literature.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011. 579 pp. \$65.00.

The broad topic of sexuality in Judaism and Christianity of the Greco-Roman era has now filled three volumes within Loader’s collection, this being the third. Loader is professor emeritus of New Testament at Murdoch University in Perth, Australia, and minister of the Uniting Church in Australia. The breadth of research and sophistication from these volumes results from a five-year project launched in 2005 and funded by the Australian Professorial Fellowship from the Australian Research Council. This volume deals primarily with pseudepigraphic literature but also includes works such as Ben Sira (section contributed by Ibolya Balla) and Theodotus. Loader seeks to “include all pertinent Jewish literature beyond that covered in the first two volumes, on the one side, and Philo, Josephus, and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, on the other, which will be the focus of the fourth volume” (1). These volumes stand alongside his other publications on the topic of sexuality: *The Septuagint, Sexuality and the New Testament* (Eerdmans, 2004), *Sexuality and the Jesus Tradition* (Eerdmans, 2005), *Sexuality in the New Testament* (Westminster John Knox, 2010), as well as six published articles (2005–2010) on sexuality in relation to Qumran, the Septuagint, and the NT. Loader is undeniably one of the

most prolific and well-informed authors on the subject of sexuality in Judaism and Christianity for this period.

The “Attitudes toward Sexuality” in this volume are organized into three major parts: Part One deals with “Apocalypses, Testaments, and Related Writings”; Part Two covers “Histories, Legends, and Related Writings” (Septuagintal literature and beyond); and Part Three examines “Psalms, Wisdom Writings, and Fragmentary Judeo-Hellenistic Works.” The collected literature spans primarily from the 3rd century BC to the end of the 1st century AD; occasionally, though, he considers texts outside this range (e.g., Testament of Solomon). Loader discusses with each text the issues of date and the original and/or surviving language (Hebrew, Aramaic, Ethiopic, Syriac, Greek, Latin). He presents each work without prejudice and avoids forcing or creating matters of sexuality where there is little record (Parables of Enoch; Lives of the Prophets) or only indirect information available (4 Enoch).

Readers should recognize that Loader is working very broadly with the term “sexuality.” It comprises many different aspects that include issues of circumcision and the uncircumcised (Testament of Moses, Jubilees, 1 Maccabees), same-sex relations (Sibylline Oracles 3, Pseudo-Aristeas, Philo), illicit prostitution (Wisdom of Solomon), sacral prostitution (Letter of Jeremiah), adultery of men (Ben Sira/Sirach), incest (Psalms of Solomon, Pseudo-Phocylides), bestiality and the demon Onoskelis (Testament of Solomon), rape (Theodotion’s Susanna), gender roles (Judith), marriage (Tobit, Testament of Job), polygamy (Pseudo-Philo), intermarriage (Joseph, Aseneth), and enjoying the beauty of one’s wife (Ben Sira/Sirach). “Sexuality,” therefore, should be understood in its broadest sense, and these examples by no means capture the comprehensiveness of Loader’s offerings from the literature. The context of sexuality, moreover, points to theological concerns and interpretations within each text, for instance, the attempt to address theodicy in 4 Ezra (85) and Psalms of Solomon (343), theological revisions to emphasize upholding Torah in the Additions to Esther (243), as well as the common, although not exclusive, appeal to the divine order of creation in matters of same-sex relations (10).

The primary trajectory of this volume appears unmotivated by contemporary issues of sexual morality and gender roles. Loader presents and then evaluates the texts in their historical context with sensitivity and a healthy exegetical methodology: he controls his moral biases, analyzes the form and structure of the original text, works within the given date, context, and genre of the texts, as well as critically interacts with relevant modern scholarship. The resultant material contributes to the common discourse of those interested in historical/textual inquiry and those supporting their contemporary ethical and social opin-

ions with ancient sources. Loader even tries, at times, to bridge the divide between modern expectations and ancient texts, as when contemporary readers project modern democratic, gender, and religious equalities on classical contexts (the shame for a woman to be shaved publicly [Testament of Job; 125]). The organized accessibility and constructive analysis of this volume make it a practical resource for students of Second Temple Judaism and nascent Christianities, as well as those looking to proliferate the breadth of their canonical understanding of sexuality.

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Tuomas RASIMUS, Troels ENGBERG-PEDERSEN, and Ismo DUNDERBERG, eds. *Stoicism in Early Christianity*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010. 301 pp. \$40.00.

From the very first line in the preface the editors of this volume ask a now age-old question: “What was the earliest Christian interaction with Greco-Roman philosophy like” (vii)? Throughout the age of the church, the influence of Platonism is often acknowledged, but this volume seeks to explore the various ways in which stoicism could have influenced early Christianity; specifically, “to what extent are distinctly Stoic ideas useful for illuminating the meaning of Christian texts from the first and second centuries?” (vii). Two things should be noted. First, this edited volume consists of scholars from around the world; so this is not an isolated contribution to the field. Second, the contributors’ scope is “early Christianity” and as such, goes beyond the NT to include a piece on Justin Martyr as well as Gnosticism.

As any volume seeking to reintroduce a topic, this volume begins with Enberg-Pedersen’s “Setting the Scene” which provides an overview of the rise and transitions, or “absorptions,” in Stoicism. Enberg-Pedersen’s introduction highlights the transitional character of this period and is why he speaks of “absorption” as a way of understanding that “one’s own preferred philosophy” could absorb alien ideas from other schools of thought. In this manner, Enberg-Pederson demonstrates the polyvalent nature of stoicism in this period but, at the same time and perhaps quite unintentionally, he also makes finding “distinctly stoic” ideas (vii) to illuminate the meaning of Christian texts more difficult. However, with a more fluid philosophical system, one is readily able to find its influences across the scope of early Christianity.

Nevertheless, the subsequent articles masterfully articulate the possible influence of Stoic ideas upon the authors of their respective Christian/Gnostic texts. Perhaps the earliest and easiest area of exploration is Paul; specially, given that his work was carried out among the Gentiles who were no doubt familiar with various philosophies. Thorsteinsson’s chapter proposes that Stoicism is “an important hermeneutical key to unlock that message” in Romans 12–15 (34). The chapters on the Gospel of Matthew (Stowers) and the Gospel of John (Attridge and Buch-Hansen) undertake perhaps the greatest undertaking in that they challenge the convenient but somewhat false dichotomy between Greco-Roman and Jewish thought.

Stowers confronts this head-on, stating:

My point is not that Matthew adopted Stoic conceptions of the divine but only that there was enough similarity between Stoic and Judean conceptions that a Judean thinker could find adapting some Stoic thought to his own purposes possible and congenial. And this is exactly what we find other Jewish writers doing, most notably Philo and the author of *Wisdom of Solomon* (61).

This touches upon perhaps the most beneficial aspect of the volume—namely, to provide another lens or way of looking at familiar topics and, if we are not too entrenched in our own understandings, we just might see things that we have missed before.

Denzey’s chapter “Facing the Beast” is particularly useful for grounding the topic of Stoicism in early Christianity beyond a philosophical level. Denzey demonstrates that when early Christians faced martyrdom, they enacted Roman cultural values of the voluntary death and thereby were “gaining status and respectability” which “gave second-century Christians much-needed cultural capital” (194). The final four chapters are devoted to possible Stoic influences in the Gnostics works of *The Gospel of Mary*, The Valentinian School (esp. *Gospel of Truth* and *Gospel of Philip*), *The Apocryphon of John*, and on possible Sethian Gnostic origins for Porphyry’s contribution to Neoplatonism.

For some of the readers of this journal, it may be important to note that this collection of global scholars are writing outside of confessional institutions. Nevertheless, this volume, on the whole, is an especially good introduction to the topic and covers a wide range of early Christian texts, and each chapter is followed by an up-to-date bibliography for further research.

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Anthony LE DONNE. *Historical Jesus: What Can We Know and How Can We Know It?* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011. 146 pp. \$12.00.

This little volume packs a punch! Seeking to evaluate historical Jesus concerns through the lens of postmodern thought, Le Donne takes two enterprises that are seemingly at cross-purposes and demonstrates that, by thinking outside of the modern “box,” students of the Bible can indeed say some things about the historical Jesus with confidence.

Le Donne’s main argument is that there is no objective, journalistic historical account of Jesus. Those who deal with issues of historiography would agree with him that all “history” is remembered, and that this outcome is a “history” that is filtered through the presuppositions, interests, emphases, and experiences of the one who is writing it. Particularly admirable about Le Donne’s approach is his recognition that the Gospels are more about the *significance* of Jesus’ words and actions, rather than a verification of them.

Le Donne coins his own terminology in several places throughout the book, the most significant of which is “memory refraction.” Central to his argument is that our memories help to interpret and make meaning of our past for our present. This is significant for a study of Jesus, because it recognizes that the same process took place for the early Christian communities from which the Gospels came. For Le Donne, this approach can avoid the despair experienced by historical Jesus scholars through the last 100 years, who have bemoaned their inability to get back to the “original” Jesus with any certainty. Any attempt to get back to a sterilized history of Jesus’ life is misplaced. Le Donne sees the road of social memory theory as one that can get historical Jesus scholars to their destination, if they would only recognize the signs.

Le Donne begins each of the three sections of the volume with a barrage of questions about the historical Jesus. He then discusses the issue of perception, memory, and history—and their relationships to each other. He ends by applying these insights to a particular element of the Jesus story, such as his relationship with his own family or his politics. This approach is helpful because it sets the discussion in a particular context, allows Le Donne to argue for his post-modern approach to history, and then provides a test case for that argument.

In a book which aims at a readership that is not familiar with much academic discussion of these issues (this is demonstrated, for example, by the in-text definitions and introductory explanations of the historical Jesus criteria), there are areas where Le Donne should have anticipated some hesitation or resistance to his arguments. To be fair, he does do this in a number of places, as in his

replacement of the term “memory distortion” with “memory refraction” and the corresponding explanation (108).

It is hard for me to imagine a lay person reading this and not wondering how, for instance, memory refraction can be reconciled with the inspiration of Scripture. I have no doubt that Le Donne has considered this, but the absence of an explicit discussion of such issues might be troubling to the average reader.

In addition, Le Donne seems to lump the entire discipline of textual criticism with a desire to get back to one “original” account of Jesus’ life (75-76). Although some text critics may have this as their goal, many others aim only to piece together a text that is closest to each of the Gospels as they were first written (maintaining the distinctions of each one), which does not seem to me to be an unworthy enterprise, and therefore may not deserve the criticism it receives from Le Donne.

Le Donne is that rare author who is able to take complex issues, suggest an innovative approach to them, and discuss them in a clear and interesting way. This book is indeed an important contribution to the historical Jesus enterprise, and is also a helpful introduction to these issues for beginning students and others who are new to the academic study of the Bible.

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Darrell L. BOCK and Robert L. WEBB, eds. *Key Events in the Life of the Historical Jesus: A Collaborative Exploration of Context and Coherence*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009. 931 pp. \$70.00.

This weighty volume on Jesus presents the work of eleven internationally known NT scholars, brought together under the auspices of the Institute for Biblical Research (IBR) Jesus Group and written collaboratively over a decade. Structurally, this book comprises the editors’ brief introduction, an essay on history, historiography, and historical Jesus research by Webb, twelve essays focused on the authenticity, context, and significance of a key event (or set of events) of Jesus’ life, and a concluding synthesizing essay. Each essay includes its own bibliography, and the book ends with a list of contributors and indices of ancient texts and modern authors.

In the first substantive essay, Robert Webb provides a wide-ranging and nuanced discussion of history, historiography, and how scholars can ask historical questions about the figure, Jesus of Nazareth. Webb offers a chastened (or

soft) postmodernist view of how we can know about past figures and events on two bases (23-30). First, the historian's goal is to provide a representation (\neq description! 24-26) of past events on the basis of publicly available evidence and modes of argumentation. Second, the most helpful form of postmodern historiography is the critical-realist form, which "combine[s] and reconcile[s] ontological realism, epistemological relativism and judgmental rationality" (29). Webb then offers a four-step historical method (32-38). After a preliminary phase of critical self-reflection, Webb's first main phase "involves gathering, interpreting, and evaluating the surviving traces (ST) to determine their function as evidence within a particular context" (33). In this phase, the historian evaluates data from both a "bottom-up" perspective, determining *of what* a datum is evidence, as well as from a "top-down" perspective, evaluating the "fit" between a given datum and various historical contexts. In the second main phase, the historian "interpret[s] and explain[s] the relevant data with hypotheses" in an attempt to identify a "preferable hypothesis . . . that (a) provides a better explanation of the evidence, and (b) allows for extrapolation that provides a more plausible explanation of the complete historical picture" (35). In the concluding phase, the historian writes up a historical narrative that "describes" relevant data and provides a representation of the past as the historian has come to understand it.

Webb also squarely faces the problems of critically investigating historical events with claims of supernatural causes and/or interpretations. He offers "methodological naturalistic history" as a way to engage historical questions without (i) depending on divine causation to provide explanatory statements as well as without (ii) denying the possibility of divine causation in history. If/when/where God acts apart from mundane, natural laws of cause and effect, such actions are, by definition, beyond the scope of historical inquiry (despite having occurred, at least theoretically, in the past; see 40-43). Finally, Webb briefly explains the specific methodological principles and tools (especially the criteria of authenticity) for historical Jesus research (54-82). Perhaps inevitably, one gets the impression that this historiographical discussion serves as a programmatic statement governing the rest of the book. However, Webb repeatedly acknowledges that this essay was the last to be written and summarizes—more or less—rather than establishes the view(s) of history, historiography, and method operative in the Study Group's discussions. I think it regrettable that the group, either collectively or via a representative (e.g., Webb), did not produce and discuss at least a version of this essay prior to the historical analyses comprising the remaining chapters.

The next twelve essays assess the authenticity and significance of a specific

event or kind of event (Jesus' table fellowship). The first six essays focus on the Galilean phase of Jesus' life and ministry: Jesus' baptism (Webb), Jesus' exorcisms (Craig Evans); the selection of "the Twelve" (Scot McKnight); Jesus' table fellowship (Craig Blomberg); the Synoptic Sabbath controversies (Donald Hagner); and Peter's confession near Caesarea Philippi (Michael Wilkins). The second half-dozen essays turn to the Jerusalem phase of Jesus' life: Jesus' "royal entry" (Brent Kinman); the Temple incident (Klyne Snodgrass); the Last Supper (Howard Marshall); Jesus' Jewish trial (Darrell Bock); Jesus' Roman trial and crucifixion (Robert Webb); and the empty tomb and post-crucifixion appearances in Jerusalem (Grant Osborne). Despite the appearance of balance, readers should be ready for an emphasis on the events in or near Jerusalem. The six chapters focused on Jesus' experiences in Jerusalem take up over fifty percent more space than their Galilean counterparts (chapters 3–8: 287 pages; chapters 9–14: 441 pages). Readers will have to decide whether circumstances surrounding the events in Jerusalem required significantly more treatment, or whether events in Galilee did not.

Bock closes the book with a (825-853) summary. He explicitly aims to present the "depth coherence" of the historical analyses of the previous twelve essays, which coherence developed inductively during the process of the Study Group's collaboration (see 825-826). Bock also extends the discussion by offering further potential areas of Jesus' life and ministry that can be correlated with the results of the present volume.

Constraints of space prevent us from considering each of the essays. As with any multi-authored compilation, some are stronger than others. Webb's essay on Jesus' baptism, for example, does exactly what the editors said each essay would do: (i) evaluate/defend authenticity (95-112); (ii) consider socio-cultural significance (113-132); and (iii) address implications for our understanding of Jesus (132-143). Moreover, his essay on historiography deserves extended and close consideration. Other essays (Craig Evans's) fall short in one area or another. I will focus on two essays: Craig Evans, on Jesus' exorcisms, and Brent Kinman, on Jesus' entry into Jerusalem.

Craig Evans' contribution "is concerned with the relation of the proclamation of the kingdom of God and the exorcisms. It is argued that these elements are closely linked, for the exorcisms demonstrate the reality of the presence of the kingdom (or rule) of God" (151). Evans then turns to biblical (152-157) and Second-Temple (157-165) texts that raise the issue of God's rule and/or that pit the reign of God against the rule of Satan (Beliar, Azaz'el, for instance). A brief section considers the "Authenticity and Key Themes of Jesus' Proclamation and Exorcisms in Light of Its Context" (165-175). However, apart from two brief

and simplistic references to multiple attestation in relation to Jesus' wilderness temptation and the Beelzebul controversy (167 and 168, respectively), Evans nowhere considers the authenticity of any particular account of an exorcism or even the exorcisms as a whole. Similarly, he does not explicitly consider the larger implications of the exorcisms for our understanding of Jesus. In the context of the present volume, these represent significant oversights.

Brent Kinman's essay fits more comfortably within the program of the present volume. Kinman affirms a rather traditional approach to the issue of authenticity (see 384-385, n. 6), and he concentrates on the criteria of multiple attestation, embarrassment, and effect in order to support the authenticity of the Gospels' accounts of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem on a donkey. When he turns to the significance of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, he rejects a "messianic" interpretation "on the historical plane" despite acknowledging, "the Entry is clearly messianic at the literary level (given the redaction in Matthew and John)" (403). Instead, the actual event of Jesus' entry "was above all a 'royal' event and not *necessarily* (or at the very least, not unequivocally) a messianic one" (405; original emphasis). Kinman also considers the size of the crowd that ushered Jesus into the city (which "was rather modest in size" (415). More interestingly, he convincingly argues for an event for which no literary evidence exists: Pontius Pilate's likely "splendid, even if insincere, welcome" to Jerusalem just prior to the Passover (415-418; 417 quoted). These two factors explain to Kinman's satisfaction why Roman authorities did not react to Jesus upon his initial arrival. In a brief reflection on the implications for our understanding of Jesus, Kinman speculates as to "Jesus' intentions": "we must conclude Jesus intended to present himself as Israel's king and as a central eschatological figure of promise when he came to the city at the Passover season" (420)! Moreover, this self-presentation "appears to have signaled a new phase in his mission" (421). These seem to me striking historical (as opposed to christological) conclusions.

Overall, this volume presents solid discussions of the topics included. Readers could complain that their favorite event was not considered (e.g., Jesus' birth, the so-called nature miracles, his experiences in/with synagogues). But the book, exceeding nine hundred pages, already continues the tradition of mammoth Jesus books, so such lacks hardly result from laziness! Nonconfessional (or simply *less*-confessional) scholars will find much to argue with here. Even so, this volume provides a thorough and comprehensive presentation of historical Jesus scholarship from an evangelical (or "biblically orthodox") theological perspective.

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Roy E. CIAMPA and Brian S. ROSNER. *The First Letter to the Corinthians.* Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010. 990 pp. \$65.00.

Roy Ciampa and Brian Rosner have provided a massive commentary on the TNIV translation of 1 Corinthians that leaves no stone unturned. Nevertheless, it is 486 pages shorter than the commentary of Anthony Thiselton, their primary conversation partner and the current record holder for longest commentary on 1 Corinthians in the English language. Ciampa and Rosner’s work is more accessible than Thiselton’s, but it is still more than the average minister or layperson may want or need. For the scholar and serious student, however, it is a work that must be consulted in the future.

Ciampa and Rosner offer a couple of unique contributions to the study of 1 Corinthians that make this commentary especially valuable. One major contribution is that they offer a fresh approach to the central concern or purpose of Paul’s letter. Since the work of Margaret Mitchell, commentators have considered disunity to be the fundamental issue that underlies all the other problems addressed in 1 Corinthians. Ciampa and Rosner do not dispute that promoting unity is a major concern of Paul, but they do not view it as the primary purpose of the letter.

In their view, Paul’s writing is motivated by his apocalyptic eschatology. Paul is the herald through whom God is bringing to pass the eschatological fulfillment of salvation history. His aim is “to bring about true worship and obedience among the Gentiles, to the glory of God” (16). Gentiles will glorify God when they turn away from the characteristic Gentile sins of idolatry and sexual immorality and instead place their hope in the final consummation of God’s glory in the future bodily resurrection. This shift of focus from unity to eschatology causes the authors to give more attention to Paul’s use of the OT (especially Deuteronomy and Isaiah) and “Jewish frames of reference” than to Greco-Roman rhetorical categories. In Pauline studies, attention to Paul’s apocalyptic thought ebbs and flows. This commentary is a welcome corrective to those who ignore the centrality of apocalyptic eschatology in Paul’s theology and ethics.

A second major contribution of this commentary is the authors’ attention to the recent research on verbal aspect in the Greek language and how it affects the interpretation of 1 Corinthians. Previous commentators have reiterated the misunderstandings of Greek verbs that are enshrined in the standard grammars, but Ciampa and Rosner reveal new insights that can be obtained from the latest research in Hellenistic Greek. Their thorough discussions of the meanings of words also often provide helpful insights.

An additional strength of the commentary is the authors' consistent attention to the influence of Roman and Corinthian culture and values on the church in Corinth. They show how the failure of the Corinthian converts to rid themselves of their cultural baggage and reform their worldview offers many parallels to our postmodern context today.

Like most commentaries, this one offers the occasional eccentric interpretation in an attempt to contribute something new to the discussion. For example, the authors, influenced by Christopher Forbes, argue that the phenomenon of speaking in tongues described in 1 Corinthians 12–14 involves utterance of human languages previously unknown to the speaker. Thus, they challenge the widely held view that these were ecstatic, unintelligible utterances. This consensus is sure to remain intact in spite of their valiant but unconvincing attempts to overturn it. Likewise, some of their interpretations of 1 Corinthians 7 swim against the tide of scholarly consensus. Fortunately, these interesting distractions ultimately do not detract from an overall exposition that is thorough, rich, and rewarding.

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James W. THOMPSON. *Moral Formation according to Paul: The Context and Coherence of Pauline Ethics.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011. 272 pp. \$24.99.

In his most recent work, Thompson describes how Paul practiced moral formation as the goal of his missionary work. Admitting that Paul provides no comprehensive ethical theory, Thompson maintains that there is indeed coherence to Paul's exhortation and therefore his theology as a whole. The key to discerning its coherence, Thompson suggests, lies in the analogous moral instruction of Hellenistic Judaism.

This work, then, explores "the relationship between the paraenetic tradition of Diaspora Judaism and Paul's instructions to new converts in a similar situation" (16). His argument unfolds in eight chapters focused on comparing and contrasting Paul to his Hellenistic Jewish contemporaries and concludes with a summary of his argument along with a brief reflection on the relevance of Paul's moral instruction today.

The first chapter concerns moral formation in the Greek literature of Diaspora Judaism. Thompson suggests that these texts are a fruitful comparison

because, like Paul's letters, they demonstrate a notable concern for "sustaining boundary markers" without creating a comprehensive exposition of the law as seen in the Mishnah (19). Thompson is primarily concerned with "works that appeal to the law in urging appropriate conduct but do not summarize the law" (22), including: Tobit (22-23), 4 Maccabees (23-30), Wisdom of Solomon (30-34), and the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (34-39). His analysis shows that these writers "rarely cite the Torah in giving moral instructions, but assume that all of the commands are derived from the Torah" (41).

In chapter two, Thompson argues for a sociological paradigm of identity and ethos to understand the relationship between Paul's theology and ethic. Here Thompson argues that Paul established his communities by "instilling a common identity for his readers with a new symbolic universe" (44). The "founding narrative" is the Christ event, which functions as the climax to "the larger narrative of Israel's story" (44). Thus, for Paul the moral formation of Gentiles is based on their new identity as part of the Israel of God.

Thompson turns to 1 Thessalonians in chapter three to reconstruct Paul's catechesis for re-narrating the identity of Gentile converts. Although Paul never explicitly cites Scripture in 1 Thessalonians, Thompson argues that the language for describing the identity of the Thessalonian believers "places gentile converts firmly within the Old Testament narrative world" (65), and his moral instructions "are clearly drawn" from the Jewish Scriptures (74). Thompson goes on to argue that Paul's instructions show marked similarity with the Hellenistic Jewish literature surveyed in chapter one.

In chapter four, Thompson places the virtue and vice lists of the Pauline letters in a Jewish framework. He argues that the cardinal virtues of the Greco-Roman tradition are conspicuously absent. Furthermore, Thompson categorizes Paul's vices into two groups: sexual sins and antisocial offenses (90-94). These categories were particularly common in Jewish literature and not the more individualistic lists of the Greco-Roman tradition. Thus, Thompson is convinced, "Little in actual content of Paul's lists is indebted to the Greco-Roman moralists" (109), and the more significant influences were the OT and Christology.

In chapter five, Thompson attempts to describe the complicated role of the Torah in Paul's thought. He suggests that 1 Cor 7:19 epitomizes the conundrum of Paul's view of Torah, jettisoning circumcision, the standard boundary marker of ancient Judaism, but maintaining a firm commitment to fulfilling the commandments. As Thompson sees it, "Paul filters his appeal to the Scriptures through his understanding of the Christ event and the eschatological moment, combining both with his appeal to Scripture" (125). For Thompson, then, Paul

does not rely on the law as an ethnic boundary marker, but it does shape his moral instruction.

In chapter six, Thompson contextualizes Paul's exhortation among ancient views of moral obstacles, what the Greeks referred to as "the passions." He argues that while both Greco-Roman and Jewish traditions recognized the need and affirmed the ability of humans to overcome the passions, Paul was uniquely pessimistic that humans could do so. Greco-Roman moralists recommended education (136-139) while Jews advocated Torah obedience (139-141), but Paul argued that no human therapy could overcome the passions, only the empowering Holy Spirit made available through Jesus' death and resurrection.

Chapter seven describes Thompson's view of how "love" functions as a central ethical category in Paul's thought. Rather than serving as a vague command with little content, Thompson argues that "love" for Paul is defined by the "love command" (Lev 19:18) reread through the lens of the cross of Christ. Thus, he concludes, "As the summation of the law, love does not replace the law's commands, but is the lens for observing them" (180).

In his last major chapter, Thompson addresses how the disputed letters show both continuity and discontinuity with the moral instruction of the undisputed Pauline epistles. Thompson sees continuity in identity formation and discontinuity in the addition of the more specific instruction of the "household codes." Thompson also finds a more developed "moral vision" in the Pastoral Epistles (202) that has closer affinity with the Hellenistic side of Hellenistic Judaism. Unconcerned with the question of authorship, Thompson assumes the disputed letters represent a later stage of the Pauline tradition.

As with any worthwhile work, this volume prompts debate. First, in regard to Paul renarrating the identity of Gentiles using the OT, one wonders about intentionality. If Paul intended Gentiles to understand their identity based on Israel's Scriptures, then why was Paul not more explicit in citing those Scriptures? How would Gentiles in Thessalonica detect Paul's Scriptural language? Thompson frequently uses the language of "echo" to describe what might well be described as an allusion or citation (125). With an echo the degree of authorial intentionality is unclear, making it shaky ground for describing Paul's intentions. Was Paul intentionally renarrating Gentile identities using Israel's Scriptures, or was he simply narrating from his native thesaurus?

Second, because of the descriptive approach of Thompson's work, a thoughtful reader will wonder how exactly Paul's logic worked. For example, it requires more explanation as to how Paul could jettison circumcision and advocate Torah obedience. Also, since Thompson argues that Paul was so utterly pessimistic about the human capacity for overcoming the passions, what does this

mean for Israel? Thompson’s only mention of Romans 9–11 makes no mention of this issue (120). Thompson clearly describes Paul’s moral instruction, but one is still left wondering if it, in fact, coheres.

Overall, Thompson has produced an excellent contribution to the growing body of literature on Pauline ethics. He successfully argues that the moral formation of countercultural communities was central to Paul’s project and shows the profound connections between Paul’s exhortation and Hellenistic Jewish literature. Additionally, Thompson is thoroughly conversant in German scholarship, weaving it effortlessly into his argument with his own English translations. Interested pastors, advanced students, and scholars will be richly rewarded by Thompson’s lucid and engaging argument that Paul’s moral formation finds its closest analogy in Hellenistic Judaism.

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Eckhard SCHNABEL. *40 Questions about the End Times.* Kregel, 2011. 368 pp. \$17.99.

Schnabel’s latest contribution to American scholarship is a volume in Kregel’s *40 Questions* series. Schnabel addresses several common, yet difficult questions crucial for a healthy eschatology. The book is laid out in three major sections. Part One addresses “General Questions about the Future” (including issues related to the futures of the world, the church, and the nation of Israel). In Part Two Schnabel turns to “The Return of Jesus Christ,” conversing about what will happen before, during, and after the Lord’s return and why. Part Three is about issues related to “The Millennium and the Last Judgment.” The final section is a simple guide to “Interpreting the End Times,” and lays out careful admonitions to those who make predictions about the second coming and to those who listen. The book concludes with an encouraging chapter about the importance of eschatology to Christian living.

This volume is a breath of fresh air. Theologies of “rapture” (in their various forms) seem to have taken over in North America, and confusion is rampant. Proponents teach their doctrines straight from Scripture (they say), and adherents believe them like they are the gospel truth. Preachers, ministers, and elders have to deal with the fallout, often with little help and nowhere to turn. Schnabel meets this ideology head on, tackles the hard issues, and leaves very few stones unturned. His breadth and depth of knowledge in regard to Jewish

and Christian history, biblical theology, and exegesis would alone make him a formidable opponent. But Schnabel combines this expertise with common sense and a plain reading of Scripture (the kind often championed by literalists) to create a volume that is both substantive and highly accessible.

If Schnabel's work has a weakness (and there are very few) then it appears in the way that he arbitrarily switches from a symbolic view of the props in Revelation to a literalist reading of them. For example, in the early portion of the book he suggests that the phrase "four corners of the earth" literally denotes the earth (62), but later says the phrase symbolizes the Abyss (226). Throughout much of the book he holds a symbolic view of Revelation. He believes the Beasts signify Rome and her allies (including cult and market; 171-172). He flatly denies that the earthquakes in Revelation are literal, but in accordance with apocalyptic conventions, believes they represent The End—God's *final* involvement in the plight of his people (243). But after describing the symbolic value of numbers in Revelation (61-64), including the "1,000 years" (as representing a "long epoch," 266-267), he then switches to a literalist view of the millennium. He claims that the saints will be resurrected to reign with Christ through an actual thousand-year period, only to have Satan released for another literal thousand years (271-276). He maintains that the timeline in Revelation 19–20 is literal and chronological, immediately after noting that the chronological sequences in Revelation may be about the chronology of the *vision* rather than the *events* within the vision (272). Schnabel may be using the *language* of the millennium ("a thousand years") to denote a long epoch without any literalist intentions. But he does so while speaking of a literal resurrection of the saints, and a literal releasing of Satan for that period of time. At the very least, the language is strained and leads to confusion.

But let me stress that, as weaknesses go, this one is minor. Because of the highly symbolic nature of the book, Revelation forces every interpreter to make calculated decisions about what is symbolic (dragon, scarlet whore, and beast), what it signifies (the Devil, Rome, and the Imperial cult), and what is literal or "real" (the churches of Asia Minor, the persecution of the saints, and the rewards for their endurance). No one is immune to this, so I cannot be too harsh with Schnabel on this matter. Though his interpretation of the millennium is literalized, he does so in a way that is otherwise faithful to the text.

There is much to appreciate in this volume. Readers of *SCJ* will certainly find more points of agreement with Schnabel than contention. His position that the end times are now, that the Olivet Discourse is as much about the destruction of the Jewish Temple as the second coming, and that neither premillennial nor postmillennial readings of Revelation are completely in line with a consis-

tent reading of the NT bear much in common with the classic amillennial position that is prominent in Restoration Movement churches. *40 Questions about the End Times* would serve as a great reference for preachers and teachers of Revelation, and with some adaptation, for use in Bible school classes.

As one who teaches Revelation, I know firsthand how “rapture” theology often robs believers of the joy of Christ’s return. Doctrines of fear and retribution have risen to prominence over the last century and have replaced the graceful Christ with a retributive thug, leaving many in confusion about what the Bible *really* says about Jesus’ second coming. Schnabel’s work is a beacon of clarity, restoring joy and hope to a doctrine that sorely misses them.

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- James R. Payton Jr., *Getting the Reformation Wrong: Correcting Some Misunderstandings* (Bob Ritchie, Florida Christian College)
- Ellen T. Charry, *God and the Art of Happiness* (Lee Blackburn, Milligan College)
- Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way* (Ron Highfield, Pepperdine University)
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- John W. Loftus, ed., *The Christian Delusion: Why Faith Fails* (Amos Briscoe, Cincinnati Christian University)
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- William D. Henard, and Adam W. Greenway, eds., *Evangelicals Engaging Emergent: A Discussion of the Emergent Church Movement* (Jason Fikes, A&M Church of Christ)
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