Book Reviews

Chris R. ARMSTRONG. *Medieval Wisdom for Modern Christians: Finding Authentic Faith in a Forgotten Age with C. S. Lewis.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016. 272 pp. $22.00.

The title of the book is an apt summary of what Armstrong sets out to demonstrate; i.e., today's Christians could use some medieval wisdom, and C. S. Lewis—a kind of medieval "dinosaur" himself—can help in the process. Armstrong suggests that for many Protestants there might be an automatic "turn-off" generated by the mere mention of the term "medieval" and the connotations that often go with it. So part of his task is to get Christians away from the knee-jerk reflex to the middle ages, such as is caricatured by *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* (e.g., monks in procession, chanting, and whacking themselves on their heads with boards, 215).

In the first chapter, "My Angle of Approach," Armstrong diagnoses the current malaise in the church and focuses on the issue of what he calls "immediatism." He refers to Lewis's concept of "chronological snobbery" as descriptive of one aspect of it. It can be seen as an overblown individualism that feels one can have everything one needs in his/her relationship with God without mediation. The cure, in part at least, is to recapture the mediation of church and sacrament. It is not enough to have a disembodied faith (quasi-gnosticism). This has resulted in "divorce, obesity, disinterest in art, poetry, church architecture, lack of skill in counseling, passing on our faith to our children, the art of dying well" (27).

Dante is presented as a key influence upon Lewis in the second chapter ("C. S. Lewis—A Modern Medieval Man"). Lewis appreciated medieval mysticism, asceticism, and aesthetics. Instead of reducing the world by focusing only on the "spiritual," Lewis saw the spiritual in and through the common things of life, such as "trees, mountains, and weather" (41). Imitating Francis of Assisi's down-to-earth connection with material reality, Lewis sometimes signed his letters in similar fashion . . . as Brother Ass! (40). It is in chapter two that Armstrong begins to bring out a host of names, past and contemporary with Lewis, and their connection with Lewis, though he usually doesn't dwell on them for long. Many of these names will continue to be brought up time and time again in subsequent chapters. A sample would include contemporaries Charles Williams, Dorothy Sayers, G. K. Chesterton, William Kirkpatrick; medievalists include Dante, Bernard of Clairvaux, Francis of Assisi, and Julian Norwich.

The need for tradition is prominent in chapter three. Lewis felt like many moderns are enslaved to their recent past which keeps them from properly assessing "the great cataract of nonsense that pours from the press and microphone of his own age" (51). Therefore, it is vital to acquaint ourselves with the "old books" (51). Boethius is brought up as one that Lewis greatly admired, and his name will appear frequently from this point throughout the book. Lewis drew upon paganism to a certain extent, conceding that at least they had regard for the gods, whereas many people today don't worship at all (63-64).

In chapter four, Armstrong points out the medieval concern for the truth, whereas many Christians today don't regard it as all that important. Ironically, the medievalists have been caricatured as intellectual paupers. He refutes as a perpetuated lie (fabricated by Enlightenment philosophes) the common example of medievalists believing that the earth is flat. He points out the middle ages birthed the universities, made significant scientific advancements (examples given), and developed the hospitals, among other accomplishments.

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Morality is the theme in chapter five, and Armstrong criticizes contemporary Christians for falling so far short in moral living. He cites Ron Sider's statistical evidence in the latter's *The Scandal of the Evangelical Conscience*. Much can be learned from the medievalists upon consideration of their asceticism, discipline, and overt aversion to pride (the worst of the "Seven Deadly Sins").

Chapter six is about the hospital. From earliest times, Christians cared for the sick and afflicted. It was quite a contrast with the pagans who avoided the sick. Benedict had his monks involved in medicine to help the sick. Later, during the crusades hospitals were established, and the order of Hospitallers had its beginning (125). While many have a natural aversion to death and dying, the medieval monks did not avoid it. In fact, they lined up on both sides of the dying man's bed, singing and praying while he passed on to the next life (138). Lewis was all about helping the needy. It is said that he gave away two-thirds of his income to help others! (136).

Chapter seven is about the natural world. Protestants overreacted to what they saw as Roman Catholic excesses. This antimaterial posture hindered their appreciation of the arts and a theology of sacramentalism. Here begins Armstrong's emphasis on the Incarnation as the main corrective to a "super-spirituality" that tends to ignore the created order. Lewis says that the material world is the only way we can see the immaterial (162).

"Getting Passionate: Medieval Faith as a Religion of the Heart" is the title of chapter eight. Here we see the affective devotion of medievalists Bernard of Clairvaux, Ailred, and Anselm provided as examples. Not only did Bernard write "O Sacred Head Now Wounded" and "Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee," but he also preached on the Song of Songs for eighteen years! (175). The Passion Play, Stations of the Cross, and graphic paintings of the crucifixion were popular vehicles of devotion (186). Armstrong says that Julian of Norwich was "possibly Lewis's favorite devotional writer" (179). He used her expression, "All shall be well," often in his writings.

Chapter nine is about the Incarnation and its importance to a correct understanding of what true humanity is all about. Lewis says, "The incarnation can be described as Heaven drawing Earth up into it" (196). He was greatly moved by Sayers, *The Man Born to Be King* and read it numerous times. For Lewis, a proper understanding of the Incarnation provides for a much more profound appreciation of the resurrection. From the middle ages, Francis of Assisi used real animals to set forth the nativity scene (205).

The title of the last chapter begins with "Getting it Together." It involves some repetition and a summary of the most salient features of the book, along with some suggestions about what might be done to fix our current ecclesiastical and personal shortcomings. Lewis personally exhibited an interesting "blend" of a man who was both earthy and spiritual. Armstrong notes that Lewis "reveled in the material pleasures of ale, tobacco, and the raucous conviviality of the English pub" (218). On the other hand, he practiced fasting, meditation, and frequent prayer (220). Armstrong sees the medieval monks as providing much help for us. We need the asceticism, the discipline, the prayer, the community, and the contemplative and active expressions of faith, as they largely led by example. Finally, Armstrong hopes that some signs of renewed interest in medieval Christian life (especially monastic) will not be just another passing fad.

Medieval Wisdom for Modern Christians has much to recommend it. Stylistically, while an academic work, the author does not write in stilted fashion, yet manages to covey some fairly complex subject matter in a helpful manner. His passion for the subject matter comes through, and the occasional humorous or bizarre anecdote provides some timely "breaks"

that help keep the reader attuned. In each chapter, numerous subcategories with largely appropriate subtitles are a plus.

Also, it was wise for Armstrong to connect C. S. Lewis with medieval thought. Not only is it a genuine reflection of who Lewis was, but it serves to grab the attention of so many Protestants and evangelicals who already have a theological "love affair" with Lewis and will immediately perk up when his name is associated with a writing. Then there is what I think is the "obvious"—Christians really *do* need exposure to this thousand years of church history, theology, and praxis to mine it for the wisdom it offers. Armstrong has made this abundantly clear and has backed up his contention well.

The biggest question I have about the book concerns Roman Catholicism. Of course, if one is to draw wisdom from the church of the middle ages, much of it will *have* to come from Catholicism. Nevertheless, it seems there is a kind of minimizing of the excesses of some of the beliefs and practices of medieval Catholicism. One could ask if the author believes in purgatory, works-righteousness, transubstantiation, relics as helpful vehicles for worship, and "excessive" regard for Mary (for example, see pages 130, 132, 143-144, 147, 153, 158, 174; for a somewhat balancing statement, see 209). However, perhaps such "minimization" is intentional, considering the implied audience that may very well come to the subject matter with a fair degree of "hostility" toward the medieval church derived from his/her theological upbringing.

Many of Stone/Campbell heritage will appreciate the author's stand on free will and the need for human effort in matters of faith, without a corresponding denial of salvation by grace. Some may also agree with the strong appeal to passion as well as reason (i.e., to oversimplify—Stone, as well as Campbell). Third, many will find his emphasis on sacraments a step in the right direction (especially in consideration of our emphasis on the "ordinance" of baptism and its "efficaciousness"). However, many might feel uncomfortable with Armstrong's strong appeal to tradition, sometimes seemingly as if it should be an equal or even primary shaper of faith contra the biblical record. His stance, however, appears to be that much if not most of what came out of the medieval church was, in fact, an expression of (or development from) the Scriptures.

Overall, cautions aside, I found *Medieval Wisdom for Modern Christians* to be quite helpful, and I would recommend it for undergraduates and graduates, and quite frankly, for any discerning Christians who want to grow in wisdom, knowledge, and practice of his/her faith.

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Thomas S. Bryan WOLFMUELLER. *Has American Christianity Failed?* St. Louis: Concordia, 2016. 250 pp. $16.99.

Based on the title, my first impression of this book was that it would be about evangelistic ineffectiveness, or how Christianity failed to live up to its goals of a moral empire. I was surprised to know it addresses the failure of American theology to focus on the Christ. The result is "churches full of confusion and Christians without the full comfort Jesus intends for His people" (8).

American Christianity is Wolfmueller's broad term for what I have thought of as American Evangelicalism. It's a conservative Christianity, generic enough to be found throughout Bible-preaching churches across the country, regardless of denominational heritage and theological tradition. Wolfmueller's argument is that all of this Christianity fails, because it "teaches the centrality of the individual, my will, my experiences, my decision, my heart, my work and dedication—to the

detriment of Christ and his saving and comforting work. American Christianity most often preaches the Christian instead of the Christ, and our senses are so dulled that we don't even notice he's missing" (8). In an attempt to start a revolution against this form of Christianity, Wolfmueller proposes we preach the centrality of the cross and the promises of Jesus.

Taking four theological trends, he refers to as revivalism, pietism, mysticism, and enthusiasm, Wolfmueller shows how the major characteristics of American Christianity emphasize the individual's responsibility for salvation. He sounds the alarm against "false teaching and dangerous practices" (10).

Is there a correction? What doctrine, or Christian heritage, will emphasize Jesus' work and promises? Wolfmueller's offer, to those who agree with his diagnosis, is the biblical soundness of the Lutheran tradition. The fact that it comes to us from Concordia Publishing House means it is also to be a theological pep rally for his own conservative Lutheran heritage. It is not difficult to find places to cheer him on; for me it was his protection of baptism, and the Lord's Supper. I had no resistance to his dismantling of premillennial dispensationalism. My favorite pages were those that heralded Jesus' victory over death (238-242).

There is an argument here to be considered. From the decision to accept Jesus to the maintenance of one's own spiritual life, there is an American preaching theme that emphasizes the Christian is responsible and must do the right things. Wolfmueller points out that this path leads to one of two sins: pride or despair (23). He offers the solution of Christ's work freely given, rather than comfort and joy based on one's own choices and effort.

I appreciate the critique of contemporary conservative American Christianity; but is the solution to be found in the catechism of the Lutheran tradition, and the Formula of Concord? (He will introduce this in the Appendix.) That's what Bryan Wolfmueller is offering.

This volume is based on a theological argument that many young preachers are not prepared to examine. The theological problem is common, the presuppositions are philosophical about the nature of God, man, sin, and salvation. The biblical arguments are in support of those philosophical conclusions. For anyone of some theological sophistication looking for a critique of modern evangelical theology this could be insightful. It would be valuable to a seminary course in Reformation theology. The message for everyone: Preach Christ and the promises that come from what He accomplished in his death and resurrection.

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Paul R. HINLICKY. *Beloved Community: Critical Dogmatics after Christendom.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015. 932 pp. $75.00.

In this volume, Hinlicky says that there are two requirements of a systematic theology. The first is the dogmatic, the "rational demand for a truthful acknowledgment of historical and contextual particularity." The second is the systematic, the "internal coherence" (xix). When one is done without the other, theology suffers. "Critical dogmatics" is thus Hinlicky's attempt to keep these two requirements together and avoid conservative/liberal binaries. For him, "systematic theology is largely concerned with putting a toolkit together for knowing God in the practices of Christian life" (xx-xxi). As his subtitle also suggests, Hinklicky does his theological reflection in the context of post-Christendom Euro-America.

Hinlicky uses the title of this volume in multivalent ways. Seeking to avoid the modalism often present in the western theological tradition, Hinlicky refers to the Trinity as the Beloved

Community, drawing upon certain Eastern Orthodox perspectives and advancing a type of Trinitarian personalism. He also uses Beloved Community to refer to the kingdom of God, the eschatological community, but also in relation to how the church lives in the time between the times.

After his prolegomena, this volume is ordered according to the persons of the Trinity, beginning with the Holy Spirit—the "subject" of theology, before moving on to Jesus Christ—theology's "object," and the Father—theology's "audience." It in no way, however, treats the persons of the Trinity in isolation from one another. Each of the persons is featured prominently within each part. Hinlicky says that the Christian faith can be summed up in one thesis: "*'God' is the self-surpassing Father who is determined to redeem the creation and bring it to fulfillment in the Beloved Community by the missions in the world of His Son and Spirit*" (49). While no chapter of the book is devoted to creation, atonement, soteriology, ecclesiology, sacramentalology, eschatology, or Scripture, this volume engages these topics in the Trinitarian reflections, and continues to return to its singular thesis.

This volume endeavors to create not only a critical, but an ecclesial dogmatics. The author writes with an eye toward the church's worship and administration of the sacraments, as well as its God-given mission within the world. This volume also concludes the work with "Doxology."

Hinlicky's discussion of baptism in chapters 3–4 is of particular interest to members of the Stone-Campbell Movement. Herein, this volume defends the view that the sign and the thing signified, the baptism in water and Spirit, are united, and that baptism brings believers into union and a joyful exchange with Christ Jesus. While the volume is sympathetic to the exclusive practice of believer's baptism, especially because of the contemporary post-Christendom context, and views it as the normative Christian practice, this volume still defends the integrity of infant baptism. It argues that baptism is not simply a one-time event, but one that "remains forever." Hinlicky says, "*Baptism 'works' in the act of its being communicated and it is communicated as the Spirit intends where and when it elicits repentance and faith*" (270). He also joins this discussion of baptism with a discussion of catechesis and paedeia as not only initial teaching, but lifelong training in critical dogmatics.

This volume is the culmination of much of Hinlicky's previous work on thinkers like Luther, Leibniz, and Deleuze, as well as his attempts to modify divine simplicity, and other topics like God's relation to time, ecclesiology, and post-Christendom and post-Holocaust Christian reflection. Hinlicky not only presents his own thought, but throughout the book he engages alternative viewpoints. In these sections, he demonstrates his generosity as a reader, providing criticism, yet also showing how thinkers he disagrees with contribute to his project.

While he distances himself from the philosophical idealism present within their work, in many ways this volume continues the project begun by two Lutheran theologians in the generation before him, Robert Jenson and Carl Braaten. Like them, he writes as a distinctly Lutheran theologian, and yet he also seeks a middle way, one both catholic and evangelical, and he practices theology in anticipation of the church's eschatological unity. Also, similarly to Jenson, Hinlicky critiques a naïve biblicism that eschews philosophical thought, while at the same time critiquing the Father's supposed overindebtedness to Hellenism.

This volume has much for the reader to disagree with, especially in relation to its social trinitarianism and critique of divine simplicity. For those willing to brave this massive tome, however, they will benefit from its insights.

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David Zac NIRINGIYE. *The Church: God's Pilgrim People*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2015. 200 pp. $24.00.

On any given Sunday, Christians in various denominations gather separately from each other to worship. In this context, Niringiye asks, "Who, then, is the church? What distinguishes and authenticates a particular community as 'the people of God'?" (6). Niringiye seeks to answer this question with attentiveness to the overarching biblical narrative, and by drawing on his own experience as a student minister, a theological student in the U.S. and U.K., a priest and assistant bishop in the Anglican Church of Uganda, an educator, and an activist.

His reflections stem from his own "restlessness with the contemporary church" (11). On the one hand, Niringiye recognizes that Jesus, and not humans, will build the church, and that the church is central to Jesus' work. On the other, Christians have massacred each other in countries like Rwanda and Kenya, while others in the United States and South Africa have used the Bible to justify segregation and apartheid.

Niringiye argues that Christians have often misused the Bible because they treat it primarily as a book, rather than as "an anthology of books, with one story" (24); a story of God's work "to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ" (Eph 1:10). The church should live by this story.

Niringiye develops his methodology from Hebrews 11–12, from which he identifies three marks of the church. First, the church is made up of people of faith; many of whom have suffered persecution because of this faith. Second, the people of God are a community—"a social entity distinguishable in its shared life, value and purpose" (30). Third, this community of faith is on a pilgrimage with God, living in hope, in the already but not yet.

He then provides a reminder that just as Jesus needed to begin with Moses in the Prophets to explain who he is to the disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:27), the church needs to begin with the OT and God's action in forming Israel to understand its identity. He then devotes two chapters to the OT, one focusing on God's covenants with Noah, Abraham, and Moses, and another on the judges, monarchy, exile, and God's promise of a new covenant (Jer 31:31-34). In these chapters, he argues that we learn not only from the faithful remnant, but from pilgrim Israel's disobedience (1 Cor 10:11).

He then devotes three chapters to a discussion of the Gospels and Acts, centering this exposition on Jesus as the fulfillment of Israel's hope. The church is called to be a people with a distinct witness, a community of love, and a community in the Spirit, one open to God's mission. This people display the work of the Spirit through proclaiming the gospel in word and deed, and by gathering together. While the church's unity is ultimately accomplished through the cross of Christ (Eph 2:15-16), Christians should still "make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" (Eph 4:3). He then concludes by arguing the church needs to order its community life in such a way that it "embodies and reflects faith, love and hope" (194).

While Niringiye does seek to understand the church in the light of both the OT and NT, a weakness of his approach is that he believes God created a new people in Jesus rather than seeing the church as a continuation and extension of Israel (see Eph 2:11-13; Rom 9–11). Despite this weakness, *The Church* has much to commend, and Niringiye's emphasis upon the contemporary global context can provide a helpful corrective to accounts that focus primarily upon the western church.

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Brian Han GREGG. *What Does the Bible Say about Suffering?* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2016. 174 pp. $20.00.

If suffering is a universal of life, then the problem of suffering is one of life's fundamental questions: *Why* do we suffer? In this volume, Gregg explores not only the *why*, but also God's response to suffering. Gregg, a professor of biblical studies, writes in the introduction that it is the question of suffering and God's relation to it that is most frequently raised by his students, and yet students are ill-equipped to answer the question. Gregg seeks to remedy this problem by exploring themes of suffering found in Scripture to better inform our approach to the issue of suffering and God's response.

The volume is organized around twelve themes of suffering motivated by passages from Scripture. These themes include the following topics as they relate to suffering: justice, free will, sovereignty, evil, mystery, eschatology, training, testing, weakness, comfort, glory, and participation. Each chapter begins with a brief anecdote or reflection from the author that introduces the theme under consideration, followed by a passage of Scripture that is explored, and concluded with practical reflections. This volume uses an analogy of a choir in the introduction that captures the thesis of the book: what Scripture has to say about suffering is like a complex harmony that must be taken as a whole rather than focusing solely on one or two parts. In the conclusion, this volume makes five general observations: the response we find to suffering in Scripture is complex and there is no simple answer; we must use discernment as we look to Scripture and attempt to apply its wisdom to ourselves and others; a degree of mystery will always remain and must be accepted as we trust God; having an intellectual understanding of suffering is not the same as going through the process of suffering with the heart; and hope is essential as we look to God in the midst of suffering.

Gregg successfully takes the complex topic of suffering and engages it in a way that results in a clear and engaging read that is accessible to a general audience. The simple structure of the book makes the main points easy to follow and consume, and yet provides plenty of fodder for further digestion. The use of anecdotes and biblical texts as springboards for each chapter keep the book grounded in the reality of human existence and its connection to Scripture. Christians will appreciate this close tie to Scripture, while non-Christians may appreciate seeing the source material that motivates Gregg's discussion and thus reasonably avoid any potential criticisms of pontificating or platitudes from an antagonistic reader. A potential criticism could be that Gregg does not dig deep enough into the themes of suffering and that more may be desired. But a key strength of this volume is the balance that the author achieves in adequately engaging the problem of suffering and God's response without losing the reader to intricate distinctions or lines of argument. Gregg never sets out to *solve* the problem of suffering, but rather to explore themes of suffering in Scripture to better prepare the reader to face the inevitable suffering that will come while remaining faithful and trusting of God. It is for this reason that the book has a wide potential audience. This volume would be a useful supplement to college courses, a great book for the minister's bookshelf to be borrowed by the questioning seeker or believer, or for any Christian that seeks to have a better understanding of suffering and God's response so as to be a compassionate source of support for those suffering, or to prepare for our own times of suffering.

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Neil ORMEROD. *A Public God: Natural Theology Reconsidered.* Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015. 208 pp. $39.00.

Ormerod, professor of theology at Australian Catholic University, writes this present volume as a follow-up to *Creator God, Evolving World*, co-authored with Cynthia Crysdale, which defended a classical view of God as "perfectly adequate to deal with the new world of scientific discoveries" (vii). *Creator God* assumed God's existence within a framework of natural theology. This volume addresses the question of God's existence in the present context dominated by the so-called new atheists like Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens, which calls for a response to claims that science has made belief in God irrational. More broadly, the context is secularization. Ormerod reformulates natural theology *contextually* by recognizing the intellectual context in which discussion occurs. He commends a metaphysical paradigm, in contrast to those of math and science, for reasoning and giving evidence for God's existence (chapters 2 and 3).

Another aim of this volume is to approach natural theology as a form of *public theology* that stands or falls on its own right (viii). Even though Ormerod travels well-worn paths of Christian tradition such as Thomas Aquinas, he seeks to advance his natural theology of a public God without the support of Christian "authorities." He seemingly approves of Alister McGrath's treatise on natural theology, *The Open Secret*, but he notes its limitations. McGrath's approach may lead Christians to dialogue with one another on natural theology, but "it is not clear that his approach would appeal to non-Christian theists" (21). As a result, Ormerod builds upon the work of Bernard Lonergan, defending the existence of God on the basis of Lonergan's philosophical "intellectual conversion" and the intelligibility of reality (chapters 3 and 4), an approach which does not rely on religious tradition.

In addition to being contextual and public, Ormerod seeks a natural theology that is concerned with the political consequences of religious belief (chapter 6). He believes a successful natural theology will avoid the extremes of theocratic religion and aggressive secularization. If God can be known publicly through reason, attempts to marginalize religion by means of radical secularization can be challenged by natural theology as a form of *political theology*.

The key issue to a "lesser extent" that emerges in the book is "moral conversion" (ix). Thankfully chapter 5 was devoted to morality, responsibility, and God. Ormerod declared, "While I happily acknowledge the fact that those without explicit religious beliefs may lead moral lives, it is another question altogether whether they can give a coherent account of what constitutes the moral life without reference to God" (126). The key issue that emerges in the book is what Lonergan calls "intellectual conversion," the lack of which is at the root of the new atheism (ix-x). Without it we have "materialistic reductionism" and "a vision of the universe without meaning, purpose, or hope" (175).

The final chapter of this volume deals with the problem of theodicy, arguing that the existence of God is not incompatible with evil. His discussion is limited by the constraints of natural theology (173). In the conclusion, this volume urges its readers to adopt a contemporary natural theology that is contextual, public, and political in its range, recognizing the full reality of our human world of meanings and values.

This volume's natural theology is a significant success, focusing less on the content of a natural theology than on how it must be formulated in order to address challenges like the new atheists, to commend itself to all thoughtful people, and to be useful in the public square.

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Paul WALLACE. *Stars beneath Us: Finding God in the Evolving Cosmos.* Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015. 168 pp. $14.99.

Wallace, is a physicist and an ordained minister. Both components of his identity are important to this accessible, and at times poetic, book about science and religion. The book eschews sensationalistic and lifeless middle-of-the-road approaches to the topics. Instead, it invites the reader to consider wonderment as a common thread for traversing science and religion. The book converses with the biblical text and theological questions at every turn, and it is readable with a writing style that is down to earth, even while writing about the heavens. It would make an engaging book study for attentive adults.

Chapter 1 establishes the thoughtful tone of the book. Wallace recounts his own childhood and adolescent queries about science and religion, giving readers a usable vocabulary for the later discussion. Chapter 2 gives life to theological questions that arise as adults grapple with their faith. Chapters 3 and 4 bring Job into the conversation as the voice that counters retributive theology. These chapters summarize good scholarship on Job, but they could also be skipped for uninterested readers. Chapter 5 introduces evolution and creationism in a way that is accessible for Christians on either (or neither) side of the debate. Chapter 6 is reflection on how worldviews get shaken up—ultimately a good thing for adults. The next two chapters are the strongest of the book and worth the reader's time. Chapter 7 explores the Big Bang, mixing in a discussion of *ex nihilo*, Job, and the origins of the universe. Chapter 8 offers a humorous critique of the Superhero portrayal of Jesus followed by a gorgeous meditation on human beings as composed of the same material as stars. Chapter 9 breaks down complex scientific principles about the conditions that make life possible into digestible material. Chapter 10 concludes the volume with a touching recollection of Wallace's own Christian calling within the context of the universe.

The memoir writing style of this volume is its greatest strength for average church readers. The book details Wallace's own spiritual questions, and it never discounts the validity of the questions themselves. His story shows the loneliness of spiritual wells that run dry and the fulfillment of encountering God with wonder—the same wonder that infuses Wallace's own appreciation of the cosmos. While the specifics of Wallace's journey are unique, many who have experienced the twists and turns of faith life will resonate with the broad strokes of his story. This journey evokes deep questions but zero pat answers or accusatory finger pointing, offering a helpful way to engage these types of conversations. To give a hint about the direction of the book, Wallace leaves his professorship to attend seminary and become an ordained Cooperative Baptist Fellowship minister—but as a pastor, he never abandons science.

The book has a critical shortcoming. Wallace incorporates wisdom from theologians in the book, which I applaud. The selected theologians, however, are cut mostly from a similar cloth: Barth, Whitehead, CS Lewis, Aquinas, Dante. Three women's voices, Teresa of Avila, Carol A. Newsom, and Catherine Keller, appear ever so briefly but do not offer substantive conversation in ways that are impactful. In a book that appeals to Job as a figure for deep suffering, Wallace would do well to look to voices from wider contests. Black theology, especially womanism, would expand his exploration into the human condition—and I hope he does so in a second volume. Church leaders will want to supplement with additional nonwhite and nonmale voices. It is my pleasure to recommend this book as a good choice for an adult book study.

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Matthew LEVERING. ***Engaging the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit: Love and Gift in the Trinity and the Church.*** **Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016. 440 pp. $30.59.**

In the last century, there has been somewhat of a theological renaissance in scholarly attention to the person and work of the Holy Spirit. Along with this increased attention comes a diversity of perspectives, among which the classical western approach of understanding the Holy Spirit as properly Love and Gift has undergone heavy scrutiny. Against such criticisms, Levering argues in this volume that in fact the names Love and Gift "instruct us about the distinct divine personality of the Spirit and shed light upon the biblical, liturgical, and experiential testimonies" concerning the Spirit, all of which are sources Levering employs at various junctures (5). As we have come to expect with Levering, the theology of Thomas Aquinas takes center stage in this book as providing the resources for defending these names in the context of contemporary pneumatology. Such names illuminate not only the Holy Spirit's eternal relationship to the Father and Son but also the Spirit's relationship to the historical mission of Jesus Christ and the church which bears his name.

This volume is structured according to this twofold distinction between the Spirit as Love and Gift in the "eternal Trinitarian communion" and the Spirit as Love and Gift in the economy of salvation (10). Chapter 1 defends Augustine's ascription of these names to the Spirit and the biblical exegetical assumptions by which Augustine arrived at them. Chapters 2 and 3 engage Aquinas's trinitarian pneumatology more closely in the face of many orthodox theologians past and present, who critique Western pneumatology (especially Aquinas) with the charge of rationalism. Ultimately, many contemporary criticisms of Aquinas's pneumatology fall short, especially the charge that his pneumatology is not founded on revelation or scripture.

The second part of the volume explores how the names Love and Gift provide a dramatic and theologically rich, albeit sufficiently intellectually cautious, understanding of the Spirit's work in Jesus Christ and the church. Chapter 4 explores Aquinas's account of the Spirit's mission to Jesus in light of the biblical scholarship of James Dunn. Levering finds, in Dunn and Aquinas, that the Spirit's work as Love and Gift is central to understanding the "unique plenitude of Jesus's experience of the Spirit" (205). Chapter 5 offers an understanding of the Spirit's work in the church that takes seriously Jesus' eschatological baptizing with the Spirit and fire, which inaugurates the kingdom of God. Jesus' prophetic words are only true if the Spirit has indeed been poured out upon the church, and Aquinas's vision of the Spirit's visible and invisible missions to the church is especially appropriate in terms of the gravity of Christ's eschatological Spirit. Chapters 6 and 7 explore two contemporary issues of significance for the Spirit's work in the church, namely the Spirit's work in producing visible unity and the holiness that makes such unity possible, both of which are central issues in the NT though ignored in contemporary pneumatology.

This volume is nothing short of remarkable. The reading of the pneumatology of Thomas Aquinas is certainly accurate and illuminating, though what is even more impressive is his vast command of biblical scholarship on the themes explored. Ultimately, Levering sees systematic theology and biblical studies as complementary disciplines even as he critiques certain historical critical methodological assumptions. The approach of blending the theological argumentation of Aquinas with the very biblical considerations that gave rise to it renders this volume not only original in its scope and contribution to scholarship, but also makes it an important resource for ministers and pastors who themselves seek to be guided by the Spirit and to learn how to read scripture anew, assuming that God wants to teach us about God's triune nature through the text. Levering's command of the literature of contemporary pneumatology is also noteworthy, though scholars of the figures in question may find his treatments or critiques insufficient as they do not always engage the relevant secondary literature. However, such a minor criticism is far outweighed by the value gained in such an expansive treatment of figures, texts, and themes. The bibliography in this vol-

ume alone is an invaluable resource for beginners and scholars alike in the state of current trends in pneumatology, and the book as a whole provides an excellent defense of a Catholic approach to the Holy Spirit for people on all sides of the denominational divide.

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Clifford B. ANDERSON and Bruce L. McCORMACK, eds. ***Karl Barth and the Making of Evangelical Theology: A Fifty-Year Perspective.*** **Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015. 235 pp. $30.79.**

This collection of eleven essays and an introduction by various scholars commemorates the fiftieth anniversary of the 1963 publication of Karl Barth's *Evangelical Theology* ("evangelical" meaning "reformational," per Congdon), a written collection of Barth's lectures given during a two-month tour of the United States—his sole visit here—in 1962. While the essayists have some freedom to explore Barth's thought and life, the unifying "thread" amongst the essays is some connection to this brief stay. Specifically, the book's aim "is to witness from different angles the historical event of Barth's 1962 trip and to reflect on its continuing influence on the direction of American theology during the intervening fifty years."

The essays cover four primary areas, namely, history, doctrine and ethics, Barth's "dialogue with American theologians," and "theological existence in America." The essayists are (history) Drewes, Congdon, and DeCou, (doctrine/ethics) Hector, McKenny, and Hunsinger, (American theologians) Migliore, Kaltwasser, and Paris, and (theological existence) Sonderegger and Neder.

This is a fantastic collection, scholarly yet accessible, analytical yet often personally compelling. Yet, before highlighting strengths, a weakness is obligatorily noted. Those unfamiliar with *Evangelical Theology* may wish to briefly skim the book before diving into this collection, to have a holistic sense of the book's contents. Sure, Anderson's introduction provides the essential historical background for the book and some content of *Evangelical Theology* when introducing the essays, and individual essays reference their point of interest in Barth's book or tour, but this is intermittent. Even half a page providing an orderly orientation might have sufficed.

Now, two strengths. First, fearing an exercise in mirror reading, one might think that *Evangelical Theology* must be read before reading this collection. Not necessarily so. Maybe this would help in reading Congdon's essay that references individual lectures within *Evangelical Theology*, but other essays work as stand-alone pieces, readily digested by the uninitiated. For example, Paris's piece (wonderful) on Martin Luther King, Jr. overtly connects to *Evangelical Theology* in terms of Barth's photo with King during Barth's tour, less obvious per contents.

Second, the book personalizes Barth, while not neglecting his theological contributions. Exhibit A in this regard is DeCou's article on Barth's visits to three prisons in America—"Chicago's House of Correction," San Quentin, and Rikers Island. Evidently motivating these visits and his preaching in prisons, Barth stated, "[i]n prison, I feel at home among sinners." Further indicating his humility and love, he decried Chicago's "small cages" for "cells," "the sight of Dante's Inferno on Earth."

This work has an intermediate level of difficulty and is likely geared towards students (upper-level undergraduate and graduate) and scholars interested in Barth. But, this book is far from being limited to the academic setting. Restoration Movement pastors and lay leaders would undoubtedly benefit, not only for the engagement in systematic theology (note, dismissing Barth theologically would be utterly self-impoverishing) but also for the practical ministry issues addressed in some of

the essays. Four examples follow. First, Mackay's challenge to "debalconise people"—move from mere observer on the "balcony" to "decision-[maker]" on the "road" of life with God—is trenchant. Second, King's grounding of the ethic of love in Christ and in the Sermon on the Mount calls for reflection and modeling. Third, Sonderegger's tackling (with Barth) of God's role when ministries fail is vital, and possibly unsettling. Fourth, Neder's assessment of Barthian implications for classroom teaching (which can apply to pastors and leaders as well) is incisive, i.e., the Holy Spirit "disturb[s]" "safe spaces"; Andres Inestia's example of deflecting "the glory and attention away from himself to someone else" is a model of "self-emptying" for teachers.

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Philip TURNER. *Christian Ethics and the Church: Ecclesial Foundations for Moral Thought and Practice.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2015. 320 pp. $27.00.

Turner's work on ethics is not another discussion of issues, but more an analysis of the theological focus of Christian ethics. Should it be self, society, or the church? In the introduction Turner shares a helpful discussion of the work of the Niebuhr brothers, especially H. Richard Niebuhr's classic, *Christ and Culture*, in order to defend his own work's thesis, which contends that the focus of Christian ethics is properly the common life of the church (xv).

He reviews three historical perspectives. John Cassian's ethic of individual sanctification is praised for many insights it contains, but it is found wanting for conceiving the Christian's life and obedience too narrowly (3-18). Walter Rauschenbusch's ethic of social redemption is praised for some contributions it has made to vocabulary and to the current scene, but it is found wanting for its unbiblical eschatology and its trimmed down view of the Christian life and virtues (19-37). In John Howard Yoder's ethic of communal witness Turner finds an approach more compatible with his thesis, although he does differ from him in significant ways (38-57, 153). In Yoder the "focus of Christian ethics is the common life of the church. . . . The character of Christian ethics is to be found in the form of the church's common life wherein relations are shaped by the imitation of Christ" (55).

Turner examines Paul's epistle to the Ephesians for the goal, basis, and character of life together in Christ (61-103). It is his conviction that the ecclesial focus of life in Christ that is expounded upon in Ephesians is found not only throughout NT writings, but also there is an ethical focus on the common life of God's people in the Hebrew Scriptures as well (107-109). What of the focus on self that many find in the teachings of Jesus (107-124)? Turner affirms the choice of the teachings of Jesus by the saints of the church as a "form of ascesis that leads individuals on a path to holiness of life." However, he believes that Matthew, for example, locates this way of life "within the life of a people that has a particular calling under God" (124). Similarly, using the Gospel of Luke and the book of Revelation as his case studies, Turner contends that society is also not an exception to his thesis, because, once again, the focus of Christian living is ecclesial through and through (125-149).

Finally, Turner examines the shape of an ecclesial ethic. What is the goal, basis, and character of an ecclesial ethic, the latter being expressed through rendered love (153-175)? What should be said about the private lives of individual members of the church who are called to live a devout and holy life (176-197)? What is to be said about the relation between the common life of churches and the social institutions of society, especially within political society (198-266)?

Turner's benchmark for ethics is God's revelation of his will in Scripture, not the opinion of the church community. Nevertheless, it is in the community of believers that we reflect on how a devout and holy life should be lived and how we, as a community of believers who love God, are

to love our neighbors. Turner's ecclesial ethic steers clear of the extremes of focusing on self (Cassian) or society (Rauschenbusch), while still addressing the needs of both. His book is a worthy contribution to theological ethics and to ecclesiology.

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William A. DYRNESS and Oscar GARCIA-JOHNSON. *Theology without Borders: An Introduction to Global Conversations.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2015. 192 pp. $22.00.

This volume explores questions that come out of the reality that theological reflection is a global matter, which goes beyond cultural boundaries. Three main assumptions, that flow from observations of the authors, define the context: (1) no matter how one frames the changes, "the church has gone global," (2) "in spite of these changes, the teaching of theology in most Western settings has not changed," and (3) "while theology is being done in many languages and settings, with ever-increasing variety and sophistication, these new theologians are frequently not in touch either with each other or, often, with much of what is discussed in Western theology classes." (ix) The authors "want to ask what this new situation of the church means for our corporate and continuing theological reflection." (viii) They argue that "rather than seeing the flow of influences either as West to East (or South) or in the reverse, we want to argue that it needs to encompass multiple directions, including flows from South to South and within the Western Churches." (viii) Thus, the authors wish to promote "a more diverse conversation" that will promote maturity in the global body of Christ as Paul desired in Ephesians 4, and they invite others to engage the conversation. They admit that the project of engaging more fully in a global conversation will likely span many books and generations. The aim of the book is, therefore, humble: "This book makes no claim to do anything more than introduce the problem and make some initial suggestions of what a global conversation in theology might look like" (x).

The first two chapters describe very different ways of approaching theological reflections in a global context. The first is written by Oscar Garcia-Johnson, who argues that "Western modernity/coloniality has occupied Western theologies and Christianity in a way that has projected an image of inferiority and codependency on the former colonies of Europe (Occidentalism) in matters of doctrine, institutions, and social practices." (9) He further explains that theology in a globalized context must include "decolonization" and "glocal (global and local) dialogue," which recognizes the importance of Western theology in the development of theology but does not treat it as the absolute center. The theological methodology he proposes, transoccidentalism, is a dual methodology where one engages in "self-interpretation" and "self-representation" in such a way that there is a "delinking from totalizing Western typologies," and where one seeks to "build intercultural and interlocal dialogue." (10) In response to Garcia-Johnson, William Dyrness, claims that the Western tradition is inescapable for both Western and non-Western theologians, but that a globalized conversation is still possible, useful, and, constructive, if they "disarm themselves of unnecessary cynicism and recognize that Western culture is generative and nuanced (not monolithic)." (9) He calls our current state of globalization "polycentric and multicultural," which leads him to conclude that global theology has been heavily influenced by Western theology, but that other influences are of equal importance. (40) The third chapter digs into the way that indigenous traditions inform Christian theology, as examples of "a transoccidental conversation." The authors stress that this conversation, which embellishes and enlarges theological understanding is not their attempt to assert relativism. Instead, it is "an insistence that the full meaning of Scripture will

emerge only as Christians throughout history and around the world read and respond together and, as Paul says, 'all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ' (Eph. 4:13)." (67) The rest of the book continues the "transoccidental conversation" through major theological categories, namely, "God, Creation, and the Human Community, Jesus Christ and the Good News for the World, The Church in Global Context, and The Christian Hope: Eschatology in Global Perspective." (v) In each chapter, the authors demonstrate the ways in which diverse historical and cultural contexts inform theological reflection.

This volume would serve well as a supplemental text to a graduate course in theology by raising important questions concerning the ways in which future theologians can and should interact with global expressions of Christianity. Theologians would benefit from this text as an introduction to the opportunities and challenges raised by the realities of globalization and global theology. One would not have to agree with all of the claims made by the authors, nor with the proposed changes in methodology in order to benefit from learning about the ways in which cultures have shaped theological understanding both within the theologian's own context, and in the contexts of others with which theological discourse can occur.

Given that the book only purports to raise the problems of doing theology in a global context and offer initial suggestions, I would judge the authors' effort an overall success. By the end of the book, I understood the importance of various theological approaches in the development of theology, and the ways in which religious, cultural, and historical realities informed their character. I find myself convinced that theology is best done in the context of the global conversation (historically and geographically) as we strive for unity in the body of Christ. I am, however, not convinced that an utterly different theological methodology is necessary in order to benefit from different approaches, nor to attain mature unity. I do, however, conclude the authors made a strong case for humility and openness as a precursor to successful global theological discourse, as well as a focus on self-interpretation that considers other perspectives. As a relatively minor critique, I found the first chapter to be very difficult, and therefore discouraging to read the rest of the work, largely because of its overuse of jargon that detracted from the clarity of the topic at hand. Additionally, the author interacts with numerous writers, which adds to the amount of jargon in the chapter but does so in such a way as to make the first chapter far from introductory. In other words, the author seems to throw the reader into the "deep end" of the conversation without clearly defining terms and concepts, and without first providing a clear, succinct description of the issues at hand. I raise this issue to encourage future readers, if they face the same difficulty, to persevere. The second and third chapters are much clearer in their presentation and serve to clarify the key points made in the first chapter. The remainder of the book is both helpful and deeply interesting, as well as refreshingly challenging.

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Evelyne A REISACHER. *Joyful Witness in the Muslim World: Sharing the Gospel in Everyday Encounters.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016. 208 pp. $22.99.

At a time when the Christian book market seems flooded with titles about Christian-Muslim relations, this volume fills a unique and needed niche. Having read and reviewed a number of similar texts over the years, I have often been able to suggest that a book would be useful in an undergraduate college class, to church leaders, to thoughtful laypeople, and that is true of this book as well. This is the first time; however, I have actually decided to follow through and adopt for my

own class a text for which I have written a review, and highly recommend that others consider doing so as well.

Reisacher is well-equipped to write on this topic, both in her academic preparation and in practical experience developing friendships with Muslims. A self-described "Lutheran-born French person," she serves as associate professor of Islamic studies and intercultural relations at Fuller Theological Seminary. Her experience working with Muslims includes over ten years at L'Ami, a Christian organization in Paris that builds bridges between churches and North African immigrants.

The first striking feature of the book is that it fills a niche that in hindsight seems surprisingly obvious, but in fact is typically overlooked: doing the work of the Kingdom should be a *joyful* endeavor, not a dreaded or feared obligation. In the author's own words: "The theme of 'joy' rarely appears in mission discourse on Muslim-Christian relations . . . I write this book to change this trend and make room for joy in our encounters with Muslims—a theme that is much truer to the biblical witness and to our theological commitments."

To accomplish the goals of this volume, Reisacher provides two chapters of theoretical material—the first focused on biblical and theological foundations for the idea of joy in ministry; the second drawing from attachment theory. Key take-aways from this portion of the book are that joy is a core characteristic of God and his people, and that healthy attachments are possible and necessary to create, even with those quite different from ourselves and in spite of the emotional ups and downs of relationships. This material provides both encouragement and a reality check for those who may be afraid to enter cross-cultural friendships or who may have had negative experiences in the past.

The remainder of the book draws attention to specific ways Christians and Muslims can build positive attachments with one another. The author's examples are fresh and contemporary, including ways to connect with Muslims online, through art, and through environmental activities. She also includes chapters on more conventional, but essential, topics: caring for the needy, connecting with Muslims in urban settings, and having theological conversations. Throughout, the author keeps the reader's attention with practical real-life vignettes in the words of people with direct experience of Muslim-Christian relationships.

The author's own joy in this ministry is evident in this volume and contagious. Long before the end of the book, the reader feels a desire to *do* something about the material. Fortunately, this volume's suggestions for building connections with Muslims are practical and accessible to those without formal missiological training. The volume seems to call us all back to some of the most basic practices of the Christian life: hospitality, kindness, community. In so doing, this volume profoundly echoes the call of Jesus himself to a life abundant with love, peace, and joy.

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Wm. Curtis HOLTZEN and Matthew Nelson HILL, ed. *In Spirit and in Truth: Philosophical Reflections on Liturgy and Worship.* Claremont, CA: Claremont, 2016. 233 pp. $16.99.

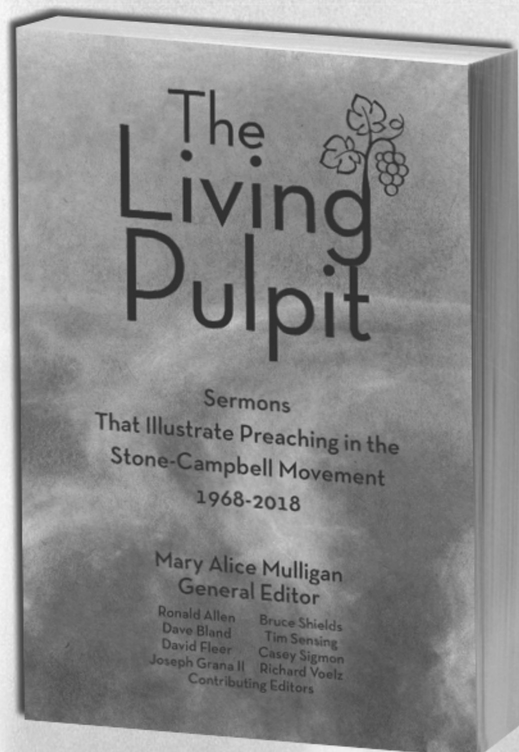
In this collection of essays, Holtzen and Hill seek to address what they see as a "glaring omission" in the field of liturgical studies, that is, an inquiry from a philosophical approach (1). Indeed, there are many important works that take on this subject from theological, sociological, and anthropological perspectives. Philosophical explorations on the question of worship and the mean-

ing of our rituals, however, are scant. As pointed out by the authors (6), this volume is written for three different audiences. The first, to scholars of both theology and philosophy who are interested in the relationship between philosophy and liturgical studies. The second, philosophers of religion who are particularly interested in Nicholas Wolterstorff's work. The last is to practitioners who are interested in the question of God's nature and liturgical practices.

This book contains ten essays that were all inspired by a series of keynote lectures given by Nicholas Wolterstorff at the Wesleyan Philosophical Society's 2015 meeting, and it begins with his essay titled "Liturgical Repetition and Reenactment." Here Wolterstorff makes the provocative argument that the celebration of the Eucharist is not a reenactment of Christ's last meal but rather, a "complex, layered repetition" (31). His argument rests on applying the type-token distinction to the liturgical repetition of the Eucharist and on the ontological difference between repetition and reenactment (9). He names the Last Supper as an *act-token*, a singular event that cannot be repeated. The meal Christ shared with his disciples before he was betrayed can only happen once. Not unlike other historical reenactments, this meal can be reenacted by actors who represent each character in the narrative. However, this reenactment is still but a representation of those events and not a repetition of the token event. The Eucharist is what he calls an *act-type* because of its scripted ability to be repeated (10). The celebration is an imitation of the *act-token* but the elements within this liturgy include much more than the literal reenactment of events that occurred the night before Christ was betrayed. In the following chapter, "The Role of Phenomenological Description in Investigating Language: An Examination of Wolterstorff's Methodology in *Divine Discourse*," Joshua Kira examines the limits of Wolterstorff's "phenomenological methodology" (38) found in Wolterstorff's book *Divine Discourse*. He describes both benefits and difficulties inherent to this methodology and proposes that they be supplemented by facets of metaphysical and theological methodologies in order to provide a more comprehensive picture of the nature of the Liturgy (51).

In chapter three, "The Eucharistic as Linguist Iconic Bodily Encounter," Brent Peterson considers the thought of Louis-Marie Chauvet and Jean-Luc Marion when responding to the question, "What is peculiar about the embodied practices of Christian communal worship?" (53). He uses Marion's critique of Heidegger's Ontotheology and his positive affirmation of icons to make room for Chauvet's argument that worship is a bodily linguistic encounter with both the presence and absence of God. In his essay "After Fire, Words: Levinas and the First Order of Language" Eric Severson uses Levinas's conversation about the primitive function of language to make the argument that before understanding the language we use, there comes responsibility (81). From there Severson explores some possible implications for how and what we pray. The fifth chapter is titled "Gadamer's Hermeneutic of Trust—Ontological and Reflective" and is by the editors of this book, Wm. Curtis Holtzen and Matthew Nelson Hill. Here Holtzen and Hill implement Gadamer's concept of "good will" (87) when wrestling with the broader question of how can we critically engage with the authorities behind our liturgies while at the same time trusting them? For Holtzen and Hill, this hermeneutic of trust enables the Christian to be reflective of what he or she is committing to while at the same time resisting Jurgen Habermas's hermeneutic of suspicion. This "good will" opens one up to trust in the Liturgy, liturgical community, and to become an entrusted member of that community (106). The next chapter, "Legitimating Our Lives before God" by Amanda DiMiele, provides a feminist reading of modernity's concept of "Self" and argues that this "Self" is primarily born out of the West's violent colonial past (113). Using Kierkegaard's work *Sickness unto Death* she contends that selfhood is a gift from God and analyzes the liturgical function of corporate confession as an end to imagining right self-legitimation (117). In chapter seven, "Worship as Compatible with Both Proper Human Autonomy and Relational Autonomy," Joyce Ann Konigsburg writes on the subject of personal autonomy and corporate

FIFTY YEARS OF PREACHING EXCELLENCE IN ONE VOLUME



The Living Pulpit collects sermons from representative preachers in the Stone-Campbell Movement over the past 50 years. The fourth volume in a series that began in 1868, this collection of sermons from 40 ministers, reviewed by a diverse team of scholars, captures the theological themes and changing approaches to preaching across the Movement's three streams.

The Living Pulpit helps preachers and scholars recognize where preaching has been—and why it has been there—in each stream, and where preaching appears to be going in a new mission field for Christianity and the Unity Movement.

General editor **Mary Alice Mulligan** is senior minister at Westview Christian Church, Indianapolis, and affiliate professor of homiletics and ethics at Christian Theological Seminary. Ordained in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Mulligan has served congregations in Illinois, Tennessee, and Indiana.

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worship activities. For Konigsburg, autonomy is at the same signified in the person's choice to participate in communal worship and bolstered by becoming an active participant in the worshiping community (144). The next essay is by John Thomas Brittingham, and it is titled "Four on the Floor: Phenomenological Reflections on Liturgy and Music." The aim of this work is to examine the function of liturgy and its relationship to music through the lens of French phenomenologist Jean-Yves Lacoste. His argument is that we experience liturgy as ordered time, space, and otherness (149). Chapter nine is written by Rustin E. Brian and titled "Beyond Syncretism: On the Competing Liturgies of US Civil Religion and the Church." In this piece Brian meticulously draws out similarities between patriotic rituals—what he calls "Liturgies of the US Nation-State"—and "Liturgies of the Church" (168). He finds these practices in competition with one another over shaping the citizen's character. For Brian this isn't a case of citizenship confusing but, rather, the co-opting of the citizen's allegiance. The conclusion of this book is titled "Divine Retribution in the Evolutionary Perspective" that is written by Isaac Wiegman where he explores the liturgical ramifications of the traditional view of Hell as deserved punishment and explores, from an evolutionary approach, why divine retribution is an attractive concept for some Christians (190). After this he poses to the reader the possibility of God's Wrath being primarily evocative in nature. Rather than being a sign of retribution, it is a call to repentance and right worship (202). For Wiegman, this opens up a number of possible manifestations in our liturgies that would produce awe in God's justice rather than fear of God's punishment.

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Marion Ann TAYLOR and Christina de GROOT, eds. ***Women of War, Women of Woe: Joshua and Judges through the Eyes of Nineteenth-Century Female Biblical Interpreters.*** **Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016. 278 pp. $35.00.**

This volume is a fantastic introduction to a multitude of forgotten female biblical interpreters. This volume consists of a collection of short excerpts from thirty-five women and their interpretations on eight female-centered narratives throughout Joshua and Judges. The featured authors use broad categories of interpretation techniques, ranging from five-act plays to in depth linguistic analysis. The collection showcases a wide variety of viewpoints that often focus on ethical and moral dilemmas in their historical Western contexts, such as wars and the beginning of the women's rights movements. There are a few well-known authors, such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton, but they intentionally seek to introduce women many may not have encountered. Before each author's original commentary, the editors include a short biography to help readers situate the author's words and perspective. This is immensely helpful for introducing many underappreciated interpreters and getting a sense of the *sitz im leben* from which they are writing. Each chapter contains writings from several different women, and all eight chapters include a series of questions to help facilitate reflection.

This important volume results in excellent commentary on some of the most difficult passages in the Bible. Furthermore, they do the groundbreaking work of working to recover the voices of the marginalized that time has forgotten. Few women commentators are included in the history of interpretation or reception history of the Bible. Taking the time to read their voices leads to changes in thought regarding both women and Protestant religion from this era. These recovered ideas also help to reassess what many assume the role of women in religion consisted of in the nineteenth century. Women had a wide variety of education, experience, and viewpoints on how they

fit into the religious, political, and cultural landscape. Oftentimes students and scholars alike dismiss women of earlier eras because of preconceived notions of the "proper" role for women. As Taylor and de Groot successfully point out, there are cracks and challenges to this monolithic idea.

While I do highly recommend this volume, it should be noted that the vast majority of writers consist of white, Western, Protestant, and economically privileged voices. The editors do briefly address that it was difficult to find extant writings by these minority voices in America and Britain, but it feels misleading to employ the broad term "nineteenth century women" when such a small portion of the female population is represented. The one major improvement I would push for is greater devotion of time to who is included and who is left out and why. While it is admirable and of immense importance to recover lost voices in interpretive history, it is also important to note who is being excluded so that they do not fall into the same problem as women in general scholarship—that they did not exist because they are not focused on. They do include a single paragraph of this, but when trying to bring worth to marginalized voices a more detailed discussion would have been helpful.

I would highly recommend this book to anyone interested in biblical studies, history, or women's issues. The collection is an excellent way to introduce students and scholars alike to overlooked writers of the nineteenth century. It is important to include this information when discussing the issue of women in the church. Many of these voices help to make up the milieu of the birth of the Stone-Campbell movement and many of the traditions American Protestant churches have inherited or, more importantly, forgotten. I would highly endorse this book for undergraduate students because of its highly accessible nature and its included questions. The questions are often basic but important and would work well for readers new to such texts and ideas. I could also see it as a source for those interested in additional ways to exegete and present a text to audiences. Several of these stories are some of the most tragic and difficult in the Bible; it is interesting to look at how those who have come before us handled their interpretation. This is a fantastic collection of literature and I am thankful the editors have spent their time to recover an importance piece of reception history.

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J. Gordon McCONVILLE. *Being Human in God's World: An Old Testament Theology of Humanity.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016. 228 pp. $27.99.

Two principles and one question guide the author's work. First, to think about humanity apart from relationship to God is impossible. Thus, the quest for self-knowledge is inseparable from a quest to know God. Second, theological interpretation, to study and understand scripture, is inseparable from personal engagement, or a transformative biblical spirituality. And for his leading question, the author calls upon the Psalms: "What is the human being, that you give attention to them?" (Ps. 8:4 and elsewhere). The author claims and demonstrates throughout the book that this question does not always lead us to information or data, but to an encounter with ourselves, and God's claims upon us.

Chapter 1 introduces the idea of "the image of God" (Gen 1), primarily as the human representation of God in the world and through relationship to God and others. Chapter 2 completes the reading of Genesis 1–3 and claims that representing the divine image was not lost in rebellion against God. Now, however, because the divine image includes ruling over creation a danger exists: the authority to rule is frequently abused. Chapter 3 explores human nature through the meaning

and interplay of three words: heart (*lebab*), soul (*nephesh*), and spirit (*ruah*)—terms that portray the complexity of human wholeness and demonstrate the dual embodiment of the human as an individual and as a member of society. Chapter 4, "The Situated Self," features two themes: "all notions of personhood are culturally conditioned" (79) and yet, some modern recoveries of the self are similar to biblical ideas (e.g., relatedness to others and the environment). Chapter 5 proposes that metaphor has enormous power to engage the imagination and appeal to readers in new contexts. In the same way, historical "kernels" may also become the nub of imaginative claims. Read in such ways, metaphor and history may function much like typology. Chapter 6 considers aspects of human embodiment—as an individual body, a social body, as well as how we are "placed" (or embodied) in memory and space (place). Chapter 7 regards the political self, humans in their life together. Here, the author recognizes tension between the pragmatism required of rulers and the prophetic voice that calls them to first principles (e.g., Deut 17). Chapter 8 considers the relationship of humans as male and female through short readings of the Levite's Concubine, Tamar and Ruth, and female images in Hosea, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. These texts witness to the enormous potential for joy and shared flourishing, as well as mistrust, danger, and fear in human relationships. In chapter 9, the author sketches a biblical understanding of vocation or work based on the image of God, wisdom literature, work and worship in Deuteronomy, and the exalted status of Bezalel. Human work is not merely maintenance but includes a vast array of imaginative creativity dedicated to God's glory. Finally, chapter 10 submits the practice of worship and the Psalms as a basic resource for spiritual transformation. "What is the human being?" Here, and finally, it is the voice that leads creation in praise.

The author's work is dense, demonstrating an enormous grasp of the bibliography of his subjects. Unfortunately, for this reader, sometimes this knowledge of what others think or say gets in the way of hearing the author's voice. This affects almost every chapter, but is especially prevalent in chapters 2 and 4, which I found difficult to read and understand. That said, in most chapters, even with occasional side trips into the opinions of other writers, the author presents a strong, clear voice with a structure that I could follow (esp. chs. 3,5,6,7,8). Throughout, the text is thick—not long or a flaw, but a text dense with data and careful in its claims: a book that requires multiple readings to fully digest. This book will prove challenging for most graduate students and pastors (though a good resource). Nonetheless, McConville has given us one set of answers to the question "What is the human being?" with the complexity and nuance of one who has much to offer.

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Richard S. HESS. *The Old Testament: A Historical, Theological, and Critical Introduction.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016. 816 pp. $49.99.

Hess is an excellent, seasoned scholar. He has written a fairly conservative introduction to the OT, while at the same time giving helpful synopses of other scholars with whom he no doubt has profound differences. Making his own excellent contributions to the field, while valuing the contribution of others and presenting those contributions briefly and fairly is a tightrope walk without a net. Hess has done a really good job of walking that tightrope.

Hess acknowledges that there is a wide variety of backgrounds in Christian higher education, when it comes to the OT. Accordingly, his intention is to ". . . accommodate readers with a variety of backgrounds" (18). However, he also seeks to cover a wide variety of scholarly topics and approaches, which makes it difficult to accomplish his accommodating intention. Each chapter includes the following major sections:

- A discussion of the name, text, and outline of this book of the Bible.
- An overview of the basic content.
- Readings. This includes premodern readings, higher criticism, literary readings, gender and ideological criticism, the ancient Near Eastern context, and the canonical context (18-19).
- Theological perspectives.

Of course, as Hess himself notes, it is impossible to compartmentalize these matters in an airtight manner. Frequently, for example, in dealing with theological perspectives, Hess refers to insights in other sections of his analysis (particularly in the "readings" sections).

A brief introduction to the Pentateuch, Historical Books, Poetic Books, and Prophetic Books precedes a more detailed discussion of the individual books contained in these groupings. This high-altitude flyover helps the user of this book to understand why the diverse books of the OT may be profitably read together. Occasional sidebars highlight certain crucial passages from the OT, present insights from other cultures throughout the ancient Near East, and other matters of interest. A brief annotated bibliography concludes each chapter. A longer bibliography ends the book.

This book has many strengths. It is well written and clear in its style. The footnotes and bibliographies point the interested reader to some of the best scholars and sources for further study. Perhaps this volume's greatest strength is that it is a one-stop introduction to the OT.

This book would be an excellent textbook for a seminary introduction to the OT. Even if an instructor wished to deal primarily with one or two aspects of the increasingly diverse field of OT introduction, the instructor could simply assign selected, discreet sections of the book. The rest of the book would still remain a wonderful reference resource for the possible future interests of the student.

This book's major strength is also its main weakness. The attempt to introduce the OT from so many different angles can easily overwhelm the reader. Certainly, Hess is extremely competent in what he is doing. However, I felt like a kid in a candy store who is told that he can sample everything for free. Perhaps if I were more self-controlled, I would have had less of an academic stomachache and would have savored the book more. And this is a book to be savored.

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John PILCH. *The Cultural Life Setting of the Proverbs.* Minneapolis: Fortress, 2016. 234 pp. $29.00.

Pilch has authored and co-authored several volumes that explore the sociocultural setting of both the OT and NT, including a six-volume commentary on the social-scientific background to the NT with Bruce Malina and Richard Rohrbaugh (1992–2013). His earliest work was *Introducing the Cultural Context of the Old Testament* (Paulist Press, 1991) which I found very helpful in my teaching.

This volume is the application to the book of Proverbs of what he has learned from his extensive research. Since it is easy to read individual verses in the book of Proverbs out of their literary and cultural context, this book is an important guide to good exegesis. This volume is divided into two parts: 1. Outline of the Book of Proverbs (1-171) and Part 2. Reading Scenarios for the Book of Proverbs (173-223). The second section which is a topical explanation of 22 sociological issues comes from the previous six-volume commentary. This section is the heart of the book, for section 1, which is a brief commentary on the book of Proverbs, constantly refers to one of the topics in section 2. Pages 225-226 provide an index to the multiple appearances of these references.

In Part 1, this volume proceeds through the book of Proverbs chapter by chapter offering comments and observations on the text, largely verse by verse with cross-references to parallel verses. On every page are multiple boldface type references to one or more of the topics in Part 2. This system avoids considerable repetition in the commentary, and after a while the reader does not have to refer to Part 2 very often.

The insights in Part 2 come from the social-science setting discovered by the study of the ancient Mediterranean world, specifically what Pilch calls the "Middle East-North Africa" (MENA) perspective, which he earlier called the circum-Mediterranean or Middle Eastern perspective. There is a "constellation of values, meanings, and practices unevenly distributed to its member" across this geographical area (xi) which provides an important cultural context for understanding the book of Proverbs.

Pilch uses the NRSV translation for the text for his comments, but he is in total disagreement with its use of inclusive language for Proverbs. For example, the reference to sons is important and must be retained for sons and daughters were raised in quite different ways in the MENA cultures. Therefore, to translate the Hebrew "son, sons" as "child, children" is inaccurate and misleading.

Every page of Part 1 has important insights for understanding the individual proverbs and illustrates how often a contemporary reading will miss the meaning. The comments on Prov 1:2 is the first example. The NRSV "instruction" renders the Hebrew "discipline" and is a totally misleading translation. Pilch refers to the heading "Discipline" in Part 2 which explains how sons were raised in MENA cultures. They were raised by their mothers until puberty and were spoiled rotten. At puberty, they were thrust into a totally different man's world, and it took strong discipline for them to learn how to become a man; sometimes it had to be physical. Pilch suggests that to play this down is to misunderstand the culture and Proverbs. He is also clear that some well-known modern interpretations of verses like this are misguided when they apply them to our culture.

Probably every reader of this book will find this volume's interpretation of a favorite proverb discomfiting. This is exactly why this is such an important book. If we care about proper hermeneutics than we must take seriously the social and culture setting of the Old Testament.

If one has not read much in the social setting of the ancient Mediterranean world this book will be an education. Every topic in Part 2 will cause reassessment of modern assumptions imposed on the OT text. Just a few of the important topics in Part 2 are: Adultery, Age (life expectancy stats are rather grim), Collectivistic Society (significantly different from ours), Honor and Shame, Limited Good (all material wealth already existed so allocation was the issue; the rich must have gotten theirs by deceit and were greedy; cf. Luke 12:15-21), Lying (acceptable to maintain honor), Rich and Poor, and Three-Zone Personality (the emotion fused thoughts, speech, and action—indicated by the various body parts involved in each). The latter is referenced multiple times in Part 1.

The book suffers early on from some poor proofreading with verse misprints and headings in the wrong place (4, 5, 9, 43) but seems to improve later. David Fiensy of Kentucky Christian University is referenced on page 184, but there is no reference to his work in the Bibliography.

This book is an essential resource for understanding Proverbs. Any teacher, preacher, or professor who wants to expound on Proverbs will be irresponsible if they do not first study this volume carefully.

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John BARTON, ed. *The Hebrew Bible: A Critical Companion.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016. 613 pp. $45.00.

Barton's latest volume is a helpful addition to the numerous introductions to OT studies that already exist. It is distinct in its primarily European authorship, and it is open about the diverse religious views of its contributors. The volume is divided into four sections. Section one contains four chapters on the Hebrew Bible in its historical and social context. John Barton begins by introducing the nature of the Hebrew Bible, terms used for this text, original languages, extracanonical texts, and the use of the text in Christian and Jewish communities. Francesca Stavrakopoulou presents the nature of historical study, historical presentation in the Hebrew Bible, and scholarly examinations of history in the Hebrew Bible. This chapter was one of the best for extensive footnotes and suggested resources for further study. Katherine Southwood surveys the social and cultural history of ancient Israel, beginning first with methods of approach before looking at ethnicity, kinship, women/marriage/fertility/rape, and hospitality. In addition to suggested resources, Southwood includes a further eight pages of bibliographic material on social and cultural history. Anthony J. Frendo concludes section one with a look at Israel in the context of the ancient Near East, arguing for an awareness that Israel was part of a larger world and its literature should be read in light of that context.

Part two consists of five chapters on genres in the Hebrew Bible. Thomas Römer begins with a look at narratives, looking first at narratives in general and then in the ANE, before focusing on the formation of several narrative sections of the Hebrew Bible. R. G. Kratz introduces prophetic literature by looking at the phenomenon in the ANE before turning his attention to stories of prophets in the Hebrew Bible and then the prophetic books themselves. Kratz's chapter is unique in that his section on further reading is not simply a list of bibliographic entries but a narrativization of the development of prophetic studies. Assnat Bartor surveys issues in study of Israel's legal texts, beginning by defining legal literature and moving on to discuss the nature of Israel's own legal literature, its largely narrative presentation, and then law and legal codes in the ANE. Jennie Grillo presents Israel's Wisdom literature, defining the term and discussing its use in the ANE before surveying Israel's Wisdom literature book-by-book. Susan Gillingham concludes this section with a look at Psalms and poetry in the Hebrew Bible. She begins with a review of the origin of the psalms in the pre-exilic, exilic, and post-exilic periods before devoting most of her chapter to the compilation of the Psalter, concluding with a short section on the reception of the psalms by Jewish and Christian communities.

Section three consists of seven chapters on religious themes in the Hebrew Bible. Benjamin Sommer begins with a fascinating chapter on monotheism, arguing, based on a specific definition of monotheism, that Israel was monotheistic from an early period even if it was not entirely monotheistic. Hermann Spieckermann reviews issues relating to creation such as chaos, divine rest, good and evil, and wisdom and creation. Hilary Marlow looks at the human condition, surveying questions of the meaning of life, the image of God, milestones in life such as marriage and birth, suffering, and finally, issues of nonhuman creation and contemporary environmentalism. Dominik Markl looks at God's covenants by beginning with ANE treaties and *ber t* in the Hebrew Bible and then surveying each specific covenant (notably devoting sections to the covenant at Sinai in Exodus as well as to the covenant at Moab in Deuteronomy). C. L. Crouch presents the topic of ethics in the Hebrew Bible by looking at how ethical issues are handled in different genres, ending with a discussion about the origin of the ethical standards of the Hebrew Bible. Crouch's chapter contains no footnotes, a fact that is frustrating as well as surprising. Stephen C. Russel looks at religious space and structures in ancient Israel, including the household, village, town, city, and religious imagination. The chapter focused mostly on household and local cult/religious space, thus

one element strangely absent was a focused look at the temple. Seth D. Kunin wrote an interesting chapter on diet, purity, and sacrifice in Israel. Most helpful here is his summary and rationale of Israel's food laws.

The final seven chapters are devoted to the study and reception of the Hebrew Bible. It is notable that rather than prioritize the historical-critical approach, this section opens with Alison Gray's very extensive presentation of reception history and advocacy of the necessity of this method in biblical exegesis. Christoph Bultmann continues in his chapter on historical-critical inquiry by acknowledging this method has never dominated the reception history of the Bible and has its own merits as well as deficiencies. He then charts the growth of historical-critical inquiry beginning with Robert Bellarmine (1542–1621) through to Samuel Driver (1846–1914). David Jasper presents literary approaches to the Hebrew Bible, noting it is religious commitment that has driven attempts to read the Bible as literature. He charts the Bible in literary criticism and then surveys the influence of theater, political readings, and deconstructionism on literary readings. Walter Moberly presents theological approaches to the Old Testament, distinguishing between history of Israelite religion and readings strategies that are theological in nature. In his chapter on political and advocacy approaches, Eryl Davies concisely describes feminist, liberation, postcolonial, and queer readings. Carmel McCarthy explains the nature and goals of textual criticism, describes four of the main original language texts, and three critical editions of the Hebrew Bible. Adrian Curtis concludes the volume with a fascinating chapter on the dilemma of attempting to map the biblical world, discussing geographical and mapping terms in the biblical text and the difficulties in attempting to make accurate maps of the biblical world.

This review is far too short to adequately review a text such as this. Similar to many edited volumes, the quality of chapters varies, however most notable deficiencies have been noted above. The book is well suited for graduate level students.

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Iain PROVAN. *Discovering Genesis: Content, Interpretation, Reception.* Discovering Biblical Texts. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015. 214 pp. $22.00.

This volume is an introduction and orientation to Genesis. In chapter 1, Provan presents the structure of Genesis and a summary of its story. He next surveys the history of the interpretation of Genesis, before the Renaissance (chapter 2) and from the Renaissance to the present (chapter 3). Chapter 4 covers the historical, social, and religious contexts of Genesis. Provan posits that the book drew on earlier traditions but reached its final form in the fifth and sixth centuries BC. He argues that Genesis represents a response of "Mosaic Yahwists" to the collapse of the world Israel knew prior to the exile, as the "authors wrestle with questions of faith and identity in a newly emerging world" (55). In chapters 5-11, this volume moves through Genesis section-by-section. He gives an overview of the contents of the sections and offers his own interpretation of the meaning of key aspects within the story in light of the original context of the writers. He discusses how Jewish and Christian interpreters have understood the text, and he indicates how the book has been received and used in art, music, and literature. Finally, this volume has an extensive bibliography and indices of biblical references, premodern sources, and authors.

This volume has a number of strengths. First, chapters 2 and 3 are a good primer on the history of interpretation of Genesis but also on the history of biblical interpretation in general. Second, this volume clearly distinguishes what Genesis itself says, including its likely message to its original audi-

ence, from the layers of interpretation that have since added meaning to the text. For example, within Genesis 3, and, indeed, in the rest of the OT, there is little evidence that the events described there precipitated a "Fall" of the kind and extent claimed by later Christian writers. In this vein, the current volume also helps the reader see how interpreters' historical, social, and religious contexts affected their interpretations. Third, this volume addresses both Jewish and Christian interpretations of Genesis. Fourth, this volume often offers interesting insights into the text of Genesis that further illuminate the story or that challenge more widely accepted interpretations.

With respect to weaknesses, first, as is often the case with books and commentaries on Genesis, there is an imbalance in the space that the book dedicates to the first eleven chapters of Genesis (72 pages) compared to the remaining thirty-nine chapters (59 pages). Perhaps in a book that includes the historical interpretation and reception of Genesis this is inevitable, given that much of the theological interest on the book through the centuries focused on Genesis 1–11. Yet, if Provan is interested in presenting the message of Genesis as intended, perhaps he should have placed more weight where the book of Genesis does, on the ancestral narratives. Second, when Provan moves to the reception of Genesis in literature, art, and music he often merely names the works but does not explore their understanding of Genesis in any depth. Thus, at times, the "reception" aspect of his book is left wanting.

This volume provides an excellent orientation to Genesis and its history of interpretation, though probably more so for those already somewhat familiar with the contents of Genesis. It will serve well as a supplement to commentaries for ministers preparing lessons on Genesis, as a helpful guide for educated laity in their personal study of Genesis, and as a textbook for an upper-level college or seminary class on Genesis.

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R. Mark SHIPP, ed. ***Timeless: Ancient Psalms for the Church Today Volume Two: God Enthroned Forever. Psalm 42–89.*** **Abilene, TX: Abilene Christian University Press, 2016. 320 pp. $19.99.**

This volume is the second installment in a planned series of books designed to provide a resource for the Church: an original contemporary psalter that is lyrically fresh, biblically accurate and musically excellent. To my knowledge, it is unique in its vision and purpose. I applaud this ambitious project and share editor Mark Shipp's vision to help the church sing the Psalms.

The Stone-Campbell movement as a whole has no single established tradition for singing psalms in their entirety, so this work is both highlighting a need and filling it. After all, if the Psalms are "The Songs of Jesus,"[1] then New Testament-oriented believers should give serious attention to this OT book. This series can help them do so.

It is, indeed, a daunting challenge to help today's worshipers pause long enough to delve into a worship text. Even more, to let the biblical text drive the conversation of worship, rather than popular appeal or trendy expressions—in short, to create a collection that is *Timeless.* The psalms were always intended to be sung, of course. But setting ancient Hebrew poetry to modern Western music has been increasingly difficult over the centuries. Responsive readings can involve the entire congregation covering the entire psalm, but Psalm singing, in which the entire congregation is singing the entire psalm text, has all but disappeared in most churches.

[1] The intriguing title of a daily devotional book by Tim Keller (Viking, 2015).

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Chant is a valid option for singing nonmetrical text, but that ancient musical approach is liturgically foreign to many. Some church traditions in the past turned to metricized psalms, but today's worshipers are distracted by the old poetic devices that awkwardly subjugated the text to strict hymnic meter and rhyme schemes. And so, the history of the church has drifted from singing psalms in translation[2] to metricized paraphrase[3] to looser allusion[4] to a slanted reference[5] to a borrowed concept or two.[6] Perhaps congregations would not necessarily be averse to singing Scripture in its entirety, but they have no acceptable contemporary means of delivering it in a predictable enough manner for people to sing along. This series attempts to bridge these gaps and make the psalms accessible again.

The work is both musical and scholarly, and in that way, it stands as a wholly unique work. To begin with, the series acknowledges that the book of Psalms is itself divided into five books, each of which might have an intended overarching theme. Likewise, the book explains each psalm carefully so as to put it into a context that allows the worshiper to sing with the spirit and the understanding.[7]

The volume is structured with a translation of each psalm itself, marked for responsive reading. Then there are explanations of the Structure and Poetry, of Theology and Application, and then a brief exhortation "For Those Who Sing Psalm __." All of these resources help the worshiper know, in a few sentences, what he or she is singing. Then come two or more musical settings, one "in a more 'traditional' hymn style" and another "in a more 'contemporary' setting," (13) with original poetry and music.

The team of contributors and editors is impressive in its sheer numbers: a review committee, an editorial committee, a lyrics subcommittee and music subcommittee. In all, the book lists 46 positions on those committees, and that by itself is a worthy accomplishment. But making great art that lasts for generations is no easy task. As the Introduction states, "getting excellent musicians/composers is not a problem for us; finding excellent lyricists who can do this elegantly and faithfully is very difficult." (12) The remaining question, then, is whether this collection is successful in accomplishing its lofty goals of providing a resource that all can use. Is it practical, in other words? I am not a prophet, nor the son of a prophet, but here is my prediction.

Some churches will find this work to be useful, but this collection would require some additional features in order to cross to other traditions, for whom pragmatic artistry is more important than ideals.[8] For example: Provide a demo recording for those who don't read music well, to make the music more accessible. Or print chords with the music for those who rely on musical instru-

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[2] "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me down to lie in pastures green: he leadeth me beside the still waters" (KJV).

[3] "The Lord's my shepherd; I'll not want. He makes me down to lie in pastures green. He leadeth me the quiet waters by" (Jacob Rous, 1650 Scottish Psalter).

[4] "The King of love my shepherd is, whose goodness faileth never; I nothing lack if I am his and he is mine forever" (H. W. Baker, 1868).

[5] "Savior, like a shepherd lead us, much we need Thy tender care. In Thy pleasant pastures feed us, for our use Thy folds prepare" (Dorothy Ann Thrupp and William Bradbury, 1840 Sunday School Collection).

[6] "Spirit lead me where my trust is without borders. Let me walk upon the waters, wherever You would call me" (Joel Houston, Matt Crocker, Salomon Ligthelm, 2012).

[7] As the apostle Paul exhorted in 1 Cor 14:15.

[8] Here are some critical findings about the settings themselves that would hold back the work from popular use: (Write to me if you would like specifics.) Some contain minor mistakes in editing the four-part writing (such as chords without a third, or parallel octaves between two parts). Some texts occasionally are a bit colloquial or noncontextual, or accents do not fall naturally with the music. And sometimes a harmonic progression or melody strays too often from the established formula of structure and balance, so it is not predictable enough for people to join in on with confidence.

ments to provide harmony, to round out the sound. And even within the *a cappella* tradition(s), some of the settings may prove to be challenging for many groups.[9] Additionally, a broader group of contributors[10] and editors might help this noble work to be more accepted outside of the churches of Christ.

I do not know Mark Shipp, but I admire the scope of his vision and I share his passion for putting the Psalms into the hands, mouths, and hearts of the church today. He and this team have contributed a new voice to the dialog of how the next generation will worship. Both of these volumes so far are commendable for their quality and their collaborative spirit. And so I say, "More!" May God strengthen your hands for this task, and may you finish the course He has set before you.

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Gary S. SELBY. *Not with Wisdom of Words: Nonrational Persuasion in the New Testament.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016. 187 pp. $22.00.

Selby provides an important work in shaping our approach to and use of rhetorical analysis when encountering documents of the NT. This volume uses four passages from the Pauline tradition (1 Thessalonians, Romans, 1 Corinthians, and Ephesians) directly, while commenting on Acts of the Apostles and Revelation. The claim is rightly made that the function of early Christian discourse is to do more than prove logical claims (the mainstay of Greco-Roman rhetoric of the time) and to use poetic language (a lesser tradition in classical rhetoric) to transpose/bring to ecstasy/imagine/experience a reality through the spoken word that builds the "faith" of believers. A majority of NT interpreters who apply "rhetorical criticism" have often emphasized the rational aspect of rhetoric to the neglect of the poetic.

This volume summarizes the problems in understanding the poetic aspects of early Christian discourse and then reviews ancient traditions of rhetoric in the rational vein through Aristotle and the more mystical/poetic stream through Gorgias and Longinus. With this methodology in place, four passages are examined for how they surpass rational persuasion to the experiential nature of bringing believers into a place beyond their present reality.

The chapter on 1 Thess 4:13-18 emphasizes Paul's use of "visions of the end" to provide early believers a proleptic experience of the coming victory of God though Christ's appearance. Selby locates the genre of this discourse within the apocalyptic context and tradition of uncovering the purposes of God and strengthening the people of God through vision. First Thess 4:13-18 is vivid and descriptive of experience, not propositional as in argument—one is "caught up" in a communal experience of believers (past and present) with the victorious Christ. Christ's coming provides believers faith and encouragement to stand in the middle of suffering.

In Rom 7:14-25, Selby suggests a "speech in character" that "performs despair." He draws out the inability of human beings to find God by turning away from God and seeking their own way in which they become conflicted (Rom 1–2). The passage 7:14-25 reinforces this message by drawing the auditors to join with all humanity in a performance of despair—a despair shortly overcome, following the speech, with the role of the Spirit's intervention and renewal (Rom 8). The

[9] A partial solution to my challenge here is that each song is rated by the editors to advise users as to the difficulty of that particular setting.

[10] Some seventy contributors (39 composers and 39 lyricists) are listed for 126 songs. That is an impressive number of contributors. It is only about half the ratio of most collections, but considering that the entire collection is original, that is to be expected.

role of "S/sin" as power and the apocalyptic context out of which Paul speaks would have sharpened the analysis of Paul's discussion of the law's role and subjugation.

In 1 Corinthians 13, a "rhapsody on love," this volume sets the context in the grasping of some of the Corinthian community members after spiritual gifts of distinction (1 Cor 12–14). This volume presents a provocative thesis—that the ecstasy so compelling to some Corinthians in their seeking and experiencing the higher gifts of the Spirit, such as tongues speaking, can be matched by the ecstasy of love as poetically presented in Paul's hymn in chapter 13. This longing for and being drawn to love would encourage a change in practice and disposition for others.

An examination of Eph 1:3-14, notes this "blessing" as a combined form of worship for the letter's auditors. This analysis would presumably extend to the other thanksgivings (and hymnic passages) in the Pauline corpus—e.g., the structure of the Thessalonian letters is notable for extended thanksgivings that hold the discourse in holy and worshipful space.

This volume concludes with important comments on the distinctive role of the audience in early Christian discourse and the reduced role of the speaker/writer (rhetor)—notably fitting the values and disposition of the Christian faith over and against the culture out of which it was birthed. The present church would do well to emulate such values to encourage unity, faith, cohesion, and witness.

In addition to a stellar understanding of rhetoric, a strength of the work is the examination of these key passages in light of the larger context of each respective letter. This is a welcome work to be joined with current NT perspectives such as the examination of religious experience, emotions, and storytelling/"performance criticism." Paul's notable engagement with the moralist traditions begs for more analysis of the philosophic/moralist rhetorical traditions within the mix of classical technical rhetoric and its more poetic expressions. Abraham Smith's Comfort One Another: Reconstructing the Rhetoric and Audience of 1 Thessalonians (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1995) illustrates this point. Highly recommended for seminary students and parish pastors who highly value communicating effectively and biblically.

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Stanley E. PORTER and Bryan R. DYER, eds. ***The Synoptic Problem: Four Views.*** **Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016. 194 pp. $22.99.**

The Synoptic Problem still interests scholars. The debate continues with various nuances, but similar themes. Those chosen to share their perspective by Porter and Dyer have done an excellent job of presenting their view and giving a balanced counterargument to the other opinions. The editors, then, give helpful insights to clarify where there is overlap of agreement and nuances of divergence.

The following scholars represented the following perspectives: Craig Evans of Houston Baptist University with The Two Source Hypothesis, Mark Goodacre of Duke University with The Farrer Hypothesis, David Barrett Peabody of Nebraska Wesleyan University with The Two Gospel Hypothesis, and Rainer Riesner of Dortmund University-Germany with The Orality and Memory Hypothesis.

Each section is well developed. Critiques are gracious but pointed. There is so much detail given there is no way to summarize it in this short review. The views are worth the read. Scholars and serious students will benefit by the "summarized detail" each writer gives.

One of the more interesting observations is that only the "Two Source Hypothesis" relies upon Q. The other views saw no need or were actually critical of Q. The editors state that since the mid-twentieth century more and more theories have been moving away from Q.

Porter and Dyer in their chapter, "What Have We Learned regarding the Synoptic Problem?" state that the 'wild card' in this discussion is the role of oral tradition. Riesner greatly stresses that orality needs more attention. He thinks that even though the issue is literary in nature, it may be oral in origin. Therefore, a Multiple Source Hypothesis is helpful along with the Tradition Hypothesis. His chapter is worth reading and evaluating.

The conclusion of the book asks if a stalemate has been reached. Their answer is yes and no! It seems even their conclusion is a stalemate, for there is no clear-cut winner. What they advocate is continued dialog. The belief is, and it seems to be valid, that the discussion is worthwhile. We are dealing with the life of Jesus Christ. We are reading, and hearing, from some of the earliest testimony about him. The format and source of this testimony is important. Credible witnesses and documents are extremely important to know and knowing about Jesus of Nazareth!

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Jeffrey A. D. WEIMA. ***Paul the Ancient Letter Writer: An Introduction to Epistolary Analysis.*** **Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016. 288 pp. $16.22.**

Weima is professor of New Testament at Calvin Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids, Michigan. I have found his most recent book, which brings together his research from various other publications on Pauline epistolary analysis, to be especially worthwhile.

He writes, "The central thesis of this volume is that Paul's epistolary practices are never accidental but relate in some way to his purposes in the letter as a whole" (25). Thus Weima's overarching method is to discern Paul's standard epistolary practices and then analyze how Paul nuances these practices for rhetorical effect. Weima's investigation is rhetorical in the broad sense that Paul's letters, in both content and form, are crafted to persuade; nevertheless, he believes that "significant objections can be raised against the widespread practice of taking the ancient Greco-Roman rules for speech and applying them in a direct and wholesale manner to the interpretation of Paul's letters" (9). Thus, he speaks of letter structure in terms of opening, thanksgiving, body, and closing—not in terms of *exordium*, *narratio*, *probatio*, and *peroratio*. While I appreciate this approach, I regret the corresponding minimal treatment of the oral presentation of Paul's letters (though oral delivery is mentioned on pp. 116, 141, and 194).

Weima finds significant rhetorical nuance in the letter openings. His examples include Romans because it displays Paul's longest sender formula and Galatians because it features the tersest recipient formula. I was especially interested in this volume's treatment of Paul's expanded recipient formula in 1 Cor 1:2: "To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours" (NRSV). Weima shows that this expanded address is rhetorically pointed at prompting the Corinthian Christians to think of themselves more accurately and more humbly—as belonging to God, as called to holiness, and as a small part of the universal church. Another place where Weima considers Paul to be rhetorically savvy is his frequent mention of cosenders. This volume rejects the term "coauthors," arguing that these individuals did not contribute to the content of the letter. Nor is Paul's mention of them simply a matter of courtesy. The selection and mention of cosenders is aimed at promptly establishing a relationship between author and recipients which will enhance the rhetorical effect of the letter.

Chapter 2 describes "three important functions of Pauline thanksgivings in support of his broader persuasive strategy" (56). These functions are pastoral, exhortative, and foreshadowing.

In the case of Galatians, though a rebuke replaces the thanksgiving, the three functions are nevertheless fulfilled, thus highlighting Paul's epistolary skill.

In his exploration of Paul's letter bodies, Weima shifts from primarily explaining differences among Paul's own epistolary formulas (a policy he follows closely in the more formulaic sections) to comparing Paul's letter bodies with conventions of his day. Weima describes four transitional formulas (appeal, disclosure, "now about," and vocative address). In each case, he lays out the form, explains the function, and illustrates the interpretive significance. After these transition formulas, he similarly addresses autobiographical sections, expressions of "apostolic parousia," confidence formulas, paraenesis, and liturgical forms (prayers, doxologies, and confessions/hymns). The chapter ends with a brief explanation of the similar literary forms, *inclusio* and chiasm.

Chapter 5 concerns the letter closing and, in light of the tendency of commentators to treat such closings briefly, is the book's most significant contribution. It builds on Weima's doctoral dissertation, *Neglected Endings. The Significance of the Pauline Letter Closings* (JSNTSup 101, 1994). Almost all aspects of letter closings are covered. I found his explanations of the holy kiss greeting (187-188) and the autograph (193-200) especially worthwhile. In contrast, amanuenses and letter deliverers are mentioned only in passing, but I will withhold criticism for what seems to be restraint on Weima's part—he apparently resists going beyond *An Introduction to Epistolary Analysis* (the book's subtitle) to a full description of the writing, delivery, performance, and reception of letters.

The final chapter is a commentary applying Weima's method to the letter of Philemon. It describes Paul's rhetorical flare in his appeal for Onesimus—much like most commentaries would do but with special attention to epistolary conventions.

It is worth noting that Weima tacitly accepts Pauline authorship of all thirteen NT letters which bear Paul's name.

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Mark D. NANOS and Magnus ZETTERHOLM, eds., ***Paul within Judaism: Restoring the First-Century Context to the Apostle.*** **Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015. 360 pp. $39.00.**

There are several major macro-paradigms for approaching Paul and his theology. Stemming from a 2010 session at the Society of Biblical Literature (11), this volume offers a collection of essays that explore different facets of Pauline literature from within the categories and thought of Judaism.

In the introduction, Nanos orients readers to the "Paul within Judaism" paradigm and its situation among other major approaches to Paul. In particular, the "Paul within Judaism" perspective supports the "New Perspective's" criticism of the "Old Perspective." At the same time, the contributors' commitment to reading Paul within Judaism leads them to question whether classic "New Perspective" lines have been sufficiently thoroughgoing (2-11). This leads to the sometimes-synonymous characterization of "Paul within Judaism" as a "Radical (New) Perspective" (cf. 34, 79n1).

Zetterholm addresses the state of the questions about interpreting Paul within Judaism and stresses the need for rigorously historical readings of Paul in his own contexts (11-12, 35). This chapter focuses on an often-implied but inappropriate dichotomy between Paul and Judaism (34). Zetterholm rounds out his analysis by describing the negative outcomes of the common dichotomy in terms of Christian identity as a "third race" (47-51).

Anders Runesson discusses terminology and how it functions (helpfully or otherwise) to establish the frameworks within which interpretation of Paul occurs (14-15, 55-58). Runesson highlights modern connotations associated with "Christianity" and "church," especially as defined by

reference to other terms like "Jews," "Judaism," and "synagogue," and he advocates for using terminology more appropriate to a first-century Jewish context (14-15, 54, 59-76).

Karin Hedner Zetterholm analyzes Torah observance in first-century Judaism (15-16, 80-103). In particular, she considers Paul's arguments from Scripture as halakhic decisions analogous to those made within other Jewish groups (15-16, 100-101, 104).

Nanos's second contribution within the volume treats Josephus's account of King Izates (17-19). The narrative is particularly salient because it shows how Izates, king of Adiabene, received contrary advice from different Jews about whether he should be circumcised (17, 106-107, 111). Behind these differences, Nanos identifies a common commitment the Jewish advisors have to urge Izates toward faithful behavior. The advisors simply disagree about what that behavior should be (17, 114-120, 127-128). This narrative provides a clear and informative parallel for understanding Paul's discussions of circumcision and the "works of the law" (18, 123-143).

Caroline Johnson Hodge considers how Paul constructs the identities of the non-Jews in the communities he addresses (19-20). They are not Jews, but neither are they merely Gentiles. Rather, they are a special class of Gentiles who have become part of Abraham's family (19-20, 153-167).

Paula Fredricksen continues the theme of identity and discusses it specifically as connected to worship practices (20-22). Pagan guests in Jewish Diaspora groups would not normally have been expected to renounce their home gods and worship Israel's alone (20, 177-185). But, because Paul's Gentile addressees have come to be "in the Messiah," Paul does expect this kind of allegiance from them (20-21, 185-194).

Neil Elliott considers Paul's political context as a member of the Jewish Diaspora (22). As such, Elliott draws attention to how Paul's Jewishness overlaps rather than competes with other identity characteristics, like his Roman citizenship or his apostleship to Jesus (23, 208-243).

Kathy Ehrensperger contextualizes Paul's comments about gender (23). She highlights the implicit expectation of women's involvement with congregational activities (e.g., praying, prophesying), albeit within certain constraints (23, 250-259).

Finally, Terence Donaldson responds to the balance of the essays from the perspective of a sympathetic outsider to these explorations of scholars from the "Paul within Judaism" perspective (24). Donaldson's response is largely appreciative and affirmative (281-284). But, he also draws attention to ways in which the volume's other essays may overplay some arguments or overlook problems with some of their own assumptions (25-28, 284-298).

Conceptually, approaching Paul as a Jewish thinker within a first-century Jewish messianic movement makes excellent sense. And this volume's essays show some of the helpful headway that can be made on this basis. Conclusions of some scholars who approach Paul "within Judaism" may be concerning to those more comfortable reading Paul within other perspectives. But, the rigorously historical impulse of the "within Judaism" approach has much to commend it. Thus, work in this area should continue to be of interest even if reasons are found to demur from this or that particular conclusion. Mirror reading Paul is methodologically indefensible if scholarship or the church are to do business truly with this apostle. And only by continuously questioning and holding contemporary readings to account in a rigorously historical light is the spell of such a mirror likely to lose its hold over time (cf. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, ed. and trans., Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall, 2nd ed., Bloomsbury Revelations [London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013], 281-282). Reflecting on Paul as specifically embedded within his first-century Jewish context provides a perennially productive set of questions, a subset of which this volume brings out quite successfully.

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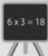

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Paul Mark ROBERTSON. ***Paul's Letters and Greco-Roman Literature: Theorizing a New Taxonomy.*** **NovTSup 167. Leiden: Brill, 2016. 313 pp. $149.00.**

Robertson is an Assistant Professor of Humanities at Colby-Sawyer College. He teaches Christianity, Religions, Literature and Classics. He has published a number of peer-reviewed articles on NT subjects, classical literature, and religious analysis. He applies cognitive methods to religious studies in much of his work. He has written a number of encyclopedia entries for *Lexham Bible Dictionary*, *T&T Clark Companion to Second Temple Judaism,* and *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Ancient Mediterranean Religions.* The current volume compares the Pauline epistles with Epictetus's *Discourses* and Philodemus's *On Piety* and *On Death* to describe the literary style freshly, and to situate Paul as author, among the Greco-Roman writers.

This volume is laid out in five chapters, preceded by the Introduction, and followed by the Conclusion. The first chapter provides a detailed rationale for the project, coupled by a literature review of scholarship regarding both Pauline literature and Greco-Roman literature, and details the social purpose for the writings of Paul, Epictetus, and Philodemus. This chapter argues that the current attempts to classify Paul's epistles within the writings of the Greco-Roman world are fraught with methodological problems. The second chapter details the social location for Paul, Epictetus, and Philodemus. This chapter argues for empirical data from the writings to aid in forming a classification system. The third chapter rejects the overuse of rigid genre forms to classify literature but prefers a system that uses shared data between writings to classify the writings. This chapter argues for a classification of literature based on a socio-literary sphere, where the intersections between text-type and society define the criteria. The fourth chapter details what criteria should be used to classify Greco-Roman writings. This chapter highlights the need to have other works of literature as a control for the study, where Aristides's *Panathenaicus* and the apocalyptic *Damascus Document* were chosen for this purpose along with some others. This work argues that the Pauline writings contain fundamental differences from the writings in the control group, although they are both perceived to be similar to the Pauline corpus by some scholars. The Appendix contains three sections, where the first contains graphs and bar charts comparing Pauline letters to other sets of Greco-Roman writings using twenty features of the works, the second contains statistical data and graphs to show the internal variation in the Pauline corpus, and the final one lists and categorizes twenty specific elements as percentages of the whole writing in question, by which the writings were analyzed.

This volume is an improvement over previous studies that compare Paul's writings to a variety of either Jewish or Greco-Roman writings, in that it shows the Pauline letters are different from many other writings that have been used before for comparison. This volume introduces the works of Epictetus and Philodemus as being more similar to Paul's letters than other writings examined before (168). These authors are more similar to Paul in their social and educational status and write with a more similar social purpose to that of Paul than do other authors in the Greco-Roman world. Pliny the Younger and Seneca have some of the similarities with Paul noticed for Epictetus and Philodemus, but not for all the categories examined in the study. The *Letter to the Hebrews* and *4 Maccabees* are more distant yet, but still close enough to Paul's letters in several literary characteristics to be included. This volume provides correctives to other comparative approaches in that it uses empirical data to decide what should be compared to Paul's letters and uses a control group to show how close certain Greco-Roman writings are to the Pauline letters (215). This volume combines concerns from literary theory, media studies, literary sociology, and linguistic anthropology to achieve its aims.

While this volume does not explain Paul's theological purpose, or the theological content of Paul's letters, it excels at classifying Paul's letters with regard to the intersections evident between

author and text, and text and audience. In this volume, Paul's purpose is understood explaining abstract claims and defending those claims before an audience that occupied the same socio-literary sphere as the audiences for Epictetus and Philodemus (217). This volume is wide-ranging in challenging the classification system of Paul's letters and the larger Greco-Roman writings in general. Additionally, this volume provides additional tools with which to analyze other writings associated with Paul, where authorship is disputed. This volume is used best as a reference for researchers to first see how to organize similar literary comparison studies, conduct them, and later to argue from the data. This work is useful as supplemental reading for any course that deals with comparing Paul's letters to other writings of the Greco-Roman world or situating Paul within the Greco-Roman world. Finally, this volume is a resource for scholars commenting on the purpose for the Pauline letters, and the nature of the original readers of those letters. The claims within this volume are worthy of engagement by Classicists, Biblical Scholars, and Theologians alike.

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Scot McKENDRICK, David PARKER, Amy MYSHRALL, and Cillian O'HOGAN, eds. *Codex Sinaiticus: New Perspectives on the Ancient Biblical Manuscript.* London & Peabody, MA: British Library & Hendrickson, 2015. 320 pp. $84.95.

The present volume reflects an interdisciplinary and up-to-date appraisal of arguably the most famous biblical manuscript currently known, Codex Sinaiticus (which, hereafter, I will refer to by its manuscript symbol, א). The volume was intended to be published in coincidence with the launching of the *Codex Sinaiticus* website (http://www.codexsinaiticus.org/en/). The site fully digitized the extant leaves of the codex and was launched in 2009, but the book was not published until 2015—noted as the fault of the editors on page *vii*. Despite the five-year delay in publication, the volume still represents one of the best resources available for researchers of א. Organized into five somewhat imbalanced sections (Section 1 offers just one essay; Section 3 has eight), the volume offers readers a deep dive into the multiple contexts important for scholarly study of this codex.

The first section, Historical Setting, is comprised of just one essay. Harry Gamble's solitary essay aptly situates א within its fourth-century setting, as readers of Gamble may well expect. Gamble contextualizes א in terms of book production/media culture, the emergence of the biblical canon, and the intended use of a codex of א's fine, even "deluxe" pedigree (11).

Section two, "The Septuagint," is comprised of three essays. Emmanuel Tov compares א to other ancient witnesses to the Greek OT and finds that א's ordering of the OT texts differs markedly from the Hebrew Bible and even sometimes from the majority of other ancient Greek witnesses. Rachel Kevern's essay attempts a reconstruction of Joshua 12:2–14:4 (Quire 17, Folio 1). One particularly commendable aspect of this volume (which no doubt contributes to its hefty price tag) is its inclusion of many full-color plates. Kevern's essay makes excellent use of such images, driving home the painstaking difficulty associated with reconstructive tasks. Albert Pietersma offers a text-critical assessment of the quality of א's text of the Psalms that differs markedly from previous generations of scholarship, affirming א's text over other witnesses in 41 instances.

"Early Christian Writings" follows and is the most robust of the volume's sections, offering up eight essays on early Christian texts in א, both within and beyond the New Testament. Eldon Jay Epp's data-rich essay contextualizes the codex's entry into the milieu of 19th-century text-critical scholarship when it was "discovered" by Constantin Tischendorf over a period of years, spanning 1844–1862. The essay ends with a valuable comparison between Codex Vaticanus (B),

affirming a "complementary" relationship between these two important witnesses (70). David Trobisch contributes a study on ℵ and its role in the formation of the early Christian Bible. As a mostly whole witness to the NT, ℵ is taken as a welcome framework for assessing the early editorial enterprise that resulted in the NT canon as we are familiar with it. Klaus Wachtel offers up an interesting theory based on its corrected text that ℵ was intended to serve as an exemplar for future reproductions of the NT, akin to the Aleppo Codex for the Hebrew Bible. In a fascinating study, Juan Hernández, Jr., treats ℵ's text of Revelation as a kind of commentary on Revelation itself. Discussing additions in Revelation ostensibly stemming from liturgical usage, such as the insertion of "amen" (ἀμήν, *amēn*) in doxologies or the multiplication of "holies" in 4:8 (instead of the expected three, ℵ has eight). The essay concludes with an eight-page appendix of variant readings catalogued by type. Peter M. Head offers some observations on ℵ's Scribe D, characterized as "fundamentally responsible" for the overall production of the codex (127). Head notes some of the characteristic features of Scribe D's work, which include replacement sheets and choices on how to execute text at the end of a line. Amy Myshrall weighs the evidence for the presence of a fourth scribe in ℵ, splitting what was once thought to be the work of one scribe into two: Scribe B1 produced Isaiah, and Scribe B2 produced the Prophets and the *Shepherd of Hermas.* The study is aided immensely by color plates, allowing readers to visually compare for themselves the handwriting of Scribes B1 and B2. The final two essays of this section focus upon the *Shepherd*'s text in ℵ. Dan Batovici discusses the physical characteristics of the *Shepherd* in ℵ, including quire structure, page numbering, titles and subtitles, and the use of paragraphs. The subtitles are distinctive in ℵ—no other books besides Isaiah have subtitles (Isa 30). The paragraphs, too, are distinctive, and may evince a kind of reader's aid signaling simple shifts in narrative. The second essay on the *Shepherd*, by Archbishop Damianos of Sinai (serving at Saint Catherine's monastery, where ℵ was housed before Tischendorf), discusses the inclusion of this text in a Christian Bible, despite its lack of apostolic pedigree. Damianos concludes that, while useful for edification, the *Shepherd* is rightly accorded its noncanonical status. Damianos closes the essay, and the section, with a beautiful reflection on the digitization of the codex, likely to be appreciated by SCJ audiences: "I hereby wish that the whole programme . . . might constitute besides its abstract scientific and textual meaning an incentive for many to concern themselves with the Spirit that is hidden behind the Word" (169). When the archbishop of the monastery from which ℵ comes waxes theological about the codex, it is wise to listen.

Section four includes four essays variously exploring the modern history of the codex. Armchair investigators will be pleased to find the controversial narrative surrounding the codex's movement from Saint Catherine's to Russia reviewed and interrogated from multiple angles. Christfried Böttrich attempts to nuance the conflicting versions, which he characterizes as one-sided: Western, Protestant scholarship has often lionized Tischendorf, while voices representing the Eastern Orthodox tradition have castigated him as a thief (cf. Damianos's introductory paragraph in his essay). Böttrich reviews the relevant primary materials, including Tischendorf's version of the story, Russian documents, and documents from the sale of the codex from Russia to the British Museum. Nicholas Fyssas continues the investigation, discussing the preserved copies of the correspondence between the Russian Imperial Embassy in Constantinople and the Russian Consulate in Egypt about Saint Catherine's and its prized codex. Emerging from Fyssas's treatment is a Saint Catherine's unequally yoked to a foreign state and placed "under great amounts of pressure" in the brokering of the deal that led to ℵ's transfer from Sinai to Russia (197). Moving on from ℵ's donation to Russia, William Frame's essay reviews the circumstances that brought the codex to the British Library. Panayotis G. Nikolopoulos rounds out the section

with a firsthand account of the "New Finds" at Sinai in 1975. The New Finds include about 50,000 new fragments, 25,000 of which are in Greek; of those, twelve leaves belong to א.

The final section, "Codex Sinaiticus Today," offers six essays. Gavin Moorhead, Sara Mazzarino, Flavio Marzo, and Barry Knight discuss the physical characteristics of א. The essay focuses upon granular detail: parchment type, preparation, dimensions, line ruling, ink used, damage over time, quire signatures, and the physical binding. On offer here is a generous collection of full-color plates to illustrate. Next, Hieromonk Justin of Sinai and Nicholas Sarris bring readers up-to-date on the conservation and photography of א, a process which is still ongoing. The authors note that, among the thousands of "New Find" fragments, there may be more pieces of א yet to be found (249). T. A. E. Brown next discusses the transcription process—a team project that resulted in the identification of a fourth hand among א's scribes. Peter Robinson reflects on the making of the electronic version of Codex Sinaiticus. Here one catches a glimpse of the two-year undertaking that was the Codex Sinaiticus Project. As the humanities become more grounded in the digital, future scholars may wish to look to the Codex Sinaiticus Project as a guide for other undertakings; this essay provides a nice point of entry. In the penultimate essay, David Parker offers a valuable overview of the entire process of transcribing א in digital media and reconstructing the codex after the "New Finds" of 1975. Steve Walton closes the book with an interesting and valuable theological reflection on א's importance for contemporary Christians. Although it plays host to no cheap apologetic tricks, Walton's essay nonetheless may be viewed as a kind of thoughtful and informed Christian apologetic. He does not polemicize but, rather, takes the opportunity to correct certain *Da Vinci Code*-esque misunderstandings of the manuscript in the popular mind. Walton also discusses the "King James Only" lobby, suggesting that the NT text of א is actually a strong witness against such views (including those who more critically champion the Byzantine text). The essay ends with a fascinating comparison of the textual transmission of the NT with that of the Qur'an. Sinaiticus, marked by variant readings and corrections throughout, differs markedly from the Qur'an, whose text appears to have been standardized in 653–705. For Walton, therefore, א is anything but irrelevant for modern audiences. Informed by the treasure trove of essays in this fine volume, the present reader emphatically agrees.

This volume is a welcome entry into the critical study of the NT text and its history of transmission. Researchers in this area will need access to this book, but its price tag may keep it out of reach for most individuals (theological libraries, on the other hand, should order it). I also strongly recommend readers familiarize themselves with the Codex Sinaiticus Project website. The color plates in this volume are illuminative, but more is to be gained from the fully digitized codex itself.

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Murray J. HARRIS. *John*. EGGNT. Ed. by Andreas J. Köstenberger and Robert Yarbrough. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman. 2015. 366 pp. $34.99.

Harris previously wrote a commentary on Colossians and Philemon as the first volume in the Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament series. He has recently written another installment in the series on John.

Harris bases his commentary on the Greek of the NT primarily using the fifth edition of the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament. The work is not for the average layman or perhaps

even the average minister. One must have a good grasp of the NT Greek to find real value in this work. Harris divides John into pericopes and then exegetes phrase-by-phrase.

This volume begins with a brief introduction focused on authorship, purpose, audience, setting, and date of John. The author also discusses how John relates to the Synoptic Gospels, John's style of Greek, and the overall structure of the book. The introduction concludes with a brief discussion of five recommended commentaries and some additional resources the reader may find helpful.

The minister familiar with the GNT will find this work of real value because the author has done the time-consuming work which will allow him to focus on developing the sermon. After each pericope this volume places several suggested homiletical outlines that provide a wonderful start for sermon series on John. This volume locates Greek verbs and explains Greek constructions. This volume breaks down each verse dissecting each Greek word and then discusses the syntax before providing commentary. Some have complained about the lack of an extensive bibliography at the end of the book, but at the end of each pericope, this volume provides a rather complete bibliography for that section.

This volume demonstrates an excellent knowledge of current trends in Johannine scholarship. When more than one suggestion is offered by commentators for the meaning of a text, this volume presents them along with reasons for choosing the one which best fits the text.

Harris's love for and deep knowledge of John's gospel is very clear. For him this commentary is more than an academic and scholarly exercise. Harris has provided the reader with a detailed analysis of the lexical and grammatical style and structure of the Fourth Gospel as well as a thorough exegesis. He allows the simplicity of the Greek and John's message to shine through. This author has found in this commentary a textbook which he will add to the required texts for his students the next time he teaches a graduate class on John's Gospel.

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C. Marvin PATE. *The Writings of John: A Survey of the Gospel, Epistles, and Apocalypse.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015. 558 pp. $39.99.

This volume is designed to introduce the undergraduate student to the writings of the apostle John as a textbook. The textbook is divided into three sections: Part 1—the Gospel of John; Part 2—the epistles of John; and Part 3—the Apocalypse. Each part begins with introductory issues: authorship, date, background, and structure. John's Gospel is covered in twenty-three chapters, his three epistles in fourteen chapters, and the Apocalypse in 19 chapters. It is clearly not a verse by verse commentary.

The book is an easy read, but not the technical resource scholars would seek. The first part begins with his assessment of John's Gospel. The author divides the Gospel into two major sections: The Book of Signs (1:19–12:50) and The Book of Glory (13:1–20:31), bracketed by the Prologue (1:1-18) and the Epilogue (21:1-25). Many sections are sparse.

In John 3, when Jesus tells Nicodemus that one must be born ἄνωθεν (*anōthen*, from above/again), Pate assumes that Jesus meant "from above," but that Nicodemus takes it to mean "again." The trouble with his assumption is that there is no Aramaic word with the double meaning. Jesus would have had to be speaking in Greek to Nicodemus, a Jewish leader. In John 4 when Jesus arrived at the Samaritan well at the sixth hour, Pate simply says at noon, without discussion of another option. In chapter 21 of his book, Pate indicates in a footnote that the meal Jesus shared with his disciples before his betrayal was not a Passover *seder* without any discussion.

Frequently after listing many alternatives for interpretation, Pate provides no clue as to his choice (the significance of the blood and water that came from Jesus' side at his crucifixion). He does, however, on occasion give extensive explanations (the significance of the testimony of the water, blood, and Spirit in 1 John 5).

Many scholars will be troubled with his exegesis of the Apocalypse. Pate provides extensive support for John's authorship of the book. He identifies four major schools of interpretation of the Apocalypse through church history: preterist, historicist, futurist, and idealist. After suggesting that the historicist view restricted itself to the battle between the papacy and the Reformation, Pate notes that this interpretation fell out of favor. After carefully describing the other three views, Pate describes his own view as an "eclectic" approach, seeing some merit in the last three approaches. His approach poses the danger of inconsistency. He ties the seals in chapter 6 to the fall of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. He includes Revelation 7 in the same historical setting, seeing the 144,000 as a figurative number for the Jewish Christians who fled to Pella in 68 C.E. The innumerable host in 7:9-17 are, however, Gentile Christians who were martyred in Rome during the Neronian persecution in the 60s. The problem is compounded when he identifies the rider on the white horse in Rev 6:2 as the antichrist during the tribulation. After describing three approaches to eschatology in Revelation as amillennial, postmillennial, and premillennial, Pate concludes that ". . . the most natural reading of Rev 20 is premillennial."

Pate's conservative understandings of the authorship and dating of the books are worthwhile. Overall, Pate's treatment of the writings of John is solid. It can serve as a good undergraduate textbook, providing plenty of room for discussion.

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Joseph H. HELLERMAN. *Philippians.* EGGNT. Ed. by Andreas J. Köstenberger and Robert Yarbrough. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2015. 368 pp. $29.99.

The EGGNT offers pastors, students, and scholars one of the more useful series on the Greek New Testament. This volume on Philippians continues the series' goals admirably, not simply focusing on semantics and the grammar of individual words, but offering insight into syntax, discourse analysis, poetics, and epistolary structure.

The introduction contains brief discussions on authorship, date, and provenance, the occasion of the letter, and linguistic and rhetorical features. While giving the reader insight into his conclusions on these matters, it is not Hellerman's intent to go into detail, and readers desiring such will need to search elsewhere.

Unlike most exegetical commentaries on Philippians, Hellerman thankfully outlines his comments using epistolary structures, such as opening (1:1-11), body (1:27–4:9), and closing (4:21-23), and places each section of Philippians into these categories. He explains well the reasons for those verses he does not believe fit directly into these categories (e.g,. 1:12-26), but indirectly relate to them. Although one disagrees with his decision to start the body of the letter at 1:27 rather than 1:12, it is a quibble in an otherwise excellent outline.

This commentary is the most prolific exegetical commentary on the Greek text of Philippians available today. This volume addresses each word in the Greek text, even if only at a clausal level. He parses for the reader nouns, verbs, and verbal forms, such as infinitives and participles. In the case of prepositions, he guides the reader to their functions, depending on the case with which they appear. For instance, in Phil 1:5, he notes that ἐπί with the dative ". . . indicates the basis or

ground of an action (22).” In each paragraph of commentary, this volume provides seamless quotes and summaries from the best modern, exegetical commentaries, such as those by O’Brien, Fee, and Reumann. Similarly, it supports each discussion of semantics, grammar, and syntax with better and widely available lexicons and word books, such as TDNT, EDNT, and BDAG. Grammars by Wallace, Blass/Debrunner/Funk, and Moulton are common sources. Moreover, this volume includes significant instances of textual criticism, such as the unique incidence of τὸ ἔργον Χριστοῦ, the work of Christ, in Phil 2:30 (163). It supplies historical background, such as sociological or archaeological information as well.[1] Hellerman is thorough in his analysis.

Another strength is the use of thought-flow sentence diagrams in this volume demonstrating the poetic or rhetorical use of literary devices, word parallels, and significant ideas and characters within the text.[2] The excellent diagram on 3:2 underscoring Paul’s use of isocolon surrounding the imperative βλέπετε, is an example (167).

At the end of each major section, this volume includes two aides which increase the usefulness of the commentary. The sections entitled, “For Further Study,” direct the reader to books and journal articles addressing major issues within each epistolary division. Many of the titles and subjects incorporated would likely escape the inexperienced reader. Additionally, this volume offers outlines for those seeking homiletical advice.

It is likely only those students, pastors, and academics with advanced Greek skills will find it helpful, though beginning students may find it useful with guidance.

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[1] E.g., “the honor inscriptions found in the forum and cemeteries of Philippi,” in providing context for Phil 3:1-11, 168.

[2] The title “thought-flow diagramming,” is from Richard Young, *Intermediate New Testament Greek: A Linguistic and Exegetical Approach* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 268.