Book Reviews

Thomas S. KIDD. *America's Religious History: Faith, Politics, and the Shaping of a Nation.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2019. 320 pp. $24.99.

In the current volume, Kidd offers a rich and nuanced exploration of Christianity in America. The specific term "Christianity" is chosen here over the more general term "religion," because Kidd focuses almost exclusively on the history of the Christian church in America, though he does briefly mention other faith traditions, including Judaism, Islam, and Buddhism. Kidd's excellent text explores the ways in which Christianity both influenced and was influenced by American culture from the colonial period to the dawn of the twenty-first century.

Distinguished Professor of History at Baylor University, Kidd stands among the leading scholars of American religious history today. His numerous publications include the recently published two-volume *American History* (2019) and *Who Is an Evangelical? A History of a Movement in Crisis* (2019). In addition to his impressive list of notable publications, Kidd also serves as a regular author to the popular evangelical blog, The Gospel Coalition, where he writes frequently on the subject of evangelical history.

This volume offers a chronological path through America's Christian history by way of short, accessible chapters centering on topics ranging from religion in the American Revolution to civil religion and the Cold War. Following traditional periodization of American history, seven chapters center on pre-Civil War America, and seven chapters trace America's steps following the war between the states.

Given Kidd's background and areas of expertise, readers will not be surprised to find a thorough treatment of American revivalism and evangelicalism. Prominent revivalists, such as George Whitefield and Billy Graham receive a disproportionate amount of attention, and the final third of the volume traces in detail the culture wars fought between American evangelicals and an increasingly diverse and secular society. Kidd skillfully traces this fault line from the early twentieth-century controversy between fundamentalists and modernists to the contemporary political battles centering on abortion, gay rights, and prayer in public schools. Those interested in American presidential history will find Kidd's final three chapters especially intriguing as he discusses how every President from John F. Kennedy to Barack Obama impacted the path of American religion.

Though Kidd provides in-depth discussions of American evangelical movements, he devotes far less attention to mainline Protestant denominations. This void becomes particularly noticeable in his treatment of post World War II America. In these chapters, he offers tremendous insight into Supreme Court battles centering on key evangelical issues (abortion, prayer in school, homosexuality) and large-scale evangelical movements (Promise Keepers and Billy Graham crusades), but devotes far less attention to traditional mainline denominations. In Kidd's defense, most mainline Protestant denominations experienced sharp numerical declines in the latter decades of the twentieth century, and many evangelical movements grew and became more active and noticeable in American culture and politics during this era.

Less present than even mainline Protestant denominations in Kidd's volume are African-American denominations. Aside from a brief mention of Richard Allen and the birth of separate African-American denominations, Kidd rarely mentions the vital role played by black churches in American culture and Christianity.

Of particular interest to members of the Stone-Campbell Movement is Kidd's brief discussion of Alvin York, a Tennessean and member of the Churches of Christ. During World War I, York originally filed paperwork to become a conscientious objector, but after becoming convinced Christians could fight in the war, he joined the effort. In fact, York eventually won the Congressional Medal of Honor for heroic actions in the war.

This volume's easy-to-read style makes it an excellent resource for any layperson seeking to understand better the ways in which Christianity developed in America. Additionally, this text could serve as an excellent introduction for seminary or college students in an American Church History or American History course.

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James L. MCMILLAN and Thomas H. OLBRICHT. *The History of the Restoration Movement in Illinois in the 19th Century.* Los Angeles: Sulis, 2020. 454 pp. $24.99.

McMillan and Olbricht present a new history of the Restoration Movement in Illinois. They utilize Nathaniel S. Haynes's 1915 *History of the Disciples of Christ in Illinois 1819–1914* but do not offer a mere "'second edition' of Haynes" (9). This is due to (1) the current ability to electronically search his text and "pull together data in ways he did not, with the goal of making what we hope are helpful observations," (2) research access to digitized Stone-Campbell Movement (SCM) periodicals that "provide details that Haynes did not know or chose not to provide," and (3) additional biographical information available today through obituaries in digitized periodicals, genealogical and cemetery websites, and "online county histories" (9).

Following an introduction to the O'Kelly, Smith/Jones, Stone, and Campbell-Scott Movements, and this monograph's relationship to Haynes's work, the first chapter describes early settlement in Illinois in general and among other denominations. Chapters 2 and 3 describe early Restorationist churches, despite the difficult task of determining the background of a congregation ("Jones/Smith, Stone, or Campbell-Scott") due to "fluidity" of relationships with each group (33). Chapter 4 concludes "that at least by the 1830s both the 'bodily exercises' and the claims to healing became very unusual in all wings of the Restoration Movement in IL" (79). Serving as an example of an Illinois leader, an essay by Erma Jean Loveland on George Alkire constitutes Chapter 5. Essays on six Illinois congregations by various authors are included in Chapter 6 along with charts covering Chicago churches, presently existing Churches of Christ founded before 1906, and the Illinois churches recorded by Haynes. Chapter 7 covers various topics: the views of others about the Movement, and "characteristics of church life in regard to church covenants, officers, and the role of women" (143).

The next three chapters are partially or fully devoted to controversy around a Jacksonville minister and college president, Walter Scott Russell. Due to their "connection to the W. S. Russell faction," Chapter 8 closely examines four of the periodicals briefly addressed by Haynes (157). One of the four was even "digitized for this project" (157). Colleges are discussed in Chapter 9. Particular attention is given to Berean College, giving a better understanding of the reasons for its closure. Its dissolution was partially related to controversy surrounding Russell, covered in Chapter 10. Russell critiqued some aspects of the Movement, emphasizing the heart, experience, and the Spirit. One of his emphases was a rejection of the Spirit working only through the Word in conversion and sanctification, something he believed impaired people from praying for their own conversion and the conversion of others.

Chapter 11 examines instrumental music in the SCM generally and in Illinois. Illinois conservatives such as Dwight L. Moody comprise much of "The Impact of Rising Conservatism on Illinois Restorationist Churches" (Chapter 12), but the chapter concludes with three SCM leaders. J. W. McGarvey, who lived for a time in Illinois—and debated H. L. Willett, a liberal professor at the University of Chicago—would be the most famous. Chapter 13 addresses liberalism outside and inside the SCM. Chapter 14 is entitled "Daniel Sommer and Illinois Conservatives." In the final chapter, McMillan and Olbricht push beyond Haynes's discussion of African Americans, providing two preachers not mentioned by him and more information on congregations he described that were founded in the 19th century. The chapter also covers African-American SCM periodicals, membership in the SCM, early black history in Illinois (including service in the Union army), and views on slavery in the Illinois SCM. Following a conclusion, appendices are devoted to a chart of "Statistics for Restorationist Growth, with an Emphasis on Illinois;" charts on Berean college enrollment, graduation numbers, and students; a manuscript on "Organs" by David Patterson Henderson from the Disciples of Christ Historical Society (DCHS) archives, and a chart of "Illinois Conservative Preachers and Congregations mentioned in Haynes and Conservative Papers."

This contribution has a number of useful features: indices of people and places, various charts, a map that accumulates Haynes's congregational data, footnotes, and the use of helpful research materials such as theses, newspapers, local histories, digitized SCM periodicals, and DCHS archival material. I appreciated the devotion of a chapter to African Americans with more information than Haynes. The further insight into the various Restorationist groups in Illinois, Illinois periodicals, and the Russell controversy increases understanding of the Movement in the state. Concerning Russell, the authors have shown that the controversy "was not merely a local issue," but "drew national attention among Disciples and other denominations" (194). This story deserves to be told with the likes of Sidney Rigdon, Dr. John Thomas, and Jesse B. Ferguson due to its impact and theological significance.

If given a second edition, I offer some recommendations. First, since content exceeds the 19th century in some places, and the authors say "they are limiting the observations to the nineteenth century and the first decade and a half of the twentieth century," revise the title. Second, while much more readable than Haynes's work which was comprised mostly of numerous local church histories and biographies of leaders, use a less topical treatment and a more interwoven narrative to make the text more engaging and less disjointed. Of course, history writing can still require a topical nature at times to dissect various issues, but a more chronological focus may lessen strained topical combinations like those in Chapter 7. Third, correct typos and errors of spacing, indentation, and italicization. Fourth, reduce large block quotes to move the narrative along. However, some are appreciated due to the opportunity to hear those from the past in their own words. Fifth, if available in the extant sources, expand on women beyond quoting Haynes. Sixth, reduce and summarize coverage of people and trends outside the Movement. Seventh, reduce repetition between chapters (i.e., the identical content between 44 and 86, 22 and 145-146, 106 and 319-320, 199-200 and 351). And, finally, include more analysis of theological objections to Russell. The sources and names cited seem to offer fodder for such discussion.

McMillan and Olbricht have provided a useful volume for those wanting to read more about the SCM in Illinois and to research it further. I am thankful for their hard work. I eagerly anticipate reading their second volume they intend to publish on the twentieth century.

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James COMO. *C. S. Lewis: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019. 134 pp. $11.95.

Since 1995 Oxford University Press has produced more than 550 volumes in their Very Short Introductions series. Topics range from Paul to Particle Physics, from Stem Cells to Stoicism. The present volume comes from C. S. Lewis scholar James Como, a founding member of the New York C. S. Lewis Society.

After an introductory chapter Como moves chronologically through Lewis's life and career. The chapters include "Roots," "Lewis Ascendant," "Fame," "Darkness and Light," "A New Day," "End Game," and "The Weight of Glory." Each chapter describes a period in Lewis's work and family life, along with summaries of his major works. Several black and white photographs leaven the text, as well as three sidebars unimaginatively called "Box 1." The Boxes include a roster of the Inklings, "Ten key ideas from Lewis's works," and brief descriptions of eight of Lewis's critics. (Kathryn Lindskoog appears twice in the book: once in the bibliography and again, unnamed, as part of "a small number of factionalists" who launched a "febrile personal attack" on Walter Hooper after Lewis's death.) The volume ends with a large reading list of primary and secondary sources, followed by an index.

Clearly, Como admires Lewis and considers him one of the great modern Christian apologists. He has produced a fact-filled, balanced work. Readers new to Lewis will learn the basics of who he was and what he did. Readers who have enjoyed Lewis's theological works but not read his scholarly literary works will get a taste of what he did in his "day job." The curious will learn that, yes, Lewis and Jane "Minto" Moore did have a love affair. As a bonus, Lewis's brother Warren ("Warnie") emerges a bit from the shadows and plays a larger role than Lewis fans may have realized. This volume will prove worthwhile to anyone with an interest in Lewis, both new readers and old.

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Keith L. JOHNSON. *The Essential Karl Barth: A Reader and Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2019. 371 pp. $40.00.

Who has read Karl Barth? It's a loaded question, to be sure. Barth's name looms large in American theological circles, but his overwhelming bibliography can be a lot to process. Where does a student begin? Barth's sermons? Or perhaps his academic articles? His long theological books? Add to the sheer volume of writing the fact that Barth wrote in German, and many pastors, laymen, and students might find the going simply too steep. This volume might be the balm needed for many.

This volume is not "essential" in the sense that only the most important items are included; nor is it an argument for a singular interpretation of Barth's complex theological legacy. Instead, the volume is meant to provoke in the interested and curious a desire for more; one might think of it as an invitation "to spend a lifetime exploring" the works of Karl Barth (ix). With that goal in mind, Johnson has selected a mixture of texts and arranged them so that these works correspond to the development of Barth's life. In other words, both the man and his writings are introduced in this book.

Divided into three parts, Barth's early development, his *Church Dogmatics*, and his political engagements during the years surrounding World War II, Johnson provides an eclectic array of writings that showcase Barth's thinking and his style at the same time. Additionally, Johnson provides a brief contextualization that accompanies each piece. These editorial bits prove helpful

for any reader, but especially for those encountering Barth for the first time. Johnson makes explicit that Barth rejected subjectivity in interpreting the Bible when the German pastor realized that "the Protestant doctrine of justification by grace alone through faith alone" provided the necessary bulwark against human subjectivity (18). Such little insights help to put Barth's thoughts on the resurrection alongside his "doctrine of the Word of God" in such a way that the concepts illuminate one another (58, 119).

While Barth's theological development is fascinating, and his exegetical methods important to understanding his work, what brings the writings together in this volume are the pieces that speak of community. Barth's "An Answer to Professor Adolf von Harnack" might be just another example of theologians debating, but it becomes something more when it is read in conjunction with Barth's "Christian Community," excerpted from *Church Dogmatics*, where Barth makes obedience to Christ the central tenet of belonging to the Church (300). Read in such a light, Barth's debate with Harnack raises from mere disagreement to a question of the fundamentals of the faith. This is undoubtedly the biggest advantage in coming to Johnson's book, whether the reader is familiar with Barth or if they've only recently encountered his thought. This volume reminds us that Barth is a human being, whose works do not exist in a vacuum but are spun from the tapestry of a real life.

Some might quibble with Johnson over his selections, and he acknowledges as much at the very outset of the book. Could he have included more from Barth's seminal commentary on Romans? Or course. Would it have been nice to have "The Christian Message and the New Humanism" in this collection, especially given its relevance to Johnson's "Conclusion?" Sure. But this volume is not about exhaustive efforts aimed at explicating Barth's theology. Johnson's work editing and commenting on the works of Barth presented accomplish for the reader the same thing he observed about himself in his "Preface." Johnson notes that Barth's "work directs me to Jesus Christ and reminds me that Christ is for me and for the world" (x). May every reader find in this volume the evidence of a mind marinated in the truth of Christ, and thus find themselves moved to know Christ better because of the encounter.

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Phillip CARY. *The Meaning of Protestant Theology: Luther, Augustine, and the Gospel That Gives Us Christ.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2019. 384 pp. $32.99.

This volume begins with a significant question, why should anyone be Protestant, especially in light of the great tradition? To answer this question Cary argues that the Protestant tradition is a form of piety that can be tied into the great tradition of the church. That form of piety is rooted in the proclamation of the gospel and in the raising of that proclamation to a sacramental standing.

Cary contrasts the theology of Augustine of Hippo, the great pillar of Roman Catholic theology, against Martin Luther the first magisterial reformer. The volume is divided into three sections. The first section, chapters 1–4, details Cary's interpretation of Augustine's life and theology. Cary highlights Augustine's formation in the Neoplatonist tradition and suggests that this philosophical school undergirds the majority of his spirituality. Carry argues that this is manifest in Augustine's understanding and use of the intellectual vision of God as the goal of Christian life. Augustine, according to Cary, thought of the Christian life as a path toward God and that this path ultimately led to the inward vision of God.

In the book's second section, chapters 5–8, Cary describes Luther's life and theology in order to highlight not vision of God but hearing the word of God. For Luther, justification by faith only

makes sense if God is who God says he is. Faith, then, is trusting that God is who God says he is. As such faith is responding to the external word of God, not the internal vision of God in Augustine. Cary also suggests that Luther's theology of the word of God raised the concept of the word of God to that of a sacrament in the Protestant tradition. For Luther the gospel gives us Christ. Because of that gift, we can have confidence that God is who God says he is.

The final section, chapters 9–12, begins with a helpful critique and honest assessment of the problems of Protestant overconfidence. Cary addresses Luther's sinful treatment and description of Jews and discusses some lasting troubles with Protestant confidence in interpreting the Scriptures. The section then integrates Luther's theology of the word into theological categories and subjects of salvation, sacrament, and Trinity. In this section Cary distinguishes Luther's understanding of human freedom from that of both Calvin and Augustine. Throughout, Cary suggests that Luther's turn to the external word of God is the Protestant codicil to Augustine's inward turn.

The strengths of the volume are its insistence that Luther's theology of the gospel gives Christians confidence in who God is. This confidence means that we trust God that our sins are forgiven, and it is so. While this volume is a defense of Protestant theology, particularly Luther's, it does seem to unfairly represent Augustine's concept of intellectual vision. Augustine's idea is rooted in the Bible and Christian witness and does not attempt to deny or move on from the humanity of Christ. In addition, the vision of God is still a vision not of the self, but of God. Nonetheless, Cary has offered a stimulating argument and opens the door for more conversation.

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Wolf KRÖTKE. *Karl Barth and Dietrich Bonhoeffer Theologians for a Post-Christian World.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2019. 272 pp. $48.00.

Wolf Krötke is Professor Emeritus of Systematic Theology at Humboldt University in Berlin, whose work has not been much translated into English. This collection of essays, eight on Barth and eight on Bonhoeffer, stretch from 1981 to 2013, and have been very readably translated by Professor John P. Burgess (of Pittsburgh and the Center for Barth Studies at Princeton Theological Seminary; but they read almost like a monograph. There is no systematic comparison of Barth and Bonhoeffer, but the individual essays are focused on particular challenges in the work of each, coupled with careful exegesis of the points in question.

Some striking points emerge, doubtless benefitting from the advantage of hindsight. Both were criticized for what was regarded by contemporaries as an "uncritical" use of the Old Testament; more than that, it was seen as a sign of Jewish influences in Christianity that were unhelpful. From the vantage point of today, where a variety of modes of biblical interpretation is more generally accepted, the seeds of anti-Semitism may be more clearly seen—"seeds," because some fortunately fell on stony ground. Nevertheless, it becomes easier to understand why the ideas of the "German Christians," which came to dominate the official German Churches during the Nazi period, were seen as progressive.

Krötke also helpfully chronicles how the German Democratic Republic found it possible to interpret Bonhoeffer in a way that fitted Marxism, despite his fundamentally conservative view of the state and top-down approach to political order. In fact, his essay on Bonhoeffer's understanding of the state is fascinating. One can also compare the essay on Barth's understanding of "Theology and Resistance" with two similar essays (in subject matter) of Bonhoeffer's understanding of resistance later in the book. One of the latter—"God's Hand and Guidance" *Dietrich*

Bonhoeffer's Language for God in a Time of Resistance—was particularly helpful in making sense of the traditional approach to Providence, which has been so important, particularly in the history of Protestant Dissent. I found myself referring to my set of Bonhoeffer's *Complete Works*, more often than Barth's *Church Dogmatics.*

However, the really eye-opening essay was on Bonhoeffer's exegesis of the Psalms. He routinely commented on the Moravian text for the day, always from the Psalms, in his prison writings; and at Finkenwalde made a point of drilling the students in Psalm 119. He sternly rebuked those who would rather not read the imprecatory verses, or the laments, for showing the dangers of German liberal theologians in putting their views ahead of the compilers of the canon. Instead he shows us how we can truly *pray* the psalms through Jesus, who himself, according to the Gospels routinely referred to them. Initially I saw this essay as an interruption, but by the end I realized how necessary it was.

If I have commented more on the Bonhoeffer essays than those about Barth, it is because Bonhoeffer's challenge of what Christianity means in a religionless society is still very much with us, even where the numbers in our churches are flourishing; but the first essay on Karl Barth as a theological conversation partner, written out of Krötke's experience in East and West Germany, is a gripping account of the way theology almost imperceptibly adjusts to its context—perhaps the most important insight in the book

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Brett SALKELD. *Transubstantiation: Theology, History, and Christian Unity.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2019. 270 pp. $29.99.

I should confess that the dedicatee of this book, Dr Margaret O'Gara, was a colleague and friend of mine (though I did not know this before receiving the book); we were also the principal drafters of the text of the fourth round of the Disciples-Catholic International Dialogue, part of which is cited as marking an ecumenical breakthrough on transubstantiation in Professor Salkeld's book. That shows that the search to remove obstacles to Christian unity is one of the primary objectives Salkeld had in mind in writing this book. For many, if not most Protestants, this word has been 'an identity-marker' of their inherited opposition to Roman Catholicism; and therefore, a fundamental obstacle in the search for Christian unity. It is particularly acute for those in the Stone-Campbell tradition, where the Lord's Supper is celebrated weekly.

Among the many theological agreements that have improved relations between the Churches in the last sixty years, it is striking that so few of them, even on the Lord's Supper, apparently have anything directly to say on transubstantiation. I say "apparently" because a good many have approached the topic by trying to find alternative phraseology that is intended to reach the same conclusion—a common affirmation of Christ's presence in the Supper—without using the terms that have alternately puzzled and offended so many in the last four centuries.

As Salkeld rightly observes, when (and if) ordinary ministers and members read such statements, they are often left wondering whether the authors intend to affirm what ordinary members have always understood transubstantiation to mean, or not; and this enhances their suspicion of the whole ecumenical project. Salkeld therefore sets out to examine the history of the idea, what it was originally intended to mean, and the implications of the fact that not only Protestants, but also Catholics, have often misunderstood the meaning of transubstantiation; and therefore the latter are clinging to a meaning that was never intended, and what they do believe is something the Catholic Church has never affirmed. It is impossible in a short review to give a

complete account of what is quite a complicated intellectual trail; but here is my view of some essential clues along the way.

It is well-known that for the first millennium the term 'transubstantiation' was never used; and that the words of institution used by Jesus, "This is my body . . . this is my blood," meant what they said, without paraphrasing the meaning of "is." The term was first used officially in the first constitution of the fourth Lateran Council in 1215, but it reflected what was supposed to be a clarification of the relationship between symbol and reality, that had arisen in a controversy in the ninth century. Before that time, it may be safely asserted that there had been no contradiction between a symbol and the reality it signified; but from then on, in a controversy which gradually intensified, the view emerged that it was impossible to hold that the reality was identical to the symbol. If the bread in the eucharist was *really* Christ's body, it was not possible simultaneously to say that the bread *symbolised* Christ's body.

Aquinas tried to resolve the problem, using Aristotle's distinction between substance and accidents; but almost within a century the Schoolmen destroyed his solution by insisting that the accidents were the physical reality of Christ's body; that theology was what Martin Luther attacked. The Council of Trent tried to recover the situation by reasserting the doctrine of transubstantiation, but since misunderstandings of that word were the heart of the problem, the reassertion did not help Protestants. Clarification came from 20th-century OT insights into the Hebrew understanding of "remembrance"—*anamnesis* in Greek. This "remembrance" is more than an act of the mind; it makes real in the present an event which happened in the past, most obviously in those events recalled at Passover. The drawing out of the sacramental implications of this in Christianity is why Salkeld praises the fourth report of the Disciples-Catholic International Theological Commission, which emphasizes precisely this point. This volume is not easy reading, but it does repay careful attention as one of the best single-volume studies available.

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Michael MAYNE. *A Skilfully Woven Knot: Anglican Identity and Spirituality*. Edited by Joel Huffstetler. Foreword by Jeffrey John. Norwich: Canterbury, 2019. 95 pp. £10.99.

I sometimes think that Americans find the Church of England hard to understand; it is only partially similar to the Episcopalian Church, which Americans are used to, and it is certainly not like the Church of Nigeria. The principal reason is that both the latter two Churches are more polarized, whereas the Church of England is more comprehensive, sometimes frustratingly so when it comes to making hard decisions. Michael Mayne, who spent the last ten years of his life as Dean of Westminster (Abbey), wrote several books, which in the UK became spiritual classics. This one contains a number of addresses previously published, but relatively inaccessible, as well as a few sermons on special occasions, not previously published. They all carry the authentic note of Mayne's voice.

I knew him while he was Vicar of Great St Mary's, the University Church in Cambridge; and I noticed the change in his voice, as a result of his year-long illness at the end of his time in Cambridge, when he was overtaken by ME/CFS. I remember that at the time ME was often regarded as "yuppie flu," with many doctors regarding it as psychosomatic and college tutors being sceptical about its genuineness. In his book *A Year Lost and Found* (which had sold 15,000 copies by 2003 and remains in print) Mayne did much to convince many of its genuineness and debilitating influence. What he drew from his experience was a profound understanding of the effects of depression on the human spirit, and the illumination which that casts on the understanding of both God and Jesus, and the incarnation, which ties them together.

In all his books one senses a deep pastoral compassion for "the other," something that in retrospect characterized his entire ministry. This volume is an excellent illustration of that, remarkably illustrated by the variety of its contents. As Joel Huffstetler remarks in his Foreword, Mayne's vision of God's vast, all-pervading love, making us and keeping us human underlies all the writings in this book, and made him what he was: "kind, open, warm, accepting, humane, compassionate and deep"—not an exclusively Anglican vision, but one which has characterized Anglicanism at its best. His favorite quotation (which I did not know before) was from John Austin Baker, "The crucified Jesus is the only accurate picture of God the world has ever seen." As we emerge from the horrors of the twentieth century in Church and world, we see the need of God's incarnate love more than ever.

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J. Milburn THOMPSON. *Justice and Peace: A Christian Primer*. 3rd ed. Revised and expanded. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2019. 384 pp. $35.00.

Dramatic changes around the globe like 9-11 generally mean mankind faces different problems, which require innovative thinking or, if you are the author of a book on social justice and peacemaking, a new edition. Thompson describes this volume as a primer for college students, thoughtful Christians, and budding scholars who want to be "active participants in public policy debates and catalysts for constructive change in the contemporary world" (xii). What values and interests should we pursue, and how can we translate them into appropriate policies? What role should citizens play in policy making?

Thompson analyzes obstacles to justice and peace in our contemporary world working on three interrelated levels. The first step is to ask realistic questions about what is going on. It is to gather information and facts to see reality. The Christian virtue of compassion will aid in the pursuit of justice and love by rooting out indifference and apathy. The second level involves analysis and evaluation to find possible causes of problems and solutions to them. The Christian virtue of wisdom will help us be circumspect in our judgment. The third level advances to commitment and action. Solutions should be implemented, and strategies need to be deployed. The presence of the Christian virtue of courage should mean that our compassion is not mere sentimentality and our wisdom is not academic in the worst sense of the word (xii–xiv).

Thompson begins with a theological foundation based on the teachings of Jesus and the early church for values to be used for the social analysis throughout the rest of the book. Then he traces some major trends in the development of the twenty-first century world—colonialism, the industrial revolution, the prelude to the twenty-first century (the cold war), and trends in our new century like globalization. Numerous obstacles to a more just and peaceful world are addressed in the following chapters. The obstacles addressed—many of them being interrelated and some being subcategories of others—include: poverty, economic justice, globalization, climate change, resource depletion, environmental destruction, human rights, discrimination against women, racism, ethnonationalist conflict, war, terrorism, weapons, arms control, and military spending.

The analysis of these issues gives the reader an overall understanding of the complexities of the problems, but specifics are also found which grip the reader with the "human face" of what may sound like an economic, scientific, or political matter. Biblical and theological principles are invoked, which matters to Christians. Protestants will read helpful texts, sources, and documents they are not used to reading, since papal encyclicals and other Roman Catholic sources are often cited. Simplistic answers are not given to complex issues, but neither does Thompson surrender in

despair. He says there is a remarkable balance in Catholic social thought and "the record of the Christian community as a justice seeker and peacemaker is, on the whole, positive and constructive" (21).

In an epilogue Thompson portrays Christian citizenship as working for justice and making peace in a journey of four dimensions (255–262). First, one must grow in knowledge and wisdom. Second, make personal changes in line with one's commitments. Third, work for justice and peace within a faith community. Fourth, be an advocate for justice and peace in public policy. Suggestions and resources for Christian involvement are provided along with the same for information and study. An excellent update to an already splendid volume, the current edition is a first-class primer for seminary classes on social justice.

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Shane J. WOOD. *Between Two Trees: Our Transformation from Death to Life*. Abilene, TX: Abilene Christian University Press, 2019. 239 pp. $14.99.

Union with Christ is an oft overlooked and generally undertaught doctrine in the Stone-Campbell tradition as it is typically associated with Reformed theology. Wood seeks to remedy this situation with a tour de force reflection on the counterpart of union with Christ: union with death. In fact, Wood delivers a theology of death—and not just physical, but spiritual death. The premise, then, is that "Life isn't lived under Eden's tree of life or beneath the healing leaves of the tree in the new Jerusalem. Life is lived between these two trees. And between these two trees, life is hard," (10). Yet, the tree of Calvary changes all this.

Wood makes his case in four sections. Section One (The Tree of Death) sets the theological and biblical foundation for our union with death. Section Two (The Shadow of the Tree of Death) describes how our union with death destroys our life. The third section (The Tree between the Trees) illuminates how Christ's redemptive work overcomes our union with death as we unite with Him. The final section (The Light of the Tree of Life) describes how our union with Christ redeems various aspects of our life and how our transformation occurs.

Three strengths make this volume a joy to read. First, Wood employs vivid and creative language. His writing style completely engages and draws the reader in. He makes excellent use of personal stories (some tragic) and illustrations that connect with the reader. The strong biblical exegesis comprises a second strength. Wood connects important biblical passages with the topic and details their relevance. The final strength is simply the topic. As mentioned previously, union with Christ typically takes a back seat in Stone-Campbell theology (and by extension Arminian circles as well). This volume provides a welcomed and needed correction to this ongoing neglect.

Two weaknesses should also be noted. The first is a practical matter: the volume contains no discussion questions or study guide. This addition would have greatly enhanced the ability of the reader to make the jump from abstract concept to practical application.

The second weakness is theological. While Wood does a masterful job of establishing the theological rationale for his premise of transformation between the trees, the role of the Holy Spirit is a glaring omission. While the Spirit is mentioned a few times, those mentions are off-handed inclusions. Without a robust discussion of the Spirit's role and power in the transformation of the disciple from life to death, the reader is left with the impression that the transformation is done by a change in perspective, mindset, or simple determination. In Chapter Eleven ("Permission: The Path to Transformation"), Wood rightly notes that transformation isn't a moment, but rather a movement (156). His focus, though, is on the choices we make and how

they transform us. While this idea is certainly true, it is incomplete. For the Christian, the indwelling Holy Spirit guides that transformation as we walk and live in the Spirit. Wood misses the opportunity to provide a practical explanation as to how the Spirit transforms us by guiding our choices.

Finally, the intended audience is wide. On the one hand, it is a powerful spiritual autobiography that will deeply resonate on a popular level. One the other hand, the theological discussion will prove valuable to an academic setting. In the hands of a preacher, teaching pastor, or small group leader, this volume will provide a positive perspective on the power of Christ for living this life.

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Darren SARISKY. *Reading the Bible Theologically.* Current Issues in Theology. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019. 424 pp. $125.00.

This volume builds upon on Sarisky's excellent earlier monograph, *Scriptural Interpretation: A Theological Interpretation* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2013; hereafter *SI*). In *SI*, Sarisky drew upon the convictions of Basil of Caesarea, contrasted and complimented by the work of Stanley Hauerwas and Rowan Williams, to examine four categories of importance for thinking about and utilizing Christian Scripture: the reader, the text, reading itself, and the Church as the location of reading. At the end of that dense, historically rich, and dialectically useful work he raises the question whether it would be possible "to construct an account of theological interpretation around a theological view of the reader, the text, the practice of reading, and the community of interpretation? (244)"

This volume is the sequel to *SI* and implicitly—and sometimes explicitly—meets the question of its predecessor with a rich and rounded answer. Sarisky does not keep his focus on the exact four categories identified in *SI* point by point, though all four make appearances at key junctures of *RBT*. Sarisky's fundamental argument in the current volume is that "theological exegesis is a view of interpretation that considers the two realities of reader and the text, from two sets of interpretive categories, theological and imminent ones" (71). In order to substantiate that assertion, Sarisky expertly interprets another important premodern figure, this time Augustine of Hippo, and then proceeds to make pointed and important interventions into the contemporary discussions of theological reading and the relationship between theological reading and historical-critical reading strategies. The most significant contributions of this volume are Sarisky's rich exposition of Augustine's approach to theological reading (75-149) and the clear and helpful interventions he makes to the scholarly discussion of theological reading scattered throughout his "Constructive Proposal" (151-327). Sarisky's works of recovery and construction are preceded by a lengthy introduction.

Sarisky's nuanced discussion of Augustine's understanding of scriptural signs is clear and compelling, both historically and as suggestive of contemporary applications. As he argues, Augustine understands the reader to be an embodied soul, estranged from God, yet reconcilable to God and reformable through the process of reading the signs of Scripture, which are providentially given by God for that purpose. In the latter chapters, Sarisky's constructive volume, his discussions of the implications of confession (225-226) for reading, his insistence on the iconic—or referential or testimonial—nature of the text (see 239-242, 268-283), and his frequent advertence to the historical particularity and diversity of Scripture (273 n 76, 278-279, 281, see also 93-94) are all salutary. These positive elements sanely bring together convictions for affirming both a robustly faithful and assiduously critical approach to the text of Christian Scripture.

My only critique of this otherwise outstanding volume is that Sarisky's theological anthropology is unevenly developed. He regularly utilizes ocular metaphors and metaphors about perception and sensation for understanding and judgment, but such metaphors, while conventionally acceptable, nevertheless obscure what practically happens when persons read and understand anything, Scripture included. Sarisky's whole argument assumes that Christian readers must read Scripture in a Christianly way, and that God intends such Christian reading and use of the text. Such a posture requires readers to "see" or "perceive" the text in Christian ways. But Christian reading is not a matter of perception or sensation, because reading is not a matter of sense or perception. Reading involves sensation, to be sure, and readers receive the text as meaningful and objectively other and so it can be said that the text "pressures" us. But reading requires personal development and a whole host of subjective, psychological, or conscious activities—such as wonder, questioning, pondering, insights, critical reflection, and others that are different than sensation—which Sarisky does not treat systematically. Sarisky has rightly identified and written well about some of those conscious activities, such as faith and specific interpretive commitments, but despite the usefulness of his theological anthropology it is psychologically and epistemologically underdeveloped.

While his historical and dialectical work is excellent, it is possible to lose the thread of his constructive arguments in his expositions of various figures and approaches. Responsibility requires that all theologians take historical care, but it is also possible to treat systematic questions in more direct ways. Notwithstanding those minor critiques, theologians, biblical scholars, pastors, and motivated Christian readers interested in the nature of Scripture should not miss this book. The price tag for the hardback is prohibitive, but I hope and expect that a paperback will appear in print soon for this important volume.

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Michal Beth DINKLER. *Literary Theory and the New Testament.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019. 286 pp. $65.00.

This volume by Dinkler (Associate Professor of New Testament at Yale Divinity School) will help further cement the author's status as a leading voice in the literary interpretation of the New Testament. This volume is the perfect blend of introduction to the topic, survey of scholarship, and scholarly contribution. After introducing the topic and providing several key definitions in the Introduction, Dinkler bridges the gap between historical-critical and literary approaches to the NT in chapter one by drawing on "Meyer Abrams's taxonomy of mimetic, expressive, objective, and pragmatic modes of literary analysis" (43). The next three chapters survey the intersections of NT studies and literary studies as Dinkler explains formalism (chapter two), structuralism (chapter three), and poststructuralism (chapter four). The author encourages interpreters to draw on the best insights of all of these approaches in their study of the New Testament.

The next two chapters are application of literary and critical theory to two key areas of NT study: the Gospels (chapter five) and Paul (chapter six). In my estimation, Dinkler's primary contribution is attacking the false dichotomy of history versus literature that has dominated much literary study of the New Testament. She demonstrates clearly that these two disciplines can be mutually informing, particularly in chapter five (in addition to chapter one). Here Dinkler examines Jesus as a character in the third Gospel (her area of particular scholarly expertise) showing that Luke's Jesus is "neither a purely *paper Jesus* nor an extratextual *historical Jesus*, but rather a paradoxical protagonist Jesus who is constructed and circumscribed by the Gospel's

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dynamic narrative form and by the concrete, real-world readers who instantiate it" (161). An additional contribution is the combination of poststructuralist literary theory with other critical theories (affect theory and ecocriticism) in a reading of the Corinthian correspondence in chapter six. The NT epistles are not typically the object of literary study, but here Dinkler "exposes anachronisms in the common assumptions about epistolarity that continue to guide NT scholars, and also offers an alternative way forward" (189).

I have already used this volume with upper division undergraduates in a classroom setting. I can imagine many professors finding Dinkler's volume useful as a course text for upper level undergraduates or graduate/seminary students who are interested in various methodological approaches to the NT. The volume is also informative for the NT scholar, even those who have expertise in literary theory. This volume deserves a wide readership.

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Fiona C. BLACK and Jennifer L. KOOSED. *Reading with Feeling: Affect Theory and the Bible*. Semeia Studies 95. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature Press, 2019. 225 pp. $55.00.

This volume deals with affectual ways of approaching the Bible and some other writings (such as the Jewish prayer book and certain modern literally works). It is a collection of eight essays by various scholars, with an introductory chapter by the editors. The essays are followed by two responses by other scholars, the first response basically positive toward the essays, and the second, skeptical (if not downright hostile). The volume has excellent bibliographies of resources for further study regarding affective theory and practice. The volume concludes with information about the contributors (omitting Rhiannon Graybill's bio), and an index of ancient sources and modern authors.

From the very beginning of this book, I felt as if I had been dropped into a strange jungle, without a guide. However, I was excited about readings of the Bible that take seriously its emotional aspects, an aspect of reading the Bible—or any literary work—that has been too often and too long neglected. But this volume deals with only a narrow range of affects—mainly grief, anger, and unhappiness. In a sense, this is a strength of the book. These affects have often been neglected or resolved facilely, especially in conservative circles. Responses that take seriously the so-called "darker" affects should be applauded.

A further strength is that this volume makes the important point that the Bible has often been used coercively. This volume can be read as a cautionary tale about the dangers of using the Bible in destructive, manipulative ways that marginalize people. However, these essays seem to this reviewer to ignore—almost completely—the validity of the so-called "lighter" affects. Thus, for example, Graybill's essay on Jonah focuses on the prophet's freedom to be unhappy. In fact, Graybill thinks of Yahweh's object lessons and questions to Jonah as being "coercive." God becomes, in some sense, the villain of this story, and Jonah's desire for the destruction of Nineveh is valorized by this approach. This is an example of the tendency of these essays to read biblical stories "against the grain." While some readers will find such readings thought-provoking, many will find them deeply problematic. Reading critically is not necessarily synonymous with reading without sympathy.

In some cases, these essays seem to cross the line into inanity. For example, Seesengood says that "one might even argue that the Bible is the root of . . . expectations of sex work" (154).

However, every human society seems to have developed the sex trade, so blaming the sex trade on the Bible, seems to this reviewer to be an overreading and misreading.

One of the most serious weaknesses of the volume seems to be inherent in affect theory. If, as some of the authors of this volume say and others imply, affect is not linguistic (and is even precognitive), how does one write or speak about affect? Granted that books about the Bible, like the Bible itself, need to take seriously affective aspects of writing and reading, the writing of books is still a cognitive activity. Thus, the writers of this volume may be sawing off the limb on which they are perched.

Many Bible interpreters will find this volume a tough go. However, it may well do them good to see some alternative interpretations of the Bible. This volume may also warn us all, of our tendency to interpret the Scriptures in ways that leave us comfortably "inside," while others are excluded. This volume might be used in an advanced seminar on biblical interpretation at the master's level.

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Kevin J. VANHOOZER and Owen STRACHAN. *The Pastor as Public Theologian: Reclaiming a Lost Vision*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2015. 222 pp. $19.99.

Disgruntled with the state of the modern pastorate, Vanhoozer and Strachan set out to cast a new vision, one that spurns contemporary models (pastor as CEO, therapist, storyteller, visionary, staff manager) and calls pastors to return to the work of reading, understanding, and proclaiming the basic doctrine of Scripture. Operating from the position that "pastors are and always have been theologians" and that all theology is in some sense public (15-16), this volume offers a clarion call for all pastors to do the public work of embodying the doctrine of Scripture among their congregations and in the world (5).

After a detailed introduction to the nature of the problem, namely that the modern pastorate has lost its vision, Vanhoozer and Strachan begin scaffolding a structure on which to rebuild. In Chapter One, Strachan compares the roles of the modern pastor to those of Israel's prophets, priests, and kings: to lead the people in purity (priest), to manifest the word and presence of God (prophet), and to represent the earthly rule of God (king). Chapter Two finds Strachan giving a brief history of the pastorate, noting the historical downturn from the early church fathers (whose theological writings were born of pastoral concerns), through the medieval period (in which theology was removed from pastoral training and relegated to the academy), to the modern pastorate's upbringing in The Great Awakening (in which pastors lost focus on theology and became more concerned with conversions). Vanhoozer returns in Chapter Three to outline a brief biblical and theological sketch of the pastorate. Adopting the "indicative/imperative" structure common to the interpretation of Paul's letters, Vanhoozer suggests that the role of the pastor is to publicly declare what is in Christ (indicative) and encourage the congregation to live out what they have in Christ (imperative). Vanhoozer then outlines a series of essential practices by which pastors should declare and encourage these things: preaching, worship, and prayer (Chapter Four). Chapter Five, "Fifty-Five Theses on the Pastor as Public Theologian," presents the book's major declarations in bullet-point form. Two or three "Perspectives" appear at the end of each chapter in which local pastors reflect upon the chapter's content and how the work of theology forms their practice of ministry.

Vanhoozer and Strachan's focus on returning to the historic purpose of the pastorate is commendable. As they define that purpose as centered on the proclamation of the Scriptures and

the discipling of the Body unto good works, they avoid the trap of overcondemning (a pitfall nearly unavoidable in similar literature) and work diligently to cast a positive vision. Rather than abandon the extracurricular activities commonly associated with the pastorate (counseling, leadership, visitation, programming, and community engagement) the authors repurpose them toward the singular goal of building up the Body of Christ in the Kingdom work of the gospel.

With any compilation or cooperative project some parts/authors shine while others struggle. Such is the case here. Most notable for readers of *SCJ* will be the overt emphasis in Strachan's writing on the superlative nature of the Reformed version of the pastorate to the detriment of other traditions. All the emphasis is on the Reformed pastor, and examples of good pastors appear almost exclusively from that tradition. Strachan praises Calvin (39, 78, 79-80), the Reformers (77), Jonathan Edwards (82), and the Puritans (80-82), and rightly so, for among them were many good pastors. But pastors of other traditions are mentioned negatively. Whitefield is described as a "celebrity evangelist" (87) who, alongside John Wesley and Charles Finney (who wasn't Calvinist enough after modifying his views on sovereignty, 87), initiated the shift toward soul-winning by use of motivational schemes. Billy Sunday and Billy Graham are located in this tradition, and while Strachan doesn't disparage the ministry of Graham, he believes that Graham's part in this was to "cement the already-established trends" (90) of abandoning any sense of the pastor as a public theologian in favor of soul-winning. While Vanhoozer is free of this criticism, this trend appears outside of Strachan's work. Most of the "Perspectives" are written by pastors from this tradition, and Wesley G. Pastor's "Perspective" speaks negatively of the son of a Methodist minister who did not have saving faith until he was met with "the theology of the Puritans" (96-97). Is the reader to infer that the only true and right pastors have descended from the Puritans? In a volume devoted to a vision of the pastor as a serious, theologically reflective leader, why is there no mention of Thomas Haemmerken (á Kempis), François Fenelon, E. V. Hill, Howard Thurman, Eugene Peterson, or William Law? In a volume dedicated to casting a vision for the pastor as a public *theologian*, where is the work of Bonhoeffer or Alexander Campbell?

Overall, this volume does a good work in calling those in located ministries (of all traditions) to recover their rightful place as those who work out—publicly, among their congregations—what the Scriptures proclaim that we have in Christ. For pastors looking to recover a sense of this purpose and (some of) its historical roots, this volume is a breath of fresh air. Its air might have been sweeter still had its historical focus been broader than simply the Reformed tradition.

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Joni S. SANCKEN. *Words That Heal: Preaching Hope to Wounded Souls.* Artistry of Preaching Series. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2019. 129 pp. $18.99.

Preaching, when done well, is about much more than biblical exposition. It speaks to both the head and the heart of the listener, addressing the timeless message of scripture to the timely context in which the sermon is crafted. Although Tom Long's long-held concern about "therapeutic preaching" still holds true, preachers and teachers of preaching are waking up to a new reality, something that the pastoral care arena has known for quite some time—preaching and sharing the message of the gospel is most effective when it connects with the person's point of need. To this end, Sancken, an Associate Professor of Homiletics at the United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio, offers the current volume.

This volume is one of the more recent additions to the ongoing Artistry of Preaching series, a relatively new series that seeks to provide thoughtful insight and creative instruction on areas not

commonly addressed in homiletic instruction. Other volumes have focused on using poetry, crafting effective and captivating imagery, and integrating learning theory into one's homiletic. In this volume, the author seeks to offer guidance to the compassionate preacher who finds herself or himself managing much more than translation issues and doctrinal differences. As the emerging field of trauma studies becomes more recognized and its connectivity to other disciplines becomes more accepted, we who practice the care of souls find ourselves needing to adopt a more pastoral tone to our preaching in order to address the deep-seated hurts, angers and concerns that are brought to the Lord's table each and every Sunday.

This is a fantastic primer for preachers who want to know how to preach pastorally and effectively address "soul wounds" in their congregation, as well as for those who teach practical ministry who are trying to speak to our current sociological context. In addition to her thoughtful prose, the author provides both sample sermons and exegetical supplements to help preachers navigate this often-confusing topic. Of particular note, the opening chapter provides an excellent summation of the current thinking on trauma studies, especially from a theological context. Also, her closing chapter and Appendix A provide a thoughtful, challenging paradigm for crafting sermons that are sensitive to the residuals of trauma.

Her engagement with relevant homiletic and trauma studies material is quite solid, especially for such a concise and coherent treatment. My only critique is that I had hoped to see more engagement with relevant pastoral care literature. Her use of the *STAR Strategies for Trauma and Resilience* is solid (and something I plan to personally investigate). Yet, as someone who has spent just as much time in the pastoral care field as the preaching field, I do think a small something is missing. Overall, however, this is a great resource that provides a significant voice in preaching to those who have experienced trauma, especially coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic and the protests connected to the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, David Dorn, Botham Jean and others.

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Lee C. CAMP. *Scandalous Witness: A Little Political Manifesto for Christians.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020. 192 pp. $19.99.

Hope and change. A vacuous political slogan by itself, but one with which we are familiar. Such a slogan as hope and change is the epitome of modernity, of planned obsolescence and the waiting for that which will finally fulfill our longings but which never comes. Unless, as Camp argues, that hope has specific content in someone or something for a radical intervention in history that actually brings substantive change, the kind of change that would make warriors become farmers and profiteers turn their attention to the common good, and death to be defeated, in short to live in response to the reign of God. That hope and change is what Camp writes about in the current volume. When hope is put in Christ and change is repentance, then we have a politics to which we can rightly give our lives.

Camp offers fifteen propositions about what such a politics might entail. I will address key themes that hold them together and suggest some places where they miss the mark. Camp suggests that his propositions are "neither right nor left nor religious," that is they cannot be fit nicely into the partisan politics of the nations nor can they be merely spiritualized opiates that placate us as we wait for heaven.

The basic account that Camp gives is that Christians know history is headed somewhere, namely God's complete reign when all shall be made right, and that this history is headed there because the end of history has already begun in the passion of Jesus Christ. Thus, Christians can and should live differently, betting their whole lives on this narration of history as having this particular end that has already begun. It is thus the case that Christians must reject any other interpretation of history that claims to know its end, whether it be capitalist or communist, democratic or authoritarian, along with claims that history is ultimately directionless.

While Camp offers a cohesive and compelling narrative arc, one wonders what it means for the average Christian in more specific detail. And this is where Camp's vision is clever and perhaps most compelling. This follows in a great tradition of Christian thinkers who have argued that various aspects of the Christian life must be ad hoc. For just one example, Kelly Johnson follows Dorothy Day to argue that for Christians, economics must be ad hoc. Readers of Camp might be surprised at his statement, "the Christian community is called to practice the sort of pragmatic realism embodied in Scripture itself" (112). However, when read alongside the claim of Christian politics as ad hoc it makes sense any manifesto for Christians must never be overly prescriptive but should have room for both the needs of that moment and for the Spirit to be at work as we listen to that Spirit together as the church.

Yet, Camp misses some opportunities. For instance, Camp spells out why America offers a bastardized version of hope, but only briefly discusses the racism upon which that hope is built, and does not mention that America's eschatology, from its beginning, has been pseudo-salvation offered by white men. Likewise, he says too little about the political economy that dominates global morality. Yes, America is not our hope, but Camp misses the opportunity to recognize that capitalism's language and ethos dominate the religious and moral imagination of Christians more than any nation.

This volume is indeed a proper characterization of Christians because of the claim that Camp makes as his last summarization of the totality of all his propositions. Camp writes, "It will be the hope of the Christ who breaks down all walls of hostility, making all things new, for captivity has, after all, been taken captive and death already undone" (172). This is what Christians stake our lives on, political or otherwise.

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Dru JOHNSON. *Human Rites: The Power Rituals, Habits and Sacraments.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2019. 148 pp. $17.99.

We are born into a world with prescribed rituals and routines that are prescribed by various sources. It is impossible to escape rituals, and in the current volume Dru Johnson invites the reader to accept this and examine the rituals and routines that we imbibe. Johnson goes as far as proposing that human beings are ritualized creatures. He divides his volume into four main sections, and they are the following: an introduction to the ritualized world in which we live, an examination of our ritual guides, a discussion on when our rites go wrong, and a presentation of rituals in the context of Christianity.

Johnson makes a compelling case for the power of rituals by giving examples from places such as basic training and the medical treatment of patients. The military uses an extremely concentrated form of ritual to take young recruits and turn them into a different type of human being in a short time. It appears that the best way to shape someone dramatically in a short time frame is to utilize ritual. Rituals can be bequeathed to us from our churches, training for our

profession or they can be prescribed just by living as a human being in the real world. To Johnson, the bottom line in all this is that rituals change us. Johnson asks the poignant question, "If our bodily practices determine how we understand the world, then we might want to ask ourselves three important questions: Who is offering us the rituals we practice? By what authority? And to what end?" (8)

Johnson points out that our rituals either come from God, our traditions, or the real world. Some of these rituals are easy to discern in our lives. For example, we practice communion in our churches because Jesus commanded it, novice teachers listen to expert teachers concerning routines and practices in the classroom, and electricians go through elaborate safety procedures passed down from others to stay safe on the job. The overarching question that one must ask is, "Whose ritual scripts are we following and why?"

One of the more fascinating parts of the volume is found in his interaction with death rituals. Johnson demonstrates that human beings need scripts to govern our lives. When a tragedy such as death comes to us, we need scripts and rituals to fall back on to navigate the unknown. People do much better with coping with loss and tragedy when they have a ritual to get them through. Research on trauma such as PTSD has revealed that patients and sufferers fare much better when therapy and coping involve rituals that involve the entire person.

Johnson also demonstrates that rituals have a *telos.* They are leading us somewhere. Some of the wit and character of the author comes through when he employs the example of The Karate Kid movie to make his point. Daniel, the young man in the film, is trained in karate by an older gentleman named Mr. Miyagi. Mr. Miyagi has Daniel perform many repetitive tasks that appear to have nothing to do with karate, but in the end, train Daniel to become proficient in the martial art. The ritual has a purpose and destination in sight.

Johnson also warns against flimsy and dark rituals that can warp and misshape us. One classic example of a lousy ritual is the ritual of cellphones and social media. Instead of these rituals bringing one to a fuller humanity, dark ritual robs us of the experiences and stimulation that one needs to develop. Many dark rituals and flimsy rituals require much less time and energy than is necessary to be profoundly changed.

Johnson concludes his volume by looking at rituals in the Christian setting. He makes the valid point that rituals should be reimagined but based on a long conversation and tradition within the Christian community. When our rituals threaten to become flimsy, we can fall back on the wisdom of ages past. One of the most significant contributions of Johnson is his insight into how one should view the world. The best way for a follower of Jesus to see the world is through the lens of the rituals that God has prescribed. The most powerful way to taste and know that the Lord is good is through sacraments and rituals within the Christian Community. I believe that Johnson's proposal that we can know about God's great acts in redemptive history from rituals is a challenge to the anti-sacramental views many espouse in Christianity today. Johnson implores us to realize that God wants us to do certain things with our minds, bodies, and hearts at certain times and circumstances. Johnson invites the reader to consider the rites, rituals, and scripts that form their life, and I believe that this invitation is timely and vital.

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Jennifer Allen CRAFT. *Placemaking and the Arts: Cultivating the Christian Life*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2018. 280 pp. $32.00.

In the current volume Craft claims that "arts are a form of placemaking, and that they 'place' us in time, space, and community in ways that encourage us to be fully and imaginatively present, continually calling us to pay attention to the world around us and inviting us to engage in responsible practices in those places. The arts help us to live locally and to know the places we are a part of" (2).

This volume is divided up into six chapters. The first chapter gives an explanation and reason for studying both the significance of place and art. As humans, and as Christians, we inherently dwell in a "place" and place matters. How we act in a place reflects the way we feel about it and our calling to it. A sense of place is important in making meaning in life. Art can help bring about this sense of place but also arises from a particular place and is informed by it in return. Craft argues here that the Arts are "central to the human imagination and flourishing in place" (22).

After building a case for why both art and place matter, chapters 2–5 go into detail on four specific types of places and how the arts interact with them: the natural world, the home and hospitality, the church, and society. Each chapter is infused with discussions of various expressions of art in these various arenas of our world. The practical discussion of the art and artists and how it connects us to place is helpful in our re-sacralizing of our life experience. Throughout these chapters Craft shows various ways in which art has value through it being self-sacrificial. It takes time and self-giving to create various forms of beauty, but this investment really amounts to love being given to both God and the community.

The final chapter builds a placed theology of the arts, in which it is argued that "arts serve to dynamically structure our lives in place through training us in love and a theological imagination understood in terms of God's calling to us as placemakers" (201). The hope here is that we each indwell our particular "place" in order to help us live out our Christian lives in the world.

I particularly enjoyed the chapter on home and hospitality, which I believe has often been neglected in our Christian experience. Hosting people in our homes and creating a visually inspiring and comfortable space in which we can engage one another is an important ingredient in our spiritual and communal growth as Christians. In a world where authentic community is getting more and more scarce, our homes, and the creative art within them, can serve as conduits to restore community connection and space. I also like that Craft leaves room for art to be seen broadly as our own created work, and how this connects us to the creator and the world.

Some might critique this volume as not going into enough detail on particular artists, although Craft does use some case studies and one volume can only do so much. My one other small critique is I would love to read a bit more about how the creation of art itself can help develop artists spiritually. Perhaps through creativity (especially within an arts community) one can be drawn into a spiritual connection to God. This is perhaps beyond the scope of this book, but seems to fit thematically somewhat.

In a world where so many are transitory, and often move based around career choices, many have lost a sense of place. Craft in this volume reminds of why place is important, and specifically how the arts can help us cultivate this sense of place and engage in our local community. This volume would be an excellent resource for a Theology and the Arts course, both at an upper division undergraduate or graduate level. It would also serve well for artists who have some theological background and wish to intentionally utilize their art to help create a sense of place in the world.

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David B. CAPES. *The Divine Christ*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2018. 224 pp. $25.00.

This volume explores the answer to the question, when did the followers of Jesus begin to think of him as divine, as more than a good man, a great teacher or wise rabbi, or even a prophet inspired by God? Instead of simply using the later Johannine texts (John 1:1-3, 20:28; 1 John 1:1-4) that point to the church's faith in the deity of Christ, Capes undertakes an intensive study of the use of YHWH by the authors of the New Testament. He shows NT texts that refer to Jesus as Christ and as Lord often quote or refer to the Hebrew texts that use the divine name and thus apply the divine name to Christ himself. While doing his own careful work with the biblical texts, it is obvious that Capes has also depended upon earlier research regarding early Christian devotion to Jesus by Richard Bauckham (*God Crucified: Monotheism and Christology in the New Testament*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998; *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament Christology of Divine Identity*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008) and Larry Hurtado (*How on Earth Did Jesus Become a God? Historical Questions about Earliest Devotion to Jesus*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005; "New Testament Christology: Retrospect and Prospect" in *Christology and Exegesis: New Approaches*, edited by Robert Jewett, 15-27, Semeia 30, Decatur, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 1985; *One God, One Lord: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism*, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988, 2nd ed., Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998).

Capes develops a foundation for his conclusions with a detailed explanation of how the Jews began to use the Hebrew word, *adoni*, LORD, as a vocalization when reading the YHWH texts and how this practice was incorporated into early English translations of the Old Testament. He explains the distinction in the use of the word when it simply means "lord' as opposed to its reference to the tetragrammaton, the name of Israel's deity. His thesis then depends upon demonstrating how the OT YHWH texts are used in the earliest Christian writings in such a way as to imply an identification with Jesus with the Israel's God who is named YHWH.

He explores how the early Christians used the Greek *kyrios* and what this title meant when they applied it to Jesus. The word was, of course, often used in reference to a superior, whether simply a master of a household or as a title of respect. However, Capes demonstrates that there are also occasions when followers of Jesus applied the title to Jesus in the context of a reference to a Hebrew text with the word YHWH.

The last chapter of the volume is an exegesis of the Pauline texts regarding Christ and what it meant for Paul to call Jesus "Lord" and to associate him closely with the Hebrew texts that have God's covenant name. Paul, he concludes, along with other early Christians, "considered Jesus constitutive of God's unique identity."

Although Capes focuses primarily upon the Hebrew YHWH texts and the use of these texts by the writers of the NT, he also undertakes a thorough and convincing critique of the thesis advanced in 1913 by Wilhelm Bousett (*Kyrios Christos: Geschichte des Christusglaubens von den Anfängen des Christentums bis Irenäus*) that Hellenistic Christianity in Syria first applied the title Lord to Jesus in their worship of him.

Following Bousett, many twentieth century scholars concluded that for the earliest Palestinian Christians, calling Jesus "Lord" had nothing to do with his divinity or their worship of him as divine. However, Capes demonstrates that even the first Palestinian Christians believed that Jesus deserved to be worshiped as Lord, not simply as a great master, rabbi or prophet, in other words not simply as lord, but as LORD, the embodiment of YHWH described in OT texts, deity itself.

This volume makes a convincing case for the fact that the disciples' faith in Jesus from the beginning meant more than faith in a prophet or rabbi. Jesus was recognized and worshiped as God incarnate from the time of his death and resurrection. This volume should be required reading for every student of the Christian faith, especially those who might give credence to the

story that belief in the deity of Jesus was a myth developed by pious disciples many years after his life on earth. Although Capes makes no reference to the long debate about the "historical Jesus," he has in effect demonstrated that the Jesus who lived and walked this earth and was executed by the Roman Procurator, Pontius Pilate, was from the very first viewed by his followers as divine.

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Debbie BLUE. *Consider the Women: A Provocative Guide to Three Matriarchs of the Bible.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2019. 225 pp. $18.00.

As I made my way into this book, I increasingly felt I could not write a review without knowing at least a bit about its author. Debbie Blue is co-founding minister of House of Mercy, a Christian congregation in St. Paul, Minnesota. Her earlier books affirm the Incarnation (*Sensual Orthodoxy*, 2004), decry bibliolatry (*From Stone to Living Word: Letting the Bible Live Again*, 2008), and explore the symbolism of birds in the Bible (*Consider the Birds: A Provocative Guide to Birds of the Bible*, 2013). Her bio at houseofmercy.org says she "approaches scripture like a farm wife handles a chicken, carefully but not delicately, thoroughly but not exactly cautiously." The website also says that, at House of Mercy "you may occasionally be led to suspend your intellect. But you will not be required to sacrifice it." These statements gave helpful context as I approached this volume.

The volume has four sections: "Abrahamic Faith," "Hagar," "Esther," and "Mary." The opening chapter establishes the book's feel, which I would describe as homiletical with grounding in theology (broadly understood) rather than in exegesis. Consider this quotation: "What does it mean to claim the blessings of Abrahamic faith? It means be unsettled. Abandon safe structures. Suspend what you know in order to discover what you don't know yet. Get lost. Have some vast and hungry questions you don't already know the answers to." (16) Chapter 2 maintains a loose grip on monotheism while unveiling its dangers, including the danger of worshiping the one God as a monolithic God. Here in chapter 2, I continued to gain an understanding of the approach. Exegetical underpinnings are typically unexpressed, and the reader is asked, rather boldly in my opinion, to accept certain statements without explanation, defense, or footnote. Examples include the claims, "Monotheism has hardly been established—had barely taken hold—before the exile" (20), and "Hagar's name means *other*, *outsider*, *stranger*" (36).

Section 2 consists of four chapters on Hagar. Chapter 3 argues that Hagar, not Sarah, is a matriarch parallel to Abraham. As such, her story tempers the patriarchy of Abraham's dominant story. As a key example, her encounter with God at the near-death of her son provides a preferable alternative to Abraham's more famous near-sacrifice of Isaac. Chapters 4–6 describe how the Genesis account of Hagar is enriched by her story as presented in the Koran and other Islamic sources. "I am grateful to have this matriarch to think about when I think about faith: the image of the mother running up and down hills to find water for her thirsty child. I can relate to it better than the image of the father being willing to kill his son for his god" (72).

As I progressed through the book, the word "provocative" in its subtitle resonated primarily in two ways. First, many of Blue's sentences begin with lead-ins such as "What if," "Perhaps," and "Maybe." She then proceeds as if the "maybe" were true. This way of provoking thought will strike some readers as enriching and others as frustrating. The second way I sensed Blue being provocative is in her view of God. For example, the lowercase "g" on "god" in the quotation at the end of the previous paragraph is not a typographical error. Because she does not "relate to" God's command to sacrifice Isaac, then the God of this story becomes a god—more specifically,

becomes "his god." Similarly, and in Blue's most bold foray from orthodoxy, she believes non-monolithic monotheism should have welcomed certain views of God that the Hebrew Bible considers idolatrous, especially goddess worship. "Sadly as the editors [the Deuteronomistic Historian] focus on the idolatry, they zoom in on the feminine face of God [Asherah]. Instead of celebrating the mother as one more expression of the unfathomably loving God of Israel, she is portrayed as a threat—as the source of idolatry" (116, also see 20, 131, 149, 154).

Section 3 is about Esther. Reading this section helped me understand and appreciate the volume better. While section 2 focused primarily on Hagar in Islamic texts, section 3 focuses on Esther in rabbinic writings. Toward the end of the section, Blue says what I had already come to know about her: "I hope someday to learn to read with the imagination that the spirit of rabbinic inquiry embodies" (123). Midrash asks questions of the text, questions which may not be answered. Midrash often gives a handful of interpretations without specifying which is best or true. Indeed, this is Blue's method as well.

Chapter 7 rehearses Esther's story while offering interpretive and provocative comments. Blue expresses high hopes that Esther can remind us of "a God more seductive than militaristic, more beautiful than violent" (99). The book of Esther contains much of both—beauty and violence—and Blue's following chapters focus on Purim as a means of grappling with this dangerous irony. Much of chapters 8–9 is the story of Blue's experiences with Purim, and here I should note that my earlier description of the book's feel as "homiletical" includes extensive storytelling.

Above, I mentioned Blue's "most bold foray from orthodoxy." My claim may need revision, for chapter 9, in a discussion of antisemitism and the Holocaust, likens Jesus' words against the scribes and Pharisees (more specifically, Matthew's version of Jesus' words) to Martin Luther's appalling treatise, "On the Jews and Their Lies" (118) Though both Jesus and Luther say better things elsewhere, they both should have thought about the consequences of their words. "Surely, if Jesus knew this sort of thing would lead to murderous prejudice, he would have been more graceful" (120).

Section 4 is about Mary the mother of Jesus. Chapter 10 gathers the biblical treatment of Mary, from the Gospels and beyond. Blue finds Matthew's birth narrative "a little off-putting" because it is "as much about men as possible" (134). She much prefers Luke's account, especially the Magnificat and Mary's interaction with Elizabeth. This chapter includes comments on the common artistic image, the Pieta. Noting that the NT does not picture Jesus' body in Mary's arms, Blue nevertheless gleans for us the wisdom that, "In all the many ways Mary would manifest to people in the ages to come, she will be seen most powerfully as someone who knows suffering" (143).

Chapter 11 then surveys these "many ways Mary would manifest to people in the ages to come." Stories and images from apocryphal Gospels, the anti-Christian philosopher Celsus, Syriac Christianity, the Council of Ephesus in AD 431, Our Lady of Guadalupe, and numerous other sources contribute to Blue's belief that Mary provides a counter-narrative to patriarchal Christianity. Most striking, Blue compares Mary to the Egyptian goddess, Isis, based on certain similarities such as images of Isis holding her son, Horus, which look similar to Mary holding Jesus. Blue calmly states, "this parallel does not seem threatening" (154). Many readers of *SCJ* will disagree. The volume ends with questions for small group discussion.

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Robert ALTER. T*he Art of Bible Translation*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019. 152 pp. $24.95.

Alter has shown himself a brilliant and engaging expositor of Hebrew Bible stylistics, and I owe much to his classics, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* and *The Art of Biblical Poetry*. Recently he has turned his hand to various translation projects, culminating in an English translation of the full Hebrew Bible. This brief volume is an extended reflection on, and defense of, his philosophy of translation—with special attention to Hebrew stylistics. Readers will not be disappointed by the wealth of illuminating exegetical examples that are characteristic of Alter's literary discussions.

After a brief "Autobiographical Prelude" and an introductory chapter titled "The Eclipse of Bible Translation" (more on this later), the bulk of the volume discusses the author's views on how to adequately translate the very characteristics that make the Hebrew Bible interesting *as literature*. The chapters discuss Syntax, Word Choice, Sound Play and Word Play, Rhythm, and The Language of Dialogue. On each topic, Alter succeeds in showing that translators cannot be content with merely conveying the basic plot or meaning of the original but must pay close attention to the Hebrew Bible's use of language. Stylistic qualities are not mere literary ornaments to each passage's content but contribute to the nuances of meaning and (just as importantly) to the power with which that meaning is conveyed.

On the one hand, it is hard to take seriously Alter's repeated overstatements suggesting that other biblical scholars and translators have been ignoring these literary qualities or have omitted them entirely from their interpretations and translations. On the other hand, it is certainly the case that Alter again and again brings out fine literary details, overlooked or obscured by past interpretations and translations. Repeatedly, he convincingly shows how these underemphasized elements of syntax or diction, of alliteration or rhythm or dialogue, are vital components of the texts in which they occur.

Alter is always interesting and often persuasive. Even where he is mainly restating commonplace knowledge about the Hebrew Bible's literary quality and stylistic characteristics, his presentation is unparalleled in its ability to engage and inform nonspecialists. Where his ideas are new, they capture the imagination and give the consistent impression that one's eyes have been opened. In fact, I would go so far as to say that Alter is a wizard with his prose, casting a spell that sweeps the reader from assertion to example to discussion to conclusion, so agreement seems all but inevitable.

Unfortunately, I am not sure that his wizardry is always benign. His translations themselves have received plenty of comment from reviewers of all stripes, some convinced that Alter's distinctive renderings surpass alternative versions, others far more dubious. What this volume contributes is a broader context for the controversy, a context dominated by the story told in his first chapter in which the brilliant (but, alas, inadequate) King James Version is followed by an unrelieved decline. In the rest of the book, paragraph after paragraph explains Alter's points by first arguing that *all* of the major modern English translations ruin the original's syntax, blunder its word choice, ignore its sound-play, wreck its rhythm, and flatten its dialogue. Even more disturbingly, Alter sometimes gives the impression that *whenever* interpreters read a word or phrase differently than he does, it is because they simply don't understand it. He even proposes various insulting explanations—from theological squeamishness, to insufficient familiarity with Hemingway or the *Iliad*—for why these earlier translators and interpreters failed so consistently. What he does not do is give any fair consideration to the question of whether these rival translators and interpreters have valid reasons, perhaps as strong as his own, for making different choices from his.

Alter gives those of us who have worked on biblical interpretation and translation much to ponder. Have we given too much attention to the idea that "everything in the biblical text needs to be explained" (4)? Perhaps. But the question cannot be answered without also asking whether Alter explains too little, using the same literal renderings while leaving English-language readers ignorant of the Hebrew words' well-attested semantic and idiomatic range. Do translators put too much stock in seeking a "natural" (and hence commonplace) English style? Perhaps. But the question cannot be answered without also asking whether, in fact, this is the wrong choice.

So, for example, Alter repeatedly takes English translators to task for not preserving the Hebrew Bible's parataxis (4, 6, 17, 28-31, 90). But since Alter rightly tells us that *all* Hebrew prose strings together clauses with the simple conjunction *vav* ("and" or "but"), why suppose that authors made a brilliant *intentional* choice to eschew subordinate clauses or specialized conjunctions? More varied syntax is standard for English (and Greek); parataxis is standard for Hebrew. Alter intriguingly proves that stripping down English syntax to conform to Hebrew literalism creates a strong prose style (he compares it to Ernest Hemingway [6], and to James Joyce [17]). But is this preferable to translating standard Hebrew prose style with a standard English prose style that Alter sneers at as "middlebrow" (6) or "undistinguished" (28)? Similarly, if using up-to-date English gives readers the "unfortunate impression . . . that the Bible was written the day before yesterday" (32), might Alter's preference for "antique coloration" (32) create an even more unfortunate impression that these texts sounded foreign and antiquated to their own original readers?

Perhaps it is only by begging such questions that Alter can cram so much fascinating, insightful, and fruitful material into such a brief and readable volume. Nobody will come away from this volume without appreciating Alter's eye for literary detail, deft interpretive choices, and powerful English-language renderings. Nobody will fail to appreciate his dozens of illuminating examples. Nobody will come away from this volume without having thought more deeply about the literary style of the Hebrew Bible, and of the English translations that attempt to render it.

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Robert ALTER. *The Art of Bible Translation*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. 2019. 152 pp. $24.95.

"Traduttore tradittore," the saying goes: translator—traitor. Those of us who have invested much of our lives in translating the Bible, or at least parts of it, will know the feeling. It is not just that true lexical equivalents between languages are extremely rare, or that so much of language is nonliteral, or even that connotations are often overlooked in our focus on getting the meaning across. It is also that, in Bible translation, we are bridging a gap of thousands of years. One learns to read between the lines in one's mother tongue by interacting with others, picking up subtle cues, and gaining insight through immediate feedback as to why some words or idioms are appropriate in some contexts and not in others. Those who become adroitly bilingual between modern languages have the opportunity to develop this skill through similar means. However, all of the native speakers of ancient Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek are gone. We are left with what amounts to a smattering of ancient texts and no conversational partners to help us understand the nuances behind the languages of the biblical texts. Hence the frequent footnote in modern English translations: "meaning uncertain."

Robert Alter is an unusual Bible translator in that his background is in English literature rather than biblical studies or linguistics. Growing up in a Jewish family, he learned both modern and ancient Hebrew as a youth. The combination of fluency in the Hebrew language and an ear for the finer points of English prose and poetry give him a unique perspective on the task of translating the Hebrew scriptures. This volume is an apologetic for his translation decisions in *The Hebrew Bible: A Translation with Commentary*, published in 2018 by W. W. Norton & Company.

One needs to understand that Alter is writing about translating the Bible into English or, by extension, other languages with a longstanding literary history. He believes that all of the other modern English translations have missed opportunities to preserve at least some of the original impact of the text through such devices as alliteration, fronting, word and sound play, atypical word choice, and rhythm. Translations that attempt to make the text feel contemporary do so at a cost. Alter prefers being as literal as possible and using the same English words for the same Hebrew words whenever possible so as to preserve Hebrew word play. He regards the modern notion of dynamic equivalence to be a corrupting force in translation. The focus cannot just be on meaning, but also on how the text feels and sounds. There is drama in the text, and it must be preserved. Most of all, he disdains the propensity of many translations to either explain or soften the text, as if English readers were not capable of filling in the blanks for themselves or needed to be protected from the terse or graphic style of Hebrew prose.

There is much to commend Alter's approach and translation. His scholarship is astounding. In spite of his critique of other translations, he humbly acknowledges his own frustrations and failures in preserving the dynamics of the text when English simply will not cooperate. It is a quick read, and students of biblical Hebrew and Bible translation would benefit from it. Nevertheless, his approach is not without problems. It would prove impossible in the majority of the world's languages. He often emphasizes sound and affect above meaning. The idea that the same word in Hebrew should always be translated in the same way in English is naïve and discounts the contextual nature of language. Finally, his disparagement of dynamic equivalence derives from a misunderstanding of the phrase. If anything, he should be calling for a more dynamic equivalence that produces the same auditory and emotional effect in the hearer/reader as it would have for the original recipients.

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Ryan E. STOKES. *The Satan: How God's Executioner Became the Enemy.* With a Foreword by John J. Collins. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2019. 304 pp. $40.00.

In this monograph, Stokes attempts "a history of the origin, shaping, and reshaping of beliefs about satan figures and about the Satan. . . . from their earliest literary manifestations in the Hebrew scriptures to the varied depictions of the Satan and his evil forces in the Jewish and Christian literature of the late Second Temple period" (xiv). Stokes understands *Satan* as a title rather than as a name, and hence prefers to add the definite article: "*the* Satan" (xvi), as in the title of his book. His thesis is that in the Old Testament, (the) Satan is originally depicted as God's agent rather than as His archenemy or adversary. Satan is actually God's ally, God's "functionary," to carry out God's will in punishing the wicked. God turns to Satan to do his dirty work. According to Stokes, Satan is consistently portrayed throughout the Hebrew Bible as God's hatchet man, his henchman, and never as his opponent. But this image changes in time during the intertestamental period in the nonbiblical writings until in the New Testament, and particularly in the book of Revelation, Satan has now become God's enemy.

Stokes begins his study by arguing a novel meaning for the Hebrew *śāṭān* (שָׂטָן): "executioner" or "(lethal) attacker" (8-17, 211). Stokes believes the earliest reference to (the) Satan is in Numbers 22, where the noun *śāṭān* (שָׂטָן) is used in reference to the Angel of the Lord when he opposes the prophet Balaam as he rides on his donkey (22, 32). Stokes dismisses the serpent in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3) as an allusion to (the) Satan, an interpretation that only became possible in the first century, after the image of Satan had evolved into God's enemy (216-220).

Stokes shows his familiarity not just with ancient Jewish writings but also with modern scholarship as he takes us on a tour of the Jewish pseudepigrapha, particularly *1 Enoch* and the "Book of the Watchers" (= *1 En.* 1–36), and then *Jubilees*, where we first encounter the Prince of Mastema as a satanic figure along with his host of evil spirits and demons. It is here that the image of the Satan changes somewhat from God's ally, God's "punisher," to "a deceiver of humankind" (99) and even the enemy of God's people (109). Then Stokes guides us through later Jewish writings like *Sirach* and the Dead Sea Scrolls, especially the *Damascus Document* and the *War Scroll* (1QM, Stokes prefers the title *War Rule*), where Belial leads the enemies of Israel into a final conflict, a cosmic battle between the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness. From these various strands the NT authors spin their own individual yarns about (the) Satan or the Devil: stories made out of whole cloth! The volume is aided with a twenty-seven-page bibliography and three indexes (modern authors, subjects, and ancient sources).

Stokes begins by quoting the book of Revelation (xiii). But ironically we soon learn that, for Stokes, this book is no revelation at all. For in his analysis, Stokes places the biblical writings on the same level with noncanonical Jewish pseudepigrapha and Qumran texts. Stokes's goal is to explain how the author of Revelation arrived at his understanding of Satan as God's archenemy in leading a rebellion in heaven (Rev 12:3-9). But if his analysis is right, then this image is just a dark illusion. If Stokes is right, the notion of a Deceiver is just a deception, for all of these various, often conflicting understandings of (the) Satan, both biblical and nonbiblical, are merely the musings of men as they speculate about the spiritual realm. We have no actual communication from God, and thus we really do not know anything. No wonder Stokes refuses to ask whether Satan really exists or not (xv), for how could he know? His opinion would be no more supported than those of the apostles Matthew, Paul, or John. And yet, as a Christian, I see this question about Satan as the most important one of all. And without it, the rest becomes a waste of my time, no matter how interesting these ancient notions might appear to others.

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Ryan E STOKES. *The Satan: How God's Executioner Became the Enemy.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2019. 304 pp. $40.00.

Recent years have seen the proliferation of technical and popular level works grappling with the identity of Satan. Yet one is often frustrated by their rather shallow engagement with Second Temple Jewish texts that are essential to such a study. In this volume, Stokes has done much to address this shortcoming while offering an important fundamental corrective to the interpretive tradition.

In Stokes's estimation, Bible scholars routinely err in identifying Satan with a superhuman accuser in the sense of a prosecuting court functionary. This mistake is understandable since lexical entries often define "satan" as accuser. Whereas Zech 3:1 and Rev 12:10 appear to presume this definition, Stokes claims it is supported neither by the Hebrew Scriptures nor Second Temple

Jewish literature. He argues quite persuasively that the term is better defined as "attacker" or perhaps "executioner."

Stokes's analysis proceeds chronologically. He begins by bringing Numbers 22 into conversation with Zechariah 3 and 1 Chronicles 21 in order to establish his thesis about the "attacking" rather than "accusing" function of the satan. He continues with a detailed discussion of Job, which employs source criticism to establish an independent satan tradition that was later appended to the book. Before proceeding to Second Temple satanology, he pauses to establish the OT background of demons, evil spirits, and fallen angels, which are eventually folded into the satan tradition.

In the Second Temple period, Stokes pays the most attention to *Jubilees* and the Dead Sea Scrolls. These works mark key transitions in the evolution of satanology, which is tied to competing notions of malevolent superhuman entities, God's complicity in evil, and human responsibility for sin. In *Jubilees*, the satan is portrayed as both leading nations astray and supporting the nations' efforts to destroy God's people. In the Dead Sea Scrolls, he morphs into the sometimes enemy of God himself.

Consistent elements of Stokes's interpretative narrative include ambiguous meanings of relevant terms and the presence of diverse views during all stages in the satan's evolution (even within single works, which themselves have complex composition and translation histories). In fact, many sources that appear to support the accuser motif do so only in the Ethiopic texts, which are often translations of translations of nonextant Hebrew originals where, Stokes argues, the attacker/executioner meaning would have been more obvious.

The volume ends by tracing diverse strands of the satan tradition into the NT where their diversity remains and where two not entirely convincing themes emerge. This chapter contains little of the meticulous analysis that characterizes previous chapters and so is least satisfying in its conclusions.

Though several of Stokes's interpretive moves require further testing, his overall argument is directionally persuasive. One glaring weakness is his tendency to ignore the apocalyptic nature of several primary sources. For instance, he identifies tension between the depiction in the "Book of Watchers" of the origin of evil and the *Epistle of Enoch*'s account of the same (128-134). The former appears to credit fallen angels for introducing illicit practices whereas the latter credits humans alone. However, if the fallen angels were meant—in apocalyptic fashion—to represent fierce nations (like Greece) who swoop upon God's people who are powerless to stop them, then the "Book of Watchers" is actually crediting foreign nations with corrupting the Israelites with their aberrant lifestyles. It is not always easy to identify what language in Jewish apocalypses points to real world realities as the author understood them and which are symbolic stand-ins for such realities, but Stokes doesn't even acknowledge this complicated issue. He simply reads all of his sources (including Revelation) as if the language were intended literally.

Stokes makes an important and likely enduring contribution to Satan studies. This reviewer looks forward to revisiting all the primary sources with Stokes' framework in mind. The volume is probably too technical for the average reader, but it should serve Bible scholars and students quite well.

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Mark S. GIGNILLIAT. *Reading Scripture Canonically: Theological Instincts for Old Testament.* Interpretation. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2019. 144 pp. $22.00.

Gignilliat ponders how the church can and should read Scripture in concert with its "theological subject matter," the triune God. Gignilliat offers a guide towards unveiling an

interpretive "trinitarian instinct," which he perceives as inherent within the OT. Driven by a series of key commitments (Scripture is the primary means by which God reveals himself to humanity, the authorial intent within Scripture resides in the providence of God, and the concept of canon is an internal property of the biblical texts and therefore a defining exegetical guide), Gignilliat offers a guide towards unveiling an interpretive "trinitarian instinct," which he perceives as inherent within the OT. The first four chapters represent methodological foundation. The final two unveil support for his proposed "trinitarian instinct."

A general disregard, without absolute dismissal, of historical-critical methodologies, is a consistent theme throughout Gignilliat's argument. Asserting that the textual witness cannot fully disclose God, he avers that the potential for deeper engagement with Scripture extends beyond historical reconstructions. Judging approaches that treat Scripture as a collection of *sources* and not a *witness* as fruitless, Gignilliat makes a lengthy apology for the canonical criticism of Brevard Childs as an appropriate approach to interpretation, if not the only one.

Gignilliat ultimately outlines how orthodox (Nicene) trinitarian doctrine is an "essential principle" of the OT, arguing for a canonical expression of YHWH God as of one substance (*ousia*) having distinctly unique persons (*personae*). Pointing to the divine self-revelations of Exod 3:14-15 and Exod 34:6-7, he argues that YHWH's character (*ousia*) is a God who is "merciful and severe" (106), a nature inherently tied to the Exodus event and a desire to redeem his people. Admitting that discerning divine personhood in the OT is complex, Gignilliat appeals to Benjamin Sommer's "divine fluidity," suggesting that revelations of YHWH attached to cult locales (i.e. Teman, Hebron, Jerusalem) represent particular, distinct *personae* emanating from a singular *ousia*. Gignilliat writes, "In certain streams of tradition, YHWH can differentiate himself from himself without fragmenting his deity or divine being" (107). However, Gignilliat admits that the textual evidence for divine fluidity is "scant," and "building theological or metaphysical conclusions on this basis remains thin" (108).

Gignilliat summarily shifts his quest to the well-worn ambiguity of YHWH and his מלאך (angel/messenger). He focuses on the wrestling episode of Genesis 32; however, his attention is on "providential interpretation," found in Hos 12:4-6 [MT]. Gignilliat reads the referents God (אלהים), angel (מלאך) and YHWH (יהוה) in Hos 12:4b, 5a, 6 as synonymous parallelisms employed as identifiers of Jacob's wrestling partner. Consequently, he finds witness to a correlation of divine *ousia* and distinct *personae* averring, "[T]he verbal character of the Old Testament is itself fertile soil for a trinitarian hermeneutic where the unity of the divine essence and diversity of the divine personae are affirmed as Gen 32:22-32 and Hos 12:1-6 attest." Remarkably, this reading prompts the bold statement: "In fact, the Old Testament's own self-presentation regarding YHWH's singularity and diversity of personae constrains the faithful reader toward this interpretive conclusion" (114).

It is incredulous that Gignilliat builds an entire thesis upon a singular point of intertextuality, especially one fraught with uncertainty. A glance at the most rudimentary critical analysis reveals how BHS deems the reading מלאך in Hos. 12:5a [MT] as potentially corrupt. Furthermore, the doxology of verse 6 has often been considered an interpolation. Additionally, the argument that the prophet's sole focus is Genesis 32 fails to appreciate the complexity of the greater Jacob cycle in Hosea. For example, Hos 12:5b references Jacob's "weeping" and "making supplication," two attributes absent from the Genesis tradition. Ironically, Gignilliat's singular appeal to the social sciences, Somner's "divine fluidity," affectively undermines trinitarian logic. If every attachment of YHWH to a local cult site opens the door for distinct divine personae, the logical conclusion is a form of pantheistic monism.

Gignilliat's methodological tension is an extension of his hermeneutical predisposition founded upon the so-called Yale School's emphasis on *special*, as opposed to *general*, hermeneutics. (Evidenced by his affinity for Brevard Childs as well as an appropriation of Fowl's disdain for a Thiselton-Vanhoozer approach to speech-act theory [55 n 28]). This is not to say that Gignilliant perceives no value in philosophical hermeneutics; however, he fails to fully articulate his nuanced positions. This is a consistent shortcoming. Throughout the volume he acknowledges the complexity of multiple issues (*Canon* vs. *Scripture*, textual criticism, metaphysics, hermeneutics, comparative religion, and even trinitarian readings of the OT), yet he soldiers on, packing an entire graduate seminar into a mere 120 pages!

Gignilliat's goals are admirable and his passion for the centrality of Scripture in the life of the Church is unquestionable. The volume could serve well as a conversation starter in studies on trinitarian doctrine, OT theology, or upper-level hermeneutics courses, but I would not recommend reading it outside of an academic community. The last line of the epilogue sums up the evangelical nature, and penultimate foundation of Gignilliat's endeavor: "People need Jesus. And Christ stands at the door of his own Word and knocks," (117). All who engage in biblical studies would be well served by contemplating this sentiment.

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Jean-Louis SKA. *A Basic Guide to the Old Testament.* Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 2019. 139 pp. $19.95.

Ska begins the current volume with a question: Why don't people read the Bible? He thinks the answer is simple—piecemeal readings disrupt the Bible's cohesion, and the difficulty of understanding the foreignness of the Bible alienates readers even further. The solution to the problem, however, is much more complex. In fact, the entire volume is the beginning of Ska's solution.

The volume comprises 8 chapters. 1) Why Don't People Read the Bible? 2) What Is the Old Testament? 3) The Pentateuch, or The Constitution of Israel; 4) The Historical Books (the "Former Prophets") and the Voice of the Opposition; 5) The Prophets: Writers, Journalists, Columnists, and Pundits of the Period; 6) The Wisdom books, the "Gurus" of Israel; 7) The Last Shelves of the National Library of Israel; and 8) Conclusion. Each of these chapters is then divided into various sections.

Ska first establishes a guiding metaphor of the OT as ancient Israel's "national library." This is Ska's way of prioritizing the role any given volume or genre played in the life of ancient Israel. The metaphor yields mixed results: in the chapter on the Prophets it is used to great effect, while in Ska's discussion of Wisdom Literature it falls somewhat flat.

Ska uses this guiding metaphor as a way of drawing comparisons between the literature of the ancient world and the literature with which modern students will be familiar. However, it does sometimes yield comparisons that go beyond the pedagogically convenient oversimplification into the actively misleading. In his discussion of the Pentateuch, for instance, the comparison with a national constitution omits substantial discussion of the broad temporal span of the Pentateuch's composition and redaction. Ska does an excellent job introducing readers to the synchronic, identity-forming function of the Pentateuch, but his general omission of compositional and redactional issues is unfortunate for a volume whose stated goal is to introduce readers to critical readings of the Bible.

That said, one of the book's strongest points is Ska's ability to balance engagement with and distance from the text of the Bible, as well as literary and religious appreciation and critical analysis. Any comparison or metaphor will of course highlight the similarities between two concepts, but it will also sharpen the distinctions. When Ska describes the prophets as Israel's opinion columnists, students may initially be confronted by the obvious disconnect—journalists and opinion writers do not prophesy, predict, or deliver the word of the Lord. Ska, however, is able to exploit this initial disjunction to show the ways Israel's prophets served as Israel's "collective conscience," both reflecting on and driving events around them and on the global stage.

On the whole, Ska's new introduction is a welcome addition to the already populated world of OT introductory material. It is sophisticated enough for use in undergraduate classrooms and accessible enough for interested laypeople and church classes. It avoids summary in favor of substantive engagement, and it reflects the sort of deep, thoughtful reflection on the Bible that has characterized Ska's career.

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Bill T. ARNOLD and Brent A. STRAWN. *The World around the Old Testament: The People and Places of the Ancient Near East.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016. 531 pp. $45.00.

In the current volume, Arnold and Strawn have provided readers with a collection of essays on the main regions and cultural groups that lived around ancient Israel. For many years, the classic texts in this subject area were D. J. Wiseman's *Peoples of Old Testament Times* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973) and, later, Alfred Hoerth, Gerald Mattingly, and Edwin Yamauchi's *Peoples of the Old Testament World* (Cambridge: the Lutterworth, 1994). Since it has now been nearly fifty years since the publication of the former and more than twenty-five since the latter, an updated study of the people and places in the regions around ancient Israel is certainly warranted.

Like the aforementioned volumes, this volume includes chapters on the regions and peoples north, south, east, and west of ancient Canaan/Israel, as follows: Daniel E. Fleming, "The Amorites" (1-30); Christopher B. Hays with Peter Machinist, "Assyria and the Assyrians" (31-105); David S. Vanderhooft, "Babylonia and the Babylonians" (107-137); Mark S. Smith, "Ugarit and the Ugaritians" (139-167); Joel M. LeMon, "Egypt and the Egyptians" (169-196); Billie Jean Collins, "The Hittites and the Hurrians" (197-228); K. Lawson Younger, Jr., "Aram and the Arameans" (229-265); Christopher A. Rollston, "Phoenicia and the Phoenicians" (267-308); Joel S. Burnett, "Transjordan: The Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites" (309-352); Carl S. Ehrlich, "Philistia and the Philistines" (353-377); Pierre Briant, "Persia and the Persians" (379-415); David F. Graf, "Arabia and the Arabians" (417-465); and Walter Burkert, "Greece and the Greeks" (467-500). The volume concludes with an index of authors (501-510), Scripture and other ancient sources (511-518), and subjects (519-531).

Since the volume is not about ancient Israel or the OT per se, the chapters are not overly oriented toward their subject's contact with Israel or their relationship to the Old Testament. Instead, "each chapter is a study of its primary subject matter—first and foremost in its own right" (xvi). That being said, the editors explain that readers can expect to find information related to four important areas, including: (1) an overview of the history and culture of the people or place under study; (2) a focus on the time ranging from the Late Bronze Age to the end of the Persian period (ca. 1550–322 BC), which is most pertinent to Israelite literature and history; (3) consideration of topics that go beyond political history, such as religion and the arts; and (4) discussion of the importance of the region or people group for the OT (xvi).

The chapter on Assyria and the Assyrians, the longest in the volume, provides an example of the approach of the essays in this volume. In it, Christopher Hays and Peter Machinist recount the recovery of Assyria, which began in earnest in the 1840s, centuries after it had been lost to history following its collapse at the end of the seventh century BC. They discuss its geography, sources, and chronology, and provide a substantial overview of its national history. Also included is a detailed discussion of a number of aspects of Assyrian culture, including: military; use of propaganda; mass deportation; economy; religion; ideology of kingship; and arts, crafts, and architecture. Hays and Machinist include an extensive comparison with Ancient Israel and biblical texts, which is comprised of detailed discussions of the mechanisms of Assyrian influence, prophecy, and historiography. Their treatment of historiography will be of special interest, since it includes case studies of annals and king lists, the siege of Sennacherib, treaties, oaths, and covenants, the birth account of Sargon and Moses, and temple building accounts, all of which are pertinent for biblical studies. The chapter concludes with an overview of Assyria's appearances in the biblical tradition.

In terms of weaknesses, some may be disappointed that the volume lacks chapters on Canaan and the Canaanites, or on Israel and the Israelites. However, the editors explain at the outset that this volume "is not primarily about ancient Israel/Palestine or the Old Testament proper" but about the world *around* the Old Testament, and that the volume can therefore proceed without such a chapter (xvi). Readers interested in ancient Canaan can still make recourse to *Peoples of Old Testament Times* and *Peoples of the Old Testament World*, as well as recent entries in the standard dictionaries and encyclopedias. Another possible shortcoming is that this volume only contains a single chapter on Transjordanian peoples, whereas *Peoples of Old Testament Times* devoted two chapters to the Moabites and Edomites, respectively, and *Peoples of the OT World* contained three chapters, one each for the Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites. That being said, Joel Burnett's chapter on Transjordan does a fine job of presenting an up-to-date overview of the Ammonite, Moabite, and Edomite peoples, and it includes plenty of footnotes and suggestions for further reading for those who would like to investigate further.

The strengths of this volume far outweigh any perceived weaknesses. Among them are studies on Ugarit and Greece, which neither *Peoples of Old Testament Times* nor *Peoples of the Old Testament World* contain. Mark Smith's chapter on "Ugarit and the Ugaritians" (139-167) provides an excellent overview of the geography and history of Ugarit, a study of the Late Bronze Age site and its political history, a canvass of its culture and religion, and a survey of the Ugaritic texts with biblical parallels. Smith's probe into the Ugaritic texts will be of special interest, since it reflects recent study that may be new to some readers. Walter Burkert's chapter on "Greece and the Greeks" (467-500) will also be of special interest since, although chapters on Greece were not included in the aforementioned volumes, it sheds light on Hellenism and conflicts over Hellenism in Israel, which feature prominently in the New Testament. This volume also includes a state-of-the art study of Arabia, something not included in *Peoples of the Old Testament World*. Although "Arabia and Arabians never played a prominent role in biblical history . . . they nevertheless penetrated the narrative in innumerable ways from the Abrahamic tradition to the postexilic period" (464). David Graf's study of "Arabia and the Arabians" (417-465) presents a timely study of this region and its people. Additional strengths include attention to recent archaeology and inscriptions. The volume includes a number of site plans, drawings, and translations of inscriptions. These strengths make the current volume a valuable resource for students of the Bible at all levels,

both graduate and undergraduate. Ministers and lay readers will also find it to be a useful tool that illuminates the world around the Old Testament.

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Stefan M. MAUL. *The Art of Divination in the Ancient Near East: Reading the Signs of Heaven and Earth.* Translated by Brian McNeil and Alexander Johannes Edmonds. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2018. 345 pp. $59.95.

McNeil and Edmonds have done English readers a great service by translating Maul's 2013 volume *Die Wahrsagekunst im Alten Orient*. The result is a sharp primer on the critical role played by various divinatory arts across millennia, not only in the ancient Near East but around the Mediterranean. This volume consists of eleven chapters along with endnotes, bibliography, and indices arranged by place, person, deity, and subject.

The first two chapters provide certain foundational arguments. Chapter one recounts the discovery of Mesopotamia's place of influence in the art of divination, as over a century's worth of archaeological evidence now details how much of the disciplines of astrology and extispicy practiced by ancient Greeks and Romans depended upon their ANE forebearers. Chapter two demonstrates the vital link between divination, especially extispicy, and the sacrificial cult. While not every sacrificial gift delivered to a temple would have been meant for oracular purposes, every act of extispicy would have been an offering.

Chapters three through seven then dive further into the "signs of the earth," to recall the book's title. Chapter three provides an overview of extispicy and constitutes the book's longest chapter. The sheer number of discovered textual sources on this topic collectively depict the academic fervor of the diviners and intricacy of their rituals, all of which Maul condenses well. Maul explores extispicy further in chapter four, turning his attention from performance of the ritual itself to the formulation of the associated question addressed to the gods. As the ritual procedure established that the only possible verdicts were "yes" or "no," the diviner devoted much of his skill toward framing the question. Questions which were poorly worded or lacking in detail might afford a false hope.

Chapters five and six shift their focus to the parallel practices of ornithoscopy, or the inspection of sacrificial birds, and divination by means of nonanimal offerings. While there is far less extant evidence of ornithoscopy, its cost effectiveness suggests that it would nevertheless have been a popular practice for the less wealthy. What evidence is available indicates that the ritual generally followed similar procedures as that of extispicy. Divination could also be practiced using vegetable votive substances, namely flour, incense, and oil. While these modest means of divination obviously benefitted the poor, their portability also contributed to their use for wartime decisions. Finally, in chapter seven Maul traces the diachronic progression of extispicy from its origins in the depths of prehistory to its political association in the third millennium BC to the heights of its influence in the first millennium BC, as denoted by the magnitude of divinatory texts found in Ashurbanipal's library.

Having explored the signs of the earth, Maul turns his attention in chapters eight and nine to those of the heavens. Chapter eight depicts the rise of astrology as a competing source of divination to extispicy. Built upon the systematic observation of astral events, this discipline offered a more nuanced picture of the future than extispicy's binary limitations. Indeed, astronomy would overtake extispicy in importance, and its impact on the other divinatory arts is featured in chapter nine. Eventually, the lines separating divinatory disciplines began to blur, leading to attempts toward harmonization.

The volume concludes with a pair of chapters in which Maul considers further the political setting of such divinatory practices. In chapter ten, he recounts how various ambiguities and contradictory prognoses built into the practices themselves kept divination from devolving into a mechanized process by necessitating the diviner's careful interpretation (hence, divination was both "art" and "science"). Chapter eleven addresses the intellectual barriers which post-Enlightenment audiences face when considering such practices. Maul argues that while the acts of divination performed in the ANE go against contemporary reason, they would have nevertheless promoted a habitual state of societal, political, and personal self-analysis which provided long-term benefits to the cultures that utilized them.

In sum, Maul offers a survey that is impressive in its ability to cover such breadth cogently and concisely. The volume's argument is supported throughout by several helpful tables and figures, particularly in the third chapter. As extispicy was a particularly "tactile" discipline, numerous images and tables portraying livers and entrails await the interested reader. Biblical scholars will not find many direct connections to specific texts, though they will undoubtedly find after reading this volume that numerous texts (both narrative and prophetic) possess added significance. Finally, while each succeeding chapter builds further upon previously explored ideas, most chapters also exist as largely self-contained arguments related to a specific topic or practice. As such, college or seminary professors should avail themselves of selected readings to supplement their examination of such practices in biblical literature.

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John WALTON and Harvey WALTON. *The Lost World of the Torah: Law as Covenant and Wisdom in Ancient Context.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2019. 268 pp. $20.00.

Walton received his PhD from Hebrew Union College and is professor of Old Testament at Wheaton College. He is widely published with his most recent efforts in the "Lost World" series which includes, *The Lost World of Genesis* and *The Lost World of the Israelite Conquest.* Harvey Walton, John's son, is a researcher in biblical studies with contributions to several publications. He has an MA from Wheaton College and is pursuing graduate studies at St. Andrews University.

Paul writes that "all Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Tim 3:16-17). In the Torah we understand the commands "Do not kill" or "Do not commit adultery," but there seems little relevance for the law that directs one to "not wear clothes of wool and linen woven together" (Deut 22:11) or to "not cook a young goat in its mother's milk" (Deut 14:21). This has often left the modern reader to evaluate the Torah/law as passé or as a "failed system that God has replaced" (215).

In this study the authors seek to "provide information about the Torah that will help readers to become more aware of how this biblical literature functioned in its context—that is, why this literature was presented in this particular way" (3). The "lost world" is the ancient setting of the OT which is lost to many of today's Bible readers. Law is understood today as basically "a formal body of written law enacted by an authority" that regulates everyday life in society to bring about order, a common good for society (5). By contrast, the authors propose that the Torah, or "law," does indeed seek to bring about order (which all societies seek) but not through a codified

legislative body of rules, rather Torah brings wisdom. "Legislation carries a sense of "you ought"; instruction carries a sense of "you will know" (45).

Throughout the volume the authors refer to "the cultural river." Today's cultural river, which lies in stark contrast to the ancient cultural river, includes customs we take for granted such as rights, freedom, capitalism, democracy, individualism, social networking, and globalism (10). The ancient near eastern river includes currents such as community identity, kingship, divination, the centrality of the temple, and the essential role of sacrifice (11). From this platform the authors walk through the concept of Torah through a series of propositions written as chapters. These propositions include holiness as a status declared by God, not pursued by man. Also, the proposition that Torah is not about salvation.

To study Scripture in its cultural context is not a new discipline, but the authors boldly and masterfully pull Torah out of today's context and place it into its appropriate ancient setting. They do not hesitate to expose the vast similarities of Torah and other law codes of the day (Hammurabi) that also seek order for their society revealing a common cultural approach to societal order. A major difference between the Torah and other ancient law codes is that the Torah is set within a suzerain-vassal relationship (God-Israel) making the terms of the Torah covenant applicable solely to the Israelites.

The authors deny that any moral or ethical code can be found in the Torah which may leave the reader with a disconnect as to where to find direction for appropriate behavior. They leave the reader looking for morality in the norms and expectations of modern society leaving us to determine what is moral and what is not, as Paul said, "everything is lawful, not everything is beneficial" (1 Cor 6:12; 10:23). The Walton's write that "it is possible to have moral knowledge, even moral knowledge that has its source in God, without needing to get it from the Torah, or even from special revelation of any kind" (213). It would be helpful in the overall discussion of Torah if the Walton's had developed this thought out more.

Walton and Walton have presented a thought-provoking study on a key part of Scripture that would be very beneficial in the college or seminary classroom as well as for the minister who seeks to make all of Scripture relevant to all people.

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Joel BADEN. *The Book of Exodus: A Biography.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019. 215 pp. $26.95.

This volume is an excellent contribution to the fascinating series *Lives of Great Religious Books* by Princeton University Press. The series provides a description of the "life" of various religious texts that stand at the fountainhead of world religions, beginning by describing the formation of the canonical text, followed by extensive overviews of how the books have been interpreted and influenced world history through the communities that have valued and applied the texts for their times. Of all the books of the Hebrew Bible, the book of Exodus has had the most profound impact on the course of the history of Israel and consequently for Judaism and Christianity, and in subsequent interpretation and application of the text, also for Western civilization as a whole. Following a brief look at the canonical text of Exodus in its historical context, the main focus of this volume is the history of interpretation of Exodus, in which he considers "the ways in which individuals and groups, in the thousands of years since the story coalesced into the form we now know, have appropriated this story to be their story, have cast

themselves or others into the biblical roles, and have used the themes of this story for their various ends" (xiii).

Due to the enormity of the impact of the Exodus in the history of interpretation, this volume must be necessarily selective. The study is divided into seven chapters to focus the content: the first chapter discusses the origins of the book of Exodus from the perspective of critical biblical scholarship and archaeology. Baden follows the traditional documentary hypothesis approach of dividing the book of Exodus into J, E, and P narratives and laws that were combined in the post-exilic period to form the canonical book of Exodus. Baden takes a moderate approach to the historicity and extrabiblical record of the Exodus: it is unlikely that an origins-story of enslavement and escape would have been invented, and Egypt would not have been chosen as the archetypal enemy nation if the work was a late post-exilic period invention, when Egypt along with Israel was largely under the domination of Mesopotamian empires in the first millennium (5). The author concludes that though there is no extant evidence of the presence of a large Israelite nation in Egypt in the late 2nd millennium, or of a crowd of Israelites migrating through the Sinai wilderness, there is evidence that there were Semitic slaves who escaped from Egypt and established settlements in the highlands of Canaan and became identified with the Israelites (7). Baden defines the Exodus story as a "collective cultural memory" that became the narrative of Israelite identity that was foundational for later interpretation and application as delineated in chapter 2. Here Baden outlines how in the biblical and post-biblical period the Exodus narrative was used to define communal identity, as the story was updated and applied for the changing needs of communities of faith that drew their heritage from biblical Israel.

Chapter 3 focuses specifically on the role of the Passover and ritual in Exodus, and how this ritual functioned to establish identity in ancient Israel and Judaism. Baden traces the development of the Passover down to modern iterations of the *Seder*, as well as looks at how the Passover was appropriated to interpret the death of Jesus in the New Testament. Chapter 4 describes how Judaism and Christianity have differentiated between themselves based on the conception and application of the laws established at Sinai.

Chapters 5–7 trace how the story of Exodus has been utilized by communities in the modern era to form and establish their identities through identification with Israel of the Exodus. Chapter 5 looks at the fascinating ways the story of the Exodus was utilized in the Protestant Reformation, the Dutch Republic, Reformation England, and the American Revolution, as communities that experienced oppression identified with Israel and viewed their experience of liberation as divinely determined and identity-forming. The survey is necessarily selective, and unfortunately a discussion of how the modern state of Israel has appropriated the Exodus theme 3,000 years after the original Israelites emerged in the land doesn't make the cut. Chapter 6 traces how the Exodus was applied in American civil-rights struggles, from the early abolitionists who opposed slavery, to the use of Exodus rhetoric in the speeches of Martin Luther King Jr. Chapter 7 in turn highlights the use of the Exodus narrative in modern liberation theologies. This selective overview of the history of interpreting and applying the Exodus shows the remarkable power and malleability of the Exodus story to provide the conceptual framework for understanding injustices and to fuel the drive for liberation and justice. The story provides definition and purpose for communities who place themselves in the situation of Israel and define themselves against Egyptian oppressors, as they seek the help of God and work for a better future.

This volume is a brief but fascinating overview of the impact of Exodus on the religious and cultural history of the world. Due to the enormity of the subject, Baden's treatment must be selective. That being said, there are a few areas of discussion that are omitted that would have been interesting and enhancing to the work. First of all, much of the depth of the Exodus

story is helpfully understood from the background of comparative ancient Near Eastern studies. A discussion of these ancient Near Eastern backgrounds and ideas would have greatly enhanced the understanding of the book of Exodus in its original context. Secondly, on the impact of Exodus in history, more could have been focused on the nature of the religious views of Exodus, as argued for example in the works of the Egyptologist Jan Assmann on the impact of Exodus (*The Invention of Religion: Faith and Covenant in the Book of Exodus*, 2018). As pointed out by Assmann, the Exodus establishes a new type of religion that is rooted in the revelation of monotheism, election, and covenant, that is drastically different from the Egyptian and ancient Near Eastern notions of sacral kingship and polytheistic cosmotheism. This new type of religion also results in a new type of covenantal political order at Sinai that is the precursor to democracy in the modern world, which is also a theme that perhaps would have been worth considering further.

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Johanna J. H. van WIJK-BOS. *The End of the Beginning: Joshua and Judges.* A People and a Land. Vol. 1. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2019. 351 pp. $29.99.

This is the first volume of a planned multivolume commentary on the Former Prophets (Joshua, Judges, 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings). It consists of an introduction to the socio-historical background to Joshua and Judges and the author's interpretive framework, followed by commentary sections on each book. The commentary proper is not a verse-by-verse exegetical reading, but an elaboration of the narrative arc of entire chapters or groups of chapters in light of their cultural and literary setting.

The primary focus throughout is the role the Former Prophets play in shaping the identity of Israel in the wake of the return from exile. Rather than dissecting the text to arrive at a historical reconstruction of Israel's origin in the Levant, the author takes the text generally at its word and works out why it should have ended up that way. Her discussion of indigeneity in Israelite portrayals of Canaanites is particularly welcome and well done.

This commentary is also unapologetically theological. Wijk-Bos does not allow textual analysis to be its own end but examines the relationship between Israelite identity-formation in and after crisis and the formation of contemporary North American Christian identity during times of crisis. In so doing, she resists easy parallels. She does not simply draw parallels between characters or events, but probes the underlying dynamics of social, religious, political, and cultural reality in the Former Prophets and shows how these dynamics illuminate contemporary dynamics.

A significant feature of Wijk-Bos's volume is her adoption of a short-line translation style, what she calls "colo-metric." By rendering Hebrew prose in English poetic format—with line breaks denoting clause breaks and major phrasing—she is able to dispense with a good deal of explicit discussion about Hebrew grammar or the relationship between narrative and syntax. By rendering this aspect of narrative implicit in her own translations, van Wijk-Bos is able to show rather than tell readers how the story and the language are intertwined.

This is an outstanding volume. Wijk-Bos provides a welcome and balanced, but unyielding, take on a controversial set of literature. It is rigorous and thorough enough for use in graduate

study but is also readable enough for nonacademic use. If I were planning a church class on Joshua and Judges, this is the volume I would most readily recommend to attendees.

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David Toshio TSUMURA. *The Second Book of Samuel*. NICOT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2019. 374 pp. $48.00.

A good commentary is one which simultaneously makes the reader smarter *and* helps the reader to get better acquainted with his/her ignorance. Tsumura's commentary on 2 Samuel is good in both senses. It demands much of the reader, but also gives much.

Tsumura's introduction to 2 Samuel has some helpful comments but assumes that the reader has access to his volume on 1 Samuel. Since 1 and 2 Samuel are generally regarded as one book that was split into two simply because of its size, it makes sense to treat the introduction to the books in only one of the volumes. An extensive outline and a very full bibliography conclude the introduction of both volumes. Since the volume on 2 Samuel was published some 12 years after the volume on 1 Samuel, the bibliography for 2 Samuel is much more up-to-date.

Tsumura is explicit in reading 2 Samuel through the lens of the NT lens of Jesus as the messiah, who descends from King David (15, 18). This is, from a Christian standpoint, quite defensible. However, this volume should be balanced by approaches which take the Jewish readings of the book more seriously.

Also, Tsumura tends to read the narratives about David in a most sympathetic manner. Thus, in commenting on the act of the men of Jabesh-Gilead in giving Saul's body a decent burial (2 Sam 2:4b-7), Tsumura acknowledges David's possible "real-politics" motivation, but Tsumura also writes, "However, one gets the impression that David was not simply motivated by politics when he sent messengers to Jabesh-Gilead. He was moved by their faithfulness toward their mutual lord and wanted to reward them with blessings from the Lord and deeds from himself" (63).

On the other hand, the narrator of this story seems reticent to sort out David's motives. Perhaps we should be as well. Both those readers who read "against the grain" and those who read more "sympathetically" may be going beyond what the text intends to say. There seems to be an irreducible opaqueness to David in Samuel. (Tsumura [81] seems more willing to acknowledge the mixed motives of Joab in the assassination of Abner.)

If the reader is not already familiar with the vocabulary of literary analysis, this commentary will be a stretch. It will need to be read with a dictionary in hand—or with a willingness to use internet resources. Nevertheless, just as a close reading of scriptural texts will richly repay the reader, so a close reading of Tsumura's commentary will enrich the study of 1 and 2 Samuel. Although it may be a bit difficult in places for some pastors, they will find enough helpful insights to make the purchase of this commentary worthwhile. It will not give the pastor or Bible teacher many good theological insights or illustrations readymade, but it will provide a solid exegetical basis for such insights and illustrations.

The volume would also be helpful for college and seminary students who are interested in the detailed study of 2 Samuel. It could function as a required or recommended volume for a course on 2 Samuel.

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W. H. BELLINGER, Jr. *Psalms as a Grammar for Faith: Prayer and Praise*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2019. 142 pp. $29.95.

Bellinger adds to his prolific writings on the Psalter with this short handbook designed "to help students and clergy interpret the Psalms with deep meaning and to appropriate deeply these profound poetic texts" (x). This modest introduction makes the volume sound like it is another of many recent introductory Psalms textbooks. However, it is much more. In this volume, the author brings his decades of research and teaching on the Psalter to both summarize the most significant recent scholarship on the book and to articulate his own reading of its structure and purpose. This final section breaks new ground in understanding the function of the Psalter in its final form.

The opening chapter sets the context for the study of the Psalms. Bellinger briefly summarizes how the Psalter has been used in both Jewish and Christian traditions and provides a succinct summary of scholarship on the book. From this background, he articulates one of his recurring themes in the book that "the Psalms provide us with a grammar of faith, a means of expressing a vibrant relationship with God" (4). In order to understand the grammar of the Psalter, one must draw from the best of Psalms scholarship. In order for this grammar to be relevant, or to speak its language, one must have a community. If we want to appropriate the psalms well, he argues, "we must read always in conversation with our life together" (16).

Chapters 2 and 3 address the two primary types of speech in the Psalter: lament and praise. Both of these chapters summarize scholarship related to this area, address important interpretive debates (e.g., the identity of the enemy, change of mood in lament psalms, and setting), provide model interpretations of individual psalms, and hermeneutical/theological reflections. The latter will be particularly helpful to the intended audience of those in ministry settings.

The final two chapters provide the author's proposal for a reading of the Psalter. He interprets the Psalter, "as a grammar of faith focusing on prayer and worship and suggests reading the Psalms as a purposeful collection tied to issues related to theodicy" (69). While understanding the Psalter as an anthology, Bellinger also argues, in line with recent Psalms scholarship, that there are many signposts and directions in it to provide readers with guidance in how it should be understood and used (74). To demonstrate this, Bellinger provides a succinct reading of each book of the Psalter (75-85). Based on this reading, he argues that the shape of the Psalter stems "from the crisis of exile and its aftermath" (86). This puts the issue of theodicy front and center as the believing community tried to come to terms with the associated trauma.

He also highlights the important role of Book III as a central panel in the Psalter. This book has a number of protest songs that continue into Books IV and V. Ultimately, he suggests that the "Psalter includes multiple plot directions and that the praise of God at the end of the Psalter is part of a larger faith experience that includes lament" (91).

Pushing back against long held views that the Psalter moves from lament to praise, Bellinger argues that themes of lament continue and, in some cases, intensify (Pss 109, 137). Based on his reading of Books IV and V of the Psalter, he argues for three primary themes that continue: the reign of YHWH, the tradition of protest, and a "spiritual pilgrimage" (98-103). Book V "makes it possible for the reading community to imagine life in the reign of God and to lean into that reality even in the face of the chaos still lurking at the door" (108).

Bellinger is to be thanked for this succinct, innovative, and hermeneutically sensitive handbook to the Psalter. He provides a wise and informed reflection on the Psalter from a lifetime of scholarly and ecclesial engagement. He incorporates the best of many new approaches to the Psalter from the previous few decades and proposes a new, nuanced reading of its canonical

message. His frequent summaries of Psalms scholarship and interaction with recent trends make it invaluable to the student.

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Nahum WARD-LEV. *The Liberating Path of the Hebrew Prophets: Then and Now.* Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2019. 272 pp. $26.00.

Ward-Lev is a Rabbi and spiritual director at congregation Beit Midrash in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where he is also a scholar in residence at Temple Beth Shalom and teaches Hebrew Bible in numerous interfaith contexts. The current volume offers a holistic reading of central texts of the Hebrew Bible that combines interests in theology, anthropology, psychology, and spiritual formation in a way that touches on the heart, soul, and mind of the reader. Ward-Lev focuses his exposition of the biblical text on the central dynamic of the "ongoing liberation journey" (xxiv) that the God of Israel, whose name *Yahweh* he translates as "Living Presence," invites humanity to journey on. This journey is characterized by mystery, relationship, and dialogue that is rooted in two theological foundations: first, the dynamism of covenantal and election theology of the books of Exodus and Deuteronomy, which is carried forward in the traditions of the prophets who invite Israel and the world further along into the journey, and second, the creation theology of Genesis where the Living Presence establishes the parameters and definitions for a liberated flourishing creation, leading into the formation of the family of Abraham which is invited to model the liberating journey on a familial level before the formation of the nation of Israel. The books of Moses establish the fountainhead of the "prophetic stream" leading to the journey of liberation, which is "that force within creation, within people, and within a society that leads people to undertake the risky journey toward flourishing, toward more freedom to enter mutual relationship" (112). The Hebrew prophets who followed in this tradition carry forth the stream in wisdom, courage, and vision, as they perceived the limitations of their current circumstances, had the courage to challenge injustices and the vision to articulate a portrait of the better alternatives into which the Living Presence was calling Israel. The first part of the volume contains chapters on the Deuteronomy, Genesis, Exodus, and the Prophets who most clearly articulated this perspective on the liberating journey; here readers will notice that the views of Ward-Lev have been most heavily influenced by the work of Walter Brueggemann and Abraham Joshua Heschel on the Hebrew prophets and prophetic imagination.

The second part of the volume considers "Contemporary Reflections on Prophetic Wisdom," as Ward-Lev looks at ways that modern activists such as Martin Luther King Jr., Martin Buber, Gustavo Gutiérrez, Beverly Harrison, Abraham Joshua Heschel, Emmanuel Levinas, and Paulo Freire among others have "dr[u]nk from the life-giving dynamism of the prophetic stream" and developed the ancient Hebrew motifs of journey, relationship, community, love, and dialogical listening as they invited others into the liberating journey in various historical and social contexts (131). Ward-Lev reads the ancient as well as modern prophets as models for all those today who seek to walk the liberating path, as we face "life-threatening forces of destruction, including global climate change, proliferation of nuclear weapons, environmental degradation, accelerating inequity between the few who are privileged and the many who suffer in poverty, growing numbers of failed states, and the rise of authoritarian regimes in formerly democratic societies." (xxi). Following the lead of the prophets, Ward-Lev urges us in the face of these dangers to "take wise, courageous, and visionary action to create the conditions in which all life can flourish" (xxi).

This volume is an excellent and accessible overview of many of the central themes of the Hebrew Bible and will benefit students and church groups alike. Ward-Lev distills the wisdom of the Hebrew Bible as well as key scholars and prophets who have flowed in the prophetic stream in an eminently practical way that shows the beauty and value of the study of these ancient texts for the modern world. As an experienced spiritual director, Ward-Lev's approach is pastoral and invitational: the volume includes appendices on spiritual practices that will invite the reader into engaging with the Living Presence and the values of the prophetic stream, to envision how the wisdom, courage, and vision of the prophets can transform our world today.

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Bill THOMPSON.[1] ***Preaching Isaiah's Message Today.*** **Joplin, MO: College Press, 2020. 224 pp. $17.99.**

This volume seeks to bridge the gap between the OT prophet Isaiah and the modern preacher and his/her hearers. That is an important *and* difficult goal in this day of specialization. There are scholars and there are preachers. Too often, all that these two groups share is their mutual contempt for the other class of specialists.

The author divides his bridge-building into three major sections. Part I gives us an introduction to the exegesis of Isaiah and the prophets. Part II presents some basic principles for preaching *from* the prophets, as well as preaching *like* the prophets. In Part III, Thompson uses his own sermons in order to show preachers how to cross the bridge between what the ancient book of Isaiah meant, and what its significance is for modern Christians. Sometimes, the best way that an engineer can show the trustworthiness of his bridge is to walk across it himself. The seven sermons were easy to read and illustrated how the preacher might move from ancient text (and context) to modern application. Two appendices are attached. One is a sermon evaluation form. The other briefly summarizes what the author has suggested about the process of evaluation. Copious endnotes and works cited provide helpful secondary sources that span good resources on the original meaning of Isaiah, and helpful books on preaching in general as well as preaching that is based on Isaiah.

This volume has many strengths and a few flaws as well. One of its strengths is its brevity. It seeks to do a great deal in a fairly short and accessible book. Thompson does not allow himself or his readers the dubious luxury of getting lost in endless discussions about many complex exegetical and theological issues. There are certainly many excellent commentaries, many of which Thompson cites, which will give more detail and nuance. Along this line of simplicity, Thompson frequently quotes several different scholars, but does not often state his own thoughts about the

[1] Bill Thompson unfortunately passed away on July 7, 2020, in Rockledge, FL, after a long battle with Multiple Myeloma Cancer. He was just 59. After graduating he served in the army for most of his career. He landed in my classroom on multiple occasions while attaining his M.Div. at Cincinnati Christian University. We talked after class often and emailed up till his death. Bill was an avid learner and continued his education by achieving a D.Min. at Asbury Theological Seminary just recently. He was thrilled to publish this book and will be pleased that it is something he leaves for posterity. He also published an article in *SCJ* based on his D.Min. research titled, "Charting a Course through Choppy Seas: Challenges to Higher Education in the Independent Christian Churches," *SCJ* 20.2 (Spring 2017). I am proud to have known him as a student and as a friend.—William R. Baker

matter at hand. This leaves the reader the freedom (and the responsibility) to form their own conclusions. This practice also invites one to read more deeply in these secondary sources.

Occasionally, the volume was a bit repetitious. Particularly in the discussion of authorship, the discussion seemed a bit scattered and redundant in a few places. Also, while the volume was usually quite clear, there were a few statements that I found confusing. For example, when discussing the four servant songs, Thompson refers to Isa 7:14, which is not usually considered to be one of the servant songs (40). I felt that the discussion on form and genre may have misunderstood the article cited in footnote 285 (72). Still, despite these quibbles, I found the volume to be provocative and fun to read. The journey from ancient text to modern application is always one that is fraught with danger. However, I felt that the current volume was a sturdy bridge over the turbulent waters swirling below.

The volume would be helpful to a wide range of people. Preachers who want to be both true to the ancient texts and helpful to their congregations will find it especially helpful. (I was a preaching pastor myself and struggled with the very issues that Thompson addresses.) This volume would also be helpful for university or Bible college preaching classes, as well as introductory college courses on exegesis.

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Walter C. KAISER Jr., with Tiberius RATA. *A Commentary on Jeremiah.* Walking the Ancient Paths. Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2019. 633 pp. $49.99.

The author follows the standard form for the genre. A brief introduction includes sections on Jeremiah's life, as well as historical, compositional, textual, and intertextual issues. Kaiser dates the present form of Jeremiah to 580 BCE while recognizing that by the time of the third century BCE two text forms existed (represented by the MT and LXX). The body of the commentary treats the text in eight major sections: The Call of Jeremiah (1:1-19), Personal Struggles of the Prophet (2:1–25:38), Increasing Unbelief and Opposition (26:1–29:32), Restoration of Israel and Judah to the Land (30:1–33:26), Call for Faithfulness (34:1–36:32), Siege, Fall, and Aftermath in Jerusalem (37:1–45:5), Prophecies against Nine Nations (46:1–51:64), and Fall of Jerusalem (52:1-34). The volume concludes with four brief excurses (Ark of the Covenant, Queen of Heaven, Shub Shebut, and Topheth), followed by a glossary, bibliography, and scripture index. Within these sections Kaiser provides a unit by unit exposition that begins with a fresh translation (with minimal footnotes), followed by an explanation of the text. As significant critical topics arise (e.g., the 13th year of Josiah, 1:2), the author summarizes interpretive options before providing his own choice and rationale. Finally, he concludes each unit with brief reflection on the meaning or relevance of Jeremiah's message for the contemporary reader.

The reader may expect neither technical language nor cutting edge research that presents new ideas or solutions to old problems. Rather, where this commentary excels is in solid distillation of prior research with clear and concise exposition of the text free of difficult professional jargon. Kaiser is conservative in his approach and conclusions, e.g., he holds that Jeremiah's descriptions of the land of Judah after the Babylonian attack matches archaeological findings (cf. Hans Barstad), stumbles over God's "certificate of divorce" (3:1-5; he holds that Deut 24 is not a precise parallel because the certificate had not yet been served to Judah), and oddly describes God's rebuke to Jeremiah's second lament ("If you have raced with men on foot . . . how can you compete with horses?") as God "cheering up" his prophet (12:5-6). These and other minor quibbles aside, Kaiser has produced a commentary well worth the investment of pastors, teachers, and lay readers. He brings the words and world of Jeremiah within the reader's reach and consistently makes the

key move from past to present, from reading the word of the LORD then to reading the word of the LORD now with sensitivity and insight. Those responsible for making the same homiletical move week after week will not only learn about Jeremiah here but will also find a helpful guide in reading the text, reading our own world, and bringing a word from God.

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Dirk JONGKIND. *An Introduction to the Greek New Testament: Produced at Tyndale House, Cambridge*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019. 125 pp. $14.99.

The author of this volume, Dirk Jongkind, was the lead editor for the Tyndale House Greek New Testament. This volume is just 125 pages long. 93 of those pages include discussion of the background of the THGNT and the exercise of NT textual criticism. Jongkind ends this volume with a glossary of terms that would be helpful to a student beginning his study of the NT text.

In chapter 1, "Your Greek New Testament and the Manuscripts," Jongkind seeks to explain to readers why the THGNT is useful for a study of the text. He describes manuscripts used to arrive at the THGNT text, in particular the nineteenth-century text of Tregelles which was used by Westcott-Hort. He notes that the editors of the THGNT sought to follow the spelling, paragraph divisions, punctuation, accents, earliest attested titles, and even the order of NT books as seen in the early manuscripts.

In chapter 2 Jongkind describes the results of the methodology behind the THGNT. He provides basic instruction for using a critical edition of the Greek New Testament. Although much of what he says applies to other editions of the Greek New Testament, such as the Nestle-Aland or UBS, Jongkind spends time explaining unusual features of the THGNT: the order of the books, what he terms the "ekthetical" style of paragraphing, and the spelling. Jongkind defends the uniqueness of the THGNT text in an effort to defend the production of another Greek New Testament.

In chapter 3, the longest chapter in this brief work, Jongkind spends time on the primary manuscripts used in the production of the text of the THGNT, including a discussion of six papyri witnesses ($\mathfrak{P}^{45}$, $\mathfrak{P}^{46}$, $\mathfrak{P}^{47}$, $\mathfrak{P}^{66}$, $\mathfrak{P}^{72}$, and $\mathfrak{P}^{75}$) and six early majuscules (Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, Alexandrinus, Ephraemi Rescriptus, Bezae, and Washingtonensis).

In chapter 4 Jongkind guides readers through the four-step procedure that was used to make decisions that led to the text of the THGNT: 1) distribution of evidence, 2) knowledge of individual manuscripts, 3) knowledge of groupings of manuscripts (families), 4) knowledge of scribal behavior. He then describes the process of preparing, copying, and correcting manuscripts. He also discusses the scribal tendencies to harmonize the text to the immediate context or to parallel texts. At the end of chapter 4, Jongkind briefly surveys the discussions regarding the ending of Mark (16:9-20), the pericope of the woman caught in adultery (John 7:53–8:11), the angel and the sweat like drops of blood in Luke 22:43-44, and Jesus' prayer of forgiveness on the cross in Luke 23:34a (78-85).

Jongkind has a short but excellent discussion of the Textus Receptus in chapter 5 and the Byzantine text in chapter 6. Both chapters deal with the reasons that the editors of the THGNT did not simply use these texts as some proponents would desire. He discusses how the Textus Receptus and Byzantine texts differ from one another.

In chapter 7, Jongkind explores the connection between theology and textual preservation. He basically addresses the old covenant, the new covenant, the growth of the church and how this accounts for the many copies of the NT and the variants. Chapter 8 is only two pages long. It is a call for the students to read the GNT with confidence.

Although scholars may not be thrilled with the THGNT, this brief introduction is a helpful guide to users of the THGNT. It could also serve as a good introductory aid to students who are just beginning to study textual criticism.

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William M. SCHNIEDEWIND. *The Finger of the Scribe: How Scribes Learned to Write the Bible*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019. 248 pp. $34.95.

Schniedewind has produced a terrific account of the scribal industry behind the Bible—keying especially on the pedagogical preparation that went into that industry. The book's seven chapters lay out the aspects of scribal education (or what he says is better called "scribal curriculum") and the impact of that education on writings mentioned in the Bible and on the forms of literature found in the Hebrew Bible itself. It does so primarily by collecting allusions to—and filling in the gaps left by—"elementary scribal exercises used by Hebrew scribes" (1). Schniedewind gives some place to sociology, but he anchors his investigation, at all points, in the material record—more so than we might find in some other discussions. In comparison with other interpretations of the evidence, Schniedewind's discussion tends toward the more maximalist end of the spectrum—more maximalist, that is, in regard to whether there was a formal education system of sorts—but his point-by-point arguments seem (to this reader) to carry his convictions.

Schniedewind argues "a bold claim"—bold, that is, against the background of standard accounts: "that the rubrics of early Israelite scribal education were adapted from the Mesopotamian school tradition at the end of the Late Bronze Age" (18). He invokes two bodies of supporting evidence (he calls them "foundations"): epigraphic and archaeological. He argues at length that the epigraphic evidence for pedagogy in the Bronze Age is impressive in range, representing practices from the lands surrounding Israel on every side. This represents a stark contrast, he tells us, from the preceding ages. Schniedewind's investigation into this international context, along with his application of these insights to the Bible itself, leads him to posit "a local infrastructure for training scribes to read and write using the traditional cuneiform elementary education curriculum" (165). Along the way, we are treated to a number of penetrating observations on the state of questions. (The dismissal of the older *Listenwissenschaft* theories [70] is especially welcome.)

As many others have discussed scribal education and writing technology in NT times, Schniedewind occasionally has to distance himself—forcefully at times—from aspects of scribalism prevalent in those later times. For example, in his lengthy discussion of the pedagogical purpose behind abecedarian (= alphabetic) texts, he asserts that alphabetic writings, in the age of the Hebrew scribe, were scarcely used as magical apotropaic devices (as they sometimes were in later times), and so we may safely rely on them as indicators of pedagogical activity.

This volume will profit anyone who wants a solid grasp of the human element in the OT. In this connection, it quite nicely complements the analysis of the biblical scribe's fingerprint in Michael Fishbane's *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*.

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John D. SCHWANDT. *Introduction to Biblical Greek: A Grammar with Exercises.* Revised Edition. Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2020. 512 pp. $34.99.

Schwandt is President of Redemption Seminary, the Founder of the Institute of Biblical Greek, and creator of the National Biblical Greek Exam. He is also the Academic Director of the Mobile Ed department at Faithlife, the company that produces Logos Bible Software. He was the General Editor for *The English-Greek Reverse Interlinear New Testament: English Standard Version*. Crossway, 2006. The current volume is a result of many years of teaching Greek at New Saint Andrews College as well as at Faithlife. This volume is a reworking of H. P. V. Nunn. *The Elements of New Testament Greek*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1913. As such, this volume retains many of the features of Nunn's older grammar, while incorporating many of the recent developments in textbook design, and many of the insights from modern linguistics along with updated discussions.

This volume contains 37 lessons, beginning with the alphabet, followed closely with the Present Indicative, and then nouns and adjectives. The Imperfect comes next, followed by the Future and Aorist. Participles are next, followed by the contract vowel verbs, and then the Perfect and Pluperfect. The moods are covered near the end along with athematic verbs. Seven appendices include vocabulary lists, answer key to the lessons, a section on accents, another on prepositions, and morphology tables. Two glossaries finish the appendices, one from English to Greek and the other Greek to English.

Several sections of exercises follow the description of the grammatical item for each chapter. These include grammar exercises, grammar composition exercises, translation of made-up sentences using lesson vocabulary, Greek sentence composition, and translation of NT passages. As early as chapter 3, the NT passage translation section has NT passages with some words provided in English where the Greek words have not yet been covered in the Grammar, and by chapter 5, whole Greek clauses or sentences from the NT are presented for translation practice without intervening English words. Using this grammar, the student is quickly and consistently exposed to translating NT passages, along with composing sentences in Greek.

Phonology is one of the linguistic updates inside this grammar. This involves the inclusion of "labial," "dental," "guttural," and "glide," when describing sounds (14), and "liquid letters" related to vowel lengthening or consonantal doubling (155). The inclusion of verbal aspect is integrated in each chapter discussing verbs rather than in a separate section (20, 71, 97, 116, 135). The fullest discussion of verbal aspect is in the chapter on the sigmatic Aorist (135), where "simple" aspect opposes "incomplete" aspect. When explaining the meaning of the Perfect and Pluperfect tenses, the discussion of verbal aspect seems missing (137). The author does not explain how either "simple" or "incomplete" aspects are involved in the Perfect. The author seems aware of the deponency debate, when connecting so-called deponent verbs to the middle voice (95), but this is understated in the section.

The retention of the "definite article" as a term for the Greek article after the lengthy development of research showing that the Greek article is not definite is an oversight for this volume. Nunn's older grammar called the article a "definite article," as well. Another problematic area for this grammar is the separation of "root" and "stem" (19-20). Here it seems that the stem vowel or connecting vowel is called a "stem," where many grammars would call the root + vowel the "stem." This is a departure from Nunn, as Nunn called the entire root + vowel the "stem." Although a footnote explains the decision, this adds to the confusion rather than detracting from it. This decision on calling the connecting vowel a "stem" allows the author next to misplace verbal aspect (20). In this volume, verbal aspect is assigned to the changing connecting vowel rather than to a stem-vowel inside the root. Verbal aspect is usually connected to stem vowels by works that

consider the stem as one that includes the root. Another desired feature that seems missing in this volume is connection to scholarly discussion for each grammatical topic using footnotes. Surprisingly, this volume does not refer to Logos Bible Software resources, nor explain how they might benefit the student.

Several of the textbook modernizations include proper headings for each topic within the chapters, bolding of headings, proper charts as opposed to parallel lists, shading of headers within the charts, more whitespace on the page separating portions of text, and wider margins. Another change is to have the student exercises within the textbook as opposed to having a separate exercise book, along with having a sufficient number and variety of types of exercises.

The grammar as a whole is a welcome addition to the growing list of grammars geared toward the first-year student. It is not a scaled-back grammar that leaves the student underinformed, but a fairly robust one that prepares the student for advanced study later on. Based on a classic, this grammar is likely to be widely used where scaled-back grammars just will not do. This grammar is particularly useful as a textbook for undergraduate and graduate courses of introductory Greek language studies and is a helpful introduction for pastors and others who wish to learn the Greek language.

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Benjamin L. MERKLE. *Exegetical Gems from Biblical Greek: A Refreshing Guide to Grammar and Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2019. 192 pp. $19.99.

I volunteered to offer a review of this helpful guide to NT Greek grammar because I wanted to discover new information in NT Greek studies. In the last thirty years, NT Greek scholars have reignited interest in syntax and discourse analysis through the works of Stephen Levinsohn, Stanley Porter, and Steven Runge. Merkle's erudite publication appealed to me quickly because I also teach NT Greek, and I have found that many times it is difficult to convince students that the study of NT Greek (and ongoing study) is vital for a preaching/teaching ministry. However, this volume may help to overcome this because he presents many interesting exegetical curiosities that pique the reader's interest, and he offers reasonable solutions to several difficult passages also.

The volume itself is too brief to use as a textbook, and Merkle admits that it was not his intention to produce it as such. Therefore, an instructor may find it useful for personal benefit or for recommended reading for intermediate students. The instruction certainly has significant use as an assigned reading for Greek students before they begin the second year in Greek. It also may be useful as a companion text with another Greek grammar. How a Greek instructor utilizes Merkle's information may require creativity, but it certainly has a useful role in learning NT Greek, especially for intermediate students. To be clear, I would not use this volume in the first year of Greek, but it has relevance for a student after completion of one year of Greek studies. As I stated earlier, this volume fits best as a companion text with another Greek grammar or as an over-the-summer read between first- and second-year Greek studies.

Merkle has provided a useful guide for Greek studies, and there are strengths and weaknesses associated with it. Since I am constrained for space, I will list a few strengths of the book: 1) he provides a worthy review of basic Greek grammar and progresses into areas of interest for intermediate Greek syntax; 2) his discussion on the function of tense in nonindicative verbs is insightful; and 3) his discussions on Greek "exegetical gems" in every chapter keeps the reader's attention. These areas I found most beneficial, but there are several other portions of instruction which a student will find intriguing also.

I found some areas less helpful. Merkle's short discussion on adverbial participles follows a traditional method of analysis and does not incorporate new development in the studies of Greek participles. For example, he does not discuss the positioning of a participle in relation to a finite verb, and the different communicative functions that occur when a participle is pre-verbal or post-verbal. Additionally, his chapter on discourse analysis was too brief. Presently, this is a new method in Greek studies and presents interesting insights into the function and framework of communication. Therefore, discourse analysis deserved more attention.

I do recommend Merkle's guide to NT Greek, but there are limitations to its usefulness. It is too brief to use as a textbook. However, it is beneficial for a refresher on basic Greek grammar and prepares students for study at an intermediate level. In conclusion, this volume is a welcome addition to any library and has some interesting insights into some difficult NT Greek passages.

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Joel B. GREEN. *Conversion in Luke-Acts: Divine Action, Human Cognition, and the People of God.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2015. 210 pp. $27.00.

In the current volume, Green sets a unique and refreshing course: to study how the neurosciences might help inform a theological study of the concept and phenomena of conversion in Luke-Acts.

Green begins with a helpful discussion of what the term "conversion" means (he argues that this is a foundational issue that is often bypassed in scholarly discussion). His goal is to re-approach conversion in Luke-Acts and explore how the cognitive sciences can contribute to our understanding of it in the narrative. Along the way, Green argues that the cognitive sciences can help resist against falsely dualistic ways of understanding key concepts which are often pitted against each other (such as repentance vs. conversion, intellect vs. morality, internal vs. external, and event vs. process). Ultimately, Green believes that insight from the cognitive sciences helps us to realize that conversion is not best understood in only spiritual or religious terms, but that it involves a "transformation of the self," which indicates a more relational, holistic, and embodied process (17).

He begins the body of his argument by discussing the ways in which the cognitive sciences can help contribute to our understanding of the conversion stories in Luke-Acts individually, leading to Luke's overall portrayal of conversion. Green argues that Luke 3:1-14 is not just important for understanding John's role as forerunner of Jesus but sets up the larger Lukan understanding of restoration and repentance, which in turn impacts his theology of conversion. In addition to this pericope, he also studies representative conversion texts such as the calling of Jesus' first disciples (Luke 5:1-11), the Transfiguration and subsequent/similar misunderstandings (Luke 9:32-45; 18:31-34), Jesus' revelation of Scripture to the disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35), Peter's later vision and altered understanding of salvation to the Gentiles (Acts 10–11), and Jesus' encounter with Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10), as well as stories that present a threat to conversion (Acts 5:1-11). Green also explores important themes and motifs that speak to conversion (darkness to light, inside and outside, hospitality and possessions).

Green walks alongside the reader in approaching complex issues, focusing on how these concepts can help illuminate a path forward in our understanding of the biblical texts we read and by which we are influenced. Readers will benefit from Green's nuanced and holistic views of conversion and repentance as inherently connected and mutually interpretive. Additionally, students

of the Bible who find themselves at home in the Stone-Campbell movement may find particularly important Green's discussion of conversion in the context of the earliest moments of the church.

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Craig S. KEENER. *Acts.* New Cambridge Commentary. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020. 699 pp. $39.99.

Readers will no doubt recall Keener's definitive Acts commentary quartet, published by Baker, and ponder the appearance of another Acts commentary by Keener this year, published by CUP. At nearly 700 pages, it is a vastly slimmed-down version of his earlier commentary: where the first volume of the quartet comprised only his introduction and commentary on the first two chapters of Acts, the current commentary introduces Acts in just under 100 pages. Yet the reader can by no means fault this later edition, nor criticize it as flimsy or in any way lacking Keener's characteristic and comprehensive footnotes and knowledge of classical literature (the index of this single volume is itself nearly a tenth of the text's total pagination).

The excellent excursuses into theology, culture, and the material world of Acts have been limited in this volume to those deemed crucial to an appropriate understanding of the dynamics of the text and also abridged. Keener's familiar clarity of style and language has not suffered in the abridgment; readers unfamiliar with his longer volume will not notice where the text has been cut and welded together again.

As usual, Keener's competence with first-century thought and philosophy in its various facets brings depth of meaning and draws out implications often hidden from the modern reader. The author interfaces these implications with issues that are relevant to today's scholar and Christian leader, giving his readers a solid and clear Scriptural path forward to resolve difficult questions.

Given the historical focus of the Stone-Campbell Movement on replicating the essential paradigm of the early church, Keener's insight into how the early Jesus movement developed and spread makes his volume on Acts an essential resource for serious SCM scholars. Yet scholars whose research focuses on Acts would still be well-advised to bear the purchasing price and choose instead Keener's four-volume commentary on Acts: the additional material, resources, and depth of dialog is worth the entrance fee.

As for this volume, while it feels hefty at 700 pages, Keener's straightforward style of writing makes this commentary accessible as a resource to educated lay members and would certainly be a valued addition to a pastor's shelf. The commentary would also serve well as a seminary and even upper-level college textbook, though some additional discussion regarding philosophies and worldviews of the first century would be recommended. On the whole, this is an excellent option for those who would like to access Keener's voice on Acts but find the original quartet somewhat daunting.

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Brant PITRE, Michael P. BARBER, and John A. KINCAID. *Paul, A New Covenant Jew: Rethinking Pauline Theology.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2019. 304 pp. $35.00.

In recent decades, scholarly discussion regarding Paul's relationship to Judaism has generated three broad proposals: "former Jew," "eschatological Jew," and "Torah-observant Jew" (12-20).

Against this backdrop, the current volume finds its impetus in the thesis that when Paul is viewed as a "new covenant Jew," tension regarding the apostle's continuity and discontinuity with Judaism is relieved (38-40). Pitre, Barber, and Kincaid make this case over the course of six chapters, followed by a brief conclusion.

To begin, the authors suggest that echoes of Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 36 in 2 Corinthians 3 illustrate the role of the "new covenant" in Paul's own theological reflection and identity. In fact, the apostle describes himself as a "minister of the new covenant" (39-42). Therefore, Paul should not be construed as discontinuous with Judaism and Jewish Torah, rather he understands that the eschatological new age has dawned, thereby bringing with it a transcending "new covenant of grace" which now makes "true obedience" possible through the Spirit (42-45). Consequently, the authors offer a corrective to E. P. Sander's covenantal nomism: "One does not simply 'get in' to the covenant by grace, one 'stays in' by it as well" (44).

Chapter two falls within the context of the broader "Paul and Apocalyptic" debate. The authors describe Paul as an "apocalyptic new covenant Jew" whose thought is both continuous and discontinuous with Jewish apocalyptic views of eschatology, angelology, cosmology, and messianism (66-67). Paul accepts such traditions but transforms them around Christ. Hence, the "two ages" have overlapped (69-73). Those "in Christ" are "no longer under angels, and therefore no longer under the Torah of Moses" (73-77). Earthly cosmology has been transformed into the "heavenly Jerusalem"—to which new covenant members already belong (82-88). Lastly, the "preexistent, hidden messiah" is now revealed, in Christ, through the Spirit (88-92).

In chapter three, the authors demonstrate how Paul's Christology is continuous and discontinuous with Judaism. By echoing Jeremiah's new covenant, the apostle expresses continuity with the Jewish hope for a restored Davidic kingdom, but it is Jesus who is fulfilling the role of the Davidic Messiah (97-99). Consequently, the authors contend that *Christos* is not a personal name for Jesus, rather Paul's letters share in meaning with Jewish texts. Equally, the apostle understands Jesus' "divine sonship" in relation to his identity as the son of David, rather than "something bestowed upon him at his resurrection" (101). Lastly, Paul habitually emphasizes Jesus' "preexistent divine status" as one "possessing equality with God" as a way of reconciling Jesus' divinity with Israel's monotheism (104-121). For Paul, Jesus is "YHWH of the *Shema*" (117).

In chapter four, the authors suggest that Paul's echoes bind Jesus' death to covenant imagery, and therefore his framework is rooted in Jewish notions of cultic sacrifice and the day of atonement. Hence, Jesus' death should not be construed as a "divine obligation," but rather an act of "divine gratuity"—a "covenant sacrifice" which establishes the new covenant as a remedy to the problem of "covenant infidelity" (130-144).

In chapter five, the authors suggest that justification is both "forensic" and "transformative of moral character" (209). Paul's supposed-judicial language must be construed within a broader covenantal, relational, participatory, and transformative framework. Hence, it is proposed that "new covenant justification" comes through "divine sonship" and is comprised of three dimensions "cardiac righteousness," "baptismal initiation," and "conformity to Christ" (172-207). Finally, the authors suggest that both positions in the *pistis Christou* debate are consistent with Paul's thought since "believers are saved by the 'faithfulness of Christ,' which is the source of their 'faith in Christ'" (188).

In the final chapter, the authors suggest that Pauline soteriology has an "ecclesial" feature (211-212). The church "participates in Christ's work of redemption" through the Eucharist (212). This involves "participation in his sacrificial body" shared inside of the Christian community through the celebration of the Lord's Supper, effected through the Spirit (220-250).

This volume is sure to move Pauline discussion forward. Though, as to how the authors' synthesizing conclusions *contra* some New Perspective arguments will be received, remains to be seen. The volume will be useful to seasoned scholars and students alike. However, in order to grasp its full significance, the reader will need to be familiar with Pauline interpretation extending back to F. C. Baur. In the end, Pitre, Barber, and Kincaid should be commended for insightfully and skillfully synthesizing large swaths of Pauline scholarship into a digestible volume.

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Syliva KEESMAAT and Brian WALSH. *Romans Disarmed: Resisting Empire, Demanding Justice*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2019. 416 pp. $26.99.

In this much anticipated volume, Keesmaat and Walsh give Romans the same treatment they gave to Colossians in their groundbreaking 2004 commentary *Colossians Remixed*. Their goal here is to "disarm" Romans. Paul's epistle, they argue, which for much of Christian history has been understood as a kind of systematic theology, has been weaponized, used by Christians against one another in relentless doctrinal debates. Yet Romans was written as an occasional letter to a bunch of mostly uneducated believers who were struggling to get along. Romans has also been weaponized in a more literal way—to justify Christian submission to the coercive and sometimes deadly powers of empire. According to Keesmaat and Walsh, the letter was intended to be a prophetic word of liberation and lament *against* the empire. In their postcolonial interpretation, *dikaiosun* is consistently read as "justice."

Like their previous work, this volume is not a conventional verse-by-verse commentary, but rather a series of meditations on central themes such as violence, economic justice, sexual ethics, and creation care which loosely follows the outline of Paul's letter. The unifying motif of their interpretation is "home." Paul's aim was to unite the highly diverse group of believers in Rome into a peaceful "household" (Greek *oikos*, from which *eco*logy and *eco*nomy are derived). They observe—drawing on N.T. Wright's work—that Paul's letter is dependent on the prior narrative of Israel, which is fundamentally a story of exile and homecoming. Like ancient Israel, the Gentile slaves and diaspora Jews who make up the Roman *ekklesia* are "homeless." Some are actually without home or property; others, wealthy, have become alienated from their true humanity by participating in the imperial project. Keesmaat and Walsh contrast the "gospel" of Rome, which is imperial expansion accompanied by violence, displacement, and alienation, to the gospel of Israel, which is God's gathering of all people, Jew and Gentile, into a new family, a new home.

In their fourth chapter, Keesmaat and Walsh read Romans through this lens. Chapter 1 establishes the contrast between the "imperial home" and God's vision for home. Chapter 2 extends the critique to all peoples; we are all homewreckers who have turned even the best parts of creation (like sexuality in 1:26-28) into instruments of domination. Home requires fidelity, Paul argues in chapter 3, and one man has proven faithful—Jesus the messiah; his faithfulness is a sign that home will be restored. In chapter 4, the story of Abraham challenges both Judean and Roman constructions of home, rooted in biological kinship and national exceptionalism. Jesus has made a new home for humanity through his self-sacrifice. The "reign of sin" in chapter 5 is read as a dysfunctional home, so that humans are caught between the household of sin/death and the household of life. Baptism in chapter 6 is the practice of identifying with God's household of life. Chapter 7 is a reminder that humans remain "incurable home breakers," while chapter 8 reassures that the Spirit of God still makes a home within us. Chapters 9–11 lament Israel's refusal to come

home by recognizing Jesus as faithful son. Chapter 12 is the "charter of the homecoming community." And so on.

Their reading was inspired in part by their experience living off the grid on a permaculture farm and working/worshiping with homeless and marginalized people, especially indigenous people, in Toronto's Sanctuary Community, to whom the volume is dedicated. Sanctuary serves as an ecclesial model for Walsh and Keesmaat, a community of refugees and down-and-outs which meets in the heart of a North American imperial city.

This lived experience also motivated them to give faces to some of the original recipients of the letter. They tell the stories of two Roman believers: a North African slavewoman from the household of Narcissus named Iris and a Judean artisan named Nereus. Iris and Nereus are invented, but their backstories are based on the families mentioned in chapter 16. Both characters have experienced loss in Rome: Nereus his identity and homeland, Iris her children, her freedom, and her dignity. Others have attempted this kind of fictive reconstruction of NT figures, but Keesmaat and Walsh do a particularly good job; the writing is vivid and engaging while not losing sight of its context-building purpose. These chapters alone are worth the price of the book, and I will certainly assign them to my students when I next teach Romans.

Another unusual feature of the volume is its long sections of poetry. In chapter 5 Keesmaat brings Paul's letter into our world through a sustained lament for the ecological devastation of modernity. Similarly, Walsh offers poetic targumim for Romans 1 and 12–13, reframing Paul's call to hospitality in terms of the contemporary refugee crisis. It is refreshing to see such creative and playful engagement with scripture; more importantly, the writers are drawing on traditional literary forms to explicate the text for the church, such that their handling of scripture is actually closer to the methods of the biblical writers than most modern methods. While they rely on rigorous academic scholarship throughout the commentary, they are not bound by it.

The volume is unabashedly political in its defense of marginalized people and the environment. Just as Paul was "not ashamed of the gospel," these writers are not embarrassed to make bold political statements which may be hard from some readers to swallow. Anticipating this challenge, several chapters include a skeptical interlocutor who breaks the fourth wall in order to raise questions and challenge some of their radical positions. Not only is this an effective rhetorical device, but it demonstrates the kind of generous listening which they call for by taking seriously the concerns and counterarguments of potential opponents. These sections serve as an apologia not only for particular claims, but for their unorthodox interpretive method generally.

This volume is a unique contribution to NT studies, a patchwork quilt of historical, theological, and literary engagements suitable for classroom discussion as well as homiletic presentation. Footnotes documenting where various chapters were first published or presented reveal this volume to have been a labor of love, long in the making. The material has been field tested on academics and ordinary Christians, in the university and in the inner city. There is also an urgency to the volume—real people are hurting, real people are displaced, our earth is groaning in pain. Whether one agrees with their politics, Keesmaat and Walsh restore something of the urgency of Paul's original letter, reminding us that it was not intended to be a dry theological treatise spawning endless soteriological debates but a call to enact the "justice of God which is revealed by faith" and a promise that in the midst of our mess God is making us a home.

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Scot McKNIGHT and Joseph B. MODICA, eds. *Preaching Romans: Four Perspectives.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2019. 191 pp. $14.95.

The first paragraph of Jack Cottrell's commentary on Romans begins, "*God's Word is a lamp to our feet and a light for our path (Ps 119:105), and no part of it shines more brilliantly than the book of Romans.*" But he has to continue with a word of concern: "*Overall the book of Romans may be the most read and most influential book of the Bible, but sometimes it is the most neglected and most misunderstood book*" (*Romans*, vol. 1, College Press, 1996). In a similar vein, McKnight and Modica begin their introduction to this volume with a bit of a lament: "The apostle Paul's letters remain enigmatic for New Testament interpreters and for those who preach on them" (xi). They state that "like the apostle Paul" their hope is that the mind of the reader ". . . will be renewed (Rom 12:2) by the scholarship and the pastoral sensibilities of this volume."

In terms of the structure of the book, it is divided into two major sections. The first ("Interpretive Perspectives on the Apostle Paul") includes four theological essays written by a "leading proponent of that approach." The title of each chapter/essay is as follows: "Romans and the 'Lutheran' Paul" by Stephen Westerholm, "Romans and the New Perspective" by Scot McKnight, "Romans and the Apocalyptic Reading of Paul" by Douglas Campbell, and "Romans and the Participationist Perspective" by Michael J. Gorman.

In the second section of the volume ("Preaching Romans: Sermons") three preachers are given the opportunity to present their views and how they would implement them through the medium of a sermon (twelve sermons in all). Michael F. Bird, Thomas R. Schreiner and Carl R. Trueman present sermons from the "Reformational Perspective"; James D.G. Dunn, Tara Beth Leach, and Scot McKnight represent the "New Perspective"; Jason Micheli, Fleming Rutledge, and William H. Willimon were chosen from the "Apocalyptic Perspective"; and providing sermons from the "Participationist Perspective" are Timothy G. Gomis, Richard B. Hays, and Suzanne Watts Henderson.

I appreciate the sentiment of Modica as he attempts to delineate the intended purpose of this book. In the final chapter ("Implications"), written by Modica, it is suggested that the reader should approach the four perspectives "as an interpretive kaleidoscope," attempting to evaluate each contribution in such a way as to "deeply enrich one's understanding of the apostle Paul and his letters." (169) He provides four "general observations": 1) each perspective is an earnest attempt to interpret the Letter to the Romans; 2) each perspective offers a way of understanding what the perspective thinks is the main thread in the apostle Paul's theology; 3) the perspectives on the apostle Paul are actually perspectives on first-century Judaism(s); 4) each perspective needs the others to exist.

This is not the first volume on my shelves that provide more than one perspective on an issue. It joins others that are part of Zondervan's "Counterpoints" series. There is much to be gained by having some of the leading proponents of particular (and many times divisive) viewpoints presented side-by-side. It tends to highlight their differences, as well as provide information not readily available in a more condensed form. I gained new insight into the approaches that I knew the least about and new aspects/approaches regarding the view(s) that I embrace.

As is often the case, the four essays and the twelve sermons are not of equal value in terms of how they presented the nuances of their own perspective and utilized key elements to present given passages from Romans. It might have been more illuminating had the contributors of the sermons been limited in terms of the text to be developed.

From my own vantage point, the essays provided by Scot McKnight and Michael Gorman were the most enlightening. One thing I believe to be obvious regarding Pauline studies is the importance of as well as the blatantly contrasting views regarding Judaism. A starting point for many contemporary writers is the work of E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (1977). Many still

consider Paul's primary opponent in Romans to be the attempt/desire to "earn salvation" through a practice of legalistic "works," exemplified in Judaism. But is that really the case?

This volume can be a great resource for preachers. It does distill some of the complexities from the debates over such theological topics as justification and predestination. A careful reading of the "sermons" will demonstrate how these four views do impact the development of sermons. The volume is not likely to sway a reader away from her/his current interpretive framework, since our nature is to 'dig in' when strongly held beliefs are challenged. Regardless, exposing oneself to how some of the most popular and respected proponents of alternative views would communicate their own position is valuable. I learned that lesson firsthand when I left the conservative college from which I graduated to attend a denominationally supported seminary.

I highly recommend this volume. The volume will be of value not only for preachers, but also for all those who have an interest in and want to know more about the interpretive processes behind exposition and (in my humble opinion) too often in translation.

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Lucy PEPPIATT. *Unveiling Paul's Women: Making Sense of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16.* With a foreword by Scot McKnight. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2018. 106 pp. $16.00.

This little volume surprised me! In this "shorter, simpler version" of her more academic volume (xiii), Peppiatt tackles 1 Cor 11:2-16. And her goal is obvious. She wants to dispose of it. She wants to be rid of those statements that appear to place some kind of limitation on women.

Referring to the hierarchy of God → Christ → Man → Woman at the beginning of this passage, 1 Cor 11:3, Peppiatt remarks, "It's not so encouraging that the wife is left at the end of the line as *kephale* ["head"] of no-one" (63), and so she reluctantly concedes: "It is true that a wife is the *kephale* of no one. We can't get around that" (65). But she is determined to "get around" the rest of the passage. And she tries to do so, I think, in a very clever, original way.

Peppiatt argues that not all of 1 Cor 11:2-16 represents Paul's voice. Several statements in this passage "are the reasons that the Corinthians have given to Paul for making women wear head coverings" (44). And so sometimes Paul is merely reiterating what the Corinthians themselves have said to him, probably in the letter that they have written (1 Cor 7:1), which is then followed by Paul's response. Peppiatt compares it to those Corinthians slogans, like 1 Cor 6:13, "All things are lawful for me," where Paul first quotes the Corinthians and then makes his reply. According to Peppiatt, Paul is not trying to compel the Corinthian women to wear a veil. It is the Corinthian men who are voicing this, not Paul. According to Peppiatt, Paul is actually arguing that the Corinthian women do not have to wear a veil (37, 41).

Peppiatt writes very well. She knows how to hold my attention. And she also knows how to get me to think and to rethink as she asks a series of good questions about 1 Cor 11:2-16 (10-12) and raises several issues for careful consideration (12-16). These are Peppiatt's strengths. Her weaknesses lie in research. She seems totally unaware of Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones's dissertation, *Aphrodite's Tortoise: The Veiled Woman of Ancient Greece* (Swansea, UK: The Classical Press of Wales, 2003), which has convinced most classical scholars that in ancient Greece women normally wore a veil that covered the lower portion of their face. And so Peppiatt assumes from 1 Cor 11:5 that Paul would be okay with a woman saying a prayer or speaking a prophecy out loud in the church assembly so long as she wears a covering on the top of her head (5). Neither she nor most NT scholars have ever considered that, in order to speak aloud, these women had to drop their veils from over their mouths, and that this dropping of the veil to speak is what spawns Paul's

rebuke. In this case, there would be no tension between 1 Cor 11:5 and 14:34-35, for Paul never intends these women to speak aloud in the assembly in the presence of men, in full accordance with 1 Tim 2:12, since their wearing of the veil would prevent their speaking (cf. the tendency for TV news reporters today to pull down their masks in order to speak in the midst of the current pandemic). First Cor 11:5 simply registers Paul's disapproval of their dropping of the veil in order to speak aloud, an action that ancient Greeks and Romans once regarded as shameful and immoral.

And Peppiatt never deals with the relevant ancient writings, like *Memorable Doings and Sayings* 6.3.10 by Valerius Maximus (early first century CE) regarding the Roman general Gaius Sulpicius Gallus, who divorced his wife because she went outside their home "with her head uncovered" ("*capite aperto*") and thus showed to other men what only his "eyes should see." He was not talking about the crown of her head or her hair, but her face, for adultery begins with a woman's smile as her eyes meet those of another man. Or Dio Chrysostom (late first century CE), who explains that the custom of women wearing a veil across their face was no longer in vogue in his day, except in Tarsus, Paul's hometown (*Or.* 33.48-49). These and other ancient statements show that, contrary to Peppiatt, these Corinthian men were not necessarily insisting on an unreasonable practice for their women.

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Josef SCHMID. *A History of the Greek Text of the Apocalypse: The Ancient Stems.* Translated from the German by Juan Hernández Jr., Garrick V. Allen, and Darius Müller. Text-Critical Studies 11. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature Press, 2018. 336 pp. $72.52.

I find it difficult to overstate the significance of this volume for Revelation, the last book of the New Testament. The book of Revelation differs radically from the rest of the New Testament, not just in its bizarre contents that leave scholars and commentators perplexed with conflicting interpretations, but also in its textual problems and complexities. From the time of Erasmus, who only had one manuscript of Revelation available to use in publishing the first Greek New Testament, until the present, determining the wording of the Greek text for Revelation has proved as challenging as its interpretation. Undaunted by this challenge, Schmid wrote a history of the Greek text of Revelation that has been hailed as a classic study by nearly all textual scholars. Schmid examined all of the available evidence: Greek manuscripts, versions, and citations in the church fathers. Because he published his work sixty-five years ago (1955), recent discoveries like $\mathfrak{P}^{115}$ were not available to him. And yet the text of $\mathfrak{P}^{115}$ confirms his conclusion that the text of Revelation has survived today in four major text forms: (1) the AC text, so named because it is the text found in *Codex Alexandrinus* (A) and *Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus* (C), and it is also the text found in the commentary written by Oecumenius in the early sixth century; (2) the $\mathfrak{P}^{47}$ S text, so named because it is the text found in $\mathfrak{P}^{47}$ and *Codex Sinaiticus*, and it is the text most often found in the writings of Origen; (3) the Andreas text (Av), so named because it is the text found in the commentary written by Andreas (or Andrew) of Caesarea in the first decade of the seventh century; and (4) the Koine text (K), so named because it was the standard text form of the Byzantine textual tradition, the so-called Majority Text. According to Schmid, the first two text forms are the oldest, and the other two represent later recensions that contain a lot of corrections.

This volume falls into three sections. In the first section, the introduction, Schmid reviews the work of previous textual scholars on the book of Revelation, including Westcott and Hort, Bernard Weiss, Wilhelm Bousset, Hermann von Soden, and H. C. Hoskier. In the second section, Schmid presents his theory of the four major text forms, or "stems" as he calls them, and reviews all of the

textual evidence. In the last section of his work, Schmid shows how the author's linguistic style (characteristic spellings, the use of the definite article, and various other grammatical criteria) can help in evaluating variant readings.

From my examination, the translation from German into English is spot on throughout. I can find no fault with it anywhere. The translators have produced a very accurate translation. And they have also corrected Schmid's shortcomings (see especially Schmid's serious dating error astutely pointed out by Juan Hernández Jr. in "The Creation of a Fourth-Century Witness to the Andreas Text Type: A Misreading in the Apocalypse's Textual History," *NTS* 60 [2014]: 106-120), and these additions make this volume even more useful for scholars today.

I really have only one complaint. There is some confusion whenever the translators make reference to a footnote in the original German, as in the "Appendix: Errata" on 265. Here in the first line, the translators cite an error on page "53 n 133," but there is no footnote "133" on 53 in the German original. In the original German publication, Schmid always renumbers his footnotes on every page, so that each page has a footnote no. "1." So the translators should have written here "53 n 4." And in the next reference (the second line on 265), they should have written "128 n 2" instead of "128 n 247." And on 267 of the English translation, under the subheading "Typos Corrected in the Translation," the very first error (concerning the initials of Scrivener's name, F. H. A.) should be cited as "18 n 3" instead of "18 n 45."

But these errors are a minor problem that will not matter at all to the student who reads only English and does not wish to consult the German original. Overall, this English translation of Schmid is very well done, and the corrections and updates that the translators have introduced to Schmid's work have increased its usefulness for scholars today. The translators are to be highly commended for their fine work in making Schmid's magnum opus available to a wider audience. And it appears at a very opportune time, just as work on the *Editio critica maior* of Revelation is nearing its final stage.

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