



themelios

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DESCRIPTION

Themelios is an international evangelical theological journal that expounds and defends the historic Christian faith. Its primary audience is theological students and pastors, though scholars read it as well. It was formerly a print journal operated by RTSF/UCCF in the UK, and it became a digital journal operated by The Gospel Coalition in 2008. The new editorial team seeks to preserve representation, in both essayists and reviewers, from both sides of the Atlantic.

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EDITORIAL

ON ABUSING MATTHEW 18

— D. A. Carson —

D. A. Carson is research professor of New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois.

Several years ago I wrote a fairly restrained critique of the emerging church movement as it then existed, before it morphed into its present diverse configurations.¹ That little book earned me some of the angriest, bitterness-laced emails I have ever received—to say nothing, of course, of the blog posts. There were other responses, of course—some approving and grateful, some thoughtful and wanting to dialogue. But the ones that displayed the greatest intensity were those whose indignation was white hot because I had not first approached privately those whose positions I had criticized in the book. What a hypocrite I was—criticizing my brothers on ostensible biblical grounds when I myself was not following the Bible’s mandate to observe a certain procedure nicely laid out in Matt 18:15–17.

Doubtless this sort of charge is becoming more common. It is regularly linked to the “Gotcha!” mentality that many bloggers and their respondents seem to foster. Person A writes a book criticizing some element or other of historic Christian confessionalism. A few bloggers respond with more heat than light. Person B writes a blog with some substance, responding to Person A. The blogosphere lights up with attacks on Person B, many of them asking Person B rather accusingly, “Did you communicate with Person A in private first? If not, aren’t you guilty of violating what Jesus taught us in Matthew 18?” This pattern of counter-attack, with minor variations, is flourishing.

To which at least three things must be said:

(1) The sin described in the context of Matt 18:15–17 takes place on the small scale of what transpires in a local church (which is certainly what is envisaged in the words “tell it to the church”). It is not talking about a widely circulated publication designed to turn large numbers of people in many parts of the world away from historic confessionalism. This latter sort of sin is very public and is already doing damage; it needs to be confronted and its damage undone in an equally public way. This is quite different from, say, the situation where a believer discovers that a brother has been breaking his marriage vows by sleeping with someone other than his wife, and goes to him privately, then with one other, in the hope of bringing about genuine repentance and contrition, and only then brings the matter to the church.

To put the matter differently, the impression one derives from reading Matt 18 is that the sin in question is not, at first, publicly noticed (unlike the publication of a foolish but influential book). It is relatively private, noticed by one or two believers, yet serious enough to be brought to the attention of the church if the offender refuses to turn away from it. By contrast, when NT writers have to deal with

¹D. A. Carson, *Becoming Conversant with the Emerging Church: Understanding a Movement and Its Implications* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005).

false teaching, another note is struck: the godly elder “must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine *and refute those who oppose it*” (Titus 1:9 NIV).

Doubtless one can think up some contemporary situations that initially might make one scratch one’s head and wonder what the wise course should be—or, to frame the problem in the context of the biblical passages just cited, whether one should respond in the light of Matt 18 or of Titus 1. For example, a local church pastor may hear that a lecturer in his denominational seminary or theological college is teaching something he judges to be outside the confessional camp of that denomination and possibly frankly heretical. Let us make the situation more challenging by postulating that the pastor has a handful of students in his church who attend that seminary and are being influenced by the lecturer in question. Is the pastor bound by Matt 18 to talk with the lecturer before challenging him in public?

This situation is tricky in that the putative false teaching is public in one sense and private in another. It is public in that it is not a merely private opinion, for it is certainly being promulgated; it is private in the sense that the material is not published in the public arena, but is being disseminated in a closed lecture hall. It seems to me that the pastor would be wise to go to the lecturer first, *but not out of obedience to Matt 18, which really does not pertain*, but to determine just what the views of the lecturer really are. He may come to the conclusion that the lecturer is kosher after all; alternatively, that the lecturer has been misunderstood (and any lecturer with integrity will want to take pains not to be similarly misunderstood in the future); or again, that the lecturer is dissimulating. He may feel he has to go to the lecturer’s superior, or even higher. My point, however, is that this course of action is really not tracing out Jesus’ instruction in Matt 18. The pastor is going to the lecturer, in the first instance, not to reprove him, but to find out if there really is a problem when the teaching falls in this ambiguous category of not-quite-private and not-quite-public.

(2) In Matt 18, the sin in question is, by the authority of the church, excommunicable—in at least two senses.

First, the offense may be so serious that the only responsible decision that the church can make is to thrust the offender out of the church and view him or her as an unconverted person (18:17). In other words, the offense is excommunicable *because of its seriousness*. In the NT as a whole, there are three categories of sins that reach this level of seriousness: major doctrinal error (e.g., 1 Tim 1:20), major moral failure (e.g., 1 Cor 5), and persistent and schismatic divisiveness (e.g., Titus 3:10). These constitute the negative flipside of the three positive “tests” of 1 John: the truth test, the obedience test, and the love test. In any case, though we do not know what it is, the offense in Matt 18 is excommunicable because of its seriousness.

Second, the situation is such that the offender can actually be excommunicated from the assembly. In other words, the offense is excommunicable *because organizationally it is possible to excommunicate the offender*. By contrast, suppose someone in, say, Philadelphia were to claim to be a devout Christian while writing a book that was in certain ways deeply anti-Christian. Suppose a church in, say, Toronto, Canada decided the book is heretical. Such a church might, I suppose, declare the book misguided or even heretical, but they certainly could not excommunicate the writer. Doubtless they could declare the offender *persona non grata* in their own assembly, but this would be a futile gesture and probably counter-productive to boot. After all, the offender might be perfectly acceptable in his *own* assembly.²

²This argument could be ratcheted up to the denominational level for those who—mistakenly, in my view—think that “church” in Matt 18 has that sort of multi-assembly organization in view.

In other words, this sort of offense might be excommunicable in the first sense—i.e., the false teaching might be judged so severe that the offender *deserves* to be excommunicated—but is not excommunicable in the second sense, for the organizational reality is such that excommunication is not practicable.

The point to observe is that whatever the offense in Matthew 18, it is excommunicable in *both* senses: the sin must be serious enough to warrant excommunication, and the organizational situation is such that the local church can take decisive action that actually means something. Where one or the other of these two senses does *not* apply, neither does Matthew 18.

One might of course argue that it is the part of prudential wisdom to write to authors before you criticize them in your own publication. I can think of situations where that may or may not be a good idea. But such reasoning forms no part of the argument of Matthew 18.

(3) There is a flavor of play-acting righteousness, of disproportionate indignation, behind the current round of “Gotcha!” games. If Person B charges Person A, who has written a book arguing for a revisionist understanding of the Bible, with serious error and possibly with heresy, it is no part of wisdom to “Tut-tut” the narrow-mindedness of Person B and smile condescendingly and dismissively over such judgmentalism. That may play well among those who think the greatest virtue in the world is tolerance, but surely it cannot be the honorable path for a Christian. Genuine heresy is a damnable thing, a horrible thing. It dishonors God and leads people astray. It misrepresents the gospel and entices people to believe untrue things and to act in reprehensible ways. Of course, Person B *may* be entirely mistaken. Perhaps the charge Person B is making is entirely misguided, even perverse. In that case, one should demonstrate the fact, not hide behind a procedural matter. And where Person B is advancing serious biblical argumentation, it should be evaluated, not dismissed with a procedural sleight-of-hand and a wrong-headed appeal to Matthew 18.

MINORITY REPORT

Know Your Limits: The Key Secret of Theological Controversy

— Carl Trueman —

Carl Trueman is Academic Dean, Vice President of Academic Affairs, and Professor of Historical Theology and Church History at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

In a conversation late in his life, Goethe commented that the secret of artistic genius lay in self-limitation. One might perhaps apply the same today to theological controversy. Indeed, while knowing one's limits is important to making appropriate contributions to many areas, it is vital in theology. This is especially true at a time like this, when technology makes the possibility of excess an omnipresent reality.

As with most pieces of advice, this is, of course, more of a 'do as I say' matter rather than a 'do as I have done.' We all make mistakes; hopefully, as we age, their frequency—or at least their variety—decreases; but just because one does not always live up to one's own stated standards does not mean that those standards cease to be valid.

Limitation is particularly important in theological controversy for three main reasons: time, calling, and competence. All three are closely connected. Our time is to be spent on the things to which we are called, and we are generally called to those things in which we exhibit a certain degree of competence. Thus, for me to spend considerable time each day between eight in the morning and six in the evening trying to master the steps of a foxtrot or tango would be time wasted: two left feet, no sense of rhythm, and a family dependent upon a salary based upon teaching and administration all indicate that my priorities should lie elsewhere.

In theological controversy, this means that we must always assess whether a particular controversy is one in which we should engage. Here are some basic rules to help us limit the battles which we are prepared to fight.

The first question to ask oneself is this: Does this issue impact my local church or my denomination? Forget nebulous ideas of the church as some amorphous, worldwide conglomerate, and think concretely, locally, and denominationally. Often there is sufficient trouble on our own doorsteps to make home the priority.

The Internet can create the illusion that the world is smaller than it really is. Certainly, ideas, information, and news of events can be transmitted over vast distances in the twinkling of an eye. A blog posted in New York can be instantly read in Jakarta; an e-book launched in London is immediately

ready for downloading in Cape Town. This means that things in one country can have implications elsewhere, but we need to use discernment before we decide to respond.

Rob Bell's recent book on hell is a good example of this.¹ The promotional video was available online. Within a short period of time there was also much web speculation about the book's content.² At the request of a friend, I critiqued Bell's use of a quotation from Luther, but I did no more.³ Why? Well, despite the volume of discussion on the web, the book has had no impact as far as I can tell upon the people in my church. My calling is first and foremost to them; and in being a good local churchman, my time and emotional energy must be focused on that particular constituency. They are more concerned about making budget and about health issues, employment, and the myriad difficulties of real life than they are about the pop-theology of the latest mega-church sensation.

Some may respond that this indicates that I am delinquent in my duties to the wider church. Is this not a case of someone taking a rather isolationist, ostrich-like approach? What happens in the trendy mega-church today will happen in the untrendy tiny-church tomorrow, or so the argument goes.

I will concede that there is a certain power in this, but we need to remember two things. First, there is an awful lot of junk out there in the church-world, and therefore one must always use discernment in deciding which battles to fight. One simply cannot fight them all. One must have some criteria for selection, and whether or not it has an immediate impact upon one's immediate constituency would seem to have a decent claim to being one of the most important.

Second, all Christians have a responsibility to help build up their local church. Part of that involves positive actions: for example, encouraging each other and bearing one another's burdens. Part of it also involves refraining from certain actions which might lead others astray; and one such action would be introducing certain errors to people who would otherwise be blissfully unaware of them.

Thus, if nobody in my congregation is wrestling with open theism's notion that God does not know the future, there is little good purpose served in me spending a great deal of time elaborating all of the arguments for open theism and then refuting them. Certainly, I may well address the question of God's foreknowledge as I preach through the Bible. I will not be able to avoid it at some points; but I will address it only when the text demands it or somebody in the congregation raises it as an issue.

Someone may pose a further objection to my apparent isolationism at this point: yes, Trueman, you have local church and denominational responsibilities; but you are also a teacher at a seminary and someone whose words have an impact beyond the hundred or so people you see in church every Sunday.

Again, there is a certain force to this, but in response I would move to the second limiting factor in choosing which controversy to engage: competence. There is, of course, a place for generalism. Every Christian has to be a generalist at some level: we are all supposed to speak the gospel to each other and to those outside the church, for example. The commands to build up the body, to give a reason for the

¹ Rob Bell, *Love Wins: A Book About Heaven, Hell, and the Fate of Every Person Who Ever Lived* (New York: HarperOne, 2011).

² Editor's Note: For a helpful summary of the controversy, see Tony Reinke, "The Rob Bell Debate: A Reader's Digest, with Suggested Resources," *C.J.'s View from the Cheap Seats* (March 16, 2011), <http://sovereigngraceministries.org/blogs/cj-mahaney/post/2011/03/16/Rob-Bell-Love-Wins-Debate-Summary.aspx>.

³ Carl Trueman, "Easy Virtues and Cruel Mistresses: Basic Advice on How to Interpret Luther," *Reformation 21* (March 9, 2011), <http://www.reformation21.org/articles/easy-virtues-and-cruel-mistresses.php>.

hope we have, and to carry forward the Great Commission do not apply only to those with an M.Div. They apply to all Christians.

Nevertheless, the Lord has provided the church with specialists. Just as many congregations enjoy the presence in their membership of a plumber who is able to deal expertly with issues of pipes and water supply and drains, so the church has people who specialize in theology, biblical studies and other divisions of the theological curriculum. Thus, the fact that I am not competent to engage certain issues at a certain level should cause me to limit the battles I fight. Just as I may be able to unblock a drain at the church but should leave the fitting of a new boiler to an expert, so I can engage most theological controversies at the level which a typical Christian might struggle with them; but I must realize that my ability to do so at a highly technical level is limited to my area of specialized training.

This leads to my final observation. I sometimes wonder if the reason so many theologians, amateur and professional, like to engage in online theological controversy has as much to do with them wanting a piece of the action as desiring to help the church. Like those people who stood around weeping and wailing after the death of Michael Jackson and yet who had no personal relationship with him at all, so I suspect many make themselves feel important by engaging in theological controversies which, by the criteria above, are none of their business. Once, for example, someone has written a good refutation of Rob Bell's use of Scripture or historical sources, there is really no need for the rest of us to do anything but refer others to such. At least, that is the case until someone has exposed the refutations themselves as weak or inadequate.

Many find theological controversy to be a fun hobby. That is a very naïve view. For those who have been involved in such where reputations, livelihoods, and, at certain times and places, even lives have been on the line, it is a nightmare. We should engage in it only when it impacts the small patch of the kingdom in which we have responsibility, and only to the extent that our abilities allow us to do so with competence. Limitation in polemic, as for Goethe in art, is the secret of true greatness.

Trinitarian Agency and the Eternal Subordination of the Son: An Augustinian Perspective

— Keith E. Johnson —

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In recent years a debate has emerged among conservative evangelicals over the “eternal functional subordination” (EFS) of the Son. At the center of this dispute is the question of how we are to understand scriptural teaching regarding the nature of the Son’s *eternal* relationship to the Father. Is the obedience of the Son to the Father limited merely to the incarnation, or does it also extend to the Son’s *eternal* relationship with the Father?¹ The trinitarian teaching of the church fathers plays a central role in this dispute. Proponents and opponents of EFS accuse one another of “tampering with the Trinity,” and they appeal to past theologians to substantiate (or deny) this claim.²

One of these theologians is Augustine of Hippo (354–430). Consider the contrasting interpretations of the Father/Son relationship in Augustine’s trinitarian theology that are offered by Bruce Ware (who affirms EFS) and Kevin Giles (who denies EFS):

As Augustine affirmed, the distinction of Persons is constituted precisely by the differing relations among them, in part manifested by the inherent authority of the Father and inherent submission of the Son.³

¹It is important to distinguish the submission of the Son to the Father in his human nature (in the incarnation) from the claim that the Son is functionally subordinate to the Father in his divine nature from all eternity. Both sides in the EFS debate affirm that the Son lived a life of obedience to the Father in his “state of humiliation” (cf. Phil 2:5–8). Proponents of EFS (e.g., George Knight, Bruce Ware, Wayne Grudem, John Dahms) make the additional claim that an eternal relation of submission and authority exists between the Father and the Son but insist that this subordination is “functional” and not “ontological.” Opponents of EFS (e.g., Gilbert Bilezikian, Millard Erickson, Kevin Giles) deny that the Son is, in any way, eternally subordinate to the Father.

²Compare the following assertions: “It cannot be legitimately denied that the eternal subordination of the Son is an orthodox doctrine and believed from the history of the early church to the present day” (Stephen D. Kovach and Peter R. Schemm Jr., “A Defense of the Doctrine of the Eternal Subordination of the Son,” *JETS* 42 [1999]: 464). “‘Tradition,’ rather than being on their [i.e., EFS proponents] side, is their strongest opponent” (Kevin Giles, *The Trinity and Subordinationism: The Doctrine of God and the Contemporary Gender Debate* [Downers Grove: IVP, 2002], 106).

³Bruce A. Ware, *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: Roles, Relationships, and Relevance* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2005), 79–80.

Augustine likewise gives no support whatsoever to the idea that Christ is eternally set under the Father's authority.⁴

The purpose of this essay is to explore the nature of trinitarian agency in Augustine's theology and to consider the implications that Augustine's position might have for the EFS debate.⁵ By "trinitarian agency" I simply mean the way in which Father, Son, and Holy Spirit work together in creation, providence, and redemption. Understood in this way, trinitarian agency is directly related to the EFS dispute inasmuch as supporters and opponents of EFS offer differing accounts of the manner in which the Father and Son work together.

Why Augustine? First, Augustine's teaching on the Trinity is by far the most influential in the history of the West.⁶ Second, despite popular portrayals to the contrary, his trinitarian doctrine shares much in common with the Greek-speaking theologians of the East (e.g., the Cappadocians: Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory of Nazianzus).⁷ In turning to Augustine, one draws upon what is arguably the most representative version of trinitarian doctrine in the history of the church among Catholics and Protestants.⁸ Finally, as we have seen above, both sides in the EFS dispute appeal to Augustine's teaching on the Trinity.

⁴Kevin Giles, *Jesus and the Father: Modern Evangelicals Reinvent the Doctrine of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 190.

⁵It should be noted that some diversity of perspective exists among evangelical proponents of EFS. For example, some EFS proponents affirm the eternal generation of the Son (e.g., John Dahms) while others deny it (e.g., Bruce Ware). In addition, some prefer to speak of the "eternal *relational* subordination" of the Son to the Father (e.g., Robert Doyle).

⁶Not everyone views Augustine's influence as positive. According to critics like Colin Gunton, Cornelius Plantinga, and Catherina LaCugna, Augustine's theology "begins" with a unity of divine substance (which he allegedly "prioritizes" over the divine persons); his trinitarian reflection is over-determined by neo-Platonic philosophy; his psychological "analogy" tends toward modalism; and he severs the life of the triune God from the economy of salvation by focusing on the immanent Trinity. Lewis Ayres and Michel Barnes, however, have convincingly demonstrated that these criticisms are based on fundamental misreadings of Augustine's trinitarian theology. See Lewis Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); idem, *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 363–83; and Michel R. Barnes, "Rereading Augustine's theology of the Trinity," in *The Trinity: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Trinity* (ed. Stephen T. Davis, Daniel Kendall, and Gerald O'Collins; New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 145–76. See also Neil Ormerod, *The Trinity: Retrieving the Western Tradition* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2005).

⁷Many contemporary narratives of the history of trinitarian doctrine assume without warrant that significant differences exist between early "Western" approaches (which emphasize divine unity) and early "Eastern" approaches (which emphasize a trinity of divine persons). This problematic assumption can be traced to the work of a nineteenth-century Jesuit, Théodore de Régnon. Trenchant criticisms of this polarizing paradigm can be found in Michel R. Barnes, "De Régnon Reconsidered," *AugStud* 26 (1995): 51–79; and idem, "Augustine in Contemporary Trinitarian Theology," *TS* 56 (1995): 237–50.

⁸Because of his status as "Doctor of the Church" (*doctor ecclesiae*), medieval theologians treated Augustine as a reliable authority whose teaching on the Trinity may be employed as foundational elements in theological argumentation because they are seen as faithful expressions of Scripture and conciliar teaching. This is not to suggest that Augustine's doctrinal statements possessed the same kind of authority as Scripture. Rather they possessed a "probable" authority—something less than the ultimate authority of Holy Scripture but certainly much more than untested theological opinions. This medieval practice offers an apt analogy for my engagement with Augustine's trinitarian theology in this essay.

Because Augustine's account of trinitarian agency can be understood only in the broader context of the relations among the divine persons, I begin by examining the divine relations as presented in *De trinitate*.⁹ Next, I outline his account of trinitarian agency. For Augustine, the working of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is indivisibly the work of the three *ad extra* (i.e., in creation, providence, and redemption). At the same time, in this single act, the divine persons work in an ordered and irreversible manner according to their relative properties *ad intra*. I close by considering the implications of Augustine's account for the EFS debate.

1. *The Relations of the Divine Persons in De trinitate*

In Book I of *De trinitate*, Augustine helpfully summarizes the Latin pro-Nicene teaching on the Trinity.¹⁰ His summary contains four themes arranged in chiastic fashion:

- A—Inseparable equality of the divine persons
- B—Real distinctions among the divine persons
- B'—Distinction of persons in the economy of salvation
- A'—Inseparable action of the divine persons in the economy of salvation¹¹

It will be helpful to quote Augustine at length:

[A] The purpose of all the Catholic commentators I have been able to read on the divine books of both testaments, who have written before me on the trinity which God is,¹² has been to teach that according to the scriptures Father and Son and Holy Spirit in the inseparable equality of one substance present a divine unity; and therefore there are not three gods but one God; [B] although indeed the Father has begotten the Son, and therefore he who is the Father is not the Son; and the Son is begotten by the Father, and therefore he who is the Son is not the Father; and the Holy Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son, but only the Spirit of the Father and of the Son, himself coequal to the Father and the Son, and belonging to the threefold unity. [B'] It was not however this same three (their teaching continues) that was born of the virgin Mary, crucified and buried under Pontius Pilate, rose again on the third day and ascended into heaven, but

⁹All citations of *De trinitate* are taken from Augustine, *The Trinity* (trans. Edmund Hill; Brooklyn: New City, 1991).

¹⁰Pro-Nicene theology is not merely a simple reassertion of the teaching of Nicaea. It represents an interpretation of Nicaea that emerged in the second half of the fourth century. Ayres (*Augustine and the Trinity*, 43) writes, "By this term [pro-Nicene] I refer to that *interpretation* of Nicaea and of earlier Nicene theologies which formed the context for the establishment of Catholic orthodoxy under the emperors Theodosius and Gratian through the actions of the councils of Constantinople and Aquileia, through imperial decree, and through the slow mutual recognition of a number of different pro-Nicene parties. This theology is not sufficiently defined by reference to Nicaea alone, but only by reference also to a number of the key principles within which Nicaea was interpreted as teaching a faith in three coordinate divine realities who constitute one nature, power, will and substance."

¹¹Augustine, of course, does not explicitly say that he intends to arrange these in "chiastic" form. This judgment is my own.

¹²In this summary, Augustine speaks about the "Trinity which God is" (*de trinitate quae Deus est*). This phrase is not used by any of Augustine's predecessors and represents an important alternative to merely affirming the Father as *Deus*. See Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 100.

the Son alone. Nor was it this same three that came down upon Jesus in the form of a dove at his baptism, or came down on the day of Pentecost after the Lord's ascension, with a roaring sound from heaven as though a violent gust were rushing down, and in divided tongues as of fire, but the Holy Spirit alone. Nor was it this same three that spoke from heaven, *You are my Son*, either at his baptism by John (Mk 1:11), or on the mountain when the three disciples were with him (Mt 17:5), nor when the resounding voice was heard, *I have both glorified it (my name) and will glorify it again* (Jn 12:28), but it was the Father's voice alone addressing the Son; [A'] although just as Father and Son and Holy Spirit are inseparable, so do they work inseparably. This is also my faith inasmuch as it is the Catholic faith (*De trin.* I.7, 69–70).¹³

First (A), Augustine discusses the divine relations from an intra-trinitarian standpoint. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit exist in an “inseparable equality of one substance.” Thus, we must speak of *one* God. Second (B), real distinctions exist among the persons that are grounded in unique relations that obtain among them. Third (B'), real distinctions exist among the divine persons in the economy of salvation. Finally (A'), the divine persons act inseparably.

It is important to observe how A/A' and B/B' mirror one other in such a way that A (inseparable nature) constitutes the basis for A' (inseparable action) while B (intra-trinitarian distinction) constitutes the basis for B' (distinction in the economy of salvation). With this background in mind, I will examine Augustine's teaching on the divine relations in greater detail following the order above (A, B, B', A').¹⁴

1.1. Unity and Equality of the Divine Persons *ad intra* (A)

Following a theological tradition that can be traced to Tertullian, Augustine locates the equality of the divine persons in a unity of divine substance.¹⁵ Father, Son, and Holy Spirit “are of one and the same substance or essence” (*De trin.* I.4, 67).¹⁶ Although he frequently speaks in terms of one “substance” (*substantia*), Augustine's vocabulary is somewhat flexible in that he also speaks of one *essentia*, one *divinitas*, and one *deitas*.¹⁷

¹³ For further discussion of this summary, see Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 95–114. Whereas Ayres sees this text as divided into three sections, I follow other commentators in seeing four sections—especially because of the thematic structure highlighted above.

¹⁴ In the discussion that follows, my goal is simply to present Augustine's teaching on the divine relations without examining the biblical and theological arguments that ground these claims. Augustine offers biblical arguments for each of the elements that will be discussed below.

¹⁵ For Augustine there is an important sense in which the equality of the three divine persons can be traced to the Father. As Ayres explains, the Father is the “cause and source of the Trinitarian communion” (*Augustine and the Trinity*, 264). This is discussed below.

¹⁶ Contra many contemporary narratives, the fact that the divine essence constitutes the principle of unity should not be viewed as a distinctive of “Western” theologies over and against “Eastern” theologies. Moreover, as we see below, Augustine is quite clear that the Father is the *principium*.

¹⁷ Augustine explains that the Latin term *substantia* has the same meaning as *ousia* in Greek: “By ‘being’ (*essentia*) I mean here what is called *ousia* in Greek, which we more usually call substance (*substantia*)” (*De trin.* V.9–10, 195–96).

1.2. Distinction of Divine Persons *ad intra* (B)

If Father, Son, and Holy Spirit share one substance, then no inequality may exist among them. Although this affirmation eliminates all ontological subordination, it leaves an important question unanswered. If the divine persons possess one nature, in what sense, and on what basis, are they distinct? According to Augustine, real distinctions exist among the divine persons that are grounded in relations of origin. Because the Father has *begotten* the Son, the Father is not the Son. Because the Son is *begotten* by the Father, the Son is not the Father. Similarly, because the Spirit *proceeds* from the Father and the Son, the Spirit is distinct from the Father and the Son.

1.2.1. Generation of the Son

Augustine was not the first to articulate a doctrine of eternal generation as a way of explicating the relationship of the Son to the Father. To the contrary, eternal generation is a central feature of pro-Nicene theology (both Latin and Greek).¹⁸ Augustine's account of eternal generation includes several important elements.¹⁹

First, the generation of the Son is incorporeal and should not be understood in the manner of human generation. Unfortunately, some people make the mistake of “transfer[ing] what they have observed about bodily things to incorporeal and spiritual things . . .” (*De trin.* I.1, 65).

Second, the Father “timelessly” (eternally) begot the Son (*De trin.* XV.47, 432). Thus, the generation of the Son is eternal.²⁰

Third, the Son is begotten by the Father in an equality of nature. Through generation the Son receives the “life”—that is, the nature or substance—of the Father. Commenting on John 5:26 (“As the Father has life in himself, so he has given the Son to have life in himself”), Augustine explains that the Father “begot [the Son] timelessly in such a way that the *life* which the Father gave the Son by begetting him is co-eternal with the *life* of the Father who gave it . . .” (*De trin.* XV.47, 432, italics mine).²¹ Thus, we should not think of the generation of the Son like “water flowing out from a hole in the ground or in the rock, but like light flowing from light” (*De trin.* IV.27, 172).²² The Son’s “light” is equal in its radiance to “light” of the Father.

Fourth, the generation of the Son is “necessary” in the sense that the Son is begotten not by the *will* of the Father but rather of the *nature* of the Father (*De trin.* XV.38, 425).²³

¹⁸ Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 236.

¹⁹ “Augustine places Latin Nicene emphasis on the Son’s being generated from the substance of the Father at the heart of his theology” (Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 180).

²⁰ Some pre-Nicene theologians like Tertullian understand the generation of the Son to be temporal (immediately prior to creation) rather than eternal.

²¹ Similarly, in Book I, Augustine explains that John 5:26 teaches that the Father “begot the Son to be unchangeable life, that is to say eternal life” (Augustine, *De trin.* I.26, 85). For further discussion and defense of Augustine’s account of eternal generation, see Keith E. Johnson, “What Would Augustine Say to Evangelicals Who Reject the Eternal Generation of the Son?” (unpublished paper presented at the 62nd meeting of Evangelical Theological Society, Atlanta, November 17, 2010).

²² Patristic writers frequently employ “light radiating from light” as an analogy for the generation of the Son by the Father. The ubiquity of this metaphor is reflected by its inclusion in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (381).

²³ To say that the Son is generated by the “will” of the Father is to assert that the Son is a “creature.”

Finally, the generation of the Son is incomprehensible.²⁴

1.2.2. *Procession of the Holy Spirit*

Although earlier theologians recognized that the procession of the Holy Spirit differed from the generation of the Son (such that it would be inappropriate to speak of the Spirit as a second “Son”), many were at a loss to offer a theological rationale for this distinction.²⁵ Augustine made an important contribution by suggesting that the Holy Spirit proceeds jointly from the Father and the Son. Augustine succinctly summarizes his position in the following statement:

And just as for the Holy Spirit his being the gift of God means his proceeding from the Father, so his being sent means his being known to proceed from him. Nor, by the way, can we say that the Holy Spirit does not proceed from the Son as well; it is not without point that the same Spirit is called the Spirit of the Father and of the Son. (*De trin.* IV.29, 174)

Although he affirms that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son,²⁶ Augustine offers an important qualification. He notes that John 15:26 does not say, “whom the Father will send from me,” but rather “whom I will send from the Father.” By this, Christ “indicated that the source (*principium*) of all godhead (*divinitatis*), or if you prefer it, of all deity (*deitatis*), is the Father. So the Spirit who proceeds from the Father and the Son is traced back, on both counts, to him of whom the Son is born” (*De trin.* V.29, 174). Thus, although Augustine clearly speaks of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as one substance, he also affirms that the source and origin of deity (*principium deitatis*) is the Father.²⁷

²⁴The incomprehensibility of God is major theme in Augustine’s theology.

²⁵Notice how Gregory of Nyssa expresses the distinctiveness of the Spirit merely in terms of being neither ungenerate nor only-begotten: “The Holy Spirit by the uncreatedness of his nature has contact with the Son and Father, but is distinguished from them by His own tokens. His most peculiar characteristic is that He is neither of those things which we contemplate in the Father and Son respectively. His is simply, neither as ungenerate (ἀγεννήτως), nor as only-begotten (μονογενῶς): this it is that constitutes His chief peculiarity” (Gregory of Nyssa, “Against Eunomius,” I.22 in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Second Series [ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979], 5:61).

²⁶The *filioque* clause was inserted into the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed at the Third Council of Toledo in 589—over one hundred and seventy years after Augustine wrote *De trinitate*. Thus, the question regarding the formal legitimacy of the insertion of the *filioque* clause into the creed must be distinguished from substantive theological question of whether the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father *and the Son*. These two issues are frequently (and wrongly!) conflated. In other words, one might argue that the Western church was wrong unilaterally to insert the filioque into the creed while, at the same time affirming, that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. For an explanation and defense of Augustine’s position, see Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 263–68.

²⁷The Father’s status as *principium* is a core element of Augustine’s trinitarian theology. As Ayres explains (*Augustine and the Trinity*, 248), “the Father’s *monarchia*, his status as *principium* and *fons*, is central to Augustine’s trinitarian theology. . . . For Augustine, the Father’s status as *principium* is eternally exercised through his giving the fullness of divinity to the Son and Spirit such that the unity of God will be eternally found in the mysterious unity of the *homoousion*.” Augustine’s account of trinitarian communion holds in tension the Father’s status as *principium* with full divinity and equality of the Son and Holy Spirit with the Father. Ayres summarizes this reality when he explains that “Augustine’s mature account of the Trinity” involves “an ordered communion of equals established by the Father” (197).

1.3. Distinction of Divine Persons *ad extra* (B')

Having examined the divine relations *ad intra*, I will now turn to the relations among the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit *ad extra* by examining the central “economic” concept in *De trinitate*—the divine “missions.”²⁸ Augustine links the “sending” of the Son to the incarnation: “[W]hat constituted the sending of the Lord was his being born in the flesh, his issuing, so to speak, from the hidden invisibility of the Father’s bosom and appearing to the eyes of men in the form of a servant. . .” (*De trin.* III.3, 129). Augustine insists that the sending of the Son represents a unique moment in salvation-history such that one cannot properly speak of the Son being “sent” prior to the incarnation.

The sending of the Holy Spirit differs from the sending of the Son in that the Spirit did not join a created reality “to himself and his person to be held in an everlasting union” (*De trin.* II.11, 104). At the same time, the sending of the Spirit (which Augustine links to Pentecost) did involve the physical manifestation of the Holy Spirit through created forms (*De trin.* II.11, 104).

Augustine’s opponents—probably Latin Homoian theologians²⁹—argued that the sending of the Son by the Father reveals the “inferiority” of the Son to the Father on the grounds that the one who sends must, of necessity, be “greater” than the one who is sent (*De trin.* II.7, 101). Augustine’s response has important implications for the EFS debate. He labors to show that “being sent” does not imply any inferiority on the part of the Son. It simply reveals that the Son is eternally *from* by the Father:

If however the reason why the Son is said to have been sent by the Father is simply that the one is the Father and the other the Son, then there is nothing at all to stop us believing that the Son is equal to the Father and consubstantial and co-eternal, and yet that the Son is sent by the Father. Not because one is greater and the other less, but because one is the Father and the other the Son; one is the begetter, the other begotten; the first is the one from whom the sent one is; the other is the one who is from the sender (*De trin.* IV.27, 172).

In short, because sending reveals merely the generation of the Son, the Son is not in any way inferior to the Father.³⁰ One of Augustine’s central insights is that the economic missions of the Son and the Spirit both reflect and reveal the nature of their eternal relation to the Father. The temporal sending of the Son reveals his eternal generation by the Father while the temporal sending of the Spirit from

²⁸ It is through the divine missions that the distinction of persons is most evidently manifested in the economy of salvation.

²⁹ Augustine’s opponents, whom he calls “Arians,” were most likely Latin Homoian theologians. See Michel R. Barnes, “Exegesis and Polemic in Augustine’s *De Trinitate* I,” *AugStud* 30 (1999): 43–52; and idem, “The Arians of Book V, and the Genre of ‘*de Trinitate*,’” *JTS* 44 (1993): 185–95. Latin Homoian theologians (e.g., Palladius and Bishop Maximinus) emphasized the Father as “true God” over and against the Son (particularly because of the Father’s unique status as *ingenerate*).

³⁰ Although he is commenting on a different passage in Book II, Ayres’s comments are apropos to this text as well (*Augustine and the Trinity*, 183): “Thus we can say that the Son was ‘sent’ without implying that one has the authority to send, while the one sent is merely subordinate, because that the Son will be sent is intrinsic to the Son’s generation from the Father. The visible life and ministry of the Incarnate Word is thus founded in the ‘interior ordering’ of the Trinity.”

the Father and Son reveals his eternal procession from the Father and Son.³¹ In this sense, the missions ultimately reveal Father.³²

Because the temporal missions correspond to and reflect the generation of the Son and procession of the Spirit, the intra-trinitarian taxis represents one of the keys to understanding the interrelationships among the divine persons in the economy of salvation.³³ Indeed, this is precisely what one discovers: the Father (*principium*) is the one who sends the Son and Spirit, while the Son and the Spirit (who proceed from the Father) are the ones who are sent.

1.4. Unity of Operation of the Divine Persons *ad extra* (A')

Having discussed the distinction of persons *ad extra*, I will now consider the divine persons in their unity of operation. According to Augustine, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit act “inseparably” (*De trin.* I.7, 70). As this will play an important role in my “Augustinian” assessment of the EFS debate, it will be helpful to examine this in some detail. The inseparable action of the divine persons represents a fundamental axiom of Augustine’s trinitarian theology.³⁴ He inherited this axiom from pro-Nicenes including Ambrose and Hilary.³⁵ Anti-Nicenes argued that the distinct activity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit indicated that the divine persons were separate beings with the Father being superior.³⁶ In response, pro-Nicenes argued that Scripture shows the activity of the divine persons to be one (i.e., all three persons are involved in acts of creation, providence, and redemption). Thus, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit share one nature.

What does Augustine mean when he affirms that the divine persons act “inseparably”? First, inseparable operation means that all three persons are involved in *every* action of creation, providence, and redemption.³⁷ As Augustine explains, while it was only the Son who became incarnate, the incarnation of the Son was the inseparable work of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Second, it means that that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit share one will and execute one power. Inseparable operation is a direct

³¹ The distinction Augustine draws between “mission” and “generation/procession” corresponds to the contemporary distinction between the economic Trinity (mission) and the immanent Trinity (generation/procession).

³² Augustine believes that the economy of salvation is not merely a record of the divine acts of salvation but that it also teaches us about God. Thus, the missions of the Son and Spirit are merely salvific but also revelatory.

³³ As Ayres (*Augustine and the Trinity*, 247) explains, “all operations *ad extra* [for Augustine] are founded in the ordering of the divine life.”

³⁴ See Michel R. Barnes, “The Logic of Augustine’s Trinitarian Theology” (unpublished paper presented at Aquinas the Augustinian Conference, Naples, Florida, February 4, 2005), 7–11.

³⁵ Lewis Ayres, “The Fundamental Grammar of Augustine’s Trinitarian Theology,” in *Augustine and His Critics: Essays in Honour of Gerald Bonner* (ed. Dodaro and George Lawless; New York: Routledge, 2000), 55–56.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 56.

³⁷ According to Augustine (and all pro-Nicenes), one cannot formally assign different external works to the divine persons as distinct agents. The divine persons enact a single agency in creation, providence, and redemption. Thus, when a biblical text mentions one divine person, this should not be seen as excluding the others: “It is to make us aware of the trinity that some things are even said about the persons singly by name; however, they must not be understood in the sense of excluding the other persons, because this same three is also one, and there is one substance and godhead of Father and Son and Holy Spirit” (Augustine, *De trin.* I.19, 79).

implication and economic expression of intra-trinitarian unity (i.e., monotheism).³⁸ This can be seen clearly in Augustine's summary of Latin pro-Nicene teaching on the Trinity: intra-trinitarian ontological unity (A) constitutes the basis for inseparable economic operation (A').

Augustine's mature account of inseparable operation can be found in his *Tractates on the Gospel of John*.³⁹ I will briefly examine his exposition of John 5:19 in Tractate 20.⁴⁰ "So Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.'"⁴¹ After reviewing the context of John 5, Augustine identifies an interpretive key that must guide one's reading of v. 19: "The Catholic faith, made firm by the Spirit of God in its saints, holds this against every heretical depravity: The works of the Father and the Son are inseparable. . . . Just as the Father himself and the Son himself are inseparable, so also the works of the Father and Son are inseparable" (*Tract.* 20.3, 166).⁴² The Catholic faith does not teach that the Father does one thing while the Son does something else. Whatever the Father does, the Son does as well.

According to Augustine, when Jesus explained to the Jews that he could do nothing of himself but only what he saw the Father doing, he was basically saying, "Why were you scandalized because I said, God is my Father, and because I make myself equal to God? I am equal in such a way that he begot me; I am equal in such a way that he is not from me, but I am from him" (*Tract.* 20.4, 167). Why then does the Son's ability to work come from the Father? Simply because the Son himself is from the Father. Hence, his power (in this case, to heal) comes from the Father as well.⁴³

Augustine recognizes that some see the Son as "less" than the Father in ability, power, and honor when they read John 5. This arises from a "carnal understanding" of Christ's words (*Tract.* 20.5, 168). To help those who struggle to see the equality of the Son to the Father, Augustine provides a concrete example. From the Gospels, we know that Jesus walked upon water. Where, in the Gospels, do we see the Father walking on water? If the Son only does what he "sees" the Father doing, then must it not be the

³⁸Inseparable action should *not* be confused with "modalism," which denies the hypostatic distinction of person.

³⁹English citations from Augustine's *In Johannis evangelium tractatus* are taken from Saint Augustine, *Tractates on the Gospel of John*, 11–27, vol. 79 of *Fathers of the Church* (trans. John W. Rettig; Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1988).

⁴⁰Written after *De trinitate*, Tractate 20 contains Augustine's mature account of trinitarian agency. See Barnes, "The Logic of Augustine's Trinitarian Theology," 8. For a discussion of Augustine's exegesis of John 5 in Tractate 20, see Keith E. Johnson, "Augustine's 'Trinitarian' Reading of John 5: A Model for the Theological Interpretation of Scripture?" *JETS* 52 (2009): 799–810.

⁴¹Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are from the ESV Bible (*The Holy Bible, English Standard Version*). Copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Unless otherwise noted, emphasis in Scripture quotations is added.

⁴²Among medieval Latin theologians, this reality is expressed though the classical axiom *opera ad extra sunt indivisa* ("the external works are undivided"). Although this axiom is faithful to his theology, Augustine prefers to say that works (*opera*) of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are "inseparable" (*inseparabilia*). For example, in the passage cited above, Augustine uses the language *patris et filii opera inseparabilia sunt* ("the works of the Father and Son are inseparable").

⁴³A reciprocal relationship exists between nature and power for Augustine (*Tract.* 20.4, 168): "Therefore, because the Son's power is from the Father, for that reason the Son's substance also is from the Father; and because the Son's substance [is] from the Father, for that reason the Son's power is from the Father."

case that the Father walked on water as well? The “Catholic faith” has a simple solution to this problem: the eternal Son walked on the water with the “flesh” walking and the “divinity” guiding its steps (*Tract.* 20.6, 169–70). When this took place, was the Father absent? By no means! John 14:10 reminds us that the Father *abiding in the Son* does his works.⁴⁴ Thus, the Son’s water-walking is the work of the Son *and* Father.⁴⁵ This, Augustine explains, is precisely the point Jesus makes in John 5:19.

Augustine offers another example of inseparable action. Genesis 1 teaches that God created light. What light did the Son create? It certainly cannot be a different light. On the contrary, it must be the same light: “Therefore, we understand that the light was made by God the Father, but through the Son” (*Tract.* 20.7, 170). Similarly, the Father created the earth. The Son did not create another world by “watching” the Father. On the contrary, the world was created by the Father *through* the Son. Thus, the reason the Son can do nothing of himself (John 5:19) is simply because “[t]he Son is not of himself” (*Tract.* 20.8, 171). Summarizing his discussion of the creative agency of the Trinity, Augustine explains, “The Father [made] the world, the Son [made] the world, the Holy Spirit [made] the world. If [there are] three gods, [there are] three worlds; if [there is] one God, Father and Son and Holy Spirit, one world was made by the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit” (*Tract.* 20.9, 172). This summary nicely captures the core elements of Augustine’s understanding of trinitarian agency.

Augustine’s mature account of trinitarian agency involves two elements. On the one hand, the working of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is inseparably the work of the three *ad extra*. On the other hand, in this single act, the divine persons work according to their relative properties *ad intra*.⁴⁶ The Father acts with the other divine persons according to his mode of being “from no one” (unbegotten). The Son acts with the other divine persons according to his mode of being “from the Father” (generation). The Spirit acts with the other divine persons according to his mode of being “from the Father and the Son” (procession). Combining these two elements we might say that the divine persons act inseparably through the intra-trinitarian *taxis*: from the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit.⁴⁷

2. Trinitarian Agency and the Eternal Subordination of the Son

Before exploring the implications of this investigation, we must consider an important question: *Do any good reasons exist for accepting Augustine’s explanation of trinitarian agency?* One’s response to this question has direct bearing on how seriously one will consider the implications that follow.

⁴⁴“Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works” (John 14:10).

⁴⁵Of course, the Holy Spirit would be included as well.

⁴⁶Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 244: “[T]he manner in which the divine three act together reflects their eternal relationships: the Father acts as the source, the Son acts as the one who is from the Father, the one in whom all things are planned and through whom all things are, and the Spirit acts as the one in whom all things find their stability and rest (although as with so many themes here Augustine never articulates this as a general principle).”

⁴⁷It is important to recognize that “inseparability” for Augustine does not mean interchangeability: “Divine action has to be attributed inseparably to Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but not as if it was carried out through the distribution of tasks to three equal sources of action. *In reality, the unique divine action has its source in the Father and is performed through the Son, in the Holy Spirit*” (Luigi Gioia, *The Theological Epistemology of Augustine’s De trinitate* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008], 162–63 [italics original]).

2.1. Theologians Who Share Augustine's Understanding of Trinitarian Agency

The account of trinitarian operation outlined above is in no way unique to Augustine. That the divine persons act inseparably *ad extra* according to their relative properties *ad intra* is an assumption Augustine shares not only with the entire Latin pro-Nicene tradition but also the Greek-speaking theologians of the East (e.g., the Cappadocians).⁴⁸ For example, in his "Answer to Ablabius," Gregory of Nyssa offers an account of trinitarian agency virtually identical to that of Augustine:

We do not learn that the Father does something on his own, in which the Son does not co-operate. Or again, that the Son acts on his own without the Spirit. Rather does every operation which extends from God to creation and is designated according to our differing conceptions of it have its origin in the Father, proceed through the Son, and reach its completion by the Holy Spirit. It is for this reason that the word for the operation is not divided among the persons involved. For the action of each in any matter is not separate and individualized. But whatever occurs, whether in reference to God's providence for us or the government and constitution of the universe, occurs through the three Persons, and is not three separate things.⁴⁹

Similarly, in his *Letters to Serapion*, Athanasius explains,

[The Trinity] is consistent in itself, indivisible in nature, and its activity is one. The Father does all things through the Word in the Holy Spirit; and thus the unity of the Holy Trinity is preserved; and thus there is preached in the Church one God, "who is over all, and through all, and in all." He is *over all* as Father, as beginning, as source; and *through all*, through the Word; and *in all*, in the Holy Spirit.⁵⁰

Hence, if one chooses to dismiss Augustine's explanation, one must also dismiss the entire Pro-Nicene tradition.

Furthermore, medieval theologians like Thomas Aquinas deploy Augustine's grammar of trinitarian agency (albeit in a more sophisticated form). For example, in his discussion of creation Aquinas explains, on the one hand, that to create is not proper to any of the divine persons but is a common work of the whole Trinity. On the other hand, Aquinas points out that the creative act is inflected through the two processions (generation and spiration):

As the divine nature, although common to the three Persons, still belongs to them in a kind of order, inasmuch as the Son receives the divine nature from the Father, and the

⁴⁸ Ayres, "The Fundamental Grammar of Augustine's Trinitarian Theology," 56: "Although this doctrine is fundamental to late fourth-century, orthodox, Latin theology, it is important that we do not think of 'inseparable operation' as a peculiarly Latin phenomena. The inseparable operation of the three irreducible persons is a fundamental axiom of those theologies which provide the context for the Council of Constantinople in AD 381 and for the reinterpretation of Nicaea, which came to be the foundation of orthodox or catholic theology at the end of the fourth century. It is a principle found in all the major orthodox Greek theologians of the later fourth and fifth centuries, and enters later Orthodox tradition through such figures as John of Damascus in the eighth century."

⁴⁹ Gregory of Nyssa, "An Answer to Ablabius: That We Should Not Think of Saying There Are Three Gods," in *Christology of the Later Fathers* (ed. Edward R. Hardy; LCC; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1954), 261–62.

⁵⁰ Athanasius, *Letters to Serapion* I.28 in *The Faith of the Early Fathers: A Source Book of Theological and Historical Passages from the Christian Writings of the Pre-Nicene and Nicene Eras* (ed. William A. Jurgens; Collegeville: Liturgical, 1970), 1:336.

Holy Ghost from them both: so also likewise the power of creation, whilst common to the three Persons, belongs to them in a kind of order. For the Son receives it from the Father and the Holy Ghost from them both.”⁵¹

Moreover, similar “Augustinian” explanations of trinitarian agency can be found among post-Reformation theologians.⁵² For example, commenting on the work of the Trinity in redemption, John Owen explains, “The agent in, and chief author of, this great work of our redemption is the whole blessed Trinity; for all the works which outwardly are of the Deity are undivided and belong equally to each person, their distinct manner of subsistence and order being observed.”⁵³ To cite a more recent example, Dutch theologian Herman Bavinck explains,

Granted, all God’s outward works (*opera ad extra*) are common to the three persons. “God’s works *ad extra* are indivisible, though the order and distinction of the persons is preserved.” It is always one and the same God who acts both in creation and recreation. In that unity, however, the order of the three persons is preserved. The “ontological” Trinity is mirrored in the “economic” Trinity.⁵⁴

The consistent pattern in the above examples is difficult to miss.

2.2. Implications for the EFS Debate

Augustine’s account of trinitarian agency has at least four implications for the dispute over the eternal subordination of the Son.

⁵¹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I, Q. 45, a. 6, ad. 2 in *St. Thomas Aquinas Summa Theologica*, vol. 1 (trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province; repr., Allen, TX: Christian Classics, 1981). For an incisive analysis of trinitarian agency in Thomas Aquinas, see Giles Emery, *Trinity, Church and the Human Person: Thomistic Essays* (Naples: Sapientia, 2007), 115–53. As Emery explains, “The three persons act in one same action, but each perform this action in the distinct mode of his personal relation, that is, according to his proper ‘mode of existing’ in accordance with the Trinitarian order. The Father acts as the source of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, the Son acts as Word of the Father, the Holy Spirit acts as Love and Gift of the Father and Son” (138). For a contemporary discussion of trinitarian agency that builds upon Aquinas, see John Webster, “Trinity and Creation,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 12 (2010): 4–19.

⁵² Among Lutheran theologians, examples would include Philip Melancthon, Martin Chemnitz, John Andrew Quenstedt, and John Gerhard. For citations from these theologians, see Heinrich Schmid, *The Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (trans. Charles A. Hay and Henry E. Jacobs; 3d ed.; 1899; repr., Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1961), 129–59. Among Reformed theologians, examples would include Peter Vermigli, Herman Witsius, Johannes Heidegger, William Perkins, Amandus Polanus, Gisbertus Voetius, Johannes Wollebius, John Owen, and Francis Turretin. See Richard A. Muller, *The Triunity of God*, vol. 4 of *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520 to ca. 1725* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 255–74; and Heinrich Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics: Set out and Illustrated from the Sources* (trans. G. T. Thomson; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1950), 105–32.

⁵³ John Owen, *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library; Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1967), 26.

⁵⁴ Herman Bavinck, *God and Creation*, vol. 2 of *Reformed Dogmatics* (trans. John Vriend; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 318. Similarly, “Corresponding to these distinctions, we also find ‘economic’ distinctions in the works *ad extra*. All of these works are accomplished by the one God, yet in them each of the three persons fulfills the role that corresponds to the order of his existence in the divine being. The Father works *of himself through* the Son *in* the Spirit” (319).

2.2.1. Distinguishing the Son from the Father

First, it must be recognized that Augustine's theology is at odds with elements of the trinitarian doctrine on *both sides* in the EFS debate. According to Augustine, the Father is distinct from the Son because the Father eternally "begot" the Son, and the Son is distinct from the Father because the Son is eternally "begotten" by the Father. Augustine is not alone in holding this position. As we saw above, the assumption that "eternal generation" constitutes the Father/Son relationship represents one of the core elements of trinitarian doctrine embraced by all pro-Nicene theologians.⁵⁵ By way of contrast, Millard Erickson (who rejects EFS) and Bruce Ware (who affirms EFS) both reject eternal generation on the grounds that this doctrine is speculative and unbiblical.⁵⁶ This move represents a substantive departure from Augustine's teaching on the Trinity. This not to suggest that everyone in this debate rejects eternal generation,⁵⁷ but simply to draw attention to substantive differences that exist between Augustine's teaching and the trinitarian doctrine of leading proponents on both sides—differences that fuel misreadings of Augustine.⁵⁸

2.2.2. The Inseparable Work of the Father and Son

Second, because the divine persons act inseparably, we must think about the "sending" of the Son by the Father in the context of inseparable operation. At stake in affirming inseparable action is nothing less than the unity of God. One *cannot* reject inseparable operation at the economic level and still affirm

⁵⁵Core elements of pro-Nicene theology include the inseparable action of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; an assumption that there are no degrees of divinity; the notion that the divine persons are distinct yet possess the same nature apart from any ontological hierarchy; and that the generation of the Son by the Father takes place within the being of God and involves no division of being. See Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy*, 236, 434. Representatives of pro-Nicene theology include Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzus, Hilary of Poitiers, Marius Victorinus, Ambrose of Milan, and (of course) Augustine.

⁵⁶Millard J. Erickson, *God in Three Persons: A Contemporary Interpretation of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 309: "I would propose that there are no references to the Father begetting the Son or the Father (and the Son) sending the Spirit that cannot be understood in terms of the temporal role assumed by the second and third persons of the Trinity respectively. They do not indicate any intrinsic relationships among the three. Further, to speak of one of the persons as unoriginate and the others as either eternally begotten or proceeding from the Father is to introduce an element of causation or origination that must ultimately involve some type of subordination among them." Cf. idem, *Who's Tampering with the Trinity: An Assessment of the Subordination Debate* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2009), 179–84. Ware, *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*, 162: "The conceptions of both the 'eternal begetting of the Son' and 'eternal procession of the Spirit' seem to me highly speculative and not grounded in biblical teaching."

⁵⁷By way of contrast, Kevin Giles (who rejects EFS) and John Dahms (who affirms EFS) both affirm eternal generation. See John V. Dahms, "The Generation of the Son," *JETS* 32 (1989): 493–501; and Kevin Giles, *The Eternal Generation of the Son and the Doctrine of the Trinity: An Exercise in Doing Evangelical Theology* (Downers Grove: IVP, forthcoming).

⁵⁸Another area of departure from Augustine's trinitarian theology concerns the status of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as "persons." For Augustine, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are *not* three distinct centers of consciousness and will. On the contrary, they share one will and execute one power. In contrast to Augustine, Erickson (explicitly) and Ware (implicitly) adopt a post-Enlightenment understanding of "person" and construe Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as three distinct centers of consciousness and will. See Erickson, *God in Three Persons*, 331; and Ware, *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*, 43–130. Ware's notion of authority and obedience as the means of distinguishing the Father and Son seems to require understanding the divine persons as three distinct centers of consciousness and will.

a unity of nature at the intra-trinitarian level.⁵⁹ Augustine insists that the Father and Son—who “have but one will and are indivisible in their working” (*De trin.* II.9, 103)—were both involved in sending the Son:

What we are saying may perhaps be easier to sort out if we put the question this way, crude though it is: In what manner did God send his Son? Did he tell him to come, giving him an order he complied with by coming, or did he ask him to, or did he merely suggest it? Well, whichever way it was done, it was certainly done by word. But God’s Word is his Son. *So when the Father sent him by word, what happened was that he was sent by the Father and his Word. Hence it is by the Father and the Son that the Son was sent, because the Son is the Father’s Word* (*De trin.* II.9, 103, emphasis mine).⁶⁰

Inseparable action, therefore, intrinsically qualifies all the working of the Father and Son, including the “sending” of the Son by the Father. EFS proponents, therefore, misread Augustine when they sever his comments about the Father “sending” the Son from Augustine’s unequivocal affirmation that the divine persons act inseparably.

For example, in making a case that the Son was subordinate to the Father *prior* to the incarnation, Bruce Ware quotes a passage from Book IV of *De trinitate* in which Augustine explains that the Son is said to have been sent not merely because he became incarnate “but that he was sent in order for the Word to become flesh . . .” (*De trin.* IV.27, 172).⁶¹ This passage, says Ware, constitutes proof that Augustine believed that the Son was “obedient” to the Father in eternity past. Ware, however, misunderstands Augustine. As we have seen above, the sending of the Son was not merely the work of the Father but the inseparable work of the Father and the Son. As Augustine explains elsewhere, “So it is that the invisible Father, together with the jointly invisible Son, is said to have sent this Son by making him visible” (*De trin.* II.9, 103). Augustine is on solid biblical ground in affirming this point.⁶² Alongside texts relating the birth, death, and resurrection of Christ to the purpose of the Father (John 3:16; Rom 8:32; Gal 4:4–6), there are also passages that relate the birth, death, and resurrection of Christ to the decision of the Son: “he made himself poor” (2 Cor 8:9); “he emptied himself” (Phil. 2:6–7); “who gave himself” (Gal 2:20); “I lay [my life] down, and I have authority to take it up again” (John 10:18). Ware’s reading takes only the former category of texts into account and not the latter.⁶³

⁵⁹ Remember from Augustine’s summary of trinitarian doctrine (cited earlier) that A (inseparable ontological unity) constitutes the basis for A’ (inseparable operation) while B (intra-trinitarian distinction among the persons) constitutes the basis for B’ (distinction of person in the economy of salvation).

⁶⁰ Commenting on this passage, Ayres explains (*Augustine and the Trinity*, 182), “The Father’s sending of the Son is intrinsic to the Father’s eternal ‘speaking’ of the Word and Wisdom: there can be no importation of the language of ‘command’ because the Son eternally comes into existence as one who eternally shares in the decisions of the Father as the Father’s Wisdom.” As a result, “common ‘decisions’ are not the result of a deliberative and temporal process, but rooted in the eternal generation of Son and [spiration of] Spirit.”

⁶¹ Ware, *Father, Son and Holy Spirit*, 80–81.

⁶² For a discussion of the biblical basis of the birth, death, and resurrection of Christ as the inseparable work of the Father and Son, see Sermon 52 in Saint Augustine, *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*, vol. III/3, *Sermons III (51–94) on the New Testament* (ed. John E. Rotelle; trans. Edmund Hill; Brooklyn: New City, 1991), 54–56.

⁶³ To state this problem in theological terms, Ware’s reading of Augustine (specifically his appeal to the “sending” of the Son as evidence that Augustine believes that the Son is eternally under the Father’s authority)

Moreover, Ware's reading of Augustine, if correct, undermines the very point Augustine is trying to make in response to his Homoian opponents who argued that one who sends is "greater" than one who is sent. As Augustine explains, "For [the Word] was not sent in virtue of some disparity of power or substance or anything in him that was not equal to the Father, *but in virtue of the Son being from the Father, not the Father being from the Son*" (*De trin.* IV.27, 172, emphasis mine).⁶⁴ The "sending" language in Scripture does not reveal that the Son is somehow eternally subordinate to the Father (which would undermine Augustine's response to Homoian theologians) but simply reveals that the Son is eternally "from the Father" (i.e., eternal generation).

2.2.3. *The Ordered Relationship between the Father and Son*

Third, an ordered and irreversible relation exists between Father and Son that necessarily shapes their agency.⁶⁵ Although the divine persons act inseparably, they do so in an "ordered" way. The Son always acts with the Father according to his "filial" mode of being "from the Father."⁶⁶ On this point, Augustine is misinterpreted by theologians on both sides in the EFS dispute.

On the one hand, some EFS opponents ignore or subtly deny this reality.⁶⁷ For example, in a five point summary of Augustine's trinitarian theology, Millard Erickson identifies inseparable action as a key element of Augustine's trinitarian theology but fails to acknowledge the ordered and irreversible relation that shapes the *agency* of the divine persons.⁶⁸ Erickson does acknowledge that the Son is "from the Father" (which he rightly relates to eternal generation); however, he does not acknowledge the fact that "from the Father" names both the Son's relationship to the Father in eternity (i.e., his manner of subsistence) and his action in the economy of salvation (i.e., manner of operation). Moreover, Erickson also fails to acknowledge a core element of Augustine's trinitarian hermeneutic that grounds this ordered relationship. According to Erickson, Augustine employs "two" rules in reading Scripture. The first rule concerns a distinction between the Son in the "form of a servant" (human nature) and the Son "in the form of God" (divine nature).⁶⁹ A second rule concerns the inseparable action of the three

works only if one ignores what Augustine says about the inseparable operation of the Father and Son.

⁶⁴Ware cites this passage as proof that Augustine combined ontological equality with functional eternal subordination (Ware, *Father, Son and Holy Spirit*, 80), but he misreads Augustine on this point. When Augustine says that the Son has his "being from the Father," this does not mean, as Ware says, that the Son has "the responsibility of carrying out the will of the Father" (*Father, Son and Holy Spirit*, 81). Augustine is referring to eternal generation—not eternal (functional) subordination.

⁶⁵That the Father/Son relationship is ordered and irreversible can be seen clearly in the generation of the Son. Whereas the Son is *from* the Father, the Father is not *from* the Son.

⁶⁶For more on this theme in John's gospel, see Andreas J. Köstenberger and Scott R. Swain, *Father, Son and Spirit: The Trinity and John's Gospel* (New Studies in Biblical Theology; Downers Grove: IVP, 2008), 111–33.

⁶⁷This problem can be found in Gilbert Bilezikian, "Hermeneutical Bungee-Jumping: Subordination in the Godhead," *JETS* 40 (1997): 57–68. Although he (rightly) notes that the church fathers consistently reject any kind of "hierarchical order" among the divine persons, Bilezikian fails to acknowledge that the church fathers also consistently affirm an *order* among the persons both in subsistence and operation. By way of contrast, Kevin Giles recognizes the ordered and irreversible relationship among the divine persons. See Giles, *Jesus and the Father*, 48–50, 228, 311.

⁶⁸Erickson, *Who's Tampering with the Trinity*, 158–59.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, 155–57.

divine persons.⁷⁰ He represents Augustine well on these two points; however, what he fails to mention is that Augustine has a third rule that he brings to bear on passages that “show not that one person is less than the other, but only that one is *from* the other” (*De trin.* II.3, 99, italics mine).⁷¹ Augustine’s “from-another” rule receives extensive attention in *De trinitate* and represents a core element of Latin pro-Nicene trinitarian hermeneutics. This rule (discussed earlier in this essay), relates directly to the ordered and irreversible relation that shapes the agency of Father and Son.

Proponents of EFS also misinterpret this ordered and irreversible relationship. From the fact that an ordered and irreversible relationship exists between the Father and the Son, it does not follow for Augustine that “authority” and “obedience” are what constitute the Father *as Father* and Son *as Son*.⁷² Bruce Ware falls into this error when he asserts that Augustine affirmed that “the distinction of Persons is constituted precisely by the differing relations among them, *in part manifested by the inherent authority of the Father and inherent submission of the Son*.”⁷³ Ware claims that “inherent authority” and “inherent submission” constitute the Father/Son relationship; however, this misreads Augustine.⁷⁴ “Authority” and “submission” are not “personal properties” for Augustine. To the contrary, “eternal generation” is what *constitutes* the Son as Son. Augustine is unequivocal on this point.⁷⁵ Ware, as we saw above, rejects eternal generation as the distinguishing property of the Son. In Ware’s theology, “submission” effectively replaces “eternal generation” as the distinguishing property of the Son.⁷⁶ Augustine is then read through the lens of this alternative understanding of personal properties.

2.2.4. The Immanent Trinity as a Blueprint for Human Relations

Finally, Augustine’s account of trinitarian agency must be viewed within the context of the creator/creature distinction, which has important implications for how human relations “imitate” divine relations. In a sermon on the baptism of Jesus, Augustine devotes extensive attention to the inseparable action of the divine persons.⁷⁷ After explaining the biblical basis for this theological principle, he inquires whether any suitable likeness might exist for the inseparable operation of three separable things. To find

⁷⁰ Ibid., 157–58.

⁷¹ For more on this rule, see Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 177–98.

⁷² Notice how Ware construes the trinitarian “order” in terms of a hierarchy of authority (*Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*, 72 [italics mine]): “A word often used by early church theologians for *the evident authority structure of the Father-Son relationship* in the Godhead is *taxis*, which means ‘ordering.’ There is an ordering in the Godhead, a ‘built-in’ structure of authority and submission that marks a significant respect in which the Persons of the Godhead are distinguished from one another.”

⁷³ Ibid., 80 (italics mine).

⁷⁴ At the same time, one must not fall into the opposite error of insisting that Augustine’s account of divine agency necessarily precludes the possibility of any analogy existing between the Son’s filial mode of being “from the Father” and his obedience to the Father in his state of humiliation. See the conclusion.

⁷⁵ In the summary of Latin pro-Nicene trinitarian doctrine we examined earlier, Augustine explains, “although indeed the Father has begotten the Son, *and therefore he who is the Father is not the Son*; and the Son is begotten by the Father, and *therefore he who is the Son is not the Father*” (*De trin.* I.7, 69 [italics mine]).

⁷⁶ For Augustine, and all pro-Nicene theologians, eternal generation grounds both *equality* of the Son to the Father (on the assumption that like begets like) and the hypostatic *distinction* of the divine persons. It is difficult to see how “authority” and “submission,” functioning as “distinguishing properties,” accomplish this same work.

⁷⁷ Sermon 52 in Saint Augustine, *The Works of Saint Augustine*, 50–65.

three things that act inseparably, Augustine suggests we turn inward to the divine image in the human mind/soul (*mens*)—specifically to the triad of memory, understanding, and will (the same triad he explores in *De trinitate*). Right before he explores this triad as a dim reflection of inseparable operation, Augustine underscores the creator/creature distinction in order to remind his readers that no created reality can adequately reflect God’s immanent nature.⁷⁸ The creator/creature distinction disallows direct movement from immanent relations to human relations. This is because human beings can imitate the triune God only in a *creaturely* way.⁷⁹

Although it is rather common in contemporary theology to treat the immanent Trinity as a blueprint for everything from ecclesial structures to gender relations,⁸⁰ this use of the immanent Trinity is problematic and does not reflect the emphasis of the NT. Scripture directs us to imitate the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit *as they relate to us in the economy of salvation* (i.e., the economic Trinity).⁸¹ When Paul exhorts Christians to imitate the triune God, he points them to the *incarnate* Son (economic Trinity): “Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God” (Eph 5:1–2). The model for Christian love is the self-giving of the Son on the cross (economic Trinity). The model for Christian marriage in Eph 5 is not the love of the Father for the Son apart from creation and redemption but the love of Christ for the church (economic Trinity). The clearest model for Christian submission to authority is the obedience of the incarnate Son to the Father as displayed on the cross (Phil 2:8). In other words, when Scripture invites us to imitate the Trinity, it directs us toward our experience of and relation with the Trinity.⁸² That is to say, it is a covenantal relation with the triune God that provides model, motivation, and ground for human imitation.

These references to the cross highlight an additional reason that our relationship with the Trinity in the economy of salvation must constitute the focal point for Christian imitation: in this life, we “imitate”

⁷⁸ See Augustine, *Serm.* 52.16, 57.

⁷⁹ See Miroslav Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 199.

⁸⁰ As Kathryn Tanner explains (*Christ the Key* [Current Issues in Theology; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009], 207), “When contemporary theologians want to form judgments about social and political matters they often turn immediately to the trinity for guidance. Rather than Christology, a theology of the trinity is enlisted to support particular kinds of human community. . . . What the Trinity is like is thought to establish how human societies should be organized.”

⁸¹ Direct appeals to the immanent Trinity can support only the most general claims. We can say, “God is one; therefore, the church should be one,” and this is true (cf. John 17). But what specific ecclesial structures can we say legitimately reflect (or do not reflect) divine unity? Theologians like Jürgen Moltmann frequently argue that hierarchical political and ecclesial structures are incompatible with the “perichoretic” unity and equality of the three divine persons. But why not argue that the “threeness” of God constitutes the blueprint for governmental structures with three “equal” yet “distinct” branches of authority: an executive branch (corresponding to the Father), a legislative branch (corresponding to the Word), and a judicial branch (corresponding to the Spirit who is described in John’s gospel as “Counselor”)? On this basis one could claim that the American government is an image of the Trinity! We can say, “Father, Son, and Holy Spirit love each other; therefore, Christians should love each other,” and this is true. But how do we know what this love should look like? The answer is found in observing how the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit *relate to human beings in the economy of salvation*.

⁸² To make this claim is not to drive a wedge between the economic and the immanent Trinity. It is simply to highlight the epistemic priority of God’s economic self-revelation as the means through which we come to know God as Trinity. See the following note.

God under the condition of sin; however, no “sin” marks the immanent life of the God. How do we know what it looks like to imitate God under sin? The answer is found by observing how the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit relate to rebellious human beings. It should not surprise us, therefore, that Eph 5:1 exhorts believers to imitate the love of God expressed in the cross because it is precisely in the cross that we observe God’s love displayed under the condition of sin. When we forgive those who sin against us we are imitating the Trinity, but not by *directly* imitating the intra-trinitarian relations among the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (as no forgiveness marks these relationships). Instead we are imitating the forgiveness we ourselves have experienced from the triune God in the economy of salvation (i.e., the economic Trinity). The model for Christian compassion is not some type of immanent “mercy” among the divine persons, but the mercy rebellious human beings experience from their heavenly Father: “Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful” (Luke 6:36). In the immediate context, Jesus has in mind the mercy God expresses toward those who have rebelled against him. Christians are to love their enemies specifically because God “is kind to the ungrateful and the evil” (Luke 6:35). Thus we might say that a proper *imitatio Trinitatis* proves to be an *imitatio Christi*.⁸³ As Kathryn Tanner explains, “Jesus’ relations with other people constitute the sort of human relations that the economy of the trinity itself specifies. Jesus’ way of life toward other people as we share in it *is* the trinitarian form of human social life.”⁸⁴ Notice how Augustine emphasizes modeling our lives after Christ (*De trin*, VII.5, 223): “Thus, to conclude, it is not surprising that scripture should be speaking about the Son when it speaks about wisdom, on account of the model which the image who is equal to the Father provides us with that we may be refashioned to the image of God; for we follow the Son by living wisely.” Although we cannot explore this issue further and it is distinct from the main concerns of this essay,⁸⁵ this fourth point is important because of the way the EFS debate is fueled by the debate over gender relations.

3. Conclusion

So where does Augustine stand on the EFS debate? We have seen that Augustine is misread by proponents and opponents of EFS alike. Moreover, important differences exist between Augustine’s trinitarian theology and the theology of some representatives on both sides in the debate. There is no evidence that Augustine believed that the hypostatic distinction between the Father and the Son is constituted by eternal “authority” (on the part of the Father) and eternal “submission” (on the part of the Son). To the contrary, this element of EFS is incompatible with his account of trinitarian agency. At the same time, Augustine does not explore the speculative question of whether any analogy might exist

⁸³The themes we have been discussing come together nicely in 1 John 3:16: “By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.” From an epistemological perspective John reminds us that the cross (i.e., the economic self-revelation of the triune God) enables us to comprehend the nature of true love. From an ontological perspective, it is clear, in the broader context, that the love we experience in the cross reflects the immanent life of God. John tells us, “God is love” (1 John 4:8), and this should be read as a metaphysical claim. Nevertheless, we know about this love and see it displayed under conditions of sin only through the cross. Finally, John’s ethical injunction (“we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers” [1 John 4:8]) is explicitly grounded in our experience of Christ laying down his life for us.

⁸⁴Tanner, *Christ the Key*, 236–37.

⁸⁵Elsewhere I discuss in some detail methodological problems with employing the immanent Trinity as a blueprint for human relations. See Keith E. Johnson, *Rethinking the Trinity and Religious Pluralism: An Augustinian Assessment* (Downers Grove, IVP: forthcoming), ch. six.

between the Son's filial mode of being eternally "from the Father" and his obedience to the Father in his state of humiliation.⁸⁶

"Are you for us or for our adversaries?" asked Joshua when he encountered an imposing stranger bearing a sword outside the city of Jericho. "Neither," said the stranger, "I am the commander of the Lord's army." Perhaps we can learn a lesson from Joshua's encounter. In our quest to answer a speculative theological question, we can become so preoccupied with the question of whose side Augustine is on that we no longer let one of the church's leading theologians speak on his own terms. At the beginning of *De trinitate*, Augustine reminds his readers, "[N]owhere else is a mistake more dangerous, or the search more laborious, or discovery more advantageous" than in the study of the Trinity (*De trin.* 1.5, 68). As we seek to understand scriptural teaching about the Trinity, the church fathers represent an invaluable resource. However, if we engage the fathers simply to determine whose "side" they are on—like pawns in a chess match—not only will we misinterpret them, but we may also fail to hear the ways in which they rightly challenge and correct our thinking about the Trinity.

⁸⁶ Thomas Aquinas, who builds on Augustine's trinitarian doctrine, does not explore this question either. Several twentieth-century theologians, however, do explore this possibility. Two notable examples include Karl Barth and Hans Urs von Balthasar. Barth's discussion of the eternal obedience of the Son (see Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics IV/1: The Doctrine of Reconciliation* [trans. G. W. Bromiley; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1956], esp. 195–203) has been the subject of extensive debate. Receiving almost no attention in the EFS debate, however, is an important Catholic contemporary of Barth, Hans Urs von Balthasar. Von Balthasar's theology is profoundly trinitarian and quite speculative at points (owing in part to the influence of the Catholic mystic, Adrienne von Speyr). In his five-volume *Theo-Drama*, von Balthasar labors to show how key facets of the economy of salvation—especially the cross—are grounded in God's immanent life. For example, von Balthasar claims that the economic self-emptying (*kenosis*) of the Son in the incarnation reflects a kind of super-*kenosis* in the divine life in which the Father gives himself away wholly and without remainder in the begetting of the Son. In relation to the present discussion, von Balthasar claims that the human obedience of Jesus reflects something fundamental about the Son's eternal relationship to the Father: "For [the Son] simply expresses in the *oikonomia* what he has always expressed anew in the eternal, triune life: his complete readiness to carry out every one of the Father's wishes" (Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Last Act*, vol. 5 of *Theo-Drama Theological Dramatic Theory* [trans. Graham Harrison; San Francisco: Ignatius, 1998], 513; see also 86–89). [Editor's note: Cf. Stephen M. Garrett, "[The Dazzling Darkness of God's Triune Love: Introducing Evangelicals to the Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar](#)," *Them* 35 (2010): 413–30.]

A Spirited Humanity: The Trinitarian Ecclesiology of Colin Gunton

— Uche Anizor —

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Conflict in relationships is often rooted in inappropriate or unmet expectations. This commonplace wisdom regarding everyday relationships is no less true of one's relationship to the church. Our conduct and feelings toward the church are governed largely by our expectations of what the church should be. These expectations, furthermore, are rooted in our understanding of the church's nature. Ministers who weekly find themselves disappointed with the failings of their congregations would do well to attend to their understanding of what the church is. Laypeople who find themselves regularly frustrated with their community's shortcomings are advised to do likewise. Disappointment (among other negative feelings) often flows from unrealistic expectations, which sometimes betray an unbalanced view of the church. Therefore, a healthy understanding of the nature of the church is of utmost practical import. Is the church the kingdom? If not, what is it? In what ways, if at all, is the church (and actual churches) a sign of the new Jerusalem? How can we theologically describe this imperfect reality we call the "church"? Colin Gunton provides one helpful response.

Among Gunton's contributions to contemporary theological discourse is his call to reconceive Christian doctrines in light of the all-important reality of the Trinity. The most notable of his trinitarian reformulations are those pertaining to the doctrine of creation and the divine attributes.¹ Due to his untimely death, a more systematic outworking of his trinitarian theology vis-à-vis other loci never came to fruition. Since Gunton did not produce an at-length systematic treatment of ecclesiology, this essay aims to outline his articulation of a trinitarian ecclesiology by drawing from his various occasional pieces.

Definitions and descriptions of the church no doubt abound. Nevertheless, I argue that, despite some missteps, Gunton's relentless attempt to root the nature and calling of the church in the being and action of the triune God opens up a way for a more concrete and realistic perspective on the church than is common, while offering a potentially more fruitful starting point for ecumenical dialogue regarding the nature of the church. First, we examine three related areas that contribute to a fuller understanding of the trinitarian heart of his ecclesiology: (1) the ontology of the church, (2) the place of pneumatology, and (3) the role of a proper Christology.² Then we provide a constructive appraisal. The hope here is

¹ For examples of Gunton's own trinitarian reformulations see his *Christ and Creation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992); *The Triune Creator: A Historical and Systematic Study* (New Studies in Constructive Theology; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998); *Act and Being: Towards a Theology of the Divine Attributes* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003); *The Actuality of Atonement: A Study of Metaphor, Rationality and the Christian Tradition* (rev. ed.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), esp. ch. 6.

² Many more aspects of his ecclesiology have been covered such as his view of the sacraments and the vocation of the church, but space precludes this. On the sacraments, see especially Colin E. Gunton, "Baptism:

that Gunton's contribution might help free pastors, teachers, and congregants to live and serve in the church with a love and compassion rooted in realistic expectations of what the church is and will be.

1. In Search of an Ontology

In Gunton's clearest and most explicit treatment of the church from the perspective of ontology, he argues that the inadequacy of theologies of the church derives from the fact that most are not seriously and consistently rooted in the triune being of God.³ Unlike the patristic attempts to clarify the church's understanding of God's triunity and the two natures of Christ that resulted in a distinctive Christian ontology, no such attempts were made in ecclesiology. Instead, theologians conformed their ecclesiologies to models found in the world around them. In the East, where neoplatonism was influential, the urge to think in terms of hierarchy proved most compelling. The ecclesiologies of the West similarly adopted alien conceptualities, the chief of which derives from Augustine, of whom Gunton writes, "A conception of the church as the community of believers is undoubtedly important for him, but it is overlaid by developments deriving from the church's change of status after Constantine."⁴ At that time, the church no longer consisted solely of believers, but appeared to be a mixed conglomeration of saved and lost, which led to two developments. First, since the church was no longer constituted by the faithful, there emerged a greater stress on the institutional nature of the ecclesia built around its hierarchical head. Second, there developed a platonizing distinction between the visible and invisible church, where the latter was envisaged as the true church, the elect, known only to God.⁵ East and West, failing to extend the insights of the doctrine of the Trinity to the ontology of the church, thus filled the vacuum by setting up rival ontologies along the lines of a neoplatonic graded hierarchy (East) and/or authoritarian legal-political structures (West).⁶

Baptism and the Christian Community," in *Father, Son and Holy Spirit: Essays Toward a Fully Trinitarian Theology* (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 201–15 (also published in Christian D. Kettler and Todd H. Speidell, eds., *Incarnational Ministry: The Presence of Christ in Church, Society, and Family; Essays in Honor of Ray S. Anderson* [Colorado Springs: Helmers & Howard, 1990], 98–109); *Actuality of Atonement*, 183–200; *The Christian Faith: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 129–34. On the vocation of the church, see particularly Colin E. Gunton, "Election and Ecclesiology in the Post-Constantinian Church," in *Intellect and Action: Elucidations on Christian Theology and the Life of Faith* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 139–55 (previously published in *SJT* 53 [2000]: 212–27); "The Church" and "The Church in the World," in *Theology through Preaching: Sermons for Brentwood* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2001), 131–36 and 137–42 respectively; "One Mediator . . . The Man Jesus Christ: Reconciliation, Mediation and Life in Community," *Pro Ecclesia* 11 (2002): 146–58.

³ Colin Gunton, "The Community. The Trinity and the Being of the Church," in *The Promise of Trinitarian Theology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2001), 58. Originally published as "The Church on Earth: The Roots of Community," in *On Being the Church: Essays on the Christian Community* (ed. Colin E. Gunton and Daniel W. Hardy; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989), 48–80. See also Roland Chia, "Trinity and Ontology: Colin Gunton's Ecclesiology," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 9 (2007): 552–68.

⁴ Gunton, "The Community," 61.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 61–62.

1.1. A Cappadocian and Puritan Contribution

For Gunton, the doctrine of the Trinity, as it appears in the Cappadocian Fathers, provides a more satisfactory ontology upon which to build a doctrine of the church sufficient to the needs of today. The Cappadocians assert that the being of God consists in free personal communion. Following John Zizioulas, Gunton writes, “The nature of God is communion.”⁷ Indeed, communion is an ontological category. The being of God, he adds, is “a community of energies, of perichoretic interaction.”⁸ The threefold *koinōnia* that is God is not a static hierarchy, but a dynamic community. The point for the church is that it reflects the being of God by displaying *koinōnia*. The church, Gunton notes, is to be a “finite echo or bodying forth of the divine personal dynamics.”⁹

In order to flesh out this insight, he contrasts the trinitarian understandings of Augustine and the Cappadocians. The former is modalist in direction and tends to conceive of the persons of the Godhead as posterior to an underlying being of which they are “outcrops,” so to speak. What Augustine neglected was the Cappadocian contribution, which stated that there is no being anterior to the persons. The being of God, in contrast, *is* the persons in relation to one another.¹⁰ These different construals of the Trinity result in correspondingly different ecclesiologies. Augustine’s doctrine of the church views the being of the church as ontologically prior to the “concrete historical relationships of the visible community.” The real being of the church, in this scheme, underlies the relations of persons rather than being a function of them.¹¹ Gunton elsewhere describes this difference as basic to that between an institution and a community. The former exists independently and is logically prior to the persons who become part of it; the persons who join it are at best secondary if not irrelevant to it. By contrast, the latter, the community, is “constituted by its members by virtue of their free relatedness to each other.”¹² The main point is that the actual relations of concrete historical persons constitutes the primary being of the church in the way that the hypostases-in-relation constitute the being of God.¹³

Gunton finds support for his view from the puritan John Owen, whom he deems to be the first to develop an ontology of the church-as-community.¹⁴ Owen writes,

- (1) The material cause of this church, or the matter whereof it is composed, which are visible believers.
- (2) The formal cause of it, which is their voluntary coalescency

⁷ Ibid., 72. See also John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary, 1985), 134.

⁸ Gunton, “The Community,” 73. Herein we find Gunton’s first reference to perichoresis, which will play a large role in his ecclesial ontology, as we will see shortly.

⁹ Ibid., 74.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid., 74–75.

¹² Colin E. Gunton, “The Church: John Owen and John Zizioulas on the Church,” in *Theology through the Theologians* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 198. Previously published as *The Transcendent Lord: The Spirit and the Church in Calvinist and Cappadocian Fathers* (London: Congregational Memorial Hall Trust, 1988).

¹³ Gunton, “The Community,” 75.

¹⁴ Gunton, “The Church,” 193–94.

into such a society or congregation, according to the mind of Christ. (3) The end of it is presential local communion, in all the ordinances and institutions of Christ¹⁵

And elsewhere he notes: “By the matter of the church, we understand the persons whereof the church doth consist, with their qualifications; by its form, the reason, cause, and way of that kind of relation among them which gives them the being of a church.”¹⁶ Actual believers in free voluntary relationships with one another is what constitutes the church of Christ. The community is the church. Owen’s shift, furthermore, from Aristotelian terminology (i.e., material and formal cause) in his earlier work to traditional trinitarian vocabulary (i.e., persons, relation) in his latter work signals, for Gunton, an ecclesiology shaped and understood in light of a doctrine of the triune God. Owen’s great achievement, then, is his contribution to understanding that the church is to reflect on its own level the kind of being God is eternally—as a communion, a being-in-relation.¹⁷ The weakness in Owen, however, is that his conception of the church as a voluntary community may collapse into a secular and individualistic understanding of freedom unless controlled pneumatologically.¹⁸ The Cappadocians, according to Gunton, provide the necessary safeguard by presenting the Holy Spirit as the “perfecting cause” who sovereignly frees persons to be for God and for others in Christian community and thus to become what they are meant to be. In short, it is the Spirit who calls the community into being.¹⁹

1.2. Open Transcendentals and the Nature of the Church

A description of Gunton’s ecclesial ontology would be wanting if what he called “open transcendentals” were not taken into account.²⁰ Since trinitarian concepts reflect the being of God the Creator, we should expect to find them echoed consistently in the created order (making them transcendentals). The three interrelated transcendental concepts native to the being of God are perichoresis, substantiality, and relationality.²¹ The first, perichoresis, refers to the idea that the three persons of the Trinity exist only in reciprocal eternal relatedness. “God is not God,” Gunton writes, “apart from the way in which Father, Son and Spirit in eternity give to and receive from each other what they essentially are. The three do

¹⁵ John Owen, *An Enquiry into the Original Name, Institution, Power, Order, and Communion of Evangelical Churches* (Works of John Owen 15; ed. William H. Goold; Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1976), 262.

¹⁶ John Owen, *The True Nature of a Gospel Church* (The Works of John Owen 16; ed. William H. Goold; Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1976), 11.

¹⁷ Gunton, “The Church,” 193–94. These reflections appear earlier in an abbreviated form in Gunton, “The Community,” 75–76.

¹⁸ Gunton writes, “We can agree with [Owen] that the formal cause of the Church—the reason for its being the kind of entity it is—is the ‘voluntary coalescence’ of visible believers into a society. But if that is all that is said, may not the outcome be a kind of ecclesiological Pelagianism, according to which we begin to forget the kind of freedom that we have, and behave as if we do it all ourselves?” (Gunton, “The Church,” 199–200). The specific roles of the Holy Spirit in Gunton’s ecclesiology will be given further attention later in this essay.

¹⁹ Gunton, “The Church,” 195–202. Gunton elsewhere notes, “[The church] is like other voluntary organizations in being joined freely; it is unlike them in attributing that joining to the work of God the Spirit and in orienting its life to worship and learning the ways of love . . .” (Gunton, *The Christian Faith*, 135).

²⁰ Gunton defines open transcendentals as “possibilities for thought which are universal in scope yet open in their application” (*The One, the Three and the Many: God, Creation and the Culture of Modernity; The 1992 Bampton Lectures* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993], 223).

²¹ Gunton develops these concepts in the context of diagnosing and proposing a theological solution to fundamental issues of modernity—overemphasizing the individual at the expense of society and vice versa.

not merely coinhere, but dynamically constitute one another's being."²² Perichoresis implies free and ordered "interrelational self-formation" and, for God, "eternal interpersonal life." This abundance and order in the divine life is part of what constitutes reality in the created order, of which the church is a part. God is what he is by virtue of the "dynamic relatedness" of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and reality at all levels displays this relatedness, its own perichoresis.²³

The second transcendental, substantiality, refers primarily to the particularity of the persons in the Godhead.²⁴ "God is what he is," Gunton observes, "only as a communion of persons, the particularity of whom remains at the centre of all he is, for each has his own way of being. . . . Therefore . . . the particularity of created beings is established by the particularity at the heart of the being of the creator."²⁵ Substantiality affirms that particulars are truly particulars because everything is created by God to be and become what it distinctively is and not something else.²⁶

Lastly, relationality refers to the notion that all things are what they are by being particulars constituted by many and various forms of relation. In God these relations exist eternally between Father, Son, and Spirit, in which there is a giving to and receiving from that is constitutive of the other. In the created universe, all things, personal and non-personal, have their beings constituted by their relationships to everything else.²⁷ Thus, the three concepts—perichoresis, substantiality, and relationality—go hand-in-hand to describe a new kind of ontology, an ontology of communion rooted in the doctrine of the Trinity.²⁸ This ontology is the point of departure for any understanding of the nature of the world and, for our purposes, the church.²⁹

1.3. The Ideal versus Actual Church

An important question emerges from the above discussion, namely, what does the ontology of the church have to do with its *actual* being? Drawing on Col 1:18, Gunton responds by pointing out that the church's connection to the cosmic reconciliation wrought by Christ makes the church a "community of the last times," called to realize in its life the beginnings of the reconciliation of all things. Through the proclamation of the gospel and the celebration of the sacraments, the community is temporally oriented to the being of God. Proclamation turns the church to the Word, whom it is called to echo, and the

²² Gunton, *The One, the Three and the Many*, 164.

²³ *Ibid.*, 164–65.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 191.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 212.

²⁷ Here Gunton departs from the view of "sociality" as a transcendental because it only takes into account personal beings to the exclusion of not non-personal objects. Relationality provides a broader, more inclusive concept that accounts for non-personal objects and the role they play in constituting and being constituted by the other (Gunton, *The One, the Three and the Many*, 223).

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 214n4.

²⁹ Elsewhere Gunton affirms, "The triune God is one whose triune *koinōnia* has overflowed into the creation and redemption of a world he loves, and particularly of those creatures he has made in his image and remade in the image of his Son Jesus. It is for that reason—because God is himself communion—that the worship of the church cannot be disentangled from its social and political matrix and outcome" ("'Until He Comes': Towards an Eschatology of Church Membership," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 3 [2001]: 187–200, esp. 195–96).

sacraments direct the church to the love of the Father as it is mediated by the Son and Holy Spirit.³⁰ Thus the church echoes the life of the Trinity when it is enabled by the Spirit to order its life to Jesus Christ.

It should be clear from his reading of Augustine and the post-Constantinian church that Gunton opposes the notion of an invisible church. Neoplatonic, monistic, and authoritarian ecclesiologies locate the true church in something other than the actual people that compose it. His rationale for rejecting this kind of “invisible church” may be understood as follows: since to be the church means to be voluntarily in communion with those who are ordered to Jesus by the Spirit (i.e., concrete individual believers), then the church must always be a visible entity. We know a true church when we see a community that freely orders and disciplines its life so that it echoes the community of the Trinity—one where perichoresis, substantiality, and relationality are freely acknowledged and lived out.³¹

To sum up, what we find in Gunton is an attempt to derive an ontology of the church, not from the surrounding environment, but from the uniquely Christian starting-point—the being of the triune God. The Cappadocian Fathers provide a conception of the being of God as a communion of persons—persons-in-relation—that has largely gone unnoticed in the West, to the detriment of the church. God, when conceived as the free relations of particular persons, provides a basis for an understanding of the church as a voluntary group of individual believers, drawn together by the Spirit to actualize who they were created to be.

2. *The Transcendent Spirit and the Church*

Among Gunton’s criticisms of traditional ecclesiologies is that they fail to take seriously the work of the Holy Spirit. Too often in history the works and judgments of churches and individuals have been identified with the work of the Spirit. Two issues lie at the heart of this mistaken identification. First, there has been a failure to recognize adequately the particular identity and work of the Holy Spirit. Second, there has been a corresponding failure to ascribe transcendence and freedom to the Spirit. Both deficiencies underlie the anemic ecclesiologies characteristic of the West.³² One of the gifts of the Cappadocians, according to Gunton, is that they developed a way to distinguish between the types of action characteristic of each person of the Trinity without destroying the unity of divine action *ad extra*. Gunton finds in Basil, particularly, the invaluable distinction of the Father as “original cause” of all things, the Son as the “creative cause,” and the Spirit as the “perfecting cause.” Although they do not provide us with a doctrine of the church, the Cappadocians do provide a conception of the Spirit that is concrete enough to allow clearer thinking about his relation to the church.³³

Following Zizioulas, Gunton affirms that the drive toward institutionalism, that is, the identification of church structures with the Spirit results from the church giving more weight to the historical work of Christ over the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit. Following a Cappadocian distinction, Gunton identifies

³⁰ Gunton, “The Community,” 82.

³¹ See *ibid.*, 83. Gunton envisions an “ecclesiology of perichoresis” in which there is “no permanent structure of subordination, but in which there are overlapping patterns of relationships, so that the same person will be sometimes ‘subordinate’ and sometimes ‘superordinate’ according to the gifts and graces being exercised.” He, however, does recognize that this idea may be “hopelessly idealistic” (Gunton, “The Community,” 80–81).

³² Gunton, “The Church,” 189. Gunton elsewhere levels a similar charge against modern theologians such as Robert Jenson. One of Jenson’s chief ecclesiological weaknesses, according to Gunton, is that he claims too close a relation between God and the church, which may actually lead to clericalism (Gunton, “‘Until He Comes,’” 197).

³³ Gunton, “The Church,” 196–97. For Basil’s distinctions, see *On the Spirit* 16.38.

the Son as representing God's immanence in history and the Spirit as God's transcendence. "He [the Spirit] is God's *eschatological otherness* from the world," Gunton writes, "God freeing the created order for its true destiny—and so, to use Basil's terminology, its perfecting cause."³⁴ A second and related ecclesiological point is that the Son *institutes* the church, while the Spirit *constitutes* it. This distinction is essential lest the Spirit be seen merely as the "fuel" that drives the all-important institutional vehicle.³⁵ In such a case, the Spirit and the community are only auxiliary to an already-given reality.

What is meant by the Spirit's constituting of the church? The church, according to Gunton, must be more than just the voluntary association of individual believers. The freedom to join the Christian community is wrought by the Spirit and is different than the autonomous notions of liberty so characteristic of secular society. The Spirit, as the "transcendent other," liberates by calling people into relation with Christ through the medium of the church. He frees people by bringing them into community, enabling them to be with and for others whom they do not choose.³⁶ Gunton goes on to say,

The Spirit respects our liberty, because he is not an internal, immanent causality forcing us into the Church, but a personal "other" coming alongside us to set us free for others, just as he was alongside Jesus in his temptation in the wilderness . . . [T]he positive gift of freedom is to be free in and for community: because to be free *is* to be in community: anything else is a denial of what it is to be human.³⁷

The church is constituted every time the word of the gospel is proclaimed and the Holy Spirit, through that word, calls the community into being—lifting them to the Father through the Son.³⁸ Through the Spirit the biblical narratives concerning Jesus' victory, sacrifice, and justification become constitutive of the life of the community and create its self-understanding.³⁹ Moreover, every true act of worship in the community is a fresh forming of the church, since the church is a community "that must, ever and again, take place: it must be constituted in the present as the people of God." When, by the Spirit, the church offers true worship, then it is truly the church.⁴⁰ Thus it is fitting to say that whenever a new member is called into this community and this body worships through the proclamation of the gospel, the church is formed anew by the sovereign Spirit, whose work in relation to the church is to call it into existence by liberating people to freely exist for their Lord and one another.⁴¹ He is not a force helping an institution accomplish its agenda, but a person who acts unfettered to bring all of creation, the church included, to its intended end.

³⁴ Gunton, "The Church," 198–99. See Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 129–30.

³⁵ Here Gunton is again following Zizioulas (Gunton, "The Church," 199). See Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 129.

³⁶ Gunton, "The Church," 201.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 202.

³⁹ Gunton, *Actuality of Atonement*, 179.

⁴⁰ Gunton, "The Church," 202. For an analysis and critique of this ecclesiological "occasionalism," see John E. Colwell, "Provisionality and Promise: Avoiding Ecclesiastical Nestorianism?" in *The Theology of Colin Gunton* (ed. Lincoln Harvey; T&T Clark Theology; London: T&T Clark, 2010), 100–15.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 203.

3. *The Church's Christomorphic Orientation*

Two factors need to be considered when attempting to discern the christological dimensions of a doctrine of the church.⁴² First, as mentioned above, the church was instituted by Jesus. The issue, then, is the character and manner in which the church was instituted and their effect on the present. If, on the one hand, Jesus' choosing of twelve disciples was a reconstituting of Israel, then the emphasis in ecclesiology would be on the creation of a historical community. On the other hand, if Jesus was setting up the disciples as first in a line of authoritative clergy, then a more clerical ecclesiology will emerge. Gunton questions both readings and strongly opposes drawing a direct line between past historical occurrences and consequent ecclesiologies.⁴³

The way forward lies in the second factor to be considered, namely, that of the significance of the dogmatic Jesus for ecclesiology. This matter concerns the way in which the church is seen to be patterned after or shaped by the life of the God-man.⁴⁴ A Christology that overemphasizes the divine Christ—the omniscient and infallible One—will issue in an ecclesiology with an over-inflated self-understanding. Gunton wants to place a much-needed stress on the ecclesiological significance of the humanity of Jesus. He asks, “If our christology take [*sic*] on board the full implications of the contingency and fallibility of Jesus, what of the church?”⁴⁵ According to Gunton, Jesus, as a truly human being, partook of the same contingency, fallibility, and defectibility (indeed defectiveness) as all humans, yet he did not sin. However, his sinlessness was not due to some “inbuilt divine programming,” but to his “free acceptance of the Spirit’s guidance.” How can the church, full as it is of sinful people, Gunton asks, “claim more for itself than it claims for him?”⁴⁶ Following Owen, he limits the immediate operation of the second Person of the Trinity on Jesus’ human nature to that of its assumption. The humanity of Jesus remains authentically human and is not overcome by the immanent reality of the Word.⁴⁷ It is the Spirit, not the Word, who is the source of the particularity, freedom, and contingency of Jesus’ humanity. This pattern has implications for our doctrine of the church. The same Spirit who constitutes the church (granting its own particularity and freedom) will give the church a “christomorphic direction,” according to Jesus’ true humanity and, thus, not the authoritarian and infallibilist shape of the past.⁴⁸ It is this checking

⁴² Although I am seeking to isolate the various strands of Gunton’s trinitarian ecclesiology, his writings are at many junctures attempts to do quite the opposite. This qualification, as we will see, is necessary as we turn to the role of the Son in his doctrine of the church.

⁴³ Gunton, “The Community,” 66.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 67.

⁴⁶ Thus a christological problem is at once a pneumatological problem (see Gunton, “The Community,” 67–68).

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 69–70. Although Gunton’s ecclesiological proposals make little mention of Edward Irving, his Spirit-Christology is much indebted to Irving. See, e.g., Colin Gunton, “Two Dogmas Revisited: Edward Irving’s Christology,” *SJT* 41(1988): 359–76. For a helpful summary and critique of Irving’s Spirit-Christology, see Donald Macleod, *The Person of Christ* (Contours of Christian Theology; Downers Grove: IVP, 1998), 221–30.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 70.

of Christology by pneumatology that is so crucial to Gunton's perspective on the ongoing role of the second person of the Trinity in the church.⁴⁹

Gunton is also concerned with ecclesiologies that overweight a theology of the body of Christ. He argues that Lutheran Christologies that tend to view Christ's physical body as ubiquitous are not as successful in making room for the work of the Holy Spirit in the church because there is too close an identification of the church with Christ. This view, at least as represented by Robert Jenson, too easily lapses into seeing the church as the actual body of an ever-immanent Christ.⁵⁰ However, 1 Corinthians, Gunton argues extensively, emphasizes a strong distinction between Christ and his body. For example, the "until he comes" of 1 Cor 11:26 suggests that there is actually a *real absence* of Christ and, thus, he remains transcendentally over the church as its Lord.⁵¹ It is when, like Calvin, one views the body of Christ as physically circumscribed that greater space is given for the distinctive work of the Spirit in the church. Furthermore, 1 Cor 15:23 distinguishes between Christ's resurrection and our own, thus calling attention to the distinction between Christ and his church.⁵² Here, as elsewhere, Gunton emphasizes that the church is an eschatological reality. Its worship and life is bracketed by the remembered gift of the Son for the life of the world and the anticipated gift of the Son's handing over of all rule and authority to the Father (1 Cor 15:24).⁵³ The line between present experience and eschatology must not be blurred.

4. Gunton, the Trinity, and the Church: A Response

This essay has thus far attempted to allow the reader to hear Gunton's voice as he explicates his doctrine of the church. We must now ask some questions and offer an appraisal of his proposals. The evaluation can be summarized as follows: Gunton's setup—Augustine and his legacy—questionably reads the tradition; he employs trinitarian concepts provocatively and intriguingly but requires some clarification; and some features of his ecclesial ontology, along with his unique christological-pneumatological proposal, present his most original and potentially fruitful contributions.

4.1. The Setup: Augustine and Western Tradition

In order to situate his proposal Gunton expresses unease with (or rather distaste for) Augustine's contribution to trinitarian thought and, consequently, ecclesiology in the West. This setup of Augustine (and much of the western tradition) as whipping-boy and foil raises a few questions. However, since a

⁴⁹This "balance" is missing from proposals like John Howard Yoder's in that he only deals with the humanity of Jesus in his ecclesiology and does not take the crucial step toward articulating the role of the Holy Spirit in the constitution of the community. His perspective falls short of a *trinitarian* ontology of the church (Gunton, "The Community," 70–71).

⁵⁰Gunton, "Until He Comes," 190.

⁵¹Ibid., 193 (see pp. 191–200 for his extensive treatment of 1 Corinthians regarding the church as an eschatological entity). Elsewhere, Gunton notes that in Scripture there are two poles in this discussion. On the one hand, there is the near identification of the church with Christ himself. On the other hand, there is an "equally strong movement to distinguish himself from the members of the church" (Gunton, *The Christian Faith*, 132).

⁵²Gunton, "Until He Comes," 193.

⁵³Ibid., 200.

number of recent writers have taken to task this trendy reading of Augustine in general,⁵⁴ I will simply pose a two-part question related to Gunton's reading of Augustine's ecclesiology:

1. Is it fair to say that Augustine's ecclesiology is an offshoot of a monistic theology?
2. What alternative readings of Augustine's doctrine of the church might be offered in light of his essentially Nicene trinitarianism?

Augustine's ecclesiology is more complicated than simply being about the hierarchy or the invisibility of the church. For him, the church is primarily founded upon the reality of the trinitarian God who himself created the church.⁵⁵ Building upon that foundation, there are various dimensions to his ecclesiology.

First, the church is referred to as transhistorical, spanning from the OT era until the present, comprised of all those who have placed their faith in the revealed God.⁵⁶ The OT situation differs from that of the NT in that since Pentecost the church is a concrete and universal community, the proper environment for the nurture of faith, and the way to salvation.⁵⁷

Second, the church is the "body of Christ," a gathering of renewed persons into communion with Christ. The body is constituted whenever persons freely assent to be the body of Christ by serving God, one another, and the kingdom.⁵⁸ Furthermore, the church is so intimately united with Christ that it really becomes his body on earth, the expression of the fullness of his humanity—although remaining a fully human entity itself.⁵⁹

Third, the church is made up of the people, but people are united to Christ and one another only by the Holy Spirit.

Fourth, the church is a mixed body, consisting of true and false believers as well as believers who operate from sometimes pure, sometimes impure motives. Augustine is quite realistic about the church. He acknowledges that the church exists between the times, but also recognizes that it is oriented toward

⁵⁴One of the most notable among those opposing this reading of Augustine is Michel René Barnes, "Re-reading Augustine's Theology of the Trinity," in *The Trinity: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Trinity* (ed. Stephen T. Davis, Daniel Kendall, and Gerald O'Collins; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 145–76. Barnes has convincingly argued that the main reason for this typical misreading of Augustine is that many fail to take into account a number of important contextual factors, the chief of which are Augustine's other trinitarian writings as well as the fourth and fifth century Latin "catholic" (Nicene) trinitarian theology within which Augustine developed his own theology. See also Basil Studer, *Trinity and Incarnation: The Faith of the Early Church* (ed. Andrew Louth; trans. Matthias Westerhoff; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1993), 167–85. With specific regard to Gunton's reading of Augustine, see Brad Green, "The Protomodern Augustine? Colin Gunton and the Failure of Augustine," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 9 (2007): 328–41; and Neil Ormerod, "Augustine and the Trinity: Whose Crisis?" *Pacifica* 16/1 (2003): 17–32.

⁵⁵Augustine, *Enchiridion* 56. Cf. Tarsicius J. van Bavel, "Church," in *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia* (ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 170. I received much help from this article and follow it closely in the subsequent discussion.

⁵⁶See Augustine, *Sermons* 300.1. It could indeed be argued that Augustine does not use the term "church" here to refer to God's people of the pre-Christian age.

⁵⁷Van Bavel, "The Church," 170.

⁵⁸Augustine, *Sermons* 272; cf. van Bavel, "The Church," 171.

⁵⁹Augustine, *Sermons* 341.1.

its perfection.⁶⁰ It is in the process of growing from a mixed body to the perfect body of Christ. The true church, in one sense, is purely an eschatological reality.

A more adequate reading of Augustine, therefore, is that the distinction between the visible (the concrete community of believers) and invisible (the hierarchy, institution, or underlying reality) church is not necessarily *ontological*, but rather, *eschatological*. It is not that the being of the church is anterior to the concrete historical relationships of the visible community, but that the true and mixed historical church is on its way to becoming the pure church, with false “members” excised and true members glorified. The whole community is called to be the church, but really it is only those who are for God and one another that constitute the church.⁶¹ Again, this friendlier reading of Augustine gives one pause when considering Gunton’s setup.

Furthermore, the NT speaks of an invisible and eschatological assembly—the church of the firstborn whose names are written in heaven, those who presently partake in the worship of the New Jerusalem (Heb 12:22–24). Indeed the author of Hebrews, at various points, hints at this eschatological dimension of the invisible church: we share in Christ now, *if* we continue to hold on to truth of the gospel till the end (e.g., Heb 3:14). Put differently, we are the true church if we demonstrate ourselves to be so in the end. Thus, the invisible church is an eschatological reality known only to God. Moreover, in Col 1:18 and throughout Ephesians, Paul speaks of the *ekklēsia* as a heavenly and eschatological reality. The church is the assembly of all those who are currently “seated in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus” (Eph 2:5–6), over which the cosmic Christ is head (1:22–23; Col 1:18).⁶² The point here is that talk of an invisible church need not be rooted in a blind acceptance of Platonistic dualism, but rather can find resources in the biblical material. In the light of Scripture, Gunton’s critique of Western ecclesiologies, at the very least, requires some nuance.

4.2. Trinitarian Terminology: Perichoresis and Communion

Interpersonal relations loom large in Gunton’s ecclesial ontology, as demonstrated by his repeated use of the concepts of perichoresis and communion. However, his deployment of these terms raises a few methodological and conceptual questions. Regarding perichoresis, one must ask: *what is the intent and what are the proper limits to the doctrine of perichoresis?*

Gunton employs perichoresis as a transcendental rooted in the Trinity. It is described, we may recall, as the free and ordered “interrelational self-formation” and “eternal interpersonal life” of the Trinity. It denotes more than coinherence, but the dynamic constitution of one another’s being. This shift in definition seems to push the limits of the concept for the sake of a fuller understanding of the relationality of the cosmos and of the church. In traditional discussions, however, the doctrine of perichoresis was applied to the Trinity to affirm the *oneness* of the Godhead.⁶³ The logic was as follows.

⁶⁰ Augustine, *Sermons* 10.7.

⁶¹ With reference to this so-called “double concept” of the church in Augustine, Yves Congar is certainly correct to point out that this problem is not unique to Augustine, but one inherent in all ecclesiologies (Yves Congar, *L’Église: De saint Augustin à l’époque moderne* [Paris: Cerf, 1997], 21).

⁶² For a detailed study of the heavenly and eschatological dimensions of the church, see Peter T. O’Brien, “The Church as a Heavenly and Eschatological Entity,” in *The Church in the Bible and the World* (ed. D. A. Carson; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987), 88–119.

⁶³ Such were the perspectives of Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory Nazianzen, Pseudo-Cyril, and John of Damascus. For helpful overviews of these matters, see Alston, “Substance and the Trinity,” 189–93; Verna Harrison,

Common essence is not enough to make Father, Son, and Holy Spirit one, since multiple human beings can be said to share the same essence (humanness) yet never be one. Thus, in the Godhead there has to be something unique that unites the persons. This is the notion of perichoresis, that is, the mutual indwelling of the persons.⁶⁴ Already assuming the distinction of persons, the main concern of this doctrine was to show that in essence and in action each person of the Godhead interpenetrates the others (and vice versa), individuating properties excluded.⁶⁵ Perichoresis thus had the important but limited role of upholding the oneness of God within a trinitarian context.

However, in communitarian understandings of the Trinity, like Gunton's, the concept is being marshaled for quite the opposite purpose. The kinds of questions with which one approaches the doctrine of the Trinity (e.g., what is its contemporary relevance? Can it remedy the ills of modern and postmodern society?) shape what kind of Trinity one gets and, for our purposes, what is made of perichoresis.

Karen Kilby, in an illuminating essay, captures the logic of communitarian models and their use of perichoresis in this manner. First, they begin with a picture of God that more resembles three humans with distinct centers of will and self-consciousness.⁶⁶ In order to resist tritheism they must find a way to show that these three are one God. They, therefore, appeal to something beyond our experience that binds the three together as one, namely, divine perichoresis. Next, perichoresis is explained by what binds human persons together—mutual giving, love, interrelatedness, etc.—and used to show what binds the three persons of the Godhead as one. What unites the Godhead is like the best we know of these things, but at an unimaginably greater level, lest we posit three gods in a family and not three persons in God. Though this kind of move is somewhat typical of much God-talk, Kilby insightfully observes what is unique about the communitarian approach:

[W]hat is at its heart a suggestion to overcome a difficulty is presented as a key source of inspiration and insight. So the social theorist [communitarian] does not just say, perhaps the divine perichoresis, which we can understand as being akin to our best relationships, only better, makes the three Persons into one God; she goes on to say, should we not model our relationships on this wonderful thing, the divine perichoresis?⁶⁷

Thus we have a three-stage process wherein perichoresis is (1) used to explain the oneness of God in a communitarian schema, (2) filled with positive human notions of relatedness and relationship, and (3) presented as an important trinitarian resource that Christian theology can offer the church and the outside world. Going beyond the less important issue of redefining traditionally circumscribed

"Perichoresis in the Greek Fathers," *SVTQ* 35 (1991): 53–65; John P. Egan, "Toward Trinitarian *Perichoresis*: Saint Gregory the Theologian, *Oration* 31.14," *GOTR* 39 (1994): 83–93; Daniel F. Stramara Jr., "Gregory of Nyssa's Terminology for Trinitarian Perichoresis," *VC* 52 (1998): 257–63.

⁶⁴ Alston, "Substance and the Trinity," 192; cf. Harrison, "Perichoresis in the Greek Fathers," 60.

⁶⁵ Care must be taken to retain the person-defining characteristics (relations of origin or opposition) so that perichoresis does not lapse into a unitary model of God. On this see Oliver D. Crisp, "Problems with Perichoresis," *TynBul* 56 (2005): 119–40, esp. 135–40.

⁶⁶ Though I do not agree with the entirety of Kilby's paper, her argument here, which I outline, seems to capture the situation accurately (Karen Kilby, "Perichoresis and Projection: Problems with Social Doctrines of the Trinity," 1–14, available at http://www.theologyphilosophycentre.co.uk/papers/Kilby_TrinNBnew.pdf [cited 6 May 2009]; originally published in *New Blackfriars* 81 [2000]: 432–45).

⁶⁷ Kilby, "Perichoresis and Projection," 10.

trinitarian language, this approach is problematic in that it first projects something onto God and then turns around and presents that projection as what is relevant and important about the triune God for the world.⁶⁸ It is along these lines that Gunton's use of perichoresis should at least be queried.

This analysis leads somewhat to the final question: *What does speech about the community of persons in the Godhead reveal about the persons? Or, are communion and community interchangeable terms, as they appear to be for Gunton?*⁶⁹ Whether due to imprecision or intentionality, Gunton does not preserve this important distinction. "Community" commonly carries with it individualistic notions of the persons, in which individuals with their own wills and self-consciousness join together to form a society of sorts. This conception is absent in the works of at least one Cappadocian, Gregory of Nyssa, who, for example, speaks of the "communion" of persons, but confines "community" to essence.⁷⁰ His emphasis in light of the Eunomian controversies is on the unity of the divine Nature.⁷¹ Not only does he not begin with persons or prioritize persons over substance (contra Gunton), but when he does refer to persons (*hypostasis* or *prosopon*) it is a severely limited term without individualistic overtones.⁷² For him the term "communion" serves to maintain the mystery of union and distinction in the Godhead. Therefore, as helpful as the existence of "community" in/as the being of God might be for expounding an alternative ecclesiology, it may be, once again, in danger of reading too much creaturely reality back into the Trinity. Perichoresis is not best understood as a community event, but as a mysterious communion of essence between the *hypostaseis* of the Godhead. At the very least, some conceptual clarity on Gunton's part would have been a great help in better understanding his proposal.

While it may be commendable to attempt to move beyond an extreme apophatism and say something about inner-trinitarian relationships beyond the fact of their relations of origin, perhaps some caution must be exercised. The crucial (and perhaps ingenious) move in Gunton's ecclesial ontology is his development of the idea of relationality (as well as substantiality and perichoresis) as a transcendental. The very being of the triune God exhibits, indeed defines, relationality, and his creation displays the same characteristic. If true, the church as the initial locus of the new creation exhibits these attributes *par excellence*. However, as one writer has recently pointed out, in order to be properly trinitarian there must be an effort to "preserve an ontological distinction between God and humanity in order to maintain an order consistent with their distinct natures."⁷³ Therefore, extending trinitarian language such as "perichoresis," "relations," "persons," and "communion" must proceed with great caution.

4.3. Ways Forward? Trinitarian/Pneumatic-Christological Ecclesiology

While Gunton rejects particular notions of an "invisible church," his ecclesiology may still be viewed as an attempt to mediate between conceptions of the church as visible and invisible, present

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁶⁹ See the above section on Gunton's ecclesial ontology.

⁷⁰ Basil, *Letters* 38.4. See the helpful discussion in Sarah Coakley, "'Persons' in the 'Social' Doctrine of the Trinity: A Critique of Current Analytic Discussion," in *The Trinity: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Trinity* (ed. Stephen T. Davis, Daniel Kendall, and Gerald O'Collins; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 123–44.

⁷¹ Coakley, "'Persons' in the 'Social' Doctrine of the Trinity," 131.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 137.

⁷³ Mark Husbands, "The Trinity Is *Not* Our Social Program: Volf, Gregory of Nyssa and Barth," in *Trinitarian Theology for the Church: Scripture, Community, Worship* (ed. Daniel J. Treier and David E. Lauber; Downers Grove: IVP, 2009), 120–41, esp. 121, 123.

and eschatological, particular and universal, imperfect and perfect, and its reality versus its place as an article of faith. While these are perennial problems in ecclesiological theory and practice, Gunton's proposals provide a number of unique and helpful contributions. The first of these might be elucidated by placing it beside a confessional ecclesiology.

The Westminster Confession (1647) speaks of the church in three distinct ways. First, the universal church is *invisible*, consisting of "the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ the Head thereof" (25.1). Second, the church is *visible*, that is, consisting of "all those throughout the world that profess the true religion . . . and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ . . . out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation" (25.2).⁷⁴ Third, this visible church is organized into particular churches that are more or less pure according to how well they display the "marks of the true church"⁷⁵ (25.4).

Gunton's ecclesiology moves us beyond not only the invisible-visible distinction, but also that of the true versus less true visible church. As noted earlier, if the church, *ontologically speaking*, is constituted by particular persons in free relation to one another, oriented toward Christ by the Spirit, then locating the church in election, hierarchy, or individual belief can be somewhat revised or at least supplemented. The church is not merely invisible (category 1), nor is it the essentially invisible conglomeration of particular believing individuals from around the world (category 2). It is, rather, a grouping of those who choose to exist in community with one another because of Jesus Christ and the Spirit, that is, people who actually relate and are instrumental in the fulfillment of one another's *telos* in Christ. This is not to deny that the church does consist of those elect of God who believe the gospel. However, the emphasis necessarily shifts toward the being of God and, consequently, to the concrete relationships that constitute the church and away from less constructive and less practically (spiritually) beneficial conceptions. In many ways, this is how the NT construes the church primarily: as those who gather, for example, in Corinth (1 Cor 1:2), in the home of Priscilla and Aquila (Rom 16:5), or in the region of Galatia (Gal 1:1–2).⁷⁶ The church is an identifiable pneumatic, Christomorphic communion of particular persons who apart from these free relations would no longer be the church.

Along with placing a much-needed emphasis on the importance of the particular communities we inhabit, this move in the direction of ontology at the very least lightens the definitional load placed upon the Reformation "marks of the true church" and may thus create more space for ecumenical (small *e*) dialogue concerning the nature of the church. The "marks"—the preaching of the "pure doctrine of the gospel," the "pure administration of the sacraments," and the exercise of church discipline—can be variously interpreted by different traditions, not to mention fiercely debated. The ecumenical potential of a trinitarian ontology of the church might prove more promising, as confessional or parochial criteria (standards) take a backseat to the open-ended criterion of Christ-centered, Spirit-enabled relationality.

Finally, describing the church as the "body of Christ" and the "communion of saints" draws proper attention to the christological and pneumatological facets of ecclesiology. However, as Gunton argues, these images by themselves may help to foster an overly elevated understanding of the church's nature.

⁷⁴ Also see the Larger Catechism which states: "The visible Church is a society made up of all such as in all ages and places of the world do profess the true religion, and of their children" (Q. 62).

⁷⁵ See, for example, the Belgic Confession (1561) article 29.

⁷⁶ O'Brien argues that the primary meaning of *ekklesia* in the NT is "gathering" or "assembly." It describes mainly a divinely constituted, concrete, identifiable object, not an abstract metaphor for a group of Christians (O'Brien, "The Church," 91–92).

He innovatively posits that what is needed for a healthy ecclesiology is rather a *pneumatic* Christology and a *Christocentric* pneumatology. The former highlights the humanity of Christ by underscoring his dependence on the Holy Spirit during his earthly life. Although one should not follow Gunton (who follows Edward Irving) in attributing fallenness to Christ's humanity, a consequence for ecclesiology of emphasizing Christ's Spirit-dependent humanity is a stress on the humanity of the church. The church is the "body" of a Christ who lived a human life in full reliance on the Spirit. The church is not the kingdom, but rather a human community dependent on the Spirit to grant it the kind of life it is intended to live.⁷⁷ The latter—Christocentric pneumatology—emphasizes the Spirit's function of bringing about the "not-yet" aspects of Christ's redemptive work, which includes conforming the church to Christ's likeness. The incompleteness of the Spirit's Christocentric work again highlights the church's humanity. Christology and pneumatology framed this way then create space for a properly eschatological perspective on the church. The church is *simul iustus et peccator*, but also oriented toward the future, its consummation, its perfection. In terms of ethics, the church may be realistic about its achievements and deeply aware of its failures, but hopeful as to its end.⁷⁸ Thus Gunton makes a unique contribution to ecclesiology and in doing so addresses the disappointed minister and layperson with whom this essay opened. By deploying an arsenal of dogmatic resources—primarily a pneumatologically controlled Christology and a christologically controlled pneumatology—he provides a creative response to the ever-perplexing question of the real versus ideal in the church. At one and the same time the church can think quite highly and rather soberly about itself. It is a gathering of those belonging to the God and Father of Jesus Christ, yet those who display the marks of citizens of the City of Humanity.

Pastors and laypeople, then, should not expect more of the church than is appropriate for what it actually is. In light of Gunton's trinitarian ecclesiology, the church is this or that communion of *broken* but freely relating individuals drawn together in Christ, which by the Holy Spirit is given the time and space to become what it is meant to be. Disappointment and disillusionment come when the eschatological dimension of the church's being is not sufficiently taken into account. When a congregation does not rise willingly to the challenge of the sermon, or take active part in the church's ministry, it merely demonstrates its reality as a creature between the times. When it is difficult for newcomers and old-timers to find meaningful fellowship, or when supposed hypocrites abound in the community, the imperfection of the church's humanity is accented. The church is an *imperfect* and *incomplete* sign of the present and coming kingdom of God; it is a Spirit-endowed *human* reality. It is

⁷⁷ It must be noted that another criticism of Gunton's pneumatic Christology is that he does not sufficiently account for the operation of the divine Son in the life of Jesus Christ. Who, for example, was the voice speaking the words "Before Abraham was I am" (John 8:58)? Whose glory is revealed after the first sign at the wedding in Cana (John 2:11)? Who is it that the winds and waves obey (Mark 4:41)? Is not part of the scandal of the Incarnation that the eternal Son willed (in the human willing) to take flesh and die at the hands of his creation? Gunton's Spirit Christology does not offer an adequate account of the above. For a brief critique of Gunton, see Alan Spence, "The Person as Willing Agent: Classifying Gunton's Christology," in *The Theology of Colin Gunton* (ed. Lincoln Harvey; T&T Clark Theology; London: T&T Clark, 2010), 59–62. However, what this paper emphasizes is the value for ecclesiology of Gunton's focus on Christ's humanity and dependence on the Spirit.

⁷⁸ Gunton works out in some detail a few of the human and eschatological aspects of the church in *Actual-ity of Atonement*, 175; *The Christian Faith*, 132; "The Church as a School of Virtue? Human Formation in Trinitarian Framework," in *Intellect and Action: Elucidations on Christian Theology and the Life of Faith* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 101–20; "Until He Comes," 187–200.

with these eyes—those able to view the present state of the church in light of its appointed *telos*—that we are to relate to the body of Christ.

Furthermore, once rightly oriented to the church’s anthropic nature, every member is thus to function as an instrument of the Spirit’s eschatological perfecting of the church. Christians within concrete congregations are called to be the means by which God’s ends are accomplished in the church. For example, we are summoned to a certain attentiveness to the “priestly” obligations we have toward one another, chiefly, to minister the Word of God. According to Luther, it is this “unofficial” ministry of the Word that leads to and sustains the reformation of the church. Indeed, if all believers are priests, and priesthood is defined primarily by the ministry of the Word, then a properly functioning priesthood leads to the pervasive presence of God’s Word amidst his people.⁷⁹ Luther’s concern was that by limiting the priesthood to a select few, we weaken the capacity for the Word of God to correct and shape the church. Therefore, in one sense Luther democratizes access to and ministry of the Word, but not to the exclusion of ordained ministers or to encourage individualism. Rather, he delivers the Word of God to every believer so that each is made responsible for the encouragement, comfort, and discipline of others, and all this for the sake of the entire church. “*Ecclesia semper reformanda est*” is thus an eschatological directive: if the church is to move toward what it will be, every Christian must take seriously his or her role in reforming or, better, conforming the church to the likeness of Christ, and pastors must prepare them for these works of ministry.

5. Conclusion

In his effort to bring the doctrine of the Trinity into meaningful contact with the doctrine of the church, Colin Gunton delves into the closely related areas of theological ontology, pneumatology, Christology, and eschatology. Despite his unfortunate misrepresentation of Augustine and the western tradition as well as his sometimes unclear use of trinitarian terminology, Gunton’s careful attempt to root the nature of the church in the being and action of God opens up possibilities for realistic and open notions of what the church is and can be. Whether or not his work yields any fruit in the field of modern ecclesiological discourse remains to be seen.

⁷⁹“The duty of a priest is to preach, and if he does not preach he is as much a priest as a picture of a man is a man” (Martin Luther, *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church* [1520], LW 36:115). “The priesthood is properly nothing but the ministry of the Word . . . Whoever, therefore, does not know or preach the gospel is not only no priest or bishop, but he is a kind of pest to the church, who under the false title of priest or bishop, or dressed in sheep’s clothing, actually does violence to the gospel and plays the wolf in the church” (ibid., 116). “To declare the praises of Christ is the priesthood and kingdom of the Christians” (*Lectures on Isaiah 40–66* [1527–1530], LW 17:98).

REVIEW ARTICLE

Magnum Opus and Magna Carta: *The Meaning of the Pentateuch*

— Stephen Dempster —

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John Sailhamer's *The Meaning of the Pentateuch*¹ is clearly the *magnum opus* of this great scholar's accomplishments over the last three decades and perhaps a *Magna Carta* for evangelical interpretation.² The book's title succinctly expresses the thesis. It is about the essential meaning of the Pentateuch, which is not just ancient historical literature but divine revelation. The meaning of the revelation is determined by the distinctive compositional structure of this central biblical text, a meaning that is reinforced and clarified by later prophetic editors and interpreters who integrated it into the completed canon of Scripture. Thus, the Pentateuch is divine revelation, which bears the marks of careful literary craftsmanship and later prophetic interpretation and canonical adaptation.

There is a gold mine of information in this book, which is the result of the author's many years of painstaking and fruitful study of this part of the Bible. In some ways this book is a compendium for much of the author's distinctive themes and terminology: text versus event, literary strategy versus literary strata, Pentateuch versus Mosaic Law, Abraham versus Moses, poetic commentary versus narrative progression, Pentateuch 2.0 versus Pentateuch 1.0, big idea versus smaller details. Whatever one thinks of this book, it needs to be part of the conversation of Pentateuchal studies in the future, particularly among evangelicals. Personally, I have found it refreshing to read a volume on the Pentateuch concerned with the final form of the text's surface structure rather than the layers of literary strata beneath it.

1. The Big Idea of the Meaning of the Pentateuch

The book consists of three major sections: Approaching the Text as Revelation, Rediscovering the Composition of the Pentateuch within the Tanak, and Interpreting the Theology of the Pentateuch. But rather than showing how the thesis is developed in each section, I would like to consider the big idea of *The Meaning of the Pentateuch*, to which all other themes are subordinate. Sailhamer argues that the central, controlling idea of the Pentateuch is soteriological: human beings are made righteous before God by faith and not by the works of the Law. Thus Paul was not reading justification by faith into the

¹ *The Meaning of the Pentateuch: Revelation, Composition and Interpretation* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2009), 632 pp.

² Personal communication from Joshua Williams, one of Sailhamer's students (November 21, 2010).

Torah but reading it out. Similarly, his belief that Jesus was the seed of Abraham who would bless the world was not imposed on the OT data but emerged from a careful study of the Pentateuch. According to Sailhamer, a close reading of the text reveals a complex literary strategy that was used to convey an eschatological hope in a future king from the line of David who would someday bless the world. The larger structure of the Tanak itself and at least one particular arrangement of the Writings consolidated and confirmed this big idea. Thus, Sinaitic Law and the Mosaic Covenant should not be confused with the meaning of the Pentateuch. The Pentateuch points out the failure of these and shows the need for a new covenant in which faith is operative.

How does Sailhamer arrive at this big idea? It is not “rocket science.” He argues that a close reading and rereading of the text, a meditation on the Torah day and night, will yield a picture that stresses the importance of faith and the failure of the Sinai project of law. This idea provides “the best explanation of what is actually there in the text of the Pentateuch” (p. 29). If one imagines that the Pentateuch is a stereogram, it is almost as if the three-dimensional figure of faith emerges from a patient observation of the surface features of the text. The resultant picture shows the relation of the major sections to each other and the clear purpose for their specific arrangements. Also emerging are structural patterns in which larger and smaller sections of narrative are followed by poems, which function like songs in a Hollywood musical, providing commentary on the unfolding drama. Key texts become visible, and they serve as hermeneutical signposts in the text pointing to the larger meaning that is developing. The results are arresting. If the Pentateuch is supposed to be all about the giving of the law as is often popularly understood, why is there no mention of the law for the first sixty or so chapters? Why does Moses, whose name is virtually synonymous with Law, never enter the land of promise, while Abraham, whose name is synonymous with faith, walks freely throughout the same land? Why is a whole generation excluded from the land except two individuals who demonstrate faith in God’s promise? Why do major sections of the law appear after major transgressions of the people? Why is there such a coincidence of law and sin and faith and righteousness? Any explanation of the final form of the Pentateuch has to provide explanations for questions like these, and for Sailhamer the soteriological explanation is the one that works the best.

If faith is the big idea, in what particular promise were the Israelites to place their faith? Again, key poems placed in strategic locations in the Torah indicate that the Israelites expected a king from the line of Judah who would defeat the powers of chaos and restore creation. Later editors confirmed this understanding and inserted the eschatological term “in the latter days” before these poems to indicate that this was the eschatological hope of the prophets.³ Thus, this would happen when a new covenant would be made, a covenant that is expected in the book of Deuteronomy (chs. 29–30).

One of the main points that Sailhamer makes is the distinction between an original composition and a later edition that was revised, interpreted, and updated by prophetic editors working at the end of the OT period, who thus provided the original Pentateuch (1.0) with a “retrofit” (2.0) with the rest of canonical Scripture. This retrofit amplified the intentions of Pentateuch 1.0. Sailhamer does not clarify the extent of this “upgrade” of the original pentateuchal “software.” Such editors acted much like the scribes in Ezra’s time by providing a number of pivotal chapters and numerous glosses and comments to ensure that the original spirit of the Pentateuch was preserved and integrated with the canon. In this new Pentateuch, original themes are emphasized and underlined by “learned quotations” as well as editorial design. This is very different from the traditional conservative position on the Pentateuch

³E.g., Gen 49:1; Num 24:14; Deut 31:29; cf. Deut 4:30.

that suggests that an original Pentateuch has been updated randomly by post-Mosaic glosses at various times, with no thought of its relation to the rest of the canon of Scripture. For Sailhamer such additions are neither random nor minor but part of an intentional strategy to enhance and highlight the original meaning of the Pentateuch for a much later audience.

Why, then, has there been a failure of scholars to see this intelligent design? The author believes a major reason has been the lenses that scholars, particularly evangelical scholars, have used to look at the data. Evangelicals have unwittingly exchanged one set of lenses for another. The Enlightenment, with its use of critical reason and its subjection of every historical claim to verification, put evangelicals on the defensive so that they became more and more interested in verifying and proving the historical facts of the Bible to skeptics and unbelievers. Consequently, these facts became detached from their overall narrative framework and lost any comprehensive significance. It was as if evangelicals unknowingly threw out the textual baby in the interest of preserving the historical bath water, as they exchanged narrative lenses for historical ones. This had a profound impact on the text, as it became simply a means to recover and prove an event. The real locus of authority had thus moved from the certainty of the Word of God to the contingent events of history. But what was also lost was a real sense of the big picture of the Bible. While the systematic theologian Robert Jensen has analyzed how the West evolved from premodernism to postmodernism and lost its fundamental story,⁴ theologian Hans Frei, on whom Sailhamer relies so much, has shown how a hermeneutical shift among Christian scholars themselves has accelerated an eclipse of the biblical story for Western culture.⁵ Thus, any concern for a big idea of the Pentateuch would be off the scholarly radar.

2. Evaluation

2.1. Strengths

Let me first applaud this massive undertaking by this leading evangelical scholar. It is very rare to see an evangelical scholar seek to make the Pentateuch the goal of so much research because of the difficulty of ever being taken seriously by the wider academic guild. Sailhamer has done the church a great service with his volume that seeks to look for the big picture of the central core of the OT. I particularly have been stimulated by his research on the distinction between Pentateuch 1.0 and Pentateuch 2.0 with the final revision being a retrofit for the OT canon. Sailhamer has been involved in groundbreaking research in his work on showing that the major canonical divisions are glued together by seams that integrate the Scriptures together into a completed whole and stamp them with an air of authority and expectancy. His observation of key poems prefaced by the later eschatological expression “in the latter days” is arresting and hardly accidental. The arrangement of the independent texts of Gen 1–11 into a text that begins with creation and ends in Babylon before the call of Abram is hardly an editorial accident and betrays an exilic or post-exilic hand. This is certainly gospel to an exilic community languishing in Babylon far from its homeland. Their call to leave is based on an ancient biblical precedent. The fact that a return from this exile is found at the end of Deuteronomy with a new generation about to enter

⁴Robert W. Jensen, “How the World Lost Its Story,” *First Things* 36 (1993): 19–24.

⁵Hans W. Frei, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980).

the land can also hardly be fortuitous. Much here is creative and stimulating and seems to breathe new life into old Scriptures.

Second, Sailhamer has a way of communicating his views relevantly. Thus his comparison of Pentateuch 1.0 and 2.0 uses computer terminology to drive a point home; or his comparison of poetical commentaries to theme songs in a Hollywood musical; or the analogy of a design on the cover of a jig-saw puzzle with the big-picture idea for a large text. His use of painting to communicate the importance of the text versus the event is extremely helpful. To put such time and effort into historical reconstruction of the event behind the text would be like trying to bring to light what is behind the shadows in one of Rembrandt's paintings. While it may be possible, it ruins the picture.

Third, Sailhamer shows that the NT writers were not just "proof-texters" but dealt seriously with the content of the OT. They saw the big picture. Thus, Sailhamer gives the church back the OT. It is not just a book that can be dispensed with once the NT has come, but it contains the gospel; the Messiah is not just an incidental theme, but the key theme, the thread that holds it all together. Particularly significant is the use of the term "gapping," borrowed from Meir Sternberg as a way to understand seminal texts (pp. 320–21). Frequently, such early texts are fraught with ambiguity, but intentionally so from a literary perspective. They are like empty vessels that are gradually filled out as the larger text unfolds. The semantic lacunae are gradually filled. This is a particularly effective way to understand the identity of the seed in Gen 3:15, which could be understood collectively or individually. As the text develops the two are played off one against the other, but neither is one sacrificed for the other. By the time the end of Genesis appears, there is a hope in a future king who will bless the people and the world.

2.2. Weaknesses

While having profited immensely from this study, I have a few criticisms. It is clear to me that Sailhamer "over-reads" significant texts. For example, I wonder if his belief that faith and law are so opposed leads him to conclude that the insertion of the major blocks of law at Sinai are the result of sin and were not originally intended. He argues that the Ten Commands in Exod 20 and the Covenant Code are placed after the offer of a covenant to Israel because Israel was afraid at Sinai and would not go up the holy mountain to worship God. Similarly, the main Levitical priestly laws were given because of the sin with the golden calf (Exod 32–34), while the Holiness Code is added because of the people sacrificing to goat-demons in the wilderness in Lev 17. Thus, Israel exchanged "a personal face-to-face relationship with God for a priesthood" (p. 392), the unmediated presence of God for a tabernacle and temple, and a life lived by faith for a law code. For Sailhamer, this explains more clearly Paul's statement in Galatians that the Law was added because of transgressions (Gal 3:19). Each Israelite transgression led to more and more law.

I find such a reading unconvincing. Later texts show that the people were commended by God for their fear at Sinai. Reflecting on the people's response of fear to God at Sinai, Yahweh remarks, "I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken to you. They have done well in all that they have spoken" (Deut 5:28). Surely the author in Exod 19 did not envision all the people going up the mountain—it could never have physically happened! And as Exod 24 reiterates and expands this text, seventy elders representing all the people ascend the mountain along with Moses, Aaron, and Aaron's sons. From a structural point of view, the entire Exodus project culminates in the legislation given to Moses regarding the building of the tabernacle so that Yahweh can finally live with his people in order to make them distinct from all the peoples of the world. Here God finally "touches down" on

planet earth. This legislation is *before* the sin of the Golden Calf (Exod 25–31), and the sin threatens this relationship; but because of the intercession of Moses and the mercy of God, the tabernacle becomes a reality—hardly a retrograde step (Exod 35–40). God’s original intention to dwell with the people can now be carried out because of the intercession of Moses and the divine grace and mercy. While it is creative to link this understanding with a statement that the law was added because of transgressions in Paul, it is a stretch to think that Paul or any other Jewish thinker of the time is thinking of an exchange of an original covenant based on faith, to one regulated by the works of the law. Paul is rather thinking of the big picture of the Law: it was added 430 years after the promise to drive home the revelation of sin into the hearts of the Israelites and thus by inference to the world in order that both would be able to trust in the mercy of God and thus be able to keep the law (Gal 3:17). The problem is not with the law but its need to be transplanted into the heart. Similarly, statements in the prophets that deal with cultic abuse employ hyperbolic language to stress that the ultimate intent of the law was not ritual but relationship. In no way were they criticizing the cult and the law—just a perversion of them.

I am also left pondering at times the difference between Pentateuch 1.0 and Pentateuch 2.0. At times I feel that Sailhamer believes that there is a minimal difference and at other times a large difference. While he speaks of a definite difference, he mentions, “it is impossible to determine how different the two editions were” (p. 24). Yet at times he can clearly separate texts like Deut 33–34 and various interpolations from the original. But it may be the case that Pentateuch 2.0 is such a thorough revision of Pentateuch 1.0 that one cannot identify it anymore—perhaps just its lineaments. Take, for example, Gen 1–11, which consists of a number of independent texts that have been creatively spliced and edited together to form an introduction to the Pentateuch. What would be the difference between Gen 1–11 in the two versions? With its climax in the Tower of Babel and the call of Abram, it seems to reflect the exile and thus 2.0.⁶ Would Gen 1–11 even have been in 1.0? And yet a similar literary strategy that is used in this text is used throughout the Pentateuch, which is largely the work of Moses, we are told, but only updated and revised. Presumably the difference is not large, but according to Sailhamer, version 2.0 represents a huge difference because without 2.0 the Sinai covenant would have kept the focus on Sinai and law and not on grace and the answer of the new covenant and the message of faith (pp. 200–206). The whole matter needs to be rethought.

When Sailhamer uses metrical constraints to show that texts within poems are later interpolations from learned prophetic editors, it seems to me to be rather subjective. While critical scholars see these as simply interpolations by a later hand with no real meaning, Sailhamer sees them as telltale signs of a later prophetic hand that is ensuring that the meaning of the text is clarified within the bounds of the canon. Thus, duplication in a later poem is intended to pick up a line from an earlier poem to show its relevance. This may well be the case, but it is hard to prove. Similarly, to suggest that Judah’s poem in Gen 49 has been expanded because of a later kingship motif may well be true, but it is difficult to prove. Sailhamer is largely accepting the critical conclusions of biblical scholars but using these critical conclusions to point out their exegetical relevance for his understanding (pp. 326–28).

His conclusion that significant poetic commentary comes at the ending of major sections should be balanced by the fact that major speeches that are often poetic stand at the beginning of major sections as well. Thus, Gen 12:1–3 sets the agenda for Abram; the oracle about Jacob and Esau in the womb in Gen 25:23 sets the framework for the Jacob narrative; and the poetic dreams of Joseph in Gen 37:6–7 are the

⁶E.g., Sailhamer argues that Gen 11:1–9 is about the fall of the kingdom of Babylon and not the fall of Babel and that Moses can hardly be responsible for this section (p. 288).

ignition that turns on the narrative engine in the Joseph story. But there are examples that are omitted in his analysis such as Gen 8:21 and 9:5. Sometimes I am also left wondering how one can distinguish between simple direct speech and poetry. For example Gen 3:14–19 is three separate speeches—direct discourse—and is quite different from Gen 49, but both are classed as poetry.

Also, the concern with event and text, while important, should not be pressed too far. The uniqueness of Israelite and Christian faith is marked by its relation to history. While I appreciate the analogy of the painting that Sailhamer uses to stress the importance of the painting as opposed to its background (pp. 19–20), it would seem to me that the more historical background uncovered for the Bible would tend to enhance the picture rather than take away from it—*as long as the canonical foreground remains in focus*. Thus, the knowledge of ancient polytheism in the ancient world points to the radicality of the demand in Deut 6:4. That human beings were basically considered as afterthoughts in the ancient world's creation stories shows the stunning magnificence of the creation of humanity in Gen 1. In other words, the canonical text's foreground shines brighter with the enhanced historical background.

Finally, in a book about the Pentateuch in which there is a lot of repetition, it is perhaps suitable that there is an inordinate amount of repetition in this book. There are many times when the same material is repeatedly mentioned. As one of many examples, there is a lengthy quote from Jamieson, Fawcett, and Brown that occurs about half a dozen times in the text (pp. 54–55, 196, 206–7, 280, 356, 464). How many times does Hans Frei's basic hermeneutical point have to be told (pp. 86, 90–91, 110, 128–29, 178–79)?⁷ Undoubtedly, such repetition is due to the independence of some of the essays at an earlier time, and it is very clear that earlier studies by the author have been given a second life within this volume. But this feature becomes downright annoying for any reader of the text, and it should be the task of any editor to smooth out such literary inconcinnities unless these were intentional and part of the literary strategy of *The Meaning of the Pentateuch 2.0*. But my guess is that these survived as strata of 1.0 that were missed by those on the editorial team responsible for 2.0 because of haste. If there is an edition 3.0—and I think that there should be—it could be substantially reduced in the interests of concision.

3. Conclusion

As far as I am concerned, John Sailhamer has distinguished himself as a servant of the Word in his work since that has been the object of his investigation, not some reconstructed source behind the Word. He has not followed the way of trendy scholarly fads, but has taken his cue from the Word. While I may disagree with him over various interpretations, his call to ponder the Torah day and night is nothing but the faithful transmission of a message from the big picture of the Tanak itself. That is a call that needs to be heard, and *when it is heard* it will no doubt become a *Magna Carta* for biblical studies.

⁷For a more thorough list of these stylistic issues, see James M. Hamilton Jr., "John Sailhamer's *The Meaning of the Pentateuch*," *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 14:2 (2010) 64–65.

PASTORAL PENSÉES

The Hopelessness of the Unevangelized

— Robert H. Gundry —

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Editor's Note: Recent controversies have swirled around the fate of those who never hear the gospel, arising in no small part because of the searching, even searing, questions posed by many, both Christian and non-Christian. This essay represents a compact, biblical restatement of the urgency and necessity of the call to proclaim the gospel to all the nations so that people may believe in Jesus Christ and be saved.

Lately there has come out of cold storage a question that has been hibernating among conservative evangelicals for some time. That question has to do with the status of people who live and die without ever hearing the gospel of Jesus Christ. Will God consign them to everlasting punishment? If so, where is his sense of fair play—they never had a chance—let alone his love for them? If not, through what means and at what time does he give them opportunity to be saved?

1. Reasons for Challenges to the Traditional View

This question of theodicy (divine justice) needs open discussion. We can easily identify reasons for its acuteness: (1) the relative fewness of the saved under the traditional view that apart from evangelization in their lifetimes people have no hope;¹ (2) the guilt of Christians in failing to evangelize them; and (3) the eternality of punishment in the hereafter. These considerations have always troubled pious minds.

In recent times historical factors have heightened sensitivity to the question. The downfall of monarchism and the rise of egalitarianism in the political realm have made it hard for people to continue thinking of God as a king who exercises his sovereignty at what surely looks to be the outrageous expense of vast hordes of humanity. Add the lingering myths of the happy heathen and the noble savage; the modern syndrome of self-pity, evident in the anti-heroes of literature, drama, and cinema and in the attribution of human failings to genetic and environmental factors; the current emphasis on love without holiness, on tolerance without convictions; the exchange of “convictions” (connoting objective truths) for mere “values” (connoting subjective preferences); and the cosmopolitanism of the global village, in which people all over the world have a more immediate awareness of one another than they ever had before. This mixture offers a witches’ brew to anyone who would dare defend the traditional view, which sat a little less uncomfortably in provincial society.

¹Compare Luke 13:23 (“Lord, are there few who are being saved?”) and the whole book of *4 Ezra*.

2. Ruling Out Universalism and Annihilationism

Let us rule out the doctrines of universal salvation and of the annihilation of the wicked (also called conditional immortality). The former solves our problem by positing the salvation of all people in the end but runs aground on texts that describe the eternal punishment of unbelievers (e.g., Matt 25:46; Rev 14:11; 20:10, 15) and on Jesus' explicit statements—in the Sermon on the Mount of all places!—that “wide is the gate and broad the way leading to destruction, and *many* are the ones who enter through it” and “how narrow is the gate and confined the road leading to life, and *few* are the ones who find it” (Matt 7:13–14). The reconciliation of all things (Eph 1:10; Col 1:19–20) refers to the new creation in Christ (Eph 1:22–23; Col 1:17–18), outside of which fall the unsaved (see Eph 2:3; 5:5–6; Col 3:5–6, 12;² Rev 21:8). In view of the contrast between “those who are being saved” and “those who are perishing” in 2 Cor 2:14–16, the reconciling of “the world” to God in 5:19 cannot imply universal salvation as a coming actuality or even as a possibility—rather, salvation as available on condition of accepting “the word of reconciliation”: “we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God” (5:20). Similarly, justification “for all people” in Rom 5:18 makes justification available for all, but not actual for all, because 2:2–6, 8–9 has previously spoken of suffering God's wrath at the Last Judgment. And again similarly, Jesus' drawing “all people” to himself according to John 12:32 cannot imply universal salvation; for 5:29 has referred to “the resurrection of judgment” as opposed to “the resurrection of life,” and 3:36 has said that God's wrath “remains” on unbelievers, so that “all people” in 12:32 has to mean all kinds of people, such as non-Jews, “the Greeks” who had just asked to see Jesus (12:20–21; cf. Rev 5:9; 7:9). So settling for “tension” between supposedly universalistic texts and obviously nonuniversalistic texts amounts to ignoring the first rule of interpretation: Take account of the context.

The destruction of both soul and body in hell (Matt 10:28) connotes devastation and ruination, not annihilation. Compare the underlying Greek word's frequent use for lostness, as in the cases of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the Prodigal Son, none of them annihilated (Luke 15:4, 6, 8–9, 24). The doctrine of annihilation also runs into the difficulty that a shortening of punishment does not at all answer the question, Why does God not give everybody an equal opportunity to be saved? Besides, eternality characterizes future punishment to the same degree that it characterizes future bliss (note the parallelism in Matt 25:46).

3. Considering Inclusivism

On to forms of so-called inclusivism, then. Usually hallowed with a supportive reference to the opinion of C. S. Lewis—though his associated belief in purgatory goes unmentioned—three inclusivistic answers to our question have captured more serious attention among conservative evangelicals:

1. Salvation is possible through the revelation of God in the visible creation and in the human conscience. People who respond to this general revelation have the benefits of Jesus' redemptive work applied to them without their hearing and believing the gospel in this lifetime.
2. All those who did not hear the gospel before their death will hear it after their death. Then they gain the opportunity of which they were deprived during their lifetimes.

²The initial “e” in “elect” indicates a choice of some “out of” a larger number (so also the original Greek).

3. Of those who did not hear the gospel before their death, only those who responded well to general revelation before dying will have an opportunity after dying. In view of their good response to general revelation, post-mortem belief in Christ will probably follow as a matter of course.

3.1. Various Appeals to Scripture

Proponents of these views make a number of appeals to Scripture.

3.1.1. *Gentiles such as Melchizedek, Balaam, and Job*

The Gentiles Melchizedek, Balaam, and Job (not to mention Adam, Abel, Seth, Enoch, and Noah, who lived prior to God's special revelation distinguishing Gentiles from Abraham and his offspring through Isaac and Jacob) are marched out as examples of salvation through general revelation. But the appeal to them overlooks the possibility that their knowledge of God derived from an original special revelation of himself to humanity, a revelation that started the practice of religion and passed on to succeeding generations of the whole human race.³ The missionary drive of the early church and, even earlier, the wholesale prophetic and other Jewish attacks on pagan religions imply that by the time of Jesus God's special revelation of himself at the dawn of human history had long since suffered dysfunctional corruption.

3.1.2. *Matthew 25:31–46*

Matthew 25:31–46 indicates that all nations will receive judgment according to their exercising or failing to exercise charity toward the wretched of the earth, whom Jesus identifies as his own brothers, not according to their hearing and believing the gospel or failing to do so. Thus it is claimed. But this interpretation, which has proved irresistible to many a Christian humanitarian, stumbles against Jesus' own definition of his brothers as those who do the heavenly Father's will (Matt 12:50) as revealed specifically in the teaching of Jesus (see Matt 7:21 with 7:24–27; 28:20), and even more seriously stumbles against the parallel in Matt 10, where the persecuted little ones needing shelter, food, and drink are not the world's needy in general but Christian missionaries in particular (see especially v. 42)! When viewed in its Matthean context, in other words, the passage turns out to militate against the view for which it is cited; for "one of these littlest brothers of mine" (v. 40) is seen to be a messenger of the gospel.

3.1.3. *John 1:9*

John 1:9 says that the Word enlightens every human being. But the context deals with the incarnate ministry of Christ as providing light, and John later shows awareness that the disciples need to be *sent* in order for the saving effects of that light to be felt (John 20:21–23). Furthermore, the gaining of Christ's light links with believing in Christ (John 1:9–13; 3:16–21; 8:12–30). We do better to say that John jumps from the old creation at the beginning (1:1–3) to the new creation, dating from the incarnation (1:4–18), than to think that he writes concerning a preincarnate and continuing general ministry of the Word through the light of reason and conscience. Therefore, John 1:9 means that Jesus the Word *as preached in the gospel* brings the light of salvation to everyone who hears and believes.

³See the old but still valuable book by Samuel M. Zwemer, *The Origin of Religion* (New York: Loizeaux, 1945), and the anthropological studies cited there of W. Schmidt.

3.1.4. Acts 10:1–2, 34–35

To appeal to God's acceptance of Cornelius, his household, and others like him (Acts 10:1–2, 34–35) is to forget that Luke and Peter are not talking about people deficient of special revelation, but about God-fearers, that is, about Gentiles who know and follow the special revelation of God in the OT. Such Gentiles frequented the synagogues, where they regularly heard the Scriptures read. Moreover, God sent Peter to preach the gospel to these people. Hence, they hardly support the possibility of salvation for the unevangelized.

3.1.5. Acts 18:9–10

According to Acts 18:9–10 the Lord said to Paul, "I have many people in this city [Corinth]." But in view of Acts 13:48b ("and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed"), it is worse than gratuitous to take the Lord's statement as referring to ignorant but acceptable people rather than to those foreordained to salvation through hearing and believing the gospel in their present lifetime. And again, the very fact that God sent Paul to preach the gospel to these people in Corinth takes away support for theories of salvation through general revelation and post-mortem belief in Christ.

3.1.6. Romans 1:19–20

Yes, the heathen do—or at least did—understand general revelation (Rom 1:19–20); but the whole thrust of Rom 1:18–3:18, 23 is that they along with the Jews stand under God's wrath because of their sin. Paul brings up general revelation to show that humankind has rejected it. Therefore, the passage poses a liability, not an asset, to the views under discussion.

3.1.7. Romans 2:14–16

Romans 2:14–16, combined with vv. 6–7, 10–11, 13, has been thought to describe the good works of the Law as performed by conscientious heathen and to ascribe to such heathen salvation. But more than once in the early chapters of Romans Paul sets out brief statements that he later interprets in detail,⁴ and in 8:1–4 he indicates that only those who are in Christ by faith and consequently have the Holy Spirit can fulfill the righteous requirement of the Law. Therefore, 2:14–16 refers to *Christian* Gentiles.⁵

3.1.8. Romans 10:18

Certainly Paul's quoting Ps 19:4 ("Their voice has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world") in Rom 10:18 does not substantiate the possibility of salvation through the general revelation enjoyed by unevangelized people. For although the psalmist has general revelation in mind, Paul reapplies the phraseology to "the gospel . . . the word of [= concerning] Christ" (vv. 16–17). As is well-known, reapplications of OT passages typify Paul's style.⁶ Furthermore (though not essential to the argument), those who have heard (v. 18) are probably the Jews, so that now God is turning his attention to the Gentiles, who have not yet heard (vv. 19–21 and the whole of Rom 9–11).

⁴Compare 1:8–15 with 15:14–33, and 1:16–17 with 3:21–4:25.

⁵See, e.g., C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Romans* (ICC; 2 vols.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975), 1:155–56.

⁶For another example nearby, see Rom 9:25–26, where the word of God through Hosea concerning the restoration of *Israel* shifts to God's acceptance of *Gentiles* who believe the gospel.

3.1.9. 1 Peter 3:18–20

Even though we were to construe Christ's preaching to the spirits in prison (1 Pet 3:18–20) as an offer of salvation to deceased human beings, the problem of the ignorant heathen would still beg for solution. For the text limits the proclamation to the spirits active during the antediluvian generation of Noah and then confined to prison. Moreover, these spirits were "disobedient." They were not the open-hearted kind of heathen the possibility of whose salvation some current theologians are exploring. And disobedient to what? General revelation alone? Can we be sure that the special revelation of a destructive flood formed no part of Noah's preaching of righteousness (cf. Gen 6:9–22; Heb 11:7; 2 Pet 2:5)?

But, of course, 1 Pet 3:18–20 probably does not at all refer to an offer of salvation to deceased human beings. The context favors a proclamation of triumph over demonic powers. Just as Jesus gained such vindication before them, so too at the Last Day his persecuted followers will gain vindication in the presence of their persecutors. As usual, when lacking qualification to the contrary, the term "spirits" refers to spirits of an angelic or demonic kind, not to the spirits of disembodied human beings.

3.1.10. 1 Peter 4:6

Differences of phraseology distance the preaching of the gospel to the dead (1 Pet 4:6) from Christ's proclamation to the once disobedient spirits in prison. This latter text specifies the gospel and deceased human beings. But who are these deceased people, and when did they hear the gospel preached to them? Apparently they are deceased Christians who heard and believed the gospel prior to suffering martyrdom. For Peter writes of their suffering in the flesh as Christ did, that is, to the point of death (v. 1; cf. 3:17–18). The gospel was preached to the martyrs. This happened before their deaths, naturally; otherwise they would not have suffered martyrdom for the gospel. During the present interim between their martyrdom and resurrection they enjoy a disembodied life with God (cf. 2 Cor 5:8; Phil 1:23). Peter designs his comments to steel living Christians against the possibility of their own martyrdom. The passage does not afford good grounds, then, for conversion after death.

3.2. The Problem of Appealing to Equal Treatment

Those who see an out for the unevangelized do so out of concern to avoid impugning the justice of God and sacrificing his love. A laudable concern! But do the suggestions of salvation through general revelation and of conversion after death in fact do the apologetic job they are intended to do! No, they fail. We must ask whether the preaching of the gospel to people in their present lifetime gives them a better opportunity to be saved than they would have had apart from such preaching. If it does, God remains unfair and unloving to let some hear while some do not hear. For then a very large proportion of human beings will suffer eternal loss because he did not give them so good an opportunity as he gave to others.

On the other hand, if for the sake of equal treatment God does not allow the preaching of the gospel to enhance the opportunity to be saved, we have no reason to preach the gospel, at least not so far as the eternal destiny of people is concerned. In fact, on the principle that the servant who knows his master's will and disobeys will receive many lashes but the servant who does not know it will receive few (Luke 12:47–48), it would be better not to preach the gospel to anybody. None would suffer disadvantage, and—since we know by observation that where the gospel is preached the majority usually reject it—many would escape a worse punishment for sinning against greater light. Oddly, the merciful thing

would be *not* to preach the gospel; and the suffering and martyrdom of witness-bearing Christians becomes a cruel mistake if the unreached can be saved equally well without hearing the gospel in this lifetime.

Besides, what of the many who have heard the gospel in their present life, but only from those whose conduct does not recommend the message or only from those who in other ways have failed to make it clear and convincing? We might also wonder about people whose backgrounds make them less susceptible to evangelism. The list of inequalities could go on and on. If we demand equal treatment of those who have never heard, others cry out for equal treatment too. The attempts to justify God's ways in salvation cannot stop with the ignorant heathen. The facile solutions here criticized rest on a philosophical view of the problem that is too simplistic and restricted—and on a theological view of our ability to justify God's ways that is too inflated (cf. Rom 11:33–36).

Given the complexities of the case, we might also doubt our ability to recognize perfect equality even though we saw it right before our eyes. Who knows? Maybe the inequalities are only apparent. But we can make no such claim, since appearances run to the contrary. It is enough to say that intellects properly chastened through recognition of their own limitations and of the complexities attending our question will hesitate to mount either an accusation against God or an apology for him. We can hardly improve on Paul's statement that the fate of the lost demonstrates the wrath and power of God just as the salvation of believers demonstrates his mercy (Rom 9:22–23). At this point it becomes evident whether our thinking centers on God—from whom and through whom and for whom are all things (Rom 11:36)—or whether anthropology has encroached on theology.

4. Staying within Scripture: The Necessity of Evangelism

The Scriptures stand alone as our source of information concerning the status of the unevangelized. As we have seen, the notions of salvation through general revelation and of an opportunity after death find no solid footing in Scripture. More than that, Scripture indicates the hopelessness of people apart from hearing and believing the gospel now. In Adam all human beings stand under condemnation (Rom 5:12–21). They have rejected general revelation (Rom 1:18–32). God's wrath remains on them apart from belief in Jesus the Son (John 3:36). The present is the time for such belief: "Behold, *now* is 'the acceptable time'; behold, *now* is 'the day of salvation'" (2 Cor 6:2). Most clearly of all for our question, Paul puts all these pieces together in Rom 10:9–16 by writing in uninterrupted succession about the necessity to salvation of confessing Jesus as Lord and calling on his name, about the necessity of believing in Jesus for calling on him, about the necessity of hearing of him for believing in him, about the necessity of our preaching the gospel for people's hearing of him, and about the necessity of sending for preaching. "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ" (Rom 10:17). We can hardly fail to notice Paul's focus on the specific message preached concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. And the repeated rhetorical questions, each beginning "How shall they . . .?" show this way of salvation to be the only way. Without the human witness here and now, an essential link is broken; the chain of salvation will not hold.

Since Scripture makes the unevangelized lost and our preaching the gospel to them necessary to their salvation, those who propose contrary views need to adduce more cogent biblical evidence in favor of those views. Otherwise, we should have to move to a decanonized view of revelation as an ever-ongoing process. Biblical particularism and evangelistic necessity, which may have been good

enough for olden times, could give way to post-biblical revelation of a theodicy supposedly more just and gracious and conveniently easier to swallow.

But the new truths of salvation by general revelation and of post-mortem conversion would doubtless yield to the even “better” truth of universal salvation. For someone is bound to ask why God even bothers to create beings who he knows ahead of time will respond neither to general revelation nor to special revelation, and why he allows many of them to increase their damnation by giving them more and more revelation that he knows very well they are not going to accept. Either we settle for a technically fair God (he gives everybody an equal opportunity) notably lacking in kindness (he creates people who he foresees will not take advantage of their equal opportunities). Or we save his kindness with the excuse of ignorance (he did not know that many of his creatures would destroy themselves, and even yet he mindlessly keeps on willing them into existence). Or, ironically, having rejected the Calvinistic doctrine of particular election, we universalize the Calvinistic doctrine of irresistible grace. By this time we have strayed so far from Scripture that the whole problem, having lost its biosphere, ceases to exist.

Staying within Scripture, however, we discover behind the Great Commission a reason to evangelize the heathen more compelling than the desirability of bringing them into the joy of salvation a little earlier than otherwise they would enter it. The reason is that apart from our preaching to them the word of Christ, they have no hope. So let us urgently and compassionately rescue the perishing.

5. An Extended Note on Eternal Punishment

The NT doesn’t put forward eternal punishment of the wicked as a doctrine to be defended because it casts suspicion on God’s justice and love. To the contrary, the NT puts forward eternal punishment as right, even obviously right. It wouldn’t be right of God not to punish the wicked, so that the doctrine supports rather than subverts his justice and love. It shows that he keeps faith with the righteous, that he loves them enough to vindicate them, that he rules according to moral and religious standards that really count, that moral and religious behavior has consequences, that wickedness gets punished as well as righteousness rewarded, and that the eternity of punishment as well as of reward invests the moral and religious behavior of human beings with ultimate significance. We’re not playing games. In short, the doctrine of eternal punishment defends God’s justice and love and supplies an answer to the problem of moral and religious evil rather than contributing to the problem.

God will finally rectify all the imbalances in the scales of justice. To biblical people no mystery attached to this rectification, as though to say we can’t understand it now—how it could be right for God to punish the wicked eternally—but at the Last Day we’ll recognize his love and justice in punishing them eternally and rewarding the righteous, also eternally. To biblical people it was *already* clear that by so doing, God will be exercising his love and justice. And it was already clear to them because they had an acute, firsthand awareness of the depth of human depravity, on the one hand, and of the pain of man’s inhumanity to man, on the other hand.

Often, moderns think that if only biblical people hadn’t been so insular, if only they’d lived in the times of radio, television, the Internet, international travel, if only they’d been personally acquainted with people of other religions—some Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims—they wouldn’t have come up with the horrible idea of eternal punishment. But the doctrine of divine inspiration of Scripture aside (though it warrants acceptance), biblical people were probably less insular than we moderns are. Most of them

had closer and more numerous contacts with people of other religions than we do. As to most of the people we Christians in the Western world deal with, if they aren't Christians they've at least been deeply influenced by the side-effects of the Christian faith that have permeated our culture. But biblical people rubbed shoulders daily with those who diligently practiced other religions, usually a variety of other religions at the same time. They knew what those other religions were and what effects they had on people. So maybe the problem we modern Westerners feel in regard to the doctrine of eternal punishment arises out of our comparative insularity, not out of the insularity of those who wrote the Bible, to our relative ignorance of the realities of human nature, other religions, and their effects on human behavior. At any rate, it's simply wrong to attribute the doctrine to unfamiliarity with other religions and their devotees.

To reference the righteous and the wicked in this discussion isn't to imply that people gain eternal life or suffer eternal punishment on the basis of whether their conduct is, on the whole, good or bad. Thinking that they do is probably part of the problem modern Westerners have in accepting the Bible's teaching of eternal punishment: Non-Christians often seem to be good people. Why should they be punished forever? But people's conduct isn't necessarily an accurate gauge of whether their *nature* is good or bad. Relatively good conduct can be the accidental effect of a good environment in family, friends, teachers, and the surrounding general culture. Put supposedly good people in another set of circumstances—a set in which they can do what they jolly well please, for example, or in which they're subject to greater temptation—and they may turn into Hitlers. Take Nero. At first, when still under the influence of the Stoic philosopher Seneca, Nero was a fairly good Roman emperor. After Seneca died, though, Nero turned demonic. We just don't know people's hearts, or even our own hearts, as God knows them (Jer 17:9–10). People don't go to heaven because their conduct is good enough. They don't go to hell because their conduct is too bad, but because they themselves are bad whether or not that fact has come out very clearly in their conduct. Our conduct and our eternal fate aren't related directly to each other as cause and effect. They're both the effect of whether or not we've been born from above through faith in Jesus Christ and the action of God's Spirit. What our conduct does determine, however, is the degree to which we enjoy eternal life or suffer eternal punishment (see, e.g., Luke 12:47–48; 1 Cor 3:10–15). Though *purely* enjoyable, heaven won't be *equally* enjoyable for everybody there. Similarly, hell won't be equally torturous for everybody there, and not so torturous as to impugn God's justice—yet torturous enough to be avoided at all costs.

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OLD TESTAMENT

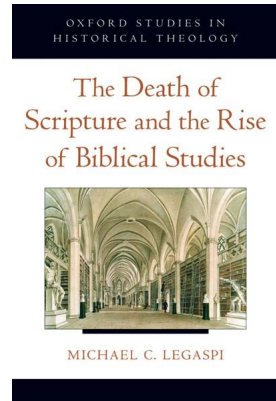
Michael C. Legaspi. *The Death of Scripture and the Rise of Biblical Studies*. Oxford Studies in Historical Theology. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010. xvi + 222 pp. £46.00/\$74.00.

The seismic shift in the West's popular and academic perspectives on the Bible over the last few centuries is easy to recognize and of great significance. This revised doctoral dissertation, rooted in research begun under Peter Machinist (Harvard Divinity School) and overseen by Ann Blair (Harvard University), approaches this complex process in a unique way by focusing on the life and writings of the relatively obscure (if undeservedly so) historical critic Johann David Michaelis (1717–1791). Legaspi's work is one of several recent (and in this case self-acknowledged) revisionist accounts of this immensely important change.

Legaspi describes the shift he explores as one from a “scriptural Bible” to an “academic Bible,” with the latter having lost its status as (authoritative) Scripture. Rather than tie the origins of the demise of the “scriptural Bible” to the Enlightenment, as is often done, he attributes it to the crisis of epistemological authority engendered by the Protestant Reformation (p. viii). The center of his thesis is that eighteenth-century approaches to Scripture as a text like any other were not a rejection of a “scriptural Bible” (it was, he argues, already a thing of the past) but an effort to preserve its presence in a new cultural context (p. 9). “The academic Bible was created by scholars who saw that the scriptural Bible, embedded as it was in confessional particularities, was inimical to the socio-political project from which Enlightenment universities draw their purpose and support” (p. viii). Legaspi's interpretation of the period and phenomena involved is thus focused on “social causes” rather than “intellectual antinomies” like the tension between faith and reason (p. ix).

The study falls into two parts, the first of which sketches the setting in which the “academic Bible” came to be, while the latter focuses on Michaelis's contribution. Legaspi begins by arguing (following R. Popkin) that the Reformation undid the Bible's authority. Chapter 2 turns to Göttingen's development as a university in the eighteenth century, where the Bible (now “academic” rather than “scriptural”) was taken up as an object of philological, moral, aesthetic, and antiquarian interest (pp. 31–32). The university's goals were “to avoid controversial ideologies, outmoded systems of thought, dogmatism, and extreme positions on either end of the theological spectrum” (p. 41). Accordingly, its various administrators and instructors (the author focuses on J. M. Gesner and C. G. Heyne) developed the institution's overall orientation as empiricist in method and motivated by the “social utility” of the subjects of study and a desire for “irenicism” in its demeanor (p. 78).

Michaelis found this milieu congenial to his interests and aspirations, especially the use of philology to revivify the post-Reformation Bible (ch. 4, which provides helpful insights into the development of linguistics and biblical Hebrew), the use of literary aesthetics to appreciate biblical poetry in and of itself (ch. 5; Michaelis appreciated and applied Lowth's technical approach to Hebrew poetry though he critiqued Lowth's lack of attention to its historical background), and the use of such a method to create new ways to see biblical figures such as Moses (ch. 6). Interestingly, Michaelis judged Astruc's embryonic source-criticism of the Pentateuch “exaggerated” and “conjectural” and argued for the



Pentateuch's coherence, but did so not for doctrinal or theological reasons but because he wanted to preserve Moses as an accessible source for humanistic inquiry (pp. 137–39).

A solid grasp of the Bible's reception in the post-Reformation West treatment is indispensable to a solid understanding of how it is understood in contemporary Western culture and academia. In this regard Legaspi's analysis adds much of value, particularly in exploring the convictions and motivations that lay behind Michaelis's work. The work weaves together an arresting tapestry of highly detailed historical threads that is both informative and a pleasure to read. It is also deeply rooted in a tremendous variety of original sources and at ease in various academic disciplines and historical epochs. That said, this reviewer wishes that Legaspi had lingered longer over the correlation of social trends with individual values, understanding, and epistemology. Further exploration of why early Enlightenment thinkers were so readily convinced that the days of the scriptural Bible were over and were content to preserve it as a cultural artifact would also have been helpful.

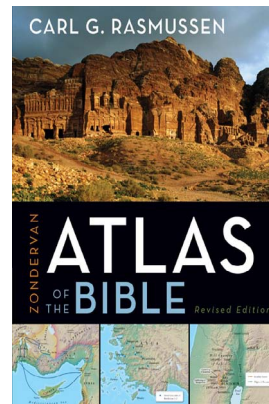
Some of the antitheses that underlie aspects of the argument are questionable. It is not clear, for example, that only after the Reformation was the Bible explored "with reference to extrascriptural concepts, whether juridicially, as among Catholics, or doctrinally, as among Protestants" (p. 4; cf. the writings of Richard Muller, which are curiously lacking from the bibliography). There is surely significant continuity between Aquinas's thought and later Catholicism, just as there is an abundance of doctrine that held a complex relation to Christian interpretation from the early Christian period onward.

Legaspi closes by documenting what he thinks is the dawning recognition that the historical aspect of biblical criticism is dispensable. The antithesis between faith and reason may not be as "stale" as Legaspi thinks, however, as the recent return of that very question at various levels of the Society of Biblical Literature suggests (see <http://www.sbl-site.org/membership/farewell.aspx>, accessed 16 February 2011). Indeed, when Legaspi suggests that those who created the academic Bible "preserved many traditional moral and religious forms (for example, the authority of the Bible) by restraining them critically and self-consciously, as historical contingencies amenable to new intellectual projects" (p. ix), he seems to mix the analytical factors that his project must keep separate if social factors are to predominate over ideological, theological, or epistemological ones. The degree to which this impressive work revises our understanding of the Bible's varying fates in Western culture will in some part be determined by the course of subsequent history, but we are in Legaspi's debt for adding significant depth to our understanding of the issues involved.

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Carl G. Rasmussen. *Zondervan Atlas of the Bible*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010. 302 pp. \$39.99.

This carefully and thoroughly revised edition of Carl Rasmussen's *Zondervan Atlas of the Bible* (ZAB) is a visual and literary feast. Map lovers will undoubtedly pour over this volume, but it will also win converts from among the realm of those unmotivated by maps alone. Rasmussen treats biblical geography in an accessible and engaging format, and for these reasons his atlas will certainly become the gold standard of biblical atlases and how they choose to present map, image, and text. Rasmussen's enthusiasm for geography is contagious, which bodes well in a genre that is often plagued by incomprehensible two-dimensional maps with confusing webs of lines and arrows that are "illuminated" with dry prose. Completely new maps produced by International Mapping comprise the major addition to Rasmussen's earlier Medallion award-winning atlas (1989). The prospects for the success of this atlas should put to rest any high-browed sentiment that only kids benefit from images when reading their Bibles.



ZAB contains two major sections, a "geographical" and a "historical" section, as well as subject and Scripture indexes, a historical timeline, a thorough geographical dictionary/index, and an accompanying poster of NT Jerusalem (which doubles as a shameless advertisement for the atlas). The "geographical" section introduces readers briefly to the broad terrain of the Middle East and its major geographical regions (Egypt, Syria and Lebanon, Mesopotamia), but also probes the geography of Israel and Jordan in more depth. Maps survey the topography, climate, travel routes, geology, and terrain of Israel and Jordan. I appreciate the distinct emphasis of each map and the carefully chosen corresponding photographs. For instance, when discussing the climate in Jerusalem, Rasmussen includes a photograph of the city during and after a "hamsin," a dry and scorching wind that wearies humans, animals, and flowers, but helps ripen grains (p. 31).

The "historical" section comprises the bulk of the atlas and spans about 180 pages. The geographical history begins with an overview of the pre-Patriarchal period, where Rasmussen discusses the Garden of Eden, the Table of Nations and Early Bronze Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Southern Levant. Rasmussen admits that theories about the location of the Garden of Eden's location are speculative. For example, major rivers like the Tigris and Euphrates flowed *from* it (high altitude) yet it was allegedly warm enough for no clothes. Not all readers will agree with the possibility of a real geographical location, though Rasmussen rightly notes the use of some familiar ancient Near Eastern geography in Gen 2–3's description of Eden. Maps of Early Bronze cities often have accompanying images of the impressive Early Bronze archaeological sites, many of which Rasmussen himself photographed.

The next historical sections deal with the patriarchal and then Exodus/conquest periods of Israel's history. Rasmussen spends a good amount of time discussing the role of the Egyptian Empire in Canaan during this period, explaining such events as the expulsion of the Canaanite Hyksos from Egypt in the MBII period. He is careful to note when cities or regions are unknown, offering various theories when possibilities exist, but leaving unknowns where appropriate. In his section on Israel's settlement (pp. 113–30), Rasmussen details not only the borders of each tribe, but also their strategic importance. For example, I was pleased to see that Rasmussen notes the importance of the Benjamin plateau for trade,

military, and east-west and north-south traffic. Despite its small size, Benjamin was a key allotment. It would have been nice to have a map that depicted visually the regional significance of the tribal allotments, though his prose amply discusses this.

In the monarchic portion of *ZAB*'s historical section, Rasmussen offers many helpful maps and visuals. I had never seen several of the kinds of maps that he includes. For instance, Rasmussen includes a map of Solomon's "sphere of influence" that was interlaced with the major trade routes through the region (p. 146). This gives one a sense of Israel's international economic significance. There is also a map of the twelve administrative divisions of Solomon's kingdom (p. 148), which show the reconfiguration of the kingdom under the monarchy as depicted by biblical writers. While military battles raged in the monarchic period, Rasmussen mercifully avoids the need to depict each battle. Instead, he provides maps that show the general direction of "Philistine pressure" or "Egyptian Pressure" on the land of Israel that enable biblical readers to imagine the general shape of any battle (p. 159). On occasion, he depicts a key battle, though he judiciously avoids crowded maps. Other unique maps include one that shows the progressive expansion of the Assyrians (p. 160) and another that depicts the regions in which Elisha and Elijah were active (p. 161).

After the geographical history of the monarchy, Rasmussen offers an overview and visual tour of Judah's lone existence in the land, the route of Judah's exile to Babylon and flight to Egypt, and their return to the land and establishment of Yehud in the Persian period. The section on the arrival of the Greeks includes an impressive two-page map of Alexander's Empire and discusses the influence of the Seleucids and Ptolemies on the land of Palestine. Two additional sections deal with the Hasmonean Dynasty and Early Roman Rule before Rasmussen turns to discuss the life and ministry of Jesus. Accurate topographical maps give one a sense of the routes that Jesus traveled, and also the geographical barriers that existed between Galileans, Samaritans, and Judeans. Subsequent sections address the expansion of the early Church, the Jewish revolt of A.D. 66–70, and the missionary journeys of Paul. One who has seen many Bible atlases and maps might have appreciated a break from the convention of simply drawing arrows to show Paul's travel routes, though Rasmussen's maps are clear. One possibility here would be to show readers how the cities to which Paul traveled connected the empire and thus served a strategic role in the expansion of early Christianity, or how they corresponded with or differed from major trade and travel routes.

Finally, Rasmussen's historical section closes by treating the seven churches of Revelation and helpfully discussing Jerusalem in detail. After completing his sweeping tour of biblical geography, Rasmussen shifts his focus to what he calls the "disciplines of historical geography" (pp. 254–62). Here he introduces the role of philology, toponymy, archaeology, and geography in a discipline that he has clearly mastered. My sense is that Rasmussen wants to equip and orient his readers to carry on the work that he so skillfully displayed in *ZAB*. This is a fitting and generous conclusion to the work, leaving readers not only with the fruits of his discipline but with its rudimentary tools. My hope is that others will follow his example.

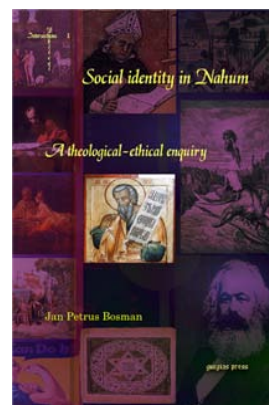
My only major suggestion for improving *ZAB* would be to link maps and images more closely with the text, for example, thorough use of bold-print words that correspond to captions or place names.

In sum, this atlas is a masterful visual and literary achievement, and it will undoubtedly endure as a staple for evangelical Bible students and teachers. In addition, *ZAB* provides a helpful guide for anyone who might want to augment their experience in Israel with a guided tour from Rasmussen.

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Jan Petrus Bosman. *Social Identity in Nahum: A Theological-Ethical Enquiry*. Biblical Intersections 1. Piscataway: Gorgias, 2008. xviii + 286 pp. £73.00/\$117.00.

This timely volume began as a ThD dissertation completed at the University of Stellenbosch (South Africa) under Hendrick Bosman in 2005. Writing with sensitivity to social identity and its role in conflict and to his position within the theological tradition of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa, Bosman brings Nahum's message to bear on the question how "texts form and legitimize an ethos whereby eliminating the 'other' (for example, through avoidance, apartheid laws or destruction) is not seen as wrong, bad, or evil, but fits into a coherent scheme of how the world of right and wrong is structured" (p. 3). Specifically, he wishes to ensure that "something like apartheid will never happen again" (p. 6). The author's approach brings together literary, social-scientific, and ideological-critical methods (with a tip of the hat to Thomas Kuhn's contention that paradigms of knowledge are routinely razed rather than refined [p. 21] and Louis Jonker's development of a "multidimensional" approach to interpretation [pp. 23–25]) to provide a robust reading of Nahum and an exploration of its significance.



Bosman argues that Nahum's treatment of social identity, which is foundational for its ethic, "points away from ethnocentrism and exclusiveness" and is instead "responsible and liberatory" (p. 17). Bosman addresses the question whether to see Nahum as the accretion of various authors' work (a diachronic approach) or as the work of a single author with consistent intentions, assumptions, and so on (a synchronic approach) by assuming that the redactors of a given prophetic book both contributed to it as authors and transmitted an unspecified portion of the earlier material they had received (pp. 39–41).

Bosman establishes his method for determining Israel's identity in Nahum (which integrates religious, political, national, and ethnic elements, with religious identity being preeminent, ch. 3) and for reading Nahum (ch. 4; he favors approaching it as a unity "containing beautiful but theologically terrible poetry," p. 113) before undertaking a careful reading of that book, which includes commentary on the Hebrew text and exegesis of selected portions. He dates 1:9–14 and 2:2–3:19 to the pre-exilic period and 1:2–8 and 2:1 to the exilic/post-exilic era (chs. 5–6), and he concludes that the pre-exilic material in Nahum "seeks to change the *status quo* of oppression and reacts against the . . . ideology that threatens [the group's] existence as a Yahweh-Alone group in Judah" (p. 174). On his view, this material functions cathartically while fortifying that group's solidarity. In the post-exilic material, much remains the same, but some elements show development, as when those excluded are referred to more universally in this later material (e.g., "enemies" instead of "Assyria"). This corresponds with what Bosman finds characteristic of Deutero-Isaiah (Isa 40–55), which he believes reflects the views of an exilic group that

understood Cyrus's rise at the end of Judah's exile as evidence that "the time of judgment had passed and that Yahweh would usher in a new period of salvation" (p. 181).

Bosman brings Nahum's message into the present by integrating John Barton's view of "natural law" (in Barton's words, "an accommodation of human action to principles seen as inherent in the way things are" [p. 237]) with other approaches. The author (with reference to N. Gottwald) sees a plurality of ethics in the OT, and believes that the contemporary evils of violence and oppression justify his choice of "responsibility" toward the other as the highest good (pp. 243–46, following E. Levinas). Ethics that are "more just and ethical" than those found in Nahum must be pursued (p. 249).

Bosman's belief that the text of Nahum refers not merely to its authors' beliefs, but to an extra-textual reality (p. 21), his willingness to wrestle with the whole book of Nahum rather than ultimately contenting himself with breaking it into parts, and his desire to articulate its message in contemporary contexts make his work a valuable one, and one hopes that such interpretative efforts will continue to gain influence. At the same time, the volume raises a few issues that it could have treated more thoroughly. First, Bosman's "and-and" solution to the prophet-or-redactor question concerning authorship does not fully appreciate the difficulty of determining what elements in a book reflect the original author's composition and what have been autonomously added by redactors. The presence of multiple and competing voices in a text effectively puts the reader in a position of determining what belongs and what does not. A similar movement toward the reader's autonomy may be present in Bosman's eclectic ethical paradigm in which most of Nahum's message is objectionable as an ethical guideline for believers (e.g., the feminine imagery in 3:5–6; the use of the "same ideology as their persecutors" to describe Assyria's fall [p. 250]). Second, while recognizing a connection between Nahum's ethics and theodicy, Bosman almost entirely avoids mention of the Day of the Lord as the (future) resolution of the evil that so troubles Nahum. Similarly, the author recognizes the interrelation of social and religious identity (p. 191), but treats 1:8 in predominantly social categories despite the absence of such elements from that verse (pp. 200–201) and his recognition elsewhere that Nahum focuses on Yahweh as the one who will execute justice (cf. pp. 192–93). A fuller appreciation of God's unique role ushering in final righteousness would greatly allay Bosman's fear that Nahum might be misused to authorize the violence of one group against another (p. 254). As it is, references to the NT are extremely rare in the book, which is surprising given the author's Protestant self-awareness.

Two complaints as to the book's form: Scripture and author indexes would greatly aid readers, and while the work itself is both coherent and well-written, better proof reading on the publisher's part is sorely needed (e.g., witness the message after a heading on p. 248 and a blank page in the middle of a chapter [p. 19]).

Bosman's wide reading, clear writing, and integration of multidisciplinary insights makes this work scintillating and enriching. Even if my critiques are justified, there is enough valuable material apart from them that we can look forward to further work from Bosman and others writing with similar aims.

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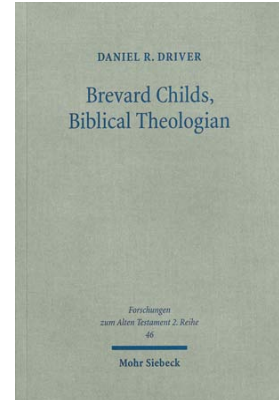
Daniel R. Driver. *Brevard Childs, Biblical Theologian: For the Church's One Bible*. Forschungen zum Alten Testament 2:46. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010. £58.00/\$94.00.

By any measure, Brevard Childs (1923–2007) made a significant contribution to the field of biblical studies during his forty-one-year tenure at Yale University. The mixed reception of his oeuvre (a dozen technical monographs or commentaries plus scores of articles), the present volume argues, is due in large part to confusion over precisely what Childs said. This revised dissertation, completed under Nathan MacDonald (with W. Moberly as the external examiner) at the University of St Andrews in 2008, is the first adjudication of the varied understandings of Childs that can have recourse to his full corpus, the last element of which appeared in the same year.

The work begins with an overview of Childs's career, specifically in his self-cast role as a "biblical theologian" who sees Jesus Christ as the source of the "inner unity" possessed by the Old and New Testaments together, and introduces canon and history as two major poles in his thinking. The first major section then reviews thoroughly the varied receptions accorded to Childs's work in the English- and German-speaking worlds. Along the way Driver ably teases out the main lines of Childs's thought, paying special attention to its relationship with Barth's thought and demonstrating the dynamism that characterizes Childs's move (around 1970) from a focus on the parts (via historical criticism) to a focus on the whole (the canon as a Christian document [p. 15]). This contrast eventually becomes nearly absolute for Childs: "theological compromise with the historical-critical approach fails," as Driver puts it (p. 93).

The second section reflects on the revolutionary nature of Childs's thesis, which could be stated as the theologian's obligation to reflect on the Scriptures as the context in which early Judaism originated (with an emphasis on social, religious, and other "settings") rather than (as H. Gunkel and many after him) to take the original setting as determining Scripture's meaning. This contrast brings to the fore the interpretative tension between the text and things external to it (cf. the interplay of canon and history, noted above). The third and final section applies itself to the core of Childs's work, the way in which the OT bears witness to Christ. The work also includes full indexes and several pieces of Childs's correspondence in an appendix.

Childs's reluctance to make his method explicit (p. 56) is a primary cause of his varied reception within biblical and theological studies. Here I will focus on the related issues of intention and reference since they arguably lie at the heart of Childs's constructive proposal. Driver contends that Childs "concludes, on expressly Christian grounds, that biblical reference, and hence biblical intertextuality, is not midrashic but deictic. In other words, the text of scripture points to its subject matter (*res*), which is the one God known in the face of Christ" (p. 30). Childs did not arrive at this naively, to say the least. Driver chronicles, among other things, Childs's attempts to see the relation of later Scripture to earlier Scripture in terms of midrash before choosing in favor of a "literal sense" which is "extended through figuration" (this is the second important element of dynamism in his thought, taking place in the early 1980s). The link between the testaments is one that grows out of the Scriptures themselves: Childs contended that "biblical intertextuality arises as a forward looking extension of a text or as a retrospective enrichment of traditional language and that it rests in either case 'on the same inner logic of Scripture's textual authority'" (p. 101). This extension's intentionality is "coextensive with the



meaning of the biblical text” that it “figures” (p. 100), and “the nature of the biblical referent must be determined by the text itself which points referringly both to the Creator and the creation in a wide variety of different ways” (p. 140).

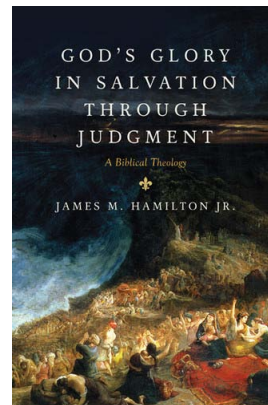
This brings us to a crucial point in attempting to understand Childs, namely, his view of authorial intent. For Childs, the canon’s “shape” is of a piece with its intertextuality and intention, and the canon was shaped by the communities that successively received (and modified) “the developing canonical corpus” (p. 77). In a context not addressed by Driver, Childs clarified what this involves when he affirmed that his interpretation of Scripture plays a language-game in which meaning is “a function of a cultural system rather than an expression of intention” (Childs, “Response,” *JSOT* 16 [1980]: 52). It is not clear to me that Driver has (or has even claimed to) resolve ambiguity in Childs’s hermeneutic on this point, but another recent analysis suggests that Childs’s program is perhaps not quite as epistemologically coherent as Driver’s analysis seems to suggest (cf. K. Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical Linguistic Approach to Christian Doctrine* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005], 219).

Still, the comprehensive scope, theological insight, and analytical skill with which Driver treats his challenging subject make this work more than worthy of careful reading and rereading. It will surely advance our understanding of the significant issues involved.

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James M. Hamilton Jr. *God’s Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2010. 639 pp. \$40.00.

Dr. James M. Hamilton is associate professor of biblical theology at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He has recently contributed a number of seminal articles to the discipline of biblical theology, such as “The Glory of God in Salvation through Judgment: The Centre of Biblical Theology?” *TynBul* 57 (2006): 57–84; “The Skull Crushing Seed of the Woman: Inner-Biblical Interpretation of Genesis 3:15,” *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 10 (2006): 30–54; “The Seed of the Woman and the Blessing of Abraham,” *TynBul* 58 (2007): 257–73; and “The Messianic Music of the Song of Songs,” *WTJ* 68 (2006): 331–45. Hamilton’s first book was published in 2006: *God’s Indwelling Presence: The Ministry of the Holy Spirit in the Old and New Testaments*. His second book, *God’s Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology*, is the object of this review.



Hamilton argues that God’s glory in salvation through judgment is the major theological thread of the whole Bible. This canonically oriented metanarrative holds the literary corpus of the Bible (cf. Daniel J. Brendsel, “Plots, Themes, and Responsibilities: The Search for a Center of Biblical Theology Reexamined,” *Them* 35 [2010]: 400–412). Prior to discussing the core issues at stake, Hamilton provides the reader with an analytical outline and a strategy for reading the book (pp. 11–20; 29–30). In ch. 1, “Can the Center Hold?,” Hamilton highlights the following methodological issue in contemporary biblical theology:

Seeking to exposit the center of biblical theology is necessary because many today question whether the Bible tells a coherent story. There are many who do not embrace the idea of a center for biblical theology and yet maintain that the Bible is coherent, but if the Bible tells a coherent story, it is valid to explore what that story's main point is. (p. 39)

Hamilton's hermeneutical axis is sought in the narrative of Exodus 34, where Moses asks to see the glory of the LORD who reveals himself as a God full of mercy and justice (see vv. 6–7). It is interesting to notice that according to the Jewish tradition, Exod 34:6–7 counts thirteen divine attributes (including the count of God's Name). This notion attests to the centrality of Exod 34:6–7 in biblical and postbiblical theologies (see Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1985]).

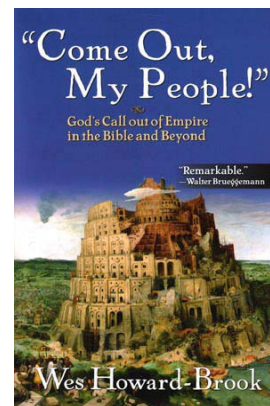
Hamilton carries out a detailed theological study of every single biblical book, thus arguing that the Bible has a *Grundstruktur*. The quest for one theological theme in the Bible is supplemented with some biblical subthemes, such as God's covenant(s) with humanity, the underlying principle of God's election, or the Lord's holiness and "otherness." All these subthemes are subordinated to the central theme of God's glory majestically manifested through acts of salvation and judgment. Though Hamilton works out a single biblical theology, he opts for the Hebrew canonical division of the Tanak (Pentateuch, Prophets, and Writings). In respect to the NT, he traces the same theological theme by following the canonical order of the Gospels, Acts, Letters, and the manifestation of God's glory in salvation through judgment in John's Revelation (chs. 2–7). Finally, Hamilton tackles some of the major objections raised by biblical scholars and theologians to the single overarching theme of God's glory in salvation through judgment (ch. 8). The book is supplemented with a selected bibliography and general and Scripture indexes.

The book is an evangelical scholarly work that should be read by contemporary OT and NT scholars likewise. The last chapter, "God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment in Ministry Today" (pp. 565–72), underlines some practical implications for Christian implementation. The systematic approach undertaken by Hamilton makes *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* an accessible and readable book for scholars and students likewise. Though much lends itself to further research and debate, Hamilton's lively discourse with contemporary scholarship is a significant milestone in biblical theology. The study on God's glory in salvation through judgment reminds us of the challenging quest for a center in the Bible. Thus, I highly recommend reading this monumental contribution to the mounting field of biblical theology.

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Wes Howard-Brook. *“Come Out, My People!”: God’s Call out of Empire in the Bible and Beyond*. Maryknoll: Orbis, 2010. xviii + 524 pp. £19.00/\$30.00.

While current discussion in NT study approaches the question “What is Christianity?” by giving attention to canon, the relationship between early Judaism and the early Christian church, and so on, this work approaches the same question from a very different angle. Underlining Christianity’s often close relation to temporal power (and its frequent misuse) across the centuries, Howard-Brook sets himself the task of not only distinguishing, but separating Christianity from those entities that attempted to make themselves its master. A second volume on the relationship between Christianity and empire will develop his exploration (p. 473), while another will explore America’s relation to the two “religions” he outlines (p. 111n31). The book includes an extensive bibliography (J. G. McConville, *God and Earthly Power: An Old Testament Political Theology: Genesis-Kings* [LHBOTS 454; London: T&T Clark, 2006] is strangely absent) and a combined author/subject index; there is no Scripture index.



Howard-Brook’s analysis moves between two poles, one of which sees Christianity as a “religion of empire” and the other as a “religion of creation” (p. xiv). He is sensitive not only to the current (and frequently spirited) discussion of religion’s relation to the public sphere, but also to the frequency with which those who reject Christianity give as their reason for doing so its past and present foibles, especially its association with intolerance or violence. The book opens with a theoretical orientation before giving over 400 pages to a survey of its theme across much of the Christian Bible and a few non-canonical or deuterocanonical works like Enoch and the Psalms of Solomon.

The Bible, Howard-Brook suggests, “gathers together witnesses to a passionate, historical argument over what it means to be ‘God’s people’” (p. 4). He focuses on the horizontal and contrasting aspects of “religion” in the Bible, defining “religion” as “the attitudes, beliefs, and/or practices that bind individuals together as a ‘people,’” and contrasts the religions of creation and empire in the following categories (in the following parentheses, the religion of creation’s position is followed by that of empire (pp. 5–6)):

- source of divine power (one vs. many)
- locus of divine presence (immanent and transcendent vs. in a royal temple)
- places of sacred encounter (non-urban and plebian vs. urban and hierarchical)
- purpose of life (joyful praise of God vs. serving gods through loyalty to empire)
- social structure (village-based and egalitarian vs. urban and hierarchical)
- economic structure (exchange and collaboration vs. currency and competition)
- political ideology (God alone reigns vs. human king as presence of supreme god)
- relationship to “others” (loving hospitality vs. suspicion and violence)
- religious obligation (love God and neighbor in justice vs. rituals expressing loyalty to gods and humans)
- relationship with earth/land (belongs to God vs. belongs to royalty and the rich)
- relationship with “enemies” (love vs. aggression)

Power and its allocation thus figure largely in Howard-Brook’s treatment of his topic.

The following summaries exemplify how the author’s reading strategy understands the biblical material. Taking for granted Genesis’s origin during the Babylonian exile, Howard-Brook suggests

that its function was to counter the Babylonian perspective, which typifies the religion of empire. He suggests that Eve's punishment of "many childbirths" is "a warning about the consequences of surplus agriculture" (p. 26), and God's warning to Cain (Gen 4:6–7) "evokes the lure of Babylon's wealth and splendor, grounded in 'redemptive' violence [the Babylonian god Marduk's killing of the primordial goddess Tiamat and his establishment of Babylon as his city as recounted by *Enuma Elish*] and surplus agriculture" (p. 34). Abram complies with the divine command in Gen 12 to leave behind all that by which "people can become captured by empire and its religion" (p. 53), while Joseph interprets events according to "an imperial sense of the 'divine order'" that favors the Pharaoh and sees the Israelites settling "in a land of empire" (pp. 88–89). In the NT, Howard-Brook finds the Fourth Gospel to be as anti-imperial as the Synoptics (p. 435). While the world's peace (and Rome's in particular) is "maintained by the twin pillars of lies and violence," Jesus' promise of peace is the result of his having conquered the world as he "stands in God's truth and embodies God's love" (p. 444).

Much like the Gospel of John, Howard-Brook has written with a purpose: "we must not continue to allow the confusion between the 'religion of creation' and the 'religion of empire' to justify 'Christian' war, racism, exploitation, and other practices of domination and exclusion" (p. 474). While Christians should be in agreement with at least this general program, such is not always the case, and Howard-Brook's work is thus timely and needed. While he sometimes advances novel interpretations, both his subject and his presentation of it make the work stimulating and provocative.

Although perhaps inevitable to some degree, it seems that the work's focus on the theme of power has disrupted the varied yet coherent worldviews of the various biblical books. Despite his assertion that the first sin in Gen 3 was "the use of the human mind to respond to experiences and 'needs' that were not firmly grounded on God's word alone" (p. 31), Howard-Brook seems to make the issue of power primary and to minimize the importance of the epistemological-soteriological focus of Gen 3. There is no mention of Gen 3:15 in that context, and throughout the volume little attention is paid to how one might move from empire-religion and enter creation-religion. Howard-Brook's understanding of "eternal life" in John as "literally" (and therefore only) "life of the age" seems forced by his focus on the source of Jesus' power and kingdom rather than its essence, and is paralleled by a pronounced de-emphasis on salvation from sin in favor of deliverance from "death threats" made by empires (p. 446). Indeed, it is perhaps the governing empire-creation polarity itself that effectively relegates soteriological concerns to the background, a subtle example of the interpreter's power to mold what the text may say.

While Howard-Brook's conceptualization of the Bible's storyline may have transposed major and minor elements of the biblical plotline, it still merits attention as an extensive, if not comprehensive, treatment of its theme in dialogue with contemporary thought and biblical interpretation.

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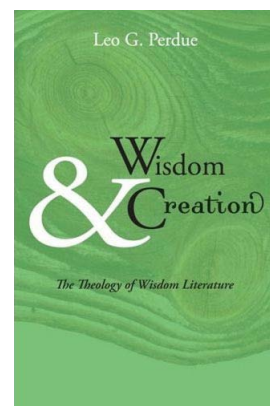
Leo G. Perdue. *Wisdom and Creation: The Theology of Wisdom Literature*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009. Repr., *Wisdom and Creation: The Theology of Wisdom Literature*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1994. 420 pp. \$46.00.

Do the maxims of Proverbs merely borrow from secular wisdom sayings of the Ancient Near East? How does one reconcile the pessimistic declarations of Job and Ecclesiastes with more “orthodox” biblical books? And perhaps most importantly, how does wisdom fit into biblical theology when the wisdom literature never mentions the great events of Israel’s history, such as the exodus and God’s covenant with Israel? Leo Perdue’s *Wisdom and Creation* skillfully explores these and other questions. The present volume is the 2009 Wipf & Stock reprint of Perdue’s 1994 book by the same title with Abingdon.

This reprint edition adds a two-page Preface in which Perdue affirms his views in the original book, while acknowledging that his many publications on the OT wisdom literature since then (e.g., *The Sword and the Stylus: An Introduction to Wisdom in the Age of Empires* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008]; *Wisdom Literature: A Theological History* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007]) have advanced his arguments significantly beyond the book’s first publication. The nearly two decades since *Wisdom and Creation*’s publication have also borne out Perdue’s main thesis, namely, that wisdom literature occupies a central place within OT theology because of its robust theology of creation. The broad acceptance of this thesis has rekindled an interest among OT theologians to reconsider the place of wisdom literature within OT theology. The older consensus, in contrast, held that biblical wisdom was mostly secular in orientation and a relative latecomer to the development of Israel’s literary traditions.

Perdue’s book is structured in three parts. Part I is a two-chapter examination of the somewhat awkward relationship that wisdom literature has traditionally had with OT theology. Chapter 1 describes several traditional approaches to integrating wisdom literature with OT theology, such as those of G. Ernest Wright and Gerhard von Rad. Through a critique of various OT scholars and their treatment of wisdom literature, Perdue concludes that the motif of creation has been neglected in biblical theology due to a bias toward salvation history. In responding to this bias, ch. 2 offers a prescriptive proposal for using imagination, rhetoric, and the study of metaphor to recover the ability of wisdom literature to envision alternative worlds. The marked differences in genre between wisdom literature and other biblical books can then be explained as the sages’ attempts to offer a fresh account of God’s ongoing creational activity in the world. This analysis is helpful in describing the manifold ways in which the sages conceived of God and his world, though Perdue’s work occasionally exhibits the postmodernist tendency to argue that the use of metaphorical language with reference to God is always open-ended and therefore non-referential in nature (e.g., Perdue’s analysis of God as a divine warrior, pp. 56–57).

Part II of *Wisdom and Creation* is a study of the canonical and deuterocanonical wisdom books: Proverbs (ch. 3), Job (ch. 4), Ecclesiastes (ch. 5), Ben Sira (ch. 6), and the Wisdom of Solomon (ch. 7). These chapters are not a full treatment of each book, but focus on the theme of wisdom’s role in creation through the various metaphors used by the sages. Perdue’s analysis takes more or less standard critical positions on the composition of the wisdom books, as in the dating of Ecclesiastes to the late fourth or early third century B.C. (p. 193). Even if one disagrees with such views, however, Perdue has provided a groundbreaking, if rather selective, treatment of metaphors for God and humanity in the



wisdom literature. On creation in Proverbs, for example, he rightly concludes, “Through the activation of imagination, the sages in Proverbs portray the cosmos as the creation of a God who established and now oversees the structures of life” (p. 121). Such a conclusion goes a long way toward redeeming the reputation of Proverbs as a secular or humanistic document.

Part III briefly summarizes the metaphors with which the sages conceive of the world and humanity. Perdue makes an important concession here regarding his hermeneutical method: “In presenting the theology of the sages, I have gone beyond what the sages often did with their language. I have even explicitly named the metaphors for God, to which the sages alluded but usually did not directly state” (p. 326). Perdue’s tendency to go beyond the text raises several questions on whether his analysis has over-interpreted the metaphors of wisdom literature. To what extent were the various metaphors used by the sages intended to illuminate only one aspect of God’s creation? When allusions are less than obvious, as Perdue concedes, how can the interpreter be certain that the author intended them?

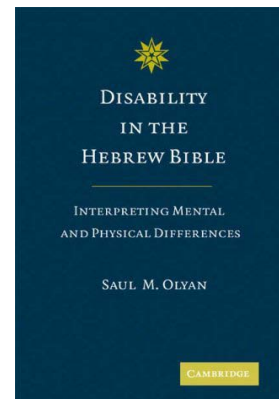
The new preface to Perdue’s book aptly summarizes the strengths and weaknesses of his approach: “Imagination, rhetoric, and metaphor recapture a biblical faith in all of its diversity that avoids the debate and controversy evoked by creedal confessions” (p. 6). It is indeed true that propositional statements, working on their own, cannot render the character of God adequately. But Perdue’s avoidance of creedal confessions in favor of the metaphorical language of wisdom and creation hardly presents a constructive method for doing biblical theology. Thus Perdue’s book will prove useful for understanding wisdom literature within its own conceptual world, while being inadequate in rejoining wisdom literature to the task of biblical theology.

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Saul M. Olyan. *Disability in the Hebrew Bible: Interpreting Mental and Physical Differences*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008. 200 pp. £52.00/\$90.00.

Saul Olyan works with an often neglected topic that to some readers of the Hebrew Bible might seem insignificant. The matter of mental and physical difference in the Hebrew Scriptures, though, has far reaching implications for contemporary conversation. Olyan deals with definitions and social constructs presented in the biblical text. While maintaining distance from current discussions of stigmatization and marginalization, this work speaks in a manner of relevance perhaps only surpassed by Amos Yong’s *Theology of Down Syndrome*. The seven essays clearly picture how the literary tradition of ancient Israel perceived disability.

In the introduction Olyan begins the necessary yet toilsome work of defining of terms. He settles on disability as “a physical or mental condition or state impacting negatively on affected categories of persons especially on account of the social meaning and significance attributed to the condition or state in the biblical context” (p. 3). The stigmatizing that occurs in the biblical text creates a representation of those with “defects” as disadvantaged in society and uses it as a rhetorical tool for negative comparisons. This cultural representation extends beyond



ancient Israel to other cultures of the Ancient Near East. Olyan shows the complexity of the Hebrew Bible's presentation as there are comparisons of idols to the disabled yet rich details of Yahweh's special care with demonstrated power towards the disabled.

The first essay deals with constructs of beauty and ugliness in the Hebrew Scriptures. In examining vocabulary closely, he argues a close association between the common terms good and bad with beauty and ugliness. He illustrates that even the Scriptures have a social perspective with many elements of continuity with the current Western culture's concept of beauty. There is discontinuity in several elements, and the Hebrew Scriptures do show beauty as ability beyond physical attributes. It also shows that lacking defects does not automatically make one beautiful.

In the second essay, Olyan draws from a passing point he makes in the previous essay that conditions considered defects in contemporary Western culture are not always biblical "defects." The presence of defects conveys biblical ugliness; however, elements such as deafness and muteness are not technically biblical defects. Conditions such as blindness and lameness are treated as "defects" in the Hebrew Scriptures with corresponding stigma and marginalization. Mental illness and deafness are noticeably absent as biblical defects. This leads some to conclude that defects are always visible. Following Milgrom, Olyan convincingly argues that genital defects (Lev 24) are not normally visible to others, yet the stigma persists for these conditions. While marginalizing tended to occur in the context of worship, circumcision was a socially acceptable exception. Olyan provides an intriguing context of circumcision versus mutilation in the Ancient Near East.

The third essay deals with conditions the Western reader would associate with "defects" yet which are not specified as such in the Scriptures. The non-defective states can still be marginalized in varying degrees and manners. The variety can be seen as the blind, lame, and deaf are unrestricted in worship matters according to the text. Lasting social restrictions are placed on those with skin diseases, yet those with genital flow are restricted from social and cultic interaction only for a specified duration.

The fourth essay tackles the difficult condition of mental illness, which is almost as equally perplexing for contemporary consensus as ancient. The Hebrew terms translated as "foolishness" and "madness" sound like contemporary mental illness. Foolishness may include some retardation, but also a lack of general intellectual acumen. Madness more often refers to an individual with mental disease. Olyan provides two classic cases to consider: David's feigned madness in 1 Sam 21 and Saul's evil spirit of 1 Sam 16. In these texts mental illness is depicted as a covenantal curse and a sign of divine rejection. Olyan considers several Semitic cognates along with these texts to characterize mental illness.

The fifth essay targets the biblical future of disability by turning to the prophets. The overwhelming message of the prophets is that the future will be without disability. Yahweh intervenes to transform all disability. This would be a unified presentation with the notable exception of Isa 56:3–7 in which eunuchs are granted access to the temple rites in the future. This would reverse the priestly regulation of Deut 23:2 (ET 23:1) transforming the regulation rather than the disabled person.

The final two essays address connections of wholeness to nonsomatic objects such as stones and extend the investigation to the Dead Sea Scrolls. In conclusion, Olyan draws out the keen interest Yahweh shows toward the disabled despite often being cited as the agent of disability.

Olyan tastefully balances the stigma with the sensitivity of modern readers. His careful reading of texts for stigma, evident in both prose and metaphor, is helpful. The citation of iconographic elements and archaeological evidence provide full-orbed arguments. The slippery process of defining disability is benefited by the cognate work. This was most evidenced in his essay regarding mental illness. The

inclusion of Egyptian material to the discussions would be helpful for perspective. The mutilation of iconography (following the Amarna period) and interesting literary parallels such as the Instructions of Amenemope (a warning against derision of the disabled, since god is his maker) are two ready examples. This careful work by Olyan heightens awareness to this important topic of the Hebrew Bible—one with extreme relevance for the current day.

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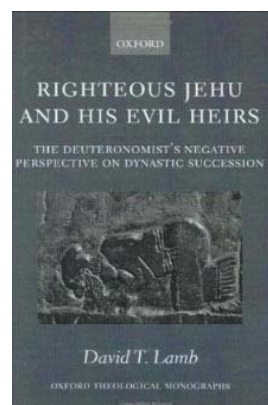
David T. Lamb. *Righteous Jehu and His Evil Heirs: The Deuteronomist's Negative Perspective on Dynastic Succession*. Oxford Theological Monographs. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. xvii + 304 pp. \$110.00.

King Jehu is certainly one of the most controversial characters in the Hebrew Bible. While Hosea announces the punishment of his dynasty “because of the massacre of Jezreel” (Hos 1:4), the Books of Kings provide two opposite appraisals of his action (2 Kgs 10:29–31). No wonder that commentators are divided with regard to the evaluation of his reign that the final redactor of Kings suggests. In the present book, adapted from his doctoral dissertation, David Lamb addresses this dilemma from a compositional criticism perspective assuming a nothian model for Kings (an exilic deuteronomistic redaction, henceforth Dtr).

Lamb points out striking peculiarities in the manner in which the biblical text presents Jehu, by means of meticulous comparison with the Dtr material about the other kings in 1 Sam to 2 Kgs, as well as with the ANE royal inscriptions (ch. 2). He provides clear and concise syntheses of various themes (e.g., divine anointing and election, tribute), summarized in helpful tables. Against this background, it appears that positive aspects of Jehu’s career are highlighted (e.g., his divine election and anointing), whereas some negative facets are omitted (the tribute to Shalmaneser III), mitigated (the territorial losses), or vindicated (his violence). Moreover, according to Lamb, the emphasized characteristics of Jehu make him one of the favorite leaders in the Deuteronomistic History; parallels with David show a pro-charismatic Dtr bias (ch. 3). On the contrary (ch. 4), Dtr’s handling of his sources on Jehu’s heirs betray a negative stance (for instance, Jeroboam II’s huge successes are mentioned in passing). In sum (ch. 5), Dtr deliberately shaped the narrative about Jehu in a positive way and adopted a negative perspective on the rest of his dynasty, despite information from his sources that could lead to different evaluations. Dtr described Jehu as a righteous king while criticizing his heirs, in order to discredit the principle of dynastic succession and to promote charismatic leadership.

Lamb demonstrates his thesis in an admirably logical and methodical way. Since this book makes an excellent case for a positive answer to the aforementioned dilemma, the most appropriate way of fuelling the debate consists in pointing out some of its limits.

First, despite the merits of its methodical approach, it seems somewhat mechanistic and neglects some subtle features of the Jehu narratives. Indeed, another book that appeared the same year was



devoted to the same subject but from a narrative criticism point of view: Lissa M. Wray Beal, *The Deuteronomist's Prophet: Narrative Control of Approval and Disapproval in the Story of Jehu (2 Kings 9 and 10)* (LHS/OTL 478; New York: T&T Clark, 2007). Wray Beal draws the opposite conclusion to Lamb's: the narrative voices suggest that Dtr ultimately disapproves Jehu's action. For instance, Wray Beal writes,

the notice of fulfillment of 2 Kgs 10:17 carried authority because it was in the voice of the authoritative narrator, and Jehu's own notices of fulfillment sustained ambiguity because they were in the voice of a fallible character. It is the fact that Jehu proclaims his own prophetic words, and that Jehu proclaims those words' fulfillment, that shows him disapproved by Dtr. (p. 187)

Overall, Wray Beal discerns in the narrative a dual depiction of Jehu, including both positive and negative elements, which were reflected in the final evaluation (10:29–31).

The second limit of the present book lies, in my opinion, in some flaws and gaps in the redactional analysis. Since the nothian theory (which Lamb endorses after a brief justification [p. 2–8]) remains pertinent in present research, it would probably be unfair to insist on the evident fact that proponents of models integrating several Dtr layers or multiple pre-exilic *redactions*, not only sources, might be frustrated (see the recent *Forschungsbericht* of J. Hutton, *The Transjordanian Palimpsest* [BZAW 396; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009], 79–156). More to the point, some criticisms can be made even from a nothian perspective. Lamb downplays the striking presence of negative elements in 2 Kgs 10:29–33; however, inasmuch as two critical remarks (vv. 29, 31) surround the positive oracle given to Jehu (v. 30), and since this is immediately followed by a notice about Israelite territorial losses caused by God himself (v. 32), it seems difficult to avoid the conclusion that the last word consists in a mitigation of Jehu's merits. Lamb considers that Jehu is a "righteous" king for Dtr, but this kind of essentialism is avoided by Dtr (he *acted* in a "right" way in one dimension of his action [10:30], which is different).

Also, Lamb offers an astute but disputable answer to the objection that Dtr would not criticize the dynastic succession while insisting on the Nathan promise (2 Sam 7) and mentioning the one made to Jehu (2 Kgs 10:30). He argues that Dtr used them to explain the duration of these dynasties in spite of the behavior of the heirs. I fail to see how Dtr would seek to discredit the very means he insists God used on such a large scale in history. A theological explanation of the differences in handling the reigns of the Jehuite dynasty seems more congruent to Dtr interests: the distinctiveness of Jehu was his God-inspired action against Baal, which suffices to explain the special treatment he receives. Moreover, the mitigated evaluation pointed out by Wray Beal attenuates the differences with his heirs.

Furthermore, Lamb failed to notice a Dtr frame (2 Kgs 8:25–29; 10:28–36) bracketing the Jehu narratives (D. Nocquet, *Le "livret noir de Baal"* [Genève: Labor et Fides, 2004], 222–27). The first part of this frame might even be extended to 2 Kgs 8:20–29 (as I propose in *Le testament d'Elisée. Texte massorétique et Septante en 2 Rois 13.10–14.16* [Cahiers de la Revue Biblique, Pendé: Gabalda, forthcoming], 50–51). Parallels between 2 Kgs 8:25–29 and 10:28–36 create a paradoxical contrast between, on the one hand, two Judean kings (Joram and Ahaziah) whose attitude resembles the apostate northern ones and who jeopardize the dynastic stability of Judah, and on the other hand a northern king (Jehu) whose yahwistic behavior is "rewarded" by an unexpected dynastic promise for Israel. This wider context for the Jehu narratives enhances the positive side of the Dtr evaluation of this king; as such, it might have fueled Lamb's arguments.

Third, Lamb works on the basis of the Masoretic Text (MT) without discussing some significant differences present in the Septuagint (LXX). Of course, this shortcoming is not peculiar to his work since many scholars proceed directly to compositional criticism without paying much attention to textual criticism. And yet, there exists an important debate in recent research about the origins of the impressive differences between the proto-MT and the *Vorlage* of the LXX, which constitute two distinct Hebrew editions of Kings. (See the *status quaestionis* of P. Hugo, “Le Grec ancien des livres des Règles: une histoire et un bilan de la recherche,” in *Sôfer Mahîr: Essays in Honour of Adrian Schenker Offered by Editors of Biblia Hebraica Quinta* [ed. Y. A. P. Goldman, A. van der Kooij, and R. D. Weis; VTSup 110; Leiden: Brill, 2006], 113–41.)

Regarding 2 Kgs 9–10 in particular, there are notable variants in the Antiochian text (LXX^L) and in the *Vetus Latina* (VL), which are the best witnesses of the Old Greek (OG) in this section. To note but two of them: (1) Whereas, according to 2 Kgs 9:27 MT, Jehu is behind the murder of Ahaziah, in 2 Kgs 10:42 LXX^L Jehu *himself* is the killer; (2) The VL contains an entire supplementary pericope, since in the *Palimpsestus Vindobonensis* 2 Kgs 13:14–21 MT lies between 2 Kgs 10:30 and 31. Accordingly, the last king speaking with Elisha is not Joash but Jehu! Among other consequences, this extends notably the Dtr frame mentioned above. (For a detailed comparison between MT and OG on this pericope, see *Le testament d’Elisée, op. cit.*, 11–72.) Other differences are analyzed by A. Schenker, “L’iconoclasme de Jéhu. Comparaison du TM et de la LXX ancienne en 2 R 10:18–28,” in *L’enfance de la Bible hébraïque* (ed. A. Schenker and P. Hugo; Genève: Labor et Fides, 2005), 170–84. However surprising such differences might be, whether a given lesson in the MT or the OG reflects the oldest text should not be an *a priori* but a *result* of exegetical investigation.

In sum, this work leaves aside some important aspects of the text, and its main thesis does not seem persuasive to me. In particular, taking into account the whole of the data seems to lead to a more balanced and subtle biblical view of the colorful character of Jehu. But insofar as this view is twofold, this stimulating study constitutes the best analysis of the positive facet of Jehu’s Dtr evaluation. Every student or scholar working on the Jehu cycle will need to read and interact with this contribution to the debate, which highlights several previously ignored points. Moreover, it will incidentally be useful in other studies for its useful syntheses of various aspects of royal ideology in the ANE and in the OT.

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NEW TESTAMENT

David L. Allen. *Lukan Authorship of Hebrews*. NAC Studies in Bible and Theology 8. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2010. 432 pp. \$24.99.

The purpose of David L. Allen's *Lukan Authorship of Hebrews* is self-explanatory. While the book includes a "paradigm composed of several hypotheses," the crux of the argument is that Luke, the physician and companion of the apostle Paul, wrote both Luke-Acts and the epistle to the Hebrews (p. 8).

In chapter one, Allen discusses how the church viewed the authorship of Hebrews from the early fathers to the present. He begins by surveying the many options for Hebrews' author (pp. 10–21), and then details the history of the Lukan proposal (pp. 22–39). Chapter two discusses the three most common choices for the author of Hebrews: Barnabas, Apollos, and Paul. Due to Allen's insistence that we choose from authors for whom we have other literature, Barnabas (pp. 40–42) and Apollos (pp. 43–45) receive only brief treatment, while the bulk of the chapter is devoted to Paul (pp. 45–77).

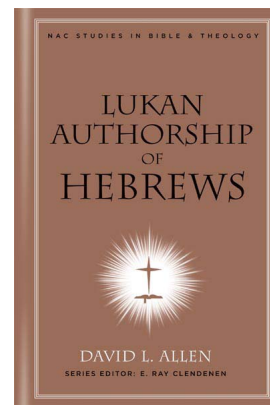
Chapters three through five, by Allen's own admission, are the "load-bearing walls" of his argument (p. 4). Chapter three presents the linguistic argument for Lukan authorship, discussing vocabulary, syntax, literary devices, prologues, and OT citation formulae (pp. 78–174). Chapter four compares the purposes of Luke-Acts and Hebrews (pp. 175–95), and chapter five compares their respective theologies, particularly in the areas of Christology, eschatology, prophecy and fulfillment, priesthood, the cross, covenant, and material possessions (pp. 196–260).

Chapter six moves from textual to historical analysis and posits, contra what Allen considers the most common argument *against* Lukan authorship of Hebrews, that Luke was most likely Jewish (pp. 261–323). Chapter seven combines several threads related to Lukan authorship, including the identity of Theophilus as a deposed Jewish high priest, Luke as the amanuensis for the pastorals, Hebrews as written from Rome, and a group of converted former priests as the recipients of Hebrews (pp. 324–75).

Allen's argument is strong in several areas. First, the introductory chapter on the history of the issue is likely the best available resource on the topic, particularly the section on the history of the Lukan hypothesis. Second, the semantic parallels between Luke-Acts and Hebrews detailed in the "linguistic argument" are hard to overlook and should set the stage for future conversations about the authorship of Hebrews. Third, while one may not be inclined to accept Allen's entire reconstruction regarding Luke's life and work, he makes a strong case for Luke's Jewishness.

My criticisms focus on the two main pillars upon which Allen's arguments are built: elements that are *unique* to Luke-Acts and Hebrews, and elements that are *common* to Luke-Acts and Hebrews. Allen's claims regarding elements *unique* to Luke-Acts and Hebrews, while initially strong, have three particular weaknesses.

First, Allen frequently argues for Lukan authorship *specifically because Luke is a better candidate than Paul* (e.g., pp. 96, 133, 171, 236). In these cases, "unique" means "not in Paul." While his insistence on limiting the candidates to those for whom we have comparative literature does simplify the conversation (pp. 3, 41–45), Allen offers no compelling reason why the author of Hebrews must have authored other canonical works.



Second, at no point does Allen discuss vocabulary and syntax as it was used outside of the NT; much of the vocabulary “unique” to Luke-Acts and Hebrews is found in either the LXX or in non-canonical literature. This does not necessarily weaken Allen’s case, but discussing vocabulary usage outside the NT would have been helpful.

Third, to put it simply, Allen’s lists of features supposedly unique to Luke-Acts and Hebrews contain far too many errors. To name a few: Allen suggests that “*Peipastheis*, ‘suffering,’” is found only in Heb 2:18 and Luke 22:28; in fact, Heb 2:18 uses *πειρασθείς* and Luke 22:28 has *πειρασμοῖς*; the former is a participial form of *πειράζω* and the latter a dative noun from *πειρασμός* (p. 99). Allen states that the exact phrase “our Lord Jesus” is found only in Acts 20:21 and Heb 13:20 (p. 100), when Eph 6:24 also uses the phrase. Allen states that the infinitive *περίκειται* occurs only in Heb 5:2 and Acts 28:20, but Acts 28:20 has an indicative form while Luke 17:2 and Mark 9:42 have the infinitive (p. 117). Allen claims that “the preposition *dia* with *pneumatōs* occurs only in Heb 9:14; Acts 1:2; 11:28; 21:4” (p. 118), but it also occurs in Rom 5:5, 2 Thess 2:2, and 2 Tim 1:14.

Allen’s presentation of *common* elements also reveals numerous weaknesses. First, Allen argues that both Luke-Acts and Hebrews rely heavily on chiasmic structures (pp. 151–71), but his discussion of Hebrews is out of date. One is particularly surprised to find no reference to George Guthrie’s work, considered by most today to be the standard work on the topic. Second, Allen suggests, “Luke wrote to motivate his readers to follow Jesus with unwavering loyalty. Is this not the tenor of Hebrews as well?” (180). Certainly, he is correct on this point, but could not this description be applied to every book in the NT? Third, Allen argues that Heb 1:1–2 makes Jesus’ role as prophet a key point in Hebrews (thus paralleling Luke), but one does not find at any other point in Hebrews a reference to Jesus having a prophetic ministry (p. 250).

The quest for the author of Hebrews is unlikely to end here. But while David Allen has not given us the final word on the issue, he has certainly laid the groundwork for a new phase of the discussion. Any attempt to move forward on the question of authorship will need to deal with Allen’s argument on Luke’s behalf.

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Barry J. Beitzel. *The New Moody Atlas of the Bible*. Chicago: Moody, 2009. 304 pp. \$49.99.

John D. Currid and David P. Barrett. *Crossway ESV Bible Atlas*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2010. 349 pp. + CD and Poster. \$55.00.

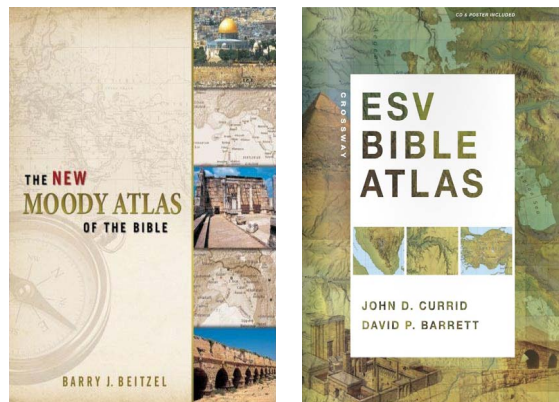
You don't miss a good Bible atlas until you start to use it. Then, familiar and obscure place names from within Scripture begin to flow into clearer view, and you want to know more about the lie of the land within the pages of the Bible. After all, salvation history always happens somewhere, and God's unfolding plan across the two Testaments is equally a matter of salvation geography. Two recent publications add considerable depth to the options open to the reader—and armchair traveller—of the biblical texts.

What does one want from an atlas? Clear maps are an obvious primary requirement, and in different ways both these atlases measure up well to the task. The Moody atlas opts for large, often page-dominating, brightly coloured maps; the ESV atlas has smaller, but more numerous maps, employing more subdued colours. There are strengths to each, and the differences will, to a large extent, rest in the eye of the beholder. There are occasional presentational frustrations. For instance, the western extent of the Assyrian Empire is needlessly cut off map 75 in the Moody atlas. Nevertheless, the maps in both volumes are very useable and clear.

Since both atlases offer digitalised versions of their maps, the ESV on a disk supplied with the atlas and the Moody via a coded website, there is excellent scope for using the maps in sermon outlines, PowerPoint presentations, and any other software-based use. Perhaps in this sense these volumes are part of a final generation of paper-based atlases, and their future lies in electronic form. Increasingly, too, cartography is finding new ways of presenting data via 'infographics'. Neither atlas makes any major use of such approaches (the ESV's representation of the agricultural year on p. 33 is one instance), and here, too, is another fruitful future direction for Bible atlases.

Accurate maps are another requirement for any atlas. Both of these atlases share the input of Barry Beitzel, in the case of the ESV as a geographical consultant for the historical maps, and both desire to inform the reader of Scripture. Perhaps one might expect identical mapping in each volume, but this is not always the case. Given the degree of interpretive reconstruction required in producing such an atlas—after all, we lack an ancient tradition of cartography and so geographical reconstruction is, by nature, interpretive—it is not surprising to find differences. For an example, compare the NW extent of the Decapolis as shown in each atlas.

What, then, constitutes 'accurate' mapping? For myself, in any atlas I am keen to understand the underlying presuppositions informing the selection, creation, and presentation of its maps. On this point, the Moody atlas is more useful, offering some thoughtful opening sections which orientate the reader prior to beginning its cartographic survey. This is very helpful for managing and maintaining a helpful sense of what geographers call 'cartographic anxiety', a realisation that what we see on any map is a representation of reality, rather than the reality itself.



For the modern western eye, perhaps more attuned to a ‘what-you-see-is-what-there-is’ view of maps, this understanding of the limits of maps is especially important. Ancients did not have our printed maps, and so did not share our ‘mental maps,’ which are shaped so profoundly by modern cartography. (For a ‘mental map’ more proximate to that of first-century Mediterranean-based believers, see M. B. Thompson, ‘The Holy Internet: Communication between Churches in the First Christian Generation,’ in *The Gospels for all Christians: Rethinking Gospel Audiences* [ed. R. Bauckham; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998], 61.) Ancient land boundaries were often approximate, and changing with localised power relations: a map of such ancient times can generate an over-precise sense of fixed edges between territories, and provides us with a ‘bird’s-eye’ view rarely afforded to an ancient viewer, apart from at certain elevated locations. Thus the use of 2D and 3D panoramas, used especially in the ESV atlas, need to be read and viewed carefully, and the ESV atlas would benefit from a more careful introduction for its readers. Both atlases make good use of accompanying photographs of the remains and locations of ancient sites: some of the photographs of archaeological artifacts in the ESV volume lack context and scale—e.g., the photograph of a ‘typical idol from ancient Palestine’ (p. 74) remains somewhat obscure.

The cartographic trump card in the ESV atlas is, to my mind, its final section of maps—large-scale regional maps which resemble most closely the relatively unadorned physical-relief maps not often found in Bible atlases but much more the staple of world atlases. Here, too, however, more reflection on the assumptions underpinning the map data would be helpful for the reader. See, for example, the criticisms of Bible atlases showing only one possible route for Paul’s journeys, made by M. Wilson, ‘The Route of Paul’s First Journey to Pisidian Antioch,’ *NTS* 55 (2009): 471–483.

Both atlases are relatively ‘text heavy.’ This is especially so within the ESV atlas, due in part to its smaller maps. What, then, might we want from a good text accompanying a map? Again, I would be keen for a text which expounds the maps. This might sound obvious, but I feel that the Moody atlas scores more highly on this count. Perhaps the text within the ESV atlas reflects its origins in the ESV Study Bible, but it reads more like a summary of the Bible account, and stands at more of a disconnect from the accompanying maps. Again, this is a subjective assessment, and some readers will welcome the ESV commentary for precisely what it is.

At some junctures, however, I found myself taking issue with the ESV’s accompanying text. For instance, is it true that the churches Paul established after Acts 16:9–10 ‘had a principally Gentile membership’ (p. 241)? And even if this is so, what caused this development, and how is it to be interpreted in relation to Paul’s missionary strategy and his understanding of people and place? Perhaps such questions are bigger than an atlas can answer, but judicious reference to literature elsewhere would allow further investigation. Also, p. 246 states, ‘a mob of 24,000 Ephesians’ faced Paul in Acts 19. Acts provides no number of the crowd. I can only assume the figure is extrapolated from the capacity of the theatre remaining in the present-day ruins of Ephesus, which the text assumes—without question—was the same size in Paul’s day. Perhaps I’ve picked up on details in the sections I know best, but it raises questions in my mind regarding details elsewhere in the text.

The Moody text is less detailed, and thus less assertive. Some wider literature and sources are footnoted. It does not deal with matters of the chronology of Pauline letters in relation to Acts, or the so-called ‘North or South Galatia’ question. The ESV text assumes one position on both these issues. Perhaps my ideal text would raise the questions and the possible alternatives, as and where they have a geographical bearing, and point to other literature, such as E. J. Schnabel’s *Early Christian Mission* (2 vols.; Downers Grove: IVP, 2004).

It is a strength of both volumes that they deal with the inter-testamental period and the events surrounding the Jewish revolts against the Romans. Both periods have an important bearing on our readings of the NT, and each is a realm where mapping can be very helpfully used to present the events in view. Likewise, for many users the commentary on these maps will be especially important for orientating lesser known events and dynamics. The inter-testamental period, for instance, helps us understand the circumstances behind the typically tripartite division of the land in Jesus' time into Judea, Galilee, and Samaria. Without understanding what these areas mean and who was ruling over them (and where and when), it is hard to understand the Gospels and Acts.

Both volumes provide indices, without claiming to provide the geographical equivalent of a concordance. (For that, there are gazetteers, such as J. J. Bimson, ed. *Illustrated Encyclopedia of Bible Places* [Leicester: IVP, 1995], which perform a useful supplementary task for the reader of Bible geographies.) On the Windows platform, the ESV disc also provides an electronic search facility of place names within its historical maps, which are produced in greyscale and colour digital versions. Both the ESV disc and Moody website support Windows and Mac.

Finally, both volumes are beautifully produced. An aesthetic dimension is important and inescapable in an atlas. Similarly sized, they are both potential coffee-table books, especially the ESV which is physically the heavyweight option and especially luxuriously produced.

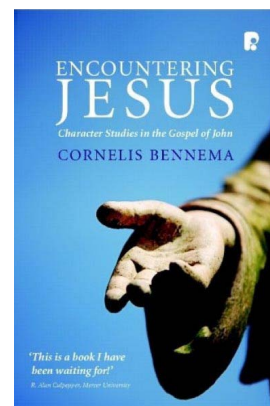
On balance, both have their strengths and weaknesses, and I advise readers to consult both. Perhaps buying both is out of the question for most readers. If it were possible, I would want the Moody text and large maps, combined with the ESV's number of maps and its regional map section. If you want to view a sample of the Moody atlas, then visit <http://www.cartogis.org/images/winners/moody.pdf>. For a comparison of this New Moody Atlas with its predecessor, see Andy Naselli's [book note](#) in *Themelios* 34 (2009): 367. Through both publications, our search for the unfolding territories of salvation geography is well served.

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Cornelis Bennema. *Encountering Jesus: Character Studies in the Gospel of John*. Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2009. x + 228 pp. \$19.99.

Cornelis Bennema's *Encountering Jesus* develops a model for a comprehensive theory of character study in the Gospel of John. The work counters a prevailing notion within Johannine scholarship that views many of the Fourth Gospel's characters as flat or minor. In contrast, Bennema classifies the characters in John's Gospel based on their conversations and interactions with Jesus. Whereas previous character studies have skipped over personages such as Joseph of Arimathea, "the world," "the crowd," and "the twelve," *Encountering* deals extensively with such characters. Several items of this analysis make this book highly commendable.

First, the author's examination of characters is theologically informed. He places characterizations within the context of the dualistic worldview,



Christology, soteriology, and historical witness of John. For the author, it seems most appropriate to consider belief-responses in the Gospel whose purpose focuses on belief-responses (cf. John 20:30–31).

Second, Bennema demonstrates that the story of Christ is for contemporary readers. “We are confronted with Jesus just as the characters in the story were and face the same challenge: where do we stand in relation to Jesus” (p. 17). Often the author explicitly draws out the manner in which the text provides this challenge: “In short, John [the Baptist] is the witness *par excellence*, and in today’s world where Jesus is still on trial we need witnesses like John” (p. 29), and “thus, believers can be light-giving lamps since their testimony to the truth is potentially life-giving” (p. 163). The author, through the traits of the characters, suggests how to read John, for if the Samaritan Woman is a “model disciple” (p. 92) and Lazarus is a “paradigmatic disciple” (p. 162), then the believer can discern how to read and obey these stories as followers of Christ.

Third, Bennema has a keen eye for the narrator’s presentation of the story. He observes that the episode of the invalid at the pool is not about the mechanics of the miracle but the response of the character to Jesus (p. 102). The author shows how smaller units contribute to the overall story, and he recognizes recurring motifs such as “the fear of the Jews” and “follow” as signs of true discipleship. Although not a stated emphasis of the work, the writer reveals inner-consistency in the way characters are presented, such that the Twelve and Thomas show themselves to be faithful in their misunderstandings and Peter is a “shepherd in the making” (p. 62).

Although this is a very fine work, this present writer raises the following criticisms. First, in terms of John’s *theology*, some issues directly tied to the characters’ interactions with Jesus are noticeably absent. For example, Bennema does not address the extent of the atonement or how it is that God loves when discussing the crowd in John 6. In John, those who are not believers remain in this spiritual state because the Father does not perform a supernatural work in their lives (John 6:37, 44–45, 65). Similarly, the author needs to explain the unbelieving characters in light of the rejection of Christ by his own (cf. John 1:9–11).

Second, in terms of *selectivity of material*, some of the individual analyses seem short in comparison to the frequency a respective character appears in John. Readers of *Encountering* might gain a better understanding of the Beloved Disciple if more attention had been given to the *character* of the Beloved Disciple than to arguments related to the Beloved Disciple as author or source of John’s Gospel. Also, this reviewer would have liked more discussion on individual passages such as John 5:18–20, how Jews are characterized by hypocrisy and lack of theological insight (John 5:39–40), and how Jews fit into Isaiah’s paradigm of unbelief (cf. John 12:36–43). Being a sober-minded scholar, however, Bennema admits that there are more ideas to be explored (p. 213).

Third, the work has several *speculative readings*. Contra Bennema, this reviewer would say that Judas never shows evidence of being a member of Jesus’s family (p. 135) and that the man born blind does not work to protect Jesus (p. 139); he simply does not know the identity of the one who healed him. Further, the author’s primary discussion of Nicodemus yields an ambiguous character who does not profess faith in Christ. However, later discussion about Nicodemus’s post-crucifixion appearance would seem to contradict this portrayal of Nicodemus (pp. 154, 194).

A question left unanswered by Bennema’s analysis is this: Does the portrayal of characters in John argue for the historical reliability—if not inerrancy—of the Fourth Gospel? That is, can a case be made that the Gospel of John’s characterizations have complexity and depth because the account is looking at real historical figures, or do the characters display inner-consistency because they are as fictional or

mythological constructions as their counterparts in classical literature? Were Bennema to explore this, he could make a very good contribution to studies on the historicity of John's Gospel.

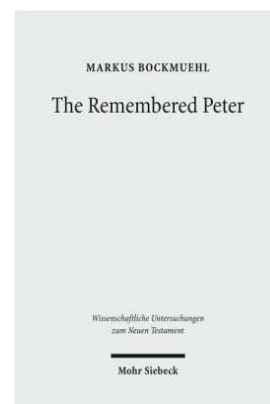
It is amazing the number of characters, complexities, and interactions used to make up John's story of the Word and the Cross. *Encountering Jesus* is an impressive work of scholarship in narrative and Johannine studies. The brevity of the book makes it a great fortnightly read. It is an accessible and useful study for scholar and layman alike.

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Markus Bockmuehl. *The Remembered Peter in Ancient Reception and Modern Debate*. WUNT 262. Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2010. xii + 263 pages. £79.00/\$157.50.

It is no controversial claim to state that Peter's legacy has been overshadowed by the Apostle to the Gentiles. Only two Petrine writings are found within the NT canon (the authenticity of which are often impugned), distinctive Petrine theological contributions are not easy to pinpoint, and Paul's letters (particularly Gal. 2:11–14) do not always portray him in a particularly favorable light. Nevertheless, historical investigation of Peter is worthy of further attention. For, as Markus Bockmuehl argues, Peter is decisively important for the origins of Christianity. Peter is, after all, the "guarantor of the Jesus tradition that *gave rise* to the gospels" (p. 6), a key bridge-figure uniting the Palestinian Jesus movement with the mission to the Gentiles, and is crucial for understanding numerous theological and historical problems in earliest Christianity. In this book, then, Bockmuehl brings together nine missives devoted primarily to the reception and memory of Peter within the first two centuries. Bockmuehl's method is to work "back-to-front," or in other words to begin with the living memory of the apostle from the second century and move back in time to historical plausibility. This fresh method is plausible given that there was a widely recognized body of people who represented and maintained memories of the apostles (e.g., Papias, Polycarp, Justin, and Irenaeus).

In ch. 2 Bockmuehl asks, "Has the recent study of Jesus and Paul taught us anything new about the relationship between them, beyond the classic treatments of the last century?" (p. 31). Given that Peter is the sole figure featured in both the ministries of Jesus and Paul, one would expect scholarship on Jesus and Paul to reflect upon this figure of continuity. To this end, he examines the works of E. P. Sanders, James D. G. Dunn, N. T. Wright, and John Dominic Crossan to see how the premier scholars of Jesus and Paul make use of the figure of Peter. Bockmuehl's conclusions are largely negative, for while all four scholars agree that "Jesus and Paul are linked by a Petrine continuity in principle, in practice none of them carries this through to any significant analytical engagement beyond the answers given by previous generations of scholars" (p. 57). Peter most frequently comes across as a figure of no interest, as a straw man for Paul to knock down, or Jesus' foil. Bockmuehl's suggestive but undeveloped insight is that Peter is an indispensable bridge between Jesus and Paul and the Jewish and Gentile missions, and that this bridge needs further development in the scholarly literature.



In ch. 3 Bockmuehl examines the memory of the relationship between Peter and Paul and suggests that their partnership was “tense but vital” (pp. 68–70). In opposition to the majority of critical scholarship, both the NT canon and the mainstream patristic interpretation of Peter and Paul evidences powerful testimony to the memory of the two apostles as fundamentally harmonious despite their differences.

Chapters 4–6 present three studies devoted to the memory of Peter in Syria and Rome in the second century. In ch. 4 Bockmuehl examines Petrine memory in Syria in the individuals of Ignatius, Justin, and Serapion and demonstrates “that a ‘chain’ of living memory of the apostles can be shown to have survived until the late second century” (p. 77). Justin understands the Gospel of Mark to represent the memories of Peter. Ignatius, likewise, uses Petrine memory to combat docetic understandings of Jesus’ resurrection and uses shared memories of Peter and Paul to exhort the church in Rome.

In ch. 5 Bockmuehl turns to the murky waters of the Pseudo-Clementines, particularly their treatment of Peter and (supposedly) Paul. But one cannot even broach the subject without attention to F. C. Baur, who used the supposed opposition between Peter and Paul in the Pseudo-Clementines as a fundamental plank in his construction of Christian origins. According to Baur and the majority of scholarship since, these works portray Peter as the hero: he is the rock and defender of the church and the supreme adversary of heresy. Peter’s enemy, Simon Magus, has been taken to be a poorly disguised cipher for Paul. The Pseudo-Clementines are, then, on this construal anti-Pauline writings. Bockmuehl exposes, however, the weakness of the evidence supporting the equation between Simon Magus and Paul. Simon is quite simply never identified as Paul. When “Saul” does appear, he is clearly distinguished from Simon Magus. Of further significance is the fact that there is not one trace of an explicitly distinctive Pauline teaching in the teachings of Simon. Simon, in fact, mocks Pauline distinctives, including resurrection from the dead, the goodness of creation and the creator, and the divine sonship of Christ (p. 107). Bockmuehl concludes that the Pseudo-Clementines are

best seen as developing the well-established second-century Christian view of Simon as the stylized arch-heretic and founding representative of Gnostic errors. In other words, [the narrative] symbolizes . . . not Peter’s opposition to Paul but Peter’s role as the church’s apostolic defender against the personification of heresy. (p. 111)

In ch. 6 Bockmuehl challenges the scholarly consensus that denies the plausibility of Peter’s ever setting foot, let alone being buried, in Rome. Bockmuehl examines the appeal to memory of Peter’s death in 1 Clement 5 and suggests that Clement *may* presume that his readers are well-aware of Peter’s martyrdom given his reserve to mention details of Peter’s death. Further, Clement’s comparison of the “great multitude” of Roman Christians who were martyred (6:1) with the example of the two apostolic martyrs (5:3–7) gains rhetorical force if the apostles’ were actually martyred in Rome. Ultimately, the evidence is inconclusive, but Bockmuehl suggests as entirely plausible that Peter actually did die and was buried in Rome.

In ch. 7 Bockmuehl asks what, if anything, the four names of Simon Peter would have meant to ancient Palestinian Jews. He presents four conclusions. First, “Simon Peter” is the name of an Israelite patriarch, a name that had begun to be used again only about 200 years preceding Peter’s birth. Second, “Simon bar Yonah” is a common Jewish name. Third, “Cephas” was a highly unusual name, and apart from Peter himself there is no evidence that it was used in Palestine as a Jewish name. Fourth, the abundance of the usage of “Peter” to refer to the Christian apostle is accounted for by Greek speakers. In ch. 8 Bockmuehl examines Peter’s connection with Bethsaida and suggests that it is likely that Peter

“grew up fully bilingual in a Jewish minority setting” as archaeological and literary evidence suggests that Bethsaida was largely Gentile (p. 185).

In ch. 9 Bockmuehl notes that in Luke 22:31–32 Jesus predicts a future conversion for Peter but that this conversion is left without narration in the remainder of Luke-Acts. Given that Luke does not narrate this event, Bockmuehl notes an important principle for his entire project: “if Luke is tacitly inviting his readers to reach certain conclusions, one of our best available exegetical guides may be to consult the conclusions the earlier readers did in fact reach” (p. 196). Bockmuehl examines three distinct pieces of effective history: the cock’s crow in Christian art, *the Acts of Peter*, and John 21. Each one of these texts connects Peter’s conversion, in some way, with Jesus’ death and resurrection.

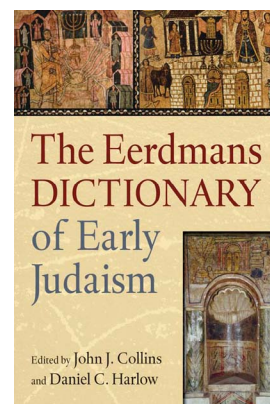
Bockmuehl’s *The Remembered Peter* draws together some interesting studies devoted to the early reception history of Peter. It should be of some interest primarily to students of early Christianity but certainly also NT scholars. I found Bockmuehl’s rereading of the Pseudo-Clementines in ch. 5, particularly his questioning of the scholarly consensus that Simon Magus is a cipher for Paul, to be one of the real gems of the book. Additionally, I found convincing his proposal that scholars of Christian origins, particularly those interested in the relationship between Jesus and Paul, are obligated to provide richer treatments of Peter’s historical significance if they intend to give a convincing historical account of Christian origins. Those looking for a broad treatment of Peter within the NT, however, must turn elsewhere or await Bockmuehl’s second forthcoming volume on Peter.

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John J. Collins and Daniel C. Harlow, eds. *The Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010. xxxvii + 1,360 pp. \$95.00.

The Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism is an indispensable resource for all students and scholars of early Judaism, NT, and early Christianity. The quality of the authors and articles, its remarkably comprehensive scope, the reader-friendly format and presentation of information, and its wide interaction with the relevant secondary literature are just a few of its virtues. While the *Dictionary of New Testament Background* (eds. Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter; Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000) certainly remains a valuable research tool, the Eerdmans dictionary has a few distinct advantages.

The work is divided into two sections. The first part (pp. 1–290) contains thirteen extensive essays devoted to broad synthetic discussions of significant aspects of early Judaism. Most of these essays are authored by scholars who have devoted significant portions of their career to the issue under consideration. Erich Gruen, for example, in “Judaism in the Diaspora” (pp. 77–96) demonstrates how Diaspora Jews “appropriated Hellenism to the goals of rewriting biblical narratives . . . [by] shaping the distinctive identity of Jews within the larger world of Hellenic culture” (p. 83). Diaspora Jews willfully and creatively participated in the social, cultural, and intellectual life of Hellenistic societies while simultaneously maintaining their Jewish identity and connection to the homeland. They were not haunted by disturbing images of exile (p. 92).



James C. VanderKam, in “Judaism in the Land of Israel” (pp. 57–76), notes that the surviving evidence testifies to a richness and diversity of thought, practices, and beliefs within the Judaism of the Second Temple period, but that “there are fundamental beliefs and practices that would have been accepted by virtually all Jews during those centuries” (p. 73). James L. Kugel, in “Early Jewish Biblical Interpretation” (pp. 121–41), examines the way in which Scripture and its interpretation came to be an obsession of Jews during the period of Early Judaism, and notes that four assumptions pervaded Second Temple biblical exegesis: (1) biblical texts were cryptic; (2) the biblical message had contemporary relevance; (3) the diverse writings contained a single and unified message; and (4) Scripture was of a divine origin. An especially useful article is Loren T. Stuckenbruck’s “Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha” (pp. 143–62), which examines the reception history of the creation of these terms as literary categories as well as their usage up until the time of the Reformation. Lawrence H. Schiffman, in “Early Judaism and Rabbinic Judaism,” notes that despite Pharisaic-rabbinic Judaism’s rejection of the apocalyptic trends of some of Early Judaism, there is evidence for numerous parallels and intellectual interaction between Second Temple works and rabbinic Judaism (e.g., disagreements over halakic tradition, similarities in biblical exegesis, and the importance of prayer and poetry).

The second section demonstrates the remarkable scope of the dictionary as it contains 520 articles devoted to, on my count, 28 topics. One will find, for example, the expected articles devoted to Jewish groups (e.g., Essenes, God-fearers, Levites, Pharisees, Priests, Rabbis, Sadducees) and articles covering the relevant literary texts from the Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Hellenistic Judaism, Philo, Josephus, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and Rabbinic Literature. One finds numerous articles devoted to religious and theological beliefs such as Covenant, Dualism, Ethics, Exile, Faith, Resurrection, Righteousness/Justice, Son of Man, and Theodicy. Also included here, however, are articles devoted to the Hebrew Bible, the NT writings, Greek and Latin authors who comment on Judaism, and distinct versions and texts of the Hebrew Bible. Scholars will appreciate that the dictionary also includes numerous articles devoted to non-literary evidence. There are essays devoted, for example, to specific archaeological sites in or related to Israel (e.g., Mount Gerizim, Masada, and Qumran), essays on archaeological structures and artifacts (e.g., aqueducts, the Arch of Titus, Jewelry, Ossuaries, Papyri, and Pottery), and 37 essays on major cities and countries related to Judaism.

The comprehensive scope of the individual articles is astounding. Scholars will appreciate that the NT writings and early Christianity are not anachronistically divorced from the context of Early Judaism. Daniel C. Harlow’s essay “Early Judaism and Early Christianity” (pp. 257–78) examines, for example, the historical evidence the NT writings provide “for the wider Jewish world they inhabited” (p. 257). Likewise, dictionary entries on Jesus of Nazareth, the Jesus Movement, Paul, Jewish Christianity, and John the Baptist are welcome inclusions. The dictionary also includes numerous helpful maps and illustrations. An additional highlight of the dictionary is its inclusion of entries on major modern interpreters of Early Judaism such as Elias Bickerman, Martin Hengel, Jacob Neusner, E. P. Sanders, and Morton Smith and also a long essay by John J. Collins on “Early Judaism in Modern Scholarship” (pp. 1–23). As the names cited in this review indicate, the dictionary has truly encompassed the best scholars—and importantly includes many Jewish and international scholars—for the dictionary. The major limitations of all dictionaries are the brevity of the articles, and of course, this dictionary is no

exception, but for an entry point into almost any topic related to Second Temple Judaism I can think of no better place than *The Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism*.

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David J. Downs. *The Offering of the Gentiles: Paul's Collection for Jerusalem in Its Chronological, Cultural, and Cultic Contexts*. WUNT 2.248. Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2008. xv + 204 pp. £54.00./\$112.20.

It is likely that the level of importance with which Paul treated the financial collection undertaken by his Gentile churches for the Jerusalem church is not matched by the amount of scholarship devoted to its exploration. The collection for the Jerusalem church occupies significant portions of the Pauline epistles (1 Cor 16:1–4; 2 Cor 8:1–9:15; Rom 15:14–32), spanned the course of years of Paul's ministry, and was something that Paul claimed he was prepared even to die for (Rom 15:30–31). David J. Downs seeks, then, in his revised dissertation completed at Princeton Theological Seminary, to examine the collection from a historical (ch. 2), socio-cultural (ch. 3), and theological standpoint. He claims that a careful study of the first two aspects will enable him to give “a much richer understanding of the place of the relief fund in Paul's theology” (p. 2).

First, however, Downs examines the four primary scholarly interpretations of the collection. Most significant here is his rejection of the common claim that Paul viewed the collection as a metaphorical depiction of the prophetic fulfillment of the eschatological pilgrimage of the Gentiles to Zion (Isa 2:2–4; Mic 4:1–2; Isa 60:5). Downs decisively rejects this view by noting that none of the classic pilgrimage texts occur in connection to Paul's statements about the collection. Further, Paul never emphasizes that the companions whom he is bringing to Jerusalem are Gentiles. Finally, the eschatological pilgrimage texts repeatedly mention the Jerusalem *Temple* as the place where the gifts are to be given, and not only does Paul never mention the temple as the locus for their gifts, he consistently indicates that the collection is for the poor Jerusalem saints (Rom 15:25). Downs also rejects the notion that the Pauline collection was an obligation placed upon Paul by the Jerusalem church leaders. He notes that whenever Paul speaks of the collection, he speaks of it as arising out of his own initiative.

In ch. 2 Downs seeks to locate the collection within Pauline chronology. Downs is convincing in his claim, contrary to many scholars, that Paul's collection did not originate out of the Jerusalem church leaders' command to Paul to “remember the poor” (Gal. 2:10). Rather, Gal 2:10 refers to a separate and prior relief fund undertaken by the church of Antioch for the Jerusalem church. Thus, Paul was engaged in at least two relief funds for Jerusalem—one from the Antioch church and later one from his Gentile churches. An independent witness confirming his argument is Acts 11:27–30, which portrays Paul and Barnabas as representatives of the church in Antioch engaging in relief aid for the poor in Jerusalem. Downs further notes, rightly in my view, that the Book of Acts nowhere mentions the collection and that attempts to interpret Paul's “almsgiving” (Acts 24:17) as a brief and allusive reference to the collection are flawed. The narrator has given the reader of Acts no indication that Paul is engaged in a relief fund, and the reference, further, fits well with the portrayal of Paul as a “faithful Jew whose individual piety is



demonstrated by almsgiving and worship” (p. 63). Downs provides a detailed historical reconstruction of the collection within Paul’s chronology, and he concludes that to retrace the history of the collection is to “be reminded that the seemingly mundane task of fundraising was for Paul a deeply theological endeavor, one which demanded his total commitment and perseverance through intense struggle” (pp. 71–72).

In ch. 3 Downs argues that ancient voluntary associations within the Greco-Roman world can legitimately serve as comparative models for the practices of the Pauline churches. Downs argues that the financial practices of these voluntary associations suggest that the Pauline collection was both analogous and distinct. For example, Paul entirely minimizes the honor that a donor to his collection might have expected based on the current practices of patronage and benefaction. On the other hand, there is ample evidence for associations pooling together their finances in order to support special projects. While much evidence demonstrates that similar associations had trans-local links and connections, Downs argues that Paul’s attempt to convince his churches to give their money “for the saints in Jerusalem does stand out when compared to the pecuniary practices of pagan associations” (p. 117). Many of Paul’s difficulties with the Corinthians and the collection may, in fact, have arisen out of their inability to understand why they were obligated to financially support a people so geographically distant and ethnically different from their own.

Downs’s most important contribution is found in ch. 4, where he examines the theological rhetoric and metaphors that Paul uses as a means for convincing his churches to participate in the collection. His basic thesis is that Paul presents the church’s participation in the collection with the metaphor of a cultic offering, that is, as an act of worship to God. In so doing, Paul challenges the economic ideologies of patronage and benefaction that confer honor and status upon the giver. Instead, Paul’s alternative economy originates out of God’s grace/benefaction. Downs supports his argument by noting that 1 Cor 16:1–4 indicates that giving to the collection was intended to be a significant component of the weekly Christian gatherings and that the term Paul uses for the collection (λογεία) has strong cultic overtones. In 2 Corinthians Paul speaks of the collection as originating out of God’s own χάρις. Thus, when humans participate in giving, they are simply responding to God’s own grace/benefaction, and in this manner Paul challenges the public honor and recognition that would typically accrue to the giver. While Paul’s repeated use of ἐπιτελέω in 2 Cor 8:1–12 is often translated simply as “to carry out,” the frequent usage of the term in cultic contexts for the fulfillment of religious obligations suggests that for Paul the Corinthians must give of their resources as a cultic obligation. In Rom 15:16, Downs argues forcefully that the phrase ἡ προσφορά τῶν ἐθνῶν should be translated as a subjective genitive, namely, as “the offering given by the Gentiles.” Downs denies that the appositional genitival reading (“the offering of the Gentiles”) that many scholars have suggested alludes to Isa 66:20 and thereby triggers allusions to the fulfillment of the eschatological pilgrimage of the Gentiles. Rather, Downs argues that the context (esp. Rom 15:16) is filled with cultic terminology, and therefore the phrase should simply be interpreted as the Gentiles’ fulfillment of their cultic obligation through financial giving to the collection.

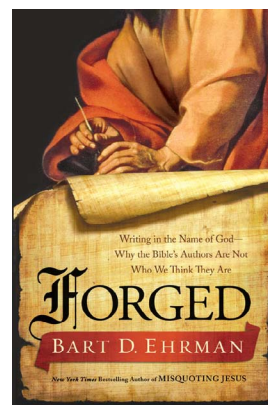
Downs’s monograph is a tightly argued, well-written, and thorough study of Paul’s collection. I found especially convincing and significant his argument that Paul was engaged in at least two relief offerings—one originating out the church in Antioch (Gal 2:10; Acts 11:27–30) and the other originating out of Paul’s own voluntary desire and from his Macedonian and Achaean churches. Additionally, his argument that nowhere in Acts is the collection mentioned should put to rest the common scholarly assumption that Acts 24:17 is a veiled reference to it. Perhaps what is so refreshing about Downs’s work

is his skillful ability to engage in historical and socio-cultural work (chs. 2–3) as well as providing a significant theological interpretation of Paul's religious rhetoric (ch. 4).

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Bart D. Ehrman. *Forged: Writing in the Name of God—Why the Bible's Authors Are Not Who We Think They Are*. New York: HarperOne, 2011. x + 307 pp. \$26.99.

Over the last decade (or more), Bart Ehrman has released a significant number of popular-level books challenging the integrity of the Bible. It was *Jesus: Apocalyptic Prophet* in 1999, *Lost Christianities* and *Lost Scriptures* in 2003, *Misquoting Jesus* in 2005, *God's Problem* in 2007, and *Jesus, Interrupted* in 2009. Although each of these books attacks the trustworthiness of the Bible from a slightly different angle, the overall message (not to mention the style and tone) is remarkably similar. Indeed, it is often difficult to tell where one book ends and another begins. But just in case the reading public has not yet received the message, Ehrman has given us another dose in his latest volume, *Forged: Writing in the Name of God—Why the Bible's Authors Are Not Who We Think They Are*. The focus this time around is now upon the authors of the NT writings and whether those authors are really who they claim to be. In short, the book is on the issue of pseudonymity (or, as Ehrman prefers, pseudepigraphy). According to the introduction, this popular volume distills a forthcoming academic work on the same topic.



Ehrman begins this new volume in the same place he begins many of the other volumes above: with his own personal testimony about his days as an evangelical at Moody and Wheaton and how he finally came to see the truth when he arrived at Princeton. In fact, he not only begins the book this way but repeatedly dips into this same story again and again throughout the volume. Of course, there is nothing inappropriate about sharing one's personal spiritual journey (although when evangelicals give their personal testimonies, they are typically not seen as relevant to the issue at hand). However, in the hands of Ehrman, the personal stories, sadly, take on a sharp, condescending tone. The reader gets the impression that such stories are less about being open and genuine and more about ridiculing what he sees as the intellectual and cultural absurdities of his former evangelical life. Unfortunately, this creates an antagonistic edge to the volume and runs the risk of alienating those readers who do not already agree with Ehrman from the outset.

While *Forged* is divided into eight chapters, it really affirms three main theses:

1. Forgery was a widespread phenomenon among early Christian literature (and in antiquity in general).
2. Contrary to popular scholarly opinions, early Christians did not look favorably on books forged in the name of another author but considered them outright lies to be rejected.
3. A number of the books of the NT were forged (or contain false attributions, fabrications, or falsifications).

As for the first two theses, there is little to disagree with in this volume. Ehrman has done an excellent job laying forth the complexities of early Christian literature and the prevalence of documents forged in the name of apostles (and others). Indeed, there were many such documents—from the *Gospel of Peter* to the book of *3rd Corinthians*—that were simply not written by whom they claim. Particularly refreshing are Ehrman’s arguments in chapter four that early Christians would *not* have considered forgery to be an acceptable literary practice (as so many modern scholars continue to maintain). It is fashionable today to suggest a “middle way” where the pseudonymity of some NT books is affirmed and the canonicity of those books is also affirmed. However, Ehrman is absolutely correct that early Christians simply did not see it this way. To them, forgery was a lie, plain and simple. This sort of work on pseudonymity is long overdue, and I look forward (at least in this area) to Ehrman’s forthcoming academic monograph on the subject.

However, when it comes to the third thesis—that the NT itself contains forged books—Ehrman’s arguments prove much less persuasive. Although Ehrman offers a variety of specific reasons why he thinks certain books are pseudepigraphal (the details of which we cannot enter into here), they can be divided into three major categories.

First, he argues that certain books could not have been written by their purported authors because those authors would not have been able to read or write. In particular, he claims that both 1 and 2 Peter must be pseudonymous because “Peter was an illiterate peasant” (p. 75). However, Ehrman vastly overplays what little we know about literacy in ancient Palestine. Although literacy rates are thought to have been generally low (around 10% according to W. V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989]), a number of scholars have argued that many Palestinian Jews would have been bilingual, speaking both Aramaic and Greek (see J. A. Fitzmyer, “The Languages of Palestine in the First Century A.D.,” *CBQ* 32 (1970): 501–31; A. Millard, *Reading and Writing in the Time of Jesus* [New York: New York University Press, 2000]; S. E. Porter, “Did Jesus Ever Teach in Greek?” *TynBul* 44 (1993): 199–235). There is no reason to think that Peter could not, over his many years, have developed a high degree of proficiency in both languages. Even if he was not able to write Greek, this would not have prevented him from being orally articulate in the language (all he would have needed was an amanuensis to write it down for him). And the use of ἀγράμματοι in Acts 4:13 does not mean that the disciples were “illiterate” as Ehrman contends, but stands in obvious contrast to the formal rabbinic training of the γραμματεῖς described in Acts 4:5. Thus, Acts 4:13 proves the *opposite* of Ehrman’s point—it shows that disciples were considered impressively learned despite the fact that they had not received formal rabbinic instruction. Ehrman’s remarkable level of assurance about Peter’s literary abilities, and his willingness to overturn the stated authorship of the book on these grounds, are simply not commensurate with what we know for sure about the situation in first century Palestine. More caution with the historical evidence is in order here.

Second, Ehrman offers some of the standard stylistic arguments to prove his case that a number of Paul’s letters are actually forgeries, particularly the Pastoral Epistles. Of course, Ehrman recognizes the limitations and subjectivity of such stylistic arguments: “Everyone, after all, uses different words on different occasions, and most of us have a much richer stock of vocabulary than shows up in any given letter or set of letters we write” (p. 98). Thus, he appeals to additional factors that, to him at least, are even more compelling. One example is the fact that the author of the Pastoral Epistles uses the word “faith” in a different way than the rest of Paul’s letters—the former uses it to describe the doctrinal *content* of Christianity and the latter uses it describe the *act* of belief. However, it is unclear to the reader

why a single author is unable to use the same word in two different ways. We do that sort of thing all the time even in our modern speech. Indeed, Paul himself uses words in different ways throughout his writings; e.g., νόμος and σὰρξ are often used in different ways by Paul even throughout the same book.

Third, Ehrman appeals to supposed theological and doctrinal disagreements between books as evidence that they could not be written by the same author. At this point, some of the same weaknesses apparent in *Jesus, Interrupted* surface again. While Ehrman is an expert in textual criticism, it is clear that he is not as comfortable in the areas of biblical exegesis and systematic theology. For instance, Ehrman observes that Eph 2:5–6 teaches, “Even when we were dead through our trespasses, God made us alive together with Christ . . . and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places” (p. 111). Incredibly, on the basis of this verse, Ehrman concludes, “Here believers *have* experienced a spiritual resurrection . . . precisely the view that Paul argued against in his letter to the Corinthians!” (p. 111, emphasis his). This surface-level exegesis, however, does not do justice to the complexities of Paul’s thought. The context of Eph 2:5–6 is not dealing with the resurrection at all, but with spiritual conversion. The fact that this passage uses the root word ζωοποιέω (“to make alive”) does not necessarily mean it is referring to the resurrection because Paul uses this same term elsewhere to refer to conversion, namely in 2 Cor 3:6 and Gal 3:21 (both undisputed Pauline letters!). Neither does describing believers as already seated with Christ in the heavenly places demonstrate that Ephesians teaches a non-bodily resurrection. Rather, such language is just another instance of Paul’s already-but-not-yet theological paradigm. In Paul’s mind, our present conversion is a down payment that guarantees our future place in heaven with Christ—so much so that he is able to speak of it as if it were, in some sense, already here. Beyond all of this, are we really to think that early Christians would have widely affirmed the canonicity of Ephesians if it so plainly denied the bodily resurrection, one of the most cherished beliefs in early Christianity? Ehrman would have us believe that all early Christians (not to mention later Christians) were just too blind to notice such a thing until modern scholars have come along to point it out for them.

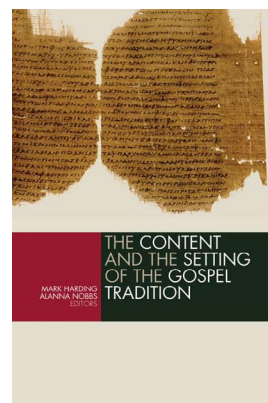
While appealing to these three lines of evidence, Ehrman also leaves certain aspects of pseudepigraphy unaddressed. For instance, he never addresses (in any substantive detail) how early Christians might have distinguished between true apostolic books and false ones. As he discusses various forgeries in early Christianity, he presents the evidence as if all these books are on an equal playing field. But are we really to think, for instance, that the fourth-century *Gospel of Nicodemus* (and the other “Pilate Gospels”) really presented a formidable literary challenge to early Christians? Ehrman fails to assign any significance to the fact that *all* known apocryphal works in the names of apostles are second century or later (and many were much later). Surely, the predominant lateness of forged works would have played some role in helping early Christians distinguish them from authentic ones. But Ehrman is basically silent on this matter. Moreover, Ehrman never addresses the literary abilities of the early church fathers to analyze ancient texts and spot forgeries. He mentions them only negatively, saying that they lacked “the sophisticated methods of analysis that we have today” (p. 33). In contrast, Robert M. Grant argues that a number of early church fathers—Papias, Justin, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and others—were astute “literary critics” who carefully analyzed the literary merits and historical origins of canonical and non-canonical books (“Literary Criticism and the New Testament Canon,” *JSNT* 16 [1982]: 24–44). As a result, they took the task of distinguishing between canonical and apocryphal books very seriously, giving us greater confidence in their final conclusions. Again, Ehrman seems unconcerned to delve into any historical matters that might lessen the persuasiveness of his thesis.

In the final analysis, *Forged* is a book with a mix of positives and negatives. Ehrman's helpful overview of the various kinds of early Christian forgeries and his excellent treatment of early Christian views of pseudepigraphy are bright spots in this volume. However, Ehrman's level of confidence that the NT definitely contains forgeries is not commensurate with the arguments he puts forth to prove that thesis. In this regard, he regularly goes beyond what the evidence can sustain. For this reason the book, like many of his others, comes across as more autobiographical than academic; more polemical than historical. Ehrman still seems to be chasing the ghosts of his evangelical past. One wonders how many more books he will need to write before they go away.

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Mark Harding and Alanna Nobbs, eds. *The Content and Setting of the Gospel Tradition*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010. xix + 460 pp. \$55.00/£35.99.

This collection of essays is a collaborative work of scholars from the Ancient History Department of Macquarie University and the Australian College of Theology (ACT). Hence it is “a distinctly Australian contribution” (p. ix). Mark Harding is Dean of ACT and Honorary Associate of Macquarie University, and Alanna Nobbs is Professor of Ancient History at Macquarie and Co-Director of the Ancient Cultures Research Centre at Macquarie. The collaboration is a natural one, not only because of the close relationship between the institutions, but because for years the Ancient History Department at Macquarie has focused on the Greco-Roman background of the New Testament. Its Ancient History Document Research Center has published the acclaimed New Documents Illustrating Early Christian series (nine volumes to date).



The present volume is a substantial contribution to scholarship in general, but especially as a supplement to more traditional Gospel textbooks. Apart from one chapter on “The Markan Outline and Emphases,” by Johan Ferreira (ch. 11), and one on “Distinctive Features of the Gospels,” by Timothy J. Harris (ch. 12), the book does not focus on the themes and theology of the individual Gospels, but rather on issues of background, text, milieu, and the historical Jesus. The book is divided into five main categories: archaeology (1 ch.), the text of the NT (2 chs.), the setting (3 chs.), the Gospels in the early churches (3 chs.), and Jesus' life and ministry (9 chs.).

The volume as a whole is well written and well edited. Bibliographies at the end of each chapter point the readers to more detailed discussions. Many of the chapters function as general introductory surveys. Chapter one on archaeology (Robert K. McIver), for example, is a wonderfully concise survey of the nature of biblical archaeology and the most important sites for the study of the life and times of Jesus. The chapters in section two on the text of the NT are more technical and go beyond the material typically covered in a college or seminary-level course on the Gospels (at least in my courses). These deal, respectively, with the present state of text-critical studies (Scott D. Charlesworth) and research on the language of the Gospels in relation to the *koine* (Erica A. Mathieson). Mathieson documents how the study of the papyri and inscriptions post-Deissmann have continued to confirm his conclusions

that the language of the NT is not a unique “NT Greek” but is integral to the *koine* and equally diverse in its various registers. Charlesworth discusses recent advances in textual criticism and particularly how studies of the papyri are challenging the notion of textual families. Why should earlier papyri be categorized according to textual “families” delineated from later majuscules? While recognizing that methodological questions are in flux, Charlesworth concludes, “Scribes made changes, but the early gospel text was transmitted accurately *en bloc*. ‘Normal’ and ‘strict’ approaches gainsay the contention that the high fluidity of early gospel MSS render impossible the recovery of the ‘original’ text” (p. 58). The chapter is an excellent—if somewhat technical—survey of the present state of NT textual criticism.

Three chapters (4–6) survey the political, social, and religious climate of first-century Palestine. In “The Political Context,” Murray J. Smith summarizes the historical and political setting of first-century Palestine and reminds readers that it is impossible to dichotomize between the religious and political spheres in the Greco-Roman world. In chapter 5 (“The Social Setting”), James R. Harrison discusses the significance of two critical social conventions—Greco-Roman benefaction and Jewish purity and holiness laws—that will be alien to many Western readers, but are critical to understand in the context of Jesus’ life and ministry. Chapter 6 on “The Gospels and Second Temple Judaism” (Mark Harding) overviews (with some overlap with chapter 4) the sources, history, and institutions of first-century Judaism.

Section four (chs. 7–9), on the Gospels in the Early Churches, has articles on “The Gospels and the Old Testament” (Theresa Yu Chui Siang Lau), “The Gospels in Early Christian Literature” (Murray J. Smith), and “The Non-Canonical Gospels” (Johan Ferreira). Smith’s chapter concerns the transmission, collection, and use of the Gospel tradition in the early church (with a case study on the Apostolic Fathers). Ferreira surveys both the variety of early Christianity (Jewish, Gentile, Gnostic) and the main representatives of extra-biblical gospels. Ferreira concludes that, apart from perhaps the *Gospel of Thomas*, these gospels provide little information concerning the historical Jesus, but are helpful in understanding the diversity of the nascent Christian church.

The largest body of articles deals with historical Jesus questions (chs. 10, 13–18). In “Who was Jesus?” (ch. 10), Chris Forbes introduces students to the field with a helpful overview of methodology, sources, criteria, and a brief survey of the “quests” for the historical Jesus. The survey culminates with important recent contributions to the field by scholars like Richard Bauckham, J. D. G. Dunn, N. T. Wright and John Meier, and a survey of the most important recent interpretations of the person of Jesus. Other chapters on the historical Jesus discuss his central message—the kingdom of God (Stephen Voorwinde), the nature and function of parables (Greg W. Forbes), the ethics of Jesus (Brian Powell), the miracles of Jesus (Evelyn Ashley), the key titles of Jesus (Van Shore), and the passion and resurrection narratives (Ian K. Smith). In some of these (e.g., kingdom of God; miracles of Jesus) a discussion of the historical Jesus is followed by a survey of the perspectives of the four Evangelists. In general, the articles in this section reach conservative conclusions within the broad spectrum of historical Jesus scholarship, but not without engagement with critical scholarship.

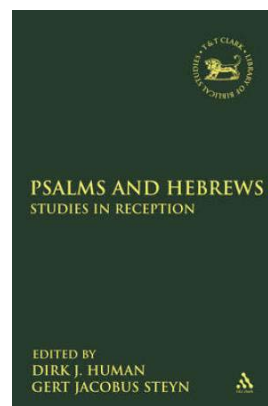
This volume as a whole is impressive in its scope and content. I would highly recommend it as a general introduction to Gospel and Jesus studies, but especially as a supplement that fills the “gaps” in a typical Gospel survey text or course. One could, of course, criticize certain gaps in the volume. For example, there are no articles on Gospel methodology, particularly on source and transmission history. There is little discussion of Q (nature, theology, community), nor on recent studies in orality. Nor does the volume engage reading approaches or the “hermeneutics” of Gospel reading, including reader-

response, liberationist, feminist, womanist, or postmodern approaches. It would be fascinating—in a distinctly Australian work like this—to see what an Aboriginal reading of the Gospels would look like. Finally, some articles are quite light, while others are rather technical. A professor utilizing the text will want to be judicious in assigning individual chapters. Yet, no volume can do everything. What this one does, it does very well, and its authors and editors are to be highly commended.

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Dick J. Human and Gert J. Steyn, eds. *Psalms and Hebrews: Studies in Reception*. LHB/OTS 527. New York: T&T Clark, 2010. xix + 299 pp. \$130.00.

The fourteen essays in this book originated as papers delivered at the fifth annual meeting of the ProPsalms (Project Psalms) seminar, an interdisciplinary effort comprising European and African scholars. Whatever else is gained by the book's international flavor, one helpful result is that the South African scholars give the rest of us access to some Afrikaans/Dutch literature that would otherwise remain inaccessible. Unlike much literature in this genre, the collection is fairly coherent, thanks to a clearly defined and sufficiently narrow subject: the reception of the psalms in Hebrews. Added to this, several of the essays tackle the same psalm: there are four essays on Ps 8, three on Ps 95, and two on Ps 110. Of the five other essays, one covers Ps 40, three cover larger hermeneutical and/or theological issues (one of these also focuses on Ps 8), and one covers the contemporary reception of the psalms in Africa, with Hebrews providing a point of comparison. All of the essays are conveniently summarized by the editors in a seven-page preface, which makes a similar summary here redundant. What follows is, instead, a few brief (and, in one case, critical) notes on three of the book's more interesting proposals. (I will pass over the reference to the "authors" of Hebrews in the book's first essay!)



First, in his article entitled "The Son, the Angels and the Odd: Psalm 8 in Hebrews 1 and 2," Sebastian Fuhrmann suggests that the devil, not Jesus, is the subject of ἐπιλαμβάνεται (2x) in Heb 2:16 because the verb, with a genitive object, more often means something like "attack" not "help" (contra, e.g., NIV, ESV, NRSV). Fuhrmann thinks the syntax of 2:14–17a also supports this reading. He suggests that 2:16's δήπου ("surely" or "it is clear") refers to previous knowledge the audience had and assumes the reference is to the known fact that the devil attacks only humans, not angels. Further, since Jesus' actions in 2:14–17a are described in the aorist tense (*sic*; ὤφειλεν in 2:17 is imperfect), ἐπιλαμβάνεται, a present tense verb, must have a different subject. Otherwise, the consistent presentation of Jesus' actions as "related to an exact point of time" would be disrupted by an action that is apparently "commonplace or ongoing." Finally, Fuhrmann suggests that this reading better explains the mention of angels in 2:16 than the traditional view does: "The question pending from the psalm quotation was not, 'is Jesus taking care of the angels or on [*sic*; of?] anybody else?', but rather 'why was the Son required to be humiliated?'"

Fuhrmann's proposal is interesting. It has, however, also overcooked the data. The lexical evidence he relies on is ambiguous at best; most often ἐπιλαμβάνομαι denotes simply taking hold of something

(check the references he lists on p. 92nn.34–35). That someone could take hold of something or someone for violent ends is not disputed; it just is not the case that such ends imply that the verb itself denotes *violent* seizure. And even if it did have this meaning, could it not denote *Jesus'* violent seizure of Abraham's seed from the devil's clutches (cf. ἐπιλαβομένου in 8:9)? Furthermore, it is true that δήπου implies a given fact. However, whether the given fact is what Fuhrmann assumes or is what the traditional view suggests (i.e., Jesus helps humans not angels) is the issue under discussion. It cannot be settled, as Fuhrmann appears to do, by simple assertion. Much the same could be said of Fuhrmann's final argument. I do not see why the question "is Jesus taking care of angels or . . . [humans]?" could not also imply the additional question Fuhrmann sees underlying 2:5–18: "why was the Son required to be humiliated?" Finally, the fact that Jesus is the subject of four aorist verbs in 2:14–17a does not make it any less likely for him to be the subject of a verb of another tense—something already proven by ὤφειλεν in v. 17. Perhaps the author of Hebrews wants to portray Jesus as continuously helping Abraham's descendants based on other actions the author portrays as completed. In any case, Jesus is the subject of a present participle and two present tense verbs in 2:11 (cf. δύναται in 2:18). Could he not be the subject of ἐπιλαμβάνεται as well?

Second, in an essay entitled "LXX Psalm 39:7–10 in Hebrews 10:5–7," Martin Karrer suggests that σῶμα ("body") was the original wording of the Old Greek translation of Ps 39:7 (ET 40:6) and was introduced, along with κατηρτίσω ("prepared") to help Greek readers understand a difficult Hebrew idiom ("You *dug ears* for me"). He thinks this reading is original because the variants ὦτα and ὠτία ("ears") are not found in any LXX manuscript earlier than Hebrews. They are, rather, found only in later Greek translations (which show a tendency toward more formal equivalence) and citations in the Church fathers (some of whom had a low regard for Hebrews, e.g., Irenaeus). Moreover, following Christian-B. Amphoux and Gilles Dorival's study, Karrer says that ὠτία, which is preferred by Rahlfs (the standard, semi-critical Greek text of the Psalter), represents a younger or more recent way of making οἶς ("ear") plural. As such, it does not reflect the sort of Greek that would have been written when the Psalter was originally translated or, for that matter, early revised. Further, Karrer notes that σῶμα occurs in all Greek manuscripts of the LXX. These, he insists, were not all influenced by Hebrews as Rahlfs suggests, since there are not additional instances where Hebrews has similarly influenced the entire LXX manuscript tradition. Thus, he concludes that Rahlfs's text is wrong in preferring ὠτία to σῶμα and should be changed in future editions.

Third, in an essay entitled "From Priest-King to King-Priest: Psalm 110 and the Basic Structure of Hebrews," Gert J. C. Jordaan and Pieter Nel revive George W. Buchanan's theory that Hebrews is a homiletical midrash on Ps 110. After showing the numerous places in Hebrews where Ps 110 is cited or alluded to, they demonstrate how the structure of Hebrews corresponds to the structure of the psalm. For example, both Ps 110 and Hebrews begin and end with declarations of the king's conquest (cf. Ps 110:1, 7 and Heb 1:1–14; 12:1–29). Also the center of both texts highlights the king's priestly-appointment (cf. Ps 110:4 and Heb 5:1–7:28). They conclude, therefore, that both observations—i.e., Hebrews' frequent use of the psalm and correspondence to the psalm's structure—suggest Hebrews meets two essential criteria of midrashic literature (Jewish commentary on Scripture) as noted, e.g., in James L. Bailey and Lyle D. Vander Broek, *Literary Forms in the New Testament: A Handbook* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992).

Besides these essays, there are one or two other illuminating pieces (e.g., de Villiers' essay entitled "Reflections on Creation and Humankind in Psalm 8, the Septuagint and Hebrews") and a few less illuminating pieces. As such, this expensive book is best borrowed, not purchased.

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T. Ryan Jackson. *New Creation in Paul's Letters: A Study of the Historical and Social Setting of a Pauline Concept*. WUNT 2.272. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010. xvi + 232 pp. £59.00/\$117.50.

This monograph is a slightly revised version of the author's PhD thesis completed at the University of Cambridge. Jackson's chief aim is to investigate the content and function of Paul's new creation thought within Galatians, 2 Corinthians, and Romans. His central thesis is that new creation explicates Paul's "eschatologically infused soteriology which involves the individual, the community and the cosmos and which is inaugurated in the death and resurrection of Christ" (p. 6).



In chapter one, Jackson sets the stage for his argument by providing a brief overview of scholarly literature related to the meaning of new creation in Paul. Jackson rightly notes that scholars have interpreted this Pauline notion primarily in three distinct ways (anthropologically, cosmologically, and communally) and have generally speaking kept these three interpretations at arms' length apart. A fundamental aim of Jackson's book is to demonstrate the strong continuity between these three categories both within the Jewish background from which Paul derives his understanding of new creation and within Paul's own depiction of the new creation. Jackson also observes the scant attention paid to the relationship between Paul's conception of new creation and Roman Imperial ideology.

Jackson's second chapter focuses on the nature of new creation in the Jewish Scriptures. Here Jackson argues that the prophecy of Isaiah is the bedrock upon which Paul constructs his portrait of new creation. His analysis of Isaiah appeals primarily to the close association between humanity and the cosmos in Isaiah's discussion of the former things/new things and the restored Zion (cf. Isa 1:7; 24:20; 35:1–2; 43:20; 65:18). Jackson also closely analyzes the discussion of the "new heavens and new earth" in Isa 65:17 and concludes that while this passage envisions a new world order (not new cosmos), it nonetheless continues the tight linking between humanity and cosmos depicted in earlier portions of Isaiah.

Chapter three focuses on the depiction of new creation in Second Temple Judaism. Jackson begins his analysis by discussing the nature of Jewish apocalyptic literature, specifically with regard to the historical dilemma (Hellenism) these varied compositions were written to address. He then engages in a close analysis of Jubilees and once again concludes that anthropology and cosmology are intricately linked in this work. Jackson reaches similar conclusions in his analysis of new creation in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

In chapter four, Jackson investigates the nature of Roman Imperial ideology. Jackson appropriately distinguishes between viewing Paul's writings as *intentional* polemic against the Roman Empire and

seeking simply to understand how Paul's statements might have been read/heard within a society inundated with a worldview that made starkly similar claims. Within this chapter, Jackson observes that Roman Imperial ideology (1) closely linked cosmos and state; (2) portrayed the Roman Empire as ushering in the dawn of a new age; and (3) depicted the Roman Empire as inaugurating a new world.

Chapter five explores the depiction of new creation in Gal 6:11–16. Jackson argues against a one-sided conception of new creation in this passage on the basis of: (1) the parallelism between κόσμος and καινή κτίσις in v. 14 and v. 15; (2) the importance of Paul's modification of the Jewish apocalyptic "two ages" framework for understanding Galatians; (3) the eschatological significance of Christ's death and resurrection within Galatians; and (4) the close relation between Paul's reference to new creation in v. 15 and his designation of the church as the "Israel of God" in v. 16.

Jackson next considers Paul's portrait of new creation in 2 Cor 5:11–21. Within this chapter, Jackson seeks to demonstrate that Paul is advancing an epistemology in v. 11–21 that would have been completely at odds with the ideology offered by Rome. Jackson begins by addressing the influence of Isaianic traditions within 2 Cor 5. He next explores the eschatological significance of Christ's resurrection for understanding the epistemology Paul proffers in v. 14–16. Building upon this analysis, Jackson then carefully considers the "in Christ" language in v. 17 and concludes this must be understood in close relation to v. 14–16 so that to be in Christ "means to have transferred from the life of the old age to the life of the new through participation in Christ's own death and resurrection" (p. 143). Jackson also helpfully argues that the discussion of reconciliation in vv. 18–21 need not require a strictly anthropological understanding of new creation because of the complex portrait of restoration in the OT and Second Temple Judaism.

The final major chapter concentrates on new creation in Rom 8:18–25. Jackson devotes a great deal of attention to the meaning of κόσμος and κτίσις in Rom 1–8 and argues within this segment of Romans that (1) there is a movement from creation to new creation and (2) this movement assumes a close relationship between humanity's sin and the cosmos that ultimately derives from Jewish traditions in the OT and Second Temple Judaism. Also central to Jackson's thesis is his argument that κτίσις in Rom 8:19–23 refers to the physical creation.

Jackson's overall treatment of this significant aspect of Pauline theology is quite convincing. One of the distinct challenges of interpreting καινή κτίσις in 2 Cor 5:17 and Gal 6:15 is its slogan-like nature. Jackson does a commendable job of appreciating the manner in which new creation summarizes and draws upon prior statements in each of these two letters. This is true especially of his discussion of the noun κόσμος in Galatians. He is also to be applauded for avoiding the tendency to sharply separate Paul's eschatology from his soteriology (a problem that has plagued much of prior literature devoted to new creation in Paul, especially the contributions of M. Hubbard and U. Mell). Finally, Jackson rightly gives primacy to Isaianic traditions in assessing the background of new creation and provocatively shows how Paul's statements would have been read within the context of Roman Imperialism.

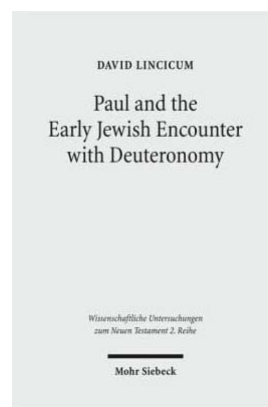
Jackson's analysis of Isaiah, nonetheless, presents a significant problem. Specifically, Jackson does not provide sufficient warrant for appealing to the breadth of Isaianic material he engages within his investigation. Further discussion of the nature of Paul's allusion to Isaianic tradition in 2 Cor 5:17 is necessary at this point. This concern aside, Jackson presents a well-reasoned argument and his analysis

of the Pauline material appreciates the complexity of Paul's thought. This book is highly recommended for scholars and students wishing to study this important aspect of Paul's theology.

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David Lincicum. *Paul and the Early Jewish Encounter with Deuteronomy*. WUNT 2.284. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010. xiv + 290 pp. \$127.50.

In this dissertation under the supervision of Markus Bockmuehl, David Lincicum seeks “to delineate the range of approaches to the ‘last book of Moses’ in Jewish literature spanning from approximately the third century BCE to the third century CE, with a special focus on the relief into which such delineation casts the apostle Paul” (p. 3). To accomplish this goal, Lincicum seeks to go beyond the narrow confines of intertextuality (which has the tendency to present Paul as “engaged in a virginal act of interpretation apart from the pesky prejudices of corporeality and temporality as a first-century Jew” p. 10) to the more holistic tool of “effective history” (*Wirkungsgeschichte*). In other words, the study seeks to place Paul within a long line of Jewish authors who engaged Deuteronomy, attempting to “note the aspects ... that are significant for each author” (p. 11).



From there Lincicum proceeds in two uneven parts. Part 1 (which consists of ch. 2) explores how Jews encountered Deuteronomy. His discussion moves from the physical realities of its bilingual existence (Greek and Hebrew) and manuscripts to the liturgical context of that encounter through synagogue readings, *tefillin* (small leather capsules containing Scripture passages worn on the forehead and left arm), *mezuzot* (small, rolled up Scripture scroll attached to the doorpost of one's house), and daily recitation of the *Shema*. These insights are then applied to Paul's educational background to propose a historically plausible reconstruction of Paul's sustained encounter with Deuteronomy from his earliest childhood through his experiences in the Greek-speaking synagogue.

Part 2 surveys the various ways Deuteronomy was appropriated, with each chapter devoted to a specific body of literature arranged in roughly chronological order. In the Qumran documents (ch. 3), Deuteronomy served to regulate the covenant and establish a framework for understanding the intersection of Israel's history with that of the sect. As such it serves to explain both their present and their future. Within the large number of documents in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha (ch. 4), Lincicum briefly surveys Jubilees, Second Maccabees, Pseudo-Philo, Tobit, Baruch, and *Testament of Moses*. What unites these quite disparate documents is the use of Deuteronomy to explain Israel's present difficulties and provide a blueprint for her future. Especially prominent is the phenomenon of “rewriting” Deuteronomy “in an act of imaginative appropriation, viewing history from the proleptic standpoint of Moses and his horizon of vision beyond the Jordan” (p. 98).

Philo (ch. 5) draws on Deuteronomy as both a theological and ethical authority, with an emphasis on the necessity of obedience to the laws. Josephus (ch. 7) presents his survey of Jewish history within a Deuteronomistic framework, which in his case means emphasizing God's faithfulness to reward

obedience and punish disobedience. Along the way he “actualizes” the legal material for his Greco-Roman audience. In *Sifre* and the Targums (ch. 8), the eschatological horizon of Deuteronomy is muted, perhaps in light of the failed Bar Kochba revolt. Both evidence holistic engagement with the entirety of Deuteronomy rather than isolated passages.

Lincicum devotes the most space to Paul (ch. 6). Focusing on the explicit quotations, implicit citations, and a few major allusions, he organizes Paul’s appropriation of Deuteronomy under three headings: ethical authority, theological authority, and historical lens. Ethically, Deuteronomy regulates the behavior of the eschatological people of God in a way that shows he does not “relativize Deuteronomy as an ethical authority in any thoroughgoing way” (p. 137). Theologically, Deuteronomy speaks authoritatively not only in Paul’s refinement of the *Shema*’ in 1 Cor 8 but also in a series of theological axioms that have Deuteronomical roots. As a historical lens, Deuteronomy explains Israel’s status within the framework of blessing and curse as well as anticipates heart circumcision, restoration, and Gentile inclusion. Based on his analysis, Lincicum concludes that Paul read Deuteronomy backwards in two senses: (1) his Deuteronomical diagnosis of Israel’s history is shaped by knowing that God’s solution is found in Christ; (2) his presentation of Deuteronomy to his churches begins conceptually with the eschatological final chapters and then moves to the earlier ethical chapters. He does this because the Spirit now enables believers to fulfill the law. “In this sense, the ethical reading of Deuteronomy is grounded in the Christological and pneumatological reading” (p. 168).

In the concluding chapter, Lincicum draws together the fruit of his labors. He concludes that while early Jewish engagement with Deuteronomy spans the totality of the book, a number of texts focus on the closing chapters of the book. This interest stems from (1) their biographical description of Moses’ last words and actions and (2) their value for understanding Israel’s plight. Turning to Paul, Lincicum argues that Paul understands the revelation of the crucified and risen Jesus “instinctively . . . through the lens of Deuteronomy’s prophetic judgment on Israel’s history” (p. 198). While Paul recognizes the newness of what God is doing in Christ, “he is emphatic that this God is none other than the one God confessed twice daily in the *Shema*” (p. 198).

Throughout this monograph Lincicum shows careful attention to each document/corpus, treating them on their own terms. The discussion of the “material *realia*” of the early Jewish encounter with Deuteronomy was particularly interesting, as it brought to life the actual ways that Jews encountered the book in a primarily liturgical context. Overall the book is well-written, well organized, and easy to follow in its main arguments.

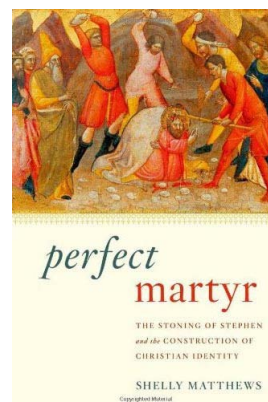
Having said that, the fundamental weakness of the study is that it attempts to cover too much ground within the limits of a dissertation. At several points Lincicum is limited to offering one- or two-page summaries of how entire documents such as Jubilees, Second Maccabees, Tobit, and Baruch appropriate Deuteronomy. As a result, Lincicum generally is not able to engage in detailed and extended exegesis of key passages and their intersection with Deuteronomy. On a methodological level, the claim that the study of *Wirkungsgeschichte* has the ability to correct “the interpretive solipsism toward which theories of intertextuality sometimes tend” may be true to some degree; however, Lincicum fails to acknowledge that the best scholarly works in the area of intertextuality do take seriously the way given texts were received, interpreted and applied by other readers. Finally, the space constraints also prevent Lincicum from unpacking the implications of statements that beg further clarification (e.g., “The variety of these [ethical] appeals [to Deuteronomy] renders it unlikely that Paul intends to relativize Deuteronomy as an ethical authority in any thoroughgoing way” [p. 137]).

In sum, Lincicum has made a valuable contribution to our understanding of how Deuteronomy was appropriated in the centuries surrounding the NT. As such all who do future work in this area will benefit from his work. But the space constraints unfortunately limit the depth of engagement the topic deserves.

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Shelly Matthews. *Perfect Martyr: The Stoning of Stephen and the Construction of Christian Identity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. viii + 226 pp. \$65.00.

Matthews's central claim in *Perfect Martyr* is that Acts 6–7 is a rhetorical construction of Stephen, Christianity's first martyr, that is motivated essentially by an anti-Jewish agenda. This agenda portrays Jews as barbaric murderers but Christians as religiously superior given their ethic of mercy and forgiveness. Perhaps more disconcerting for Matthews is that the anti-Judaism of Acts has "been reauthorized and reinscribed in much modern biblical scholarship" (p. 14). In order to counter the violence and anti-Judaism that is perpetuated by Acts, Matthews suggests that one might offer "a better historical narrative than the one offered by Acts" (p. 10). These "better narratives" may instead portray Jews and Christians as getting along, as forming common anti-imperial alliances, and not insisting on their religious commitments as essential to their personal identity.



In her introduction and in ch. 1, Matthews sets forth some of her scholarly conclusions regarding Acts. At least three of these assumptions are crucial for her broader argument. First, the rhetoric of Acts is anti-Jewish and participates in developing the proto-orthodox supersessionist stance toward Judaism. Second, Acts is pro-Roman in that major portions of Acts have been written in order to stress the compatibility between Christianity and the Roman Empire. Third, Acts should be dated in the second or third decade of the second century C.E. The depiction of Jews as evil and persecutory, the emphasis on proof from prophecy, the glowing depiction of the Roman Empire, and the fact that the first external witness to Acts comes from Irenaeus suggest that it has been written in the early second century.

In ch. 2 Matthews notes the peculiarity of the martyrdom of Stephen in that (unlike other early Christian martyrdom tales such as *Martyrdom of Polycarp*) he is martyred solely by Jews and apart from Roman authorities. The rhetoric of Acts, then, intentionally depicts Jews as violent persecutors and absolves Rome from Stephen's death. This rhetoric fits comfortably, according to Matthews, within the rest of Acts as the death of Jesus is frequently laid at the feet of the Jews (e.g., 2:22–23; 3:12–15; 4:8–10). The author may appropriate the actual Jewish heritage for his own group, but he denigrates only real (non-Christian) Jews. Matthews argues that Stephen's speech is clearly anti-temple and suggests "that it would have been better had the temple never been built" (p. 69). Those engaging in temple worship are guilty of idolatry. Moving from temple criticism, Stephen then further slanders the Jews as prophet-killers. Further, this is not intra-mural argumentation, for Stephen refers to their fathers as "your ancestors" (7:51–52). Matthews emphasizes that whereas the trials of Jesus and Paul included

Roman involvement, the martyrdom of Stephen is a purely Jewish affair. It is part of a larger strategy, therefore, of distinguishing Jews from Christians while simultaneously seeking to stay within the good graces of Rome. Thus, Matthews writes, “the perfect martyr dies not in Rome but in Jerusalem; not at the hands of the emperor but at the will of a barbaric Jewish mob” (p. 77).

In an appropriately titled chapter (“Disrupting Acts”) Matthews seeks to demonstrate that Acts and its portrait of the martyrdom of Stephen need not be read as the only historical account of the church and its first martyr. The strong structural and thematic coherence of Acts has unfortunately, according to her, “resulted in the pervasive tendency to read its version of events as the obvious and true account of early Christian history” (p. 79). First, Matthews invokes Hegesippus’s narration of the martyrdom of James brother of Jesus as a comparative text. James dies from three methods: being thrown off of the temple, stoning, and a beating by a club. The martyrdom of James arises not out of “faithful transmission of eyewitness testimony but rather to eyes trained on Scriptures, searching those Scriptures for details that can be ‘historicized’” (p. 84). In other words, the similarities between the martyrdom of Stephen in Acts and James in Hegesippus (e.g., conflict with the temple, a high Christology, and Jews engaging in mob behavior) are the result of similar attempts to construct the reason for the split between the Christians and the Jews. Both authors see the split as arising out of the murder of a “true Jew” by “barbaric and violent Jews.” A second strategy Matthews employs for countering the hegemony of Acts is to examine related texts which give evidence for more positive alliances between Jews and Christians in the first-century. She notes, for example, that according to Josephus there was great outrage by Torah-observant Jews at the murder of both John the Baptist and James the brother of Jesus.

Finally, in ch. 4 Matthews takes up the merciful prayer of forgiveness offered by Stephen for his persecutors. This prayer is, according to Matthews, largely a façade as “Stephen, *the character*, may pray for mercy upon his tormentors, but Luke, *the author*, makes it clear that Stephen’s prayer has no consequence for those tormentors” (p. 99). Both Stephen’s and Jesus’ prayer in Luke’s Gospel function as assertions of the total discontinuity which exists between Judaism and Christianity and demonstrates the ethical superiority of the latter over the former. The prayer of forgiveness by the merciful martyr for the violent Jew demonstrates the enormous ethical gap between the two religions. Matthews suggests that the rhetoric of love for one’s enemy, however, has less to do with ethics and more to do with an identity assertion. These prayers mark the subject as ethically superior.

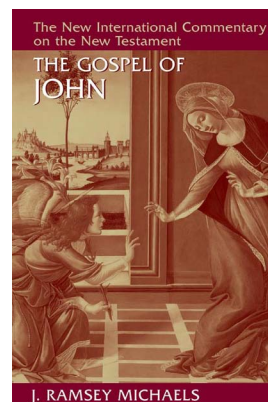
Matthews should be commended for her honesty and her straightforward assertions regarding her motivations in writing *Perfect Martyr*. She is clearly disturbed by the depiction of Jews as violent, by the depiction of the early Christians as (supposedly) pro-Roman, and by the audacity and hypocrisy of the Christian assertion of ethical/religious superiority. And insofar as Acts *has been used* by its interpreters to justify anti-Semitism and perpetuate negative and violent stereotypes, then *Perfect Martyr* may be useful in highlighting an inappropriate usage of Acts and other NT texts. Matthews’s arguments stand or fall, however, on assumptions which I find problematic. First, she does not demonstrate nor provide strong evidence for dating Acts to the second-century (110–120’s C.E.). Her assumption that Acts is a second-century document is crucial for her negative opinion of Luke as a reliable historian. It is also crucial for her rejection of the scholarly claims that Acts depicts the Christian apostles and the Jewish Leadership as engaged in intra-mural debate and argumentation—not outright anti-Semitism. I find her claim that Acts is attempting to gain the good graces of the Roman Empire flawed, and it is a pity

that she does not interact with C. Kavin Rowe, *World Upside Down: Reading Acts in the Graeco-Roman Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), who demonstrates that Acts is certainly not pro-Roman.

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J. Ramsey Michaels. *The Gospel of John*. NICNT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010. 1,121 pp. £43.99/\$65.00.

This massive commentary is the net result of five decades of teaching and writing in the area of Johannine studies by the professor emeritus of religious studies at Missouri State University. We find evidence of Michaels's longstanding specialization in this area in the twelve articles he authored that dealt with aspects of the Fourth Gospel, ranging from 1966 to 2004. One senses a certain relief in his bringing this magisterial work to completion in his retirement, after his smaller commentaries on John (his Good News Commentary of 1984, based on the GNB, and his New International Biblical Commentary of 1989, based on the NIV). It is a privilege to sit at the feet of an inspiring specialist and catch his infectious enthusiasm for the text itself. Scholarly theories about the text flourish and fade but the text is permanently luxuriant. Interestingly, he found Bultmann's commentary to be the most useful, not because of that scholar's theories about source, redaction, and displacement, far less his overall rejection of the Gospel's theology, but because of his acute attention to detail and his perceptiveness in reading the Gospel as it stands.



While the Introduction is relatively short (42 out of 1,058 pages of text), it includes the standard issues of authorship (the author's anonymity is "both conspicuous and deliberate," p. 24), date (? 70–100 AD, p. 38), location ("there is no way to be certain," p. 38), structure ("Structure in John's Gospel . . . is largely in the eye of the beholder," p. 37), and relation to the Synoptic Gospels ("much of what is implicit in the other three Gospels becomes explicit in John," p. 30). In fact, he recommends that this Introduction be read last, just as he wrote it after finishing the commentary itself.

The four brief pages on "Theological Contributions" to NT theology focus on two matters: (1) the pervasive emphasis on "Jesus as God's unique Envoy or messenger, simultaneously claiming for himself both Deity and obedient submission to Deity" (p. 39) and (2) the role of God the Father as the initiator and goal of Christian salvation. This role, he believes, "is rarely noticed or appreciated by interpreters" (p. 39). People believe in Jesus as a *result* of being "born of God" or "born from above." God is working in a person's life before that person "believes" or "comes to the Light" (cf. 3:21; 6:37, 44, 65; 9:3). "Those who, in Emily Dickinson's words, 'choose the Envoy—and spurn the groom' have failed to understand the Gospel of John" (p. 42). There is, I believe, a similar tension in NT theology as a whole and in Paul's theology in particular, where the "center" or coordinating theme seems to be not the person and work of Christ, as fundamental as they are, but God the Father's salvation through his Son and his Spirit.

Each section is headed by Michaels's own translation, which well reflects the simple directness of John's Greek style, with its avoidance of artificial rhetorical flourishes, sophisticated vocabulary, and long complex sentences. Reading Michaels's exegesis of verses or passages generally regarded as both difficult and important (such as 1:18, 29; 5:18; 12:39–41; 14:28; 20: 17, 22), I found his treatment

to be always insightful and creative even if not always totally convincing. He constantly probes the text with original questions and graciously interacts with alternative views. Commendably, he is not hesitant to break with exegetical tradition. For example, he speaks of a “preamble” (1:1–5) rather than of a “prologue” (1:1–18) and of “the light” rather than “the Word” as the major theme in that preamble (p. 45). As for John 21, he observes that “the transition between John 20 and 21 is not inconsistent with other narrative transitions in the Gospel” (p. 1024), noting the repeated phrase “all these things” (*meta tauta*) in 5:1; 6:1; 7:1; 21:1.

Not all evangelical readers will be satisfied with Michaels’s stance on the question, “Does the Gospel of John put words in Jesus’ mouth?”: “Perhaps so, though not as often as some might think, and when I conclude that it does, my job as a commentator is to leave them there” (p. xii). But few will disagree that in this Gospel there is an inextricable blend of historical reminiscence and theological reflection.

The reader will not find here a comprehensive bibliography on this Gospel (Keener’s commentary provides that), or detailed analyses of key terms (such as Brown’s commentary gives), or an overall discussion of historical issues (for this see C. L. Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of John’s Gospel* [Downers Grove: IVP, 2001]), although there are full indexes of subjects, Scripture references, and early extrabiblical literature. But if one wishes an up-to-date, creative but careful exegesis of a given passage, with copious cross-references to other Johannine and biblical passages, there will not be disappointment. With its greater length and detail, this volume has an edge over other recent non-technical commentaries on John such as those by Lincoln, Borchert, Whitacre, Köstenberger, Beasley-Murray, Moloney, and Witherington—what an embarrassment of riches we now have! In Michaels’s most recent contribution to the study of the Fourth Gospel we are offered a balanced, nourishing, and very generous meal of Johannine fare, prepared by a master chef and served up appetizingly. Enjoy the meal!

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Rodrigo J. Morales. *The Spirit and the Restoration of Israel: New Exodus and New Creation Motifs in Galatians*. WUNT 2.282. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010. xii + 200 pp. £49.00/\$97.50.

The current work slightly revises Rodrigo Morales’s doctoral dissertation at Duke University under the supervision of Richard Hays. Morales seeks to explain the significance of receiving the Spirit in Galatians, and in particular tries to discern the connection between the blessing of Abraham (Gal 3:14) and the reception of the Spirit. Morales conducts his study in light of Jewish teachings on the gift of the Spirit, arguing that the coming of the Spirit accords with the restoration of Israel.

Morales sets the scene by investigating texts that describe the outpouring of the Spirit in both the OT and Second Temple Judaism. In most instances Paul does not allude to these texts, according to Morales. Instead Paul draws on a wide tradition which would almost certainly shape his conception of the gift of the Spirit. Morales argues that both the OT (Isa 11:1–16; 32:15–20; 42:1–9; 43:14–44:8; 48:16; 57:14–21;



59:15b–21; 61:1–11; 63:7–64–12; Ezek 11:14–21; 18:30–32; 36:16–38; 37:1–14; 39:21–21; Joel 2:18–3:5) and Second Temple (*Jubilees*, *The Treatise on the Two Spirits*, *The Words of the Luminaries*, 4Q521, *Psalms of Solomon*, *The Similitudes of Enoch*, *The Testament of Judah*, *The Testament of Levi*) texts on the dispensing of the Spirit are associated with the new exodus and the restoration of Israel. These texts on the Spirit exhibit some diversity, but they typically point to an eschatological future and the coming of the new creation and a time when God's people will be enabled to obey him. Scholars may quibble here and there over Morales's exegesis, but I would argue that he makes his case clearly and convincingly from both the OT and Second Temple literature.

The book then turns to Paul and Galatians. He begins by saying like Cosgrove and Lull that the entire letter "hangs" on the reception of the Spirit. The Spirit signals the restoration of God's promises, but these promises are interpreted in light of Jesus' death and resurrection. The coming of the Spirit does not mean submission to the Torah and circumcision but freedom from the law. Morales examines the text of Gal 3:1–14 in some detail, providing many helpful exegetical insights along the way. He is clearly conversant with the literature on these verses and presents his own case clearly. He interprets the curse of the law in Gal 3:10 along the same lines as N. T. Wright and James Scott, with the backdrop for the interpretation of the text stemming from Deut 27–30 and the curse of exile. But Morales departs from Wright and Scott in seeing the curse as death rather than exile (which improves their reading).

The first person pronouns in Galatians (3:10–4:7) are the subject of significant controversy. Morales contends that they invariably refer to the Jews. Gentiles are included in Israel's restoration (but not in the first person plural pronouns), for they too receive the Spirit. The author makes a good case for the notion that the gift of the Spirit in Gal 3:14 is tied to the blessing of the Spirit promised in Isa 44:3 and follows James Scott in seeing the heir in Gal 4:1–7 as Israel under the law. Morales draws upon John Barclay in seeing chs. 5–6 as integral to the remainder of Galatians. The church was fractured by communal friction, and the Spirit-flesh polarity picks up the emphasis on the Spirit from the first part of the letter. The Spirit-flesh opposition should be interpreted in terms of redemptive history rather than anthropologically. The eschatological character of Paul's argument is evident in 5:5–6. In terms of the fulfillment of the law in 5:14, Morales follows Hays in seeing a primary reference to the fulfillment of the law by Christ. The works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit (5:19–23; cf. also 6:8) are also eschatological, denoting life in the old age and the new era respectively.

Morales has contributed a fine study that is replete with insights and careful exegesis, demonstrating the eschatological character of the whole of Galatians. The focus on the Spirit ties together nicely Gal 1–4 with 5–6. Furthermore, he rightly hearkens back to the OT in unearthing Paul's eschatological vision. This is not to say that everything Morales says is convincing, though space forbids the kind of detailed interaction that is needed. Redemptive-history is the rage (rightly in most respects), but Morales falls into the either-or of pitting redemptive-history over against anthropology in discussing the Spirit-flesh distinction. The argument that the first person plural pronouns in 3:10–4:7 refer only to Jews is quite strained, especially in 4:6. Such sudden shifts in the argument are too clever by half. So too, reading the curse of the law in terms of the exile, though it is not foreign to Paul's thought per se, does not account well for what Paul is doing specifically in Gal 3:10–14, for he addresses Gentiles individually, warning them about the consequences of living under the Torah.

Morales rightly sees from the OT that when the Spirit comes the law will be kept, and he also correctly emphasizes that believers are not under the law according to Paul. But somewhat surprisingly he does not clearly explain the tension in Pauline thought, with the result that the empowering work

of the Spirit for a new obedience is slighted. Perhaps he does not unpack the work of the Spirit clearly since he focuses on Christ's fulfillment of the law in 5:14. In any case, Morales's own study provides the ammunition for seeing both continuity and discontinuity in terms of the Spirit and the law. With the arrival of the new creation there is both abolition and fulfillment of the law. Finally, the cross and justification are not the subject of Morales's study, but he wrongly and too quickly says that the Spirit is the central issue of the letter, ignoring the programmatic nature of Gal 2:15–21, where justification and the cross come to the forefront.

This review should not end on a negative note. We can be grateful to Morales for tracing the connections between the promise of the Spirit in the OT and Second Temple literature and Paul and for emphasizing the redemptive-historical character of Pauline theology.

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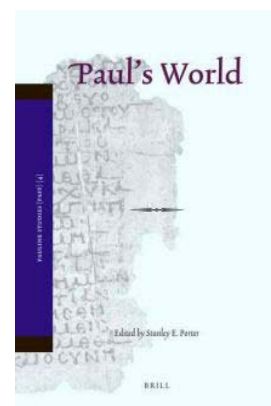
Stanley E. Porter, ed. *Paul's World*. Pauline Studies 4. Leiden: Brill, 2008. xii + 284 pp. £89.00/\$130.00.

In 2005 the first of the Pauline Studies series was published. This series has now grown to six volumes with ten volumes being planned. Each volume is edited by well-known NT scholar Stanley Porter and is composed of scholarly essays devoted to key issues concerning the apostle Paul. Books within this series are devoted to the Pauline canon, his opponents, his theology, his background, and forms of his letter writing.

This fourth volume is devoted to the world in which Paul lives. It contains twelve articles written by a mixture of senior and junior scholars from Canada, the United States of America, Mexico, Australia, and Germany.

Stanley Porter provides an introductory article to orient the reader to this diverse collection of essays. In his essay entitled "Defining the Parameters of Paul's World: An Introduction," he helps to define what is meant by Paul's world. It is a broad concept and includes "the culture, history and tradition that moved across the face of the ancient world of the first century" (p. 2). Religious, social, cultural, literary, rhetorical, and linguistic factors shaped the first century world in which Paul lived and ministered. These defined who Paul was and who he became. These aspects are often overlooked or assumed in the study of Paul but they are worthy of attention.

Several of the articles within *Paul's World* are written in response to other scholars. For example, Ronald Hock's article "The Problem of Paul's Social Class: Further Reflections" draws conclusions on Paul's social class in relation to the trade of tentmaking. This trade helped to support Paul's apostolic ministry (1 Thess 2:9; 1 Cor 4:12; cf. Acts 18:3) and has been considered to be a key for Paul's upbringing. A large part of Hock's article involves interacting with scholars such as Todd Still, Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, and Calvin Roetzel. After considering the conclusion of these scholars, Hock concludes that while tentmakers came from a lower social class, Paul appears to have learned this trade after his conversion. Other aspects of Paul's writing, such as his dual citizenship, education, and use of athletic images, exhibit that he emerged from a higher class. Hock, thus, concludes that Paul had an aristocratic



origin and upbringing. He learned his tentmaking trade after his conversion, and thus this occupation does not provide a key to his social class.

Sean Adams's article "Crucifixion in the Ancient World: A Response to L. L. Welborn" is also a specific response to previous scholarship. In his volume, *Paul, the Fool of Christ: A Study of 1 Corinthians 1–4 in the Comic Philosophic Tradition*, Welborn argues that Paul should be seen in relation to the mime in the Greco-Roman world. According to Welborn, this makes the best sense of Paul's statements of being a fool of Christ in a passage like 1 Cor 4:9–13. Welborn's conclusion is contrary to the church fathers and the early church's viewpoint that despised the Greco-Roman mime. Sean Adams rightly addresses problems in Welborn's thesis from the nature of crucifixion in the Roman world. He illustrates that the cross was not merely a means of capital punishment, but it was also a means to disgrace the victim. Worshipping a crucified God was inconceivably backwards, rather than being a Greco-Roman comical idea.

Other articles raise completely new areas in the exploration of Paul's world rather than addressing other scholars primarily. For example, Ron Fay addresses "Greco-Roman concepts of Deity." He surveys the Greco-Roman understanding of deity as expressed in Jupiter, the mystery cults of Isis and Mithras, and the Imperial emperor cult. He concludes that the Greco-Roman concept of god had a broad semantic domain in first-century Rome. There was no theological barrier between divinity and humanity as most heroes or emperors could aspire to be gods. Most pagan worship of gods in Rome would have been focused on benefits in this world rather than in eternity.

In an article entitled "The Languages that Paul did not speak," Stanley Porter examines Acts 14 to explore languages that Paul may also have spoken. While Aramaic would have been used in his preaching in the synagogue and Greek was the *lingua franca* of the day, his confrontation with those in Lycaonia, Lystra, and Derbe illustrated that he knew many other languages. Such a conclusion opens up new perspectives for considering how Paul related to the world in which he traveled.

Panayotis Coutsompis writes also about religious and imperial cults in "Paul, the Cults in Corinth, and the Corinthian Correspondence." Idolatry and food offered to idols was a large issue in Corinth. The author presents the large number of deities in Corinth, the frequent sacrifices made at the Asklepiion Foundation, and the growing evidence of the influence of the Roman imperial cult in Corinth. As a result, idolatry was a great problem that the Corinthians needed to confront. This information adds emphasis to Paul's command to "flee idolatry" in 1 Cor 10:14 since idolatry was a great reality for the Corinthian Christian. It also reveals how great the Christian challenge is to a culture like that of first century Corinth when he claims Jesus is Lord alone (cf. 1 Cor 8:5–6).

Other articles that complete this volume are the following. In "Hellenistic Schools in Jerusalem and Paul's Rhetorical Education," Andrew Pitts develops further the discussion on Hellenistic schools in Jerusalem. He concludes that Paul would have had access to basic Greek literacy and possibly even study with a *grammaticus* even in Jerusalem. In "Paul and the Athletic Ideal in Antiquity: A Case Study in Wrestling with Word and Image," James Harrison concludes that Paul transformed the athletic image from that of the great man who elevated his city or state to the Christian training for eternal benefits. Michael Thate examines the only reference to Satan in Paul's letter to the Romans in "Paul at the Ball: *Ecclesia Victor* and the Cosmic Defeat of Personified Evil in Romans 16:20." In his article "Ephesians 5:18–19 and Religious Intoxication in the World of Paul," Craig Evans finds the well-known cult of Dionysius, which linked religious experience with intoxication, behind the wording of Eph 5:18–19. In "The Letter to Philemon: A Discussion with J. Albert Harrill," Tobias Nicklas rebuts J. A. Harrill's claim

that Paul was a participating member in the slave system. Finally, Craig Keener's "Some Rhetorical Techniques in Acts 24:2–21" compares rhetorical technique with Paul's defense before Felix and concludes that Paul was rhetorically skilled.

Porter rightly concludes that the essays found in this collection exhibit three points. First, while Paul's world is often neglected in secondary literature, the field offers a broad and fertile field for research. Second, Paul's world was intricately intertwined with the political arena in which he lived. Several of the articles explore the close relationship between religion and politics, particularly in the exploration of the emperor cult. Third, larger social, cultural, and religious patterns influence particular passages in Paul's writing and the book of Acts.

There is a great amount of diversity in this volume from perspectives, topics, and contributors. This will stimulate anyone looking for pursuing further research in the Greco-Roman world of the NT as well as the world that Paul encountered. The diversity could frustrate someone looking for an overview of the world that Paul encountered. All those interested in Pauline studies will also benefit from these essays.

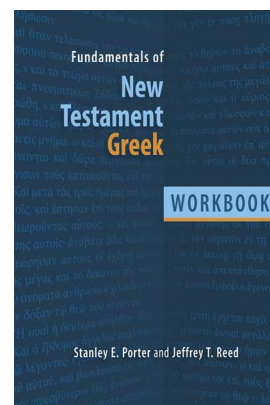
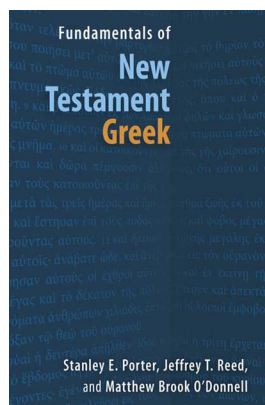
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Stanley E. Porter, Jeffrey T. Reed, and Matthew Brook O'Donnell. *Fundamentals of New Testament Greek*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010. xxii + 466 pp. \$39.99.

Stanley E. Porter and Jeffrey T. Reed. *Fundamentals of New Testament Greek: Workbook*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010. xii + 260 pp. \$20.00.

This new textbook for NT Greek is a full introduction, covering all the major components of a first-year course in depth. After preliminary material, the substance of the textbook consists of thirty chapters dealing with the alphabet, nouns, adjectives and pronouns, verbs, the article, prepositions, clauses, etc., in a logical order. Each chapter contains an outline of concepts to be covered and a lengthy and varied vocabulary list before dealing with a small number of topics. Paradigms are clearly laid out, and new concepts explained. After the main grammar chapters, there is a bibliography and then a full summary of verb formulas, verb endings, verb accents, paradigms, principal parts, a Greek-English vocabulary list, a subject index, and finally a quick grammatical index. The book is well-produced, with only a few printing errors (e.g., apparently a missing footnote [p. 131] and duplicated footnote references [p. 247n4]).

Each chapter of the *Workbook* contains exercises in using the material covered in the text, designed both to reinforce and extend a student's knowledge of that material together with that previously dealt with. There are exercises in changing the format of words, as well as real sentences from the Greek



NT to translate (with appropriate vocabulary help for words and constructions not yet dealt with). There is also a sizeable passage from the NT for translation, again with much needed assistance in the form of word lists. Footnotes in both text and *Workbook* add details for the interested student. The last part of the *Workbook* duplicates the text book material from the verb formulas to the vocabulary list, presumably for easy access.

There would be little point writing another first-year text book for NT Greek, if it were very similar to others already on the market. This text, however, is distinctive, so it may well fill a gap by adopting a somewhat different approach. For a first-year text, it is quite detailed, and the authors make no apology for that. Indeed, they suggest that some material, some of which is marked off by a shaded background, may be left for the second year of study if a student or lecturer considered that wise. They emphasise, however, that they want the student to have as full a list of vocabulary items and grammatical forms as possible, so that he or she can move on to reading the Greek NT as soon as possible without having to look up words very frequently. This is surely a good aim to have, although some may find the amount of detail given a little overwhelming, especially in the verbal paradigms that include a full treatment of the optative mood, for example. On the other hand, it explains the contractions that have resulted in the forms of words that occur in the NT, as much as possible, and this may well help students understand how the forms originated and perhaps make them easier to memorise.

Another distinctive of this book is the somewhat individualistic method of parsing, which again is more detailed than most texts of NT Greek. Its usefulness in detail may override its distinctiveness, although it might take some time for teachers to adapt to the more detailed system. Again, while accents are not always given a full treatment in such texts, the authors of this book clearly wish to provide as thorough a treatment of them as possible.

As one would expect, with Porter's name as one of the authors, the matter of verbal aspect is dealt with in accord with his viewpoint on this important subject. Thus, the book is written from a perspective that is committed to the 'tenses' having reference to aspect and not to time at all. Thus, the imperfect tense is treated as a subcategory of the present tense, so that it 'conveys imperfective verbal aspect . . . in narrative (or past-time)' (p. 60), and the future tense does not refer to future time but 'conveys expectation regarding an event' (p. 81). This viewpoint is worked into the treatment of the text in a thorough manner, although this reviewer found a number of instances where time-reference seems to have crept back in. For example, the aorist tense-form 'is not confined to reference to past time,' but 'this is its predominant textual usage' (p. 84). Whether the notion of time-reference has been entirely excluded as thoroughly as seems to be required by some statements of theory is then a matter of debate. In the end, each student and teacher will need to decide whether they agree with this viewpoint about verbal aspect and find it theoretically and pedagogically viable and, hence, whether to attempt to teach and learn about verbs in the Greek NT using this book. Teachers will no doubt wish to review this book for classroom use since it has many strengths and treats a number of topics that are not normally given in such detail.

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Jerry L. Sumney. *Philippians: A Greek Student's Intermediate Reader*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 2007. xxiv + 161 pp. \$17.99.

Jerry Sumney has produced a very useful aid for students who have already completed an introductory course in Greek and who now want to take their language skills to a higher level. It will also be of value to those whose Greek studies lie in the more distant past and who wish to revive the skills which have become rusty.

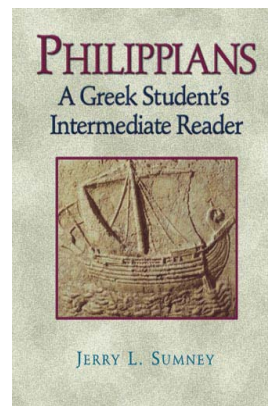
His book is designed to lead the reader through the Greek text of Philippians step by step. Thus, at the beginning of each section of text, the full Greek text is provided, along with an English translation which is intended to bring out significant interpretative issues. Sumney then works through the section, phrase by phrase. In doing so, he parses significant Greek words and highlights grammatical constructions. Grammatical terms which may be unfamiliar are highlighted in bold type and briefly explained in a glossary at the end of the book. The most important constructions are frequently explained and illustrated in “text boxes” at the appropriate locations in the discussion of the biblical text.

To some extent, Sumney is obliged to provide some literary and historical comment in order for his discussion of the text to be useful (for example, the typical structure of the opening of a Hellenistic letter), but clearly he cannot provide the detail and argumentation which would be found in a detailed commentary. While there is a measure of overlap between the material in this book and that found in a commentary, it is not really fair to judge this book by the standards of a commentary. Sumney sticks fairly firmly to the task of explaining the language issues, and those who wish detailed exegetical and theological discussions will have to augment this book with traditional commentaries.

Sumney constantly references major exegetical tools, such as BDAG, BDF, LSJ, etc., as well as significant commentaries (he frequently cites those by O'Brien and Fee). It is helpful that he also makes good use of Wallace's *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, which will be more accessible than BDF for many readers.

Each section of text ends with a selection of monographs and articles which can be consulted for further study (although these are not particularly current, with only a few items having been published more recently than 2000), and there is an annotated list of important exegetical tools provided at the end of the book. Also at the end of the book, there is a summary of the syntax of NT Greek, which should be a useful reference guide.

This book will not tell you all there is to know about the Greek text of Philippians. For example, the much-debated term in Phil 2:6, *harpagmos*, is dealt with in just a few lines with no reference to the interpretation “something to be used for his own advantage,” which has gained favour in recent years. However, Sumney does alert the reader to the fact that this is a debated issue and so allows them to follow it up if they wish, and N. T. Wright's significant article on the topic is indicated among the resources for further study.



All in all, this book provides a very useful, self-contained, teaching tool for those who wish to improve their Greek. I hope that many who are learning Greek, or who began to learn it long ago, will find fresh encouragement in this book to engage more seriously with the Greek text of the NT.

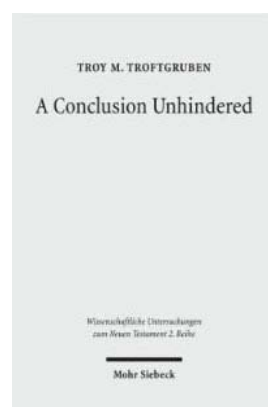
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Troy M. Troftgruben. *A Conclusion Unhindered: A Study of the Ending of Acts within Its Literary Environment*. WUNT 2.280. Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2010. xiii + 232 pp. £59.00/\$117.50.

The ending of Acts (28:16–31) is abrupt and surprising to say the least. The fate of Paul, his trial before Caesar, and whether he was able to continue travels westward are questions that Luke does not answer. As John Chrysostom noted, “The author brings his narrative to this point, and leaves the hearer thirsty for more” (*Hom. Act. 55*). The problem of the ending of Acts has led to numerous proposals: Luke had no more reliable information about Paul; he ran out of papyrus; he did write a third volume, but it has been lost; or Luke did not want to end with the unedifying details of Paul’s death. Troy Troftgruben’s revised dissertation completed at Princeton Theological Seminary suggests, however, that what is missing in these discussions is an analysis of *how* Acts concludes (instead of *why* it concludes as it does). The conclusion of Acts does provide closure, but a lack of understanding of *how* ancient writings conclude has prevented scholars from seeing how Luke gives closure to his second volume. What is needed is a comparative study of the many ways in which ancient writings provide closure.



In ch. 2 Troftgruben argues that while all writings end, not all of them conclude. To conclude is to provide closure to a book and to justify the end of the narrative, and there are numerous ways authors do this. Closure is accomplished in three ways. First, the most common endings are those which provide resolution of tension and complication. Whether it is the end of a war, the defeat of the villain, or the reunification of lovers, resolution provides a solution to the conflict in the narrative. The second means for providing closure is completion. This is often accomplished when the ending alludes to earlier portions of the narrative. This may take place through circularity where the final scene corresponds to the beginning scene, through parallelism where a final scene mirrors scenes that occur throughout the narrative or simply summarizes preceding events. The third way a narrative may conclude is through “terminal markers” such as closing scenes (e.g., a funeral), a closing comment from the author, or a summary of past events. But endings do not always provide closure. An open ending produces the sense that the ending is unjustified and that there is more to the story. In addition to irresolution and incompleteness, a narrative’s ending may remain open through “tangents”—where an ending contains topics unrelated to the rest of the narrative—and “linkage”—where the story refers to components of a narrative laying outside the boundaries of the current narrative. Given these ways of providing closure or openness, the interpreter of Acts needs to ask, “What kind of closure/openness is provided by the ending?”

In ch. 3 Troftgruben presents a study of endings and closure in ancient literature. Prose fiction tends to end with closure. For example, all of the extant Greek novels end with resolution—specifically, the reunification of separated lovers. Many of them also conclude with terminal markers such as “so concludes the story of . . .” or “I think that this final chapter will be most pleasurable to my readers.” Similarly, with ancient biography one finds numerous techniques for closure. Terminal markers such as a list of descendants, funerary events, and explicit summarizing words from the narrator end many of Plutarch’s *Lives*. Or in *Cato Minor* narrative expectations are fulfilled as Cato’s prophecy regarding the rise of Caesar is fulfilled later in the biography. Further, the death of Cato functions as a representative scene (“completion”) as his death scene portrays him doing things that summarize his entire life. Ancient epics, however, have more complicated endings. On the one hand, the *Iliad* generates closure through circularity as both the first and the final books have scenes on Mt. Olympus regarding Zeus’s will and conversations regarding Achilles’s fate. Closure is also enabled by a focus on Achilles’s wrath and Zeus’s will. On the other hand, the epic ends without narration of the end of the Trojan War. Both the Troy’s fall and Achilles’s death are alluded to but never narrated. So in this way the ending contains aspects of closure and openness.

In chs. 4–5 Troftgruben applies his discoveries of closure and openness to the ending of Acts and suggests that the ending of Acts contains both features. Troftgruben notes numerous instances whereby the ending alludes to earlier scenes and motifs within Acts as well as the Gospel. For example, Acts 28:17–20 provides a clear summary of Paul’s previous trials (chs. 22–26). In addition, it recalls Paul’s typical practice of first seeking out local Jews. His claim that he is on trial for “the hope of Israel” (28:20) summarizes one of the main emphases of his defense speeches (cf. 23:6; 24:15). Further, Paul’s speech to the Jews in Acts 28:23–28 concludes numerous proclamations throughout Luke-Acts, including Jesus in Nazareth (Luke 4:16–30), Peter at Pentecost (2:14–40), and Paul in the synagogue (13:45–52). His speech recalls major motifs occurring throughout Luke-Acts (e.g., the importance of the OT scriptures and salvation to the Gentiles). There are, then, numerous indicators of narrational closure. However, there are also some surprising features of the conclusion that do not terminate the story. Troftgruben suggests that Paul’s final words to the Roman Jews (quoting Isa 6:9–10) function less as a final write-off or curse and more as a warning intended to bring about repentance. The reader is left wondering about Israel’s acceptance of God’s salvation. Further, the final summary of Paul’s apostolic witness is one of ongoing activity; thus, while the narrative is terminated, Paul’s witness continues. According to Troftgruben, “Unfulfilled expectations signify incompleteness, and they hinder closure because they cause the reader to consider events beyond the end of the narrative” (p. 161).

Troftgruben rejects, however, the proposal of Daniel Marguerat, who argues that the ending of Acts imitates a rhetoric of silence thereby nudging the reader to actively end the story. In this case, the ending’s silence encourages the reader to continue Paul’s legacy in giving witness unto the ends of the earth. Marguerat points to Chrysostom, who claimed that Luke “brings his narrative to this point, and leaves the hearer thirsty so that he fills up the lack by himself through reflection.” Troftgruben contests Marguerat’s proposal, claiming that Acts is fundamentally negative about humanity’s ability to carry out God’s purposes. God’s purpose is accomplished *in spite of* humanity, not as a result of it. Further, Marguerat’s use of the Chrysostom quote stems from a less authentic manuscript and probably did not contain the italicized phrase. Additionally, Marguerat and others misinterpret the final scene (28:30–31) by focusing on Paul’s legacy when in reality the scene is merely “representative of the larger movement of apostolic witness” and “the fact that Paul is the particular apostle in 28:30–31 seems to have limited significance” (p. 166). The closing verses highlight God, Jesus, and the Spirit—not

Paul. Instead, Troftgruben argues that the openness should be understood as a narratival means of “linkage”—that is “a form of openness that connects the story of the narrative . . . to another, subsequent story” (p. 169). This story is not a written text but is rather God’s continued saga of witness to the whole inhabited world. As was the case with the epics that made links to stories outside their own narrative, so the ending of Acts implies a design whereby God continues to bring forth salvation to the ends of the earth. Thus, the ending of Acts brings completion to the narrative while at the same time suggesting that God’s mission in the world continues throughout history.

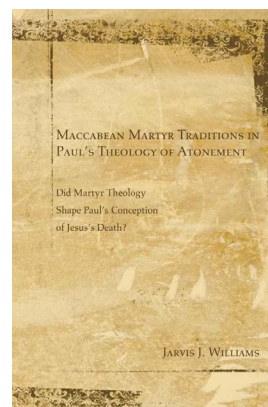
This book fulfills the task that it sets out to accomplish. Troftgruben’s study of narrative closure and openness truly clarifies *how* Acts ends, and the reader is better able to discern how both aspects are present in the ending. His treatment of the endings of other ancient writings is enlightening, making comparisons with Acts 28 quite easy for the reader. In lieu of his recognition of the openness of the ending of Acts, especially intriguing is his proposal that the end makes a linkage to an ongoing divine saga. I found, however, his criticism of Marguerat’s important proposal unconvincing. Whether the ending of Acts intends a “linkage” to the narrative of God’s continuing work in the world (Troftgruben) or whether it encourages the reader to continue Paul’s witness-bearing legacy (Marguerat), both proposals rightly identify the openness of the conclusion of Acts. Troftgruben’s rejection of Marguerat’s proposal results in some odd claims. That Luke is entirely pessimistic about humanity’s ability to continue God’s work in the world and God’s work continues in spite of humanity is overstated given that Luke’s favorite term for Christ-followers is “witness.” And that Acts 28:30–31 is simply representative of the movement’s apostolic witness and has little to do with Paul himself cannot be justified. Finally, I was disappointed that Troftgruben devoted only one page to Acts 27:1–28:15 given that scholars (e.g., Daniel Marguerat and Loveday Alexander) have rightly noted that this text functions as part of the epilogue of Acts and is crucial for understanding the conclusion. Despite these criticisms, Troftgruben’s book is a valuable resource for understanding Acts 28:16–31 and one to which I will return.

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Jarvis J. Williams. *Maccabean Martyr Traditions in Paul’s Theology of Atonement: Did Martyr Theology Shape Paul’s Conception of Jesus’s Death?* Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2010. xiv + 141 pp. \$18.00.

Scholars have for generations debated the influences on Paul’s portrayal of Jesus’s death. Is Jesus’s death best understood as the noble death of a martyr, as an example to follow, or as a vicarious sacrifice to atone for the sins of others? In his published dissertation, completed under Thomas Schreiner at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Jarvis Williams offers a well-reasoned argument for the influence of Martyr Theology on the apostle’s presentation of “Jesus’s death both as an atoning sacrifice and as a saving event for Jews and Gentiles” (p. 2). By Martyr Theology, Williams refers specifically to the theology of Maccabean martyrdom represented especially in 2 and 4 Maccabees.

In ch. 2, the author examines key texts in 2 and 4 Maccabees and concludes that these documents “present the martyrs as atoning sacrifices and as a saving



event for Israel” (p. 27). He notes scholarly disagreement regarding the dating of 4 Maccabees, with many positing a date of composition in the late first or early second century C.E. Williams clarifies that he is not claiming that Paul was literarily dependent on 4 Maccabees, but that he was shaped by the theology of martyrdom espoused most clearly by 2 and 4 Maccabees but that was likely already extant in other Second Temple Jewish texts that clearly antedate the apostle (p. 32). Williams contends that the authors of 2 Maccabees and especially 4 Maccabees conflate a Greco-Roman pagan notion that salvation may come through a human being’s self-sacrifice with sacrificial imagery from the OT cult. He claims that 4 Macc 17:22 is the only place in extant literature besides Rom 3:25 that *hilastērion* is applied to the vicarious death of a person for another’s sins, and he argues that the term indicates that the martyrs’ deaths effected both expiation and propitiation, purifying the land and saving Israel from God’s wrath (p. 63).

In ch. 3, Williams examines key texts in the OT that have been proposed as possible background for Paul’s conception of Jesus’s death, focusing attention on Gen 22, Exod 32, Num 25, and Isa 53. He claims that the Servant in Isa 52:13–53:12 refers to an individual figure whose death as a guilt offering (*āšām*, 53:10) is both an atoning sacrifice and a saving event for Jews and Gentiles (pp. 82–83). While this text serves as the closest OT parallel to Martyr Theology and Paul’s portrayal of Jesus’s death, he concludes that while Isa 53 may have influenced Paul, this influence was not direct but came “through the lens of Martyr Theology” (p. 84).

In ch. 4, Williams analyzes Paul’s presentation of Jesus’s death, focusing mainly on Rom 3:21–26 (pp. 85–101). The author’s argument hinges on his analysis of *hilastērion* in Romans 3:25 and *katallassō* (“to reconcile”) in Rom 5:10 and 2 Cor 5:18–21, as these terms are explicitly used in Martyr Theology. According to Williams, *hilastērion* refers to the mercy seat in cultic contexts in the LXX and Heb 9:5. However, this background of cultic animal sacrifice does not fully explain Paul’s argument that “Jesus (a human) was sacrificed to save Jews and Gentiles, just as the martyrs (humans) were sacrificed to save Israel” (p. 96). Williams contends that the presence of the key terms *katallassō*, *haima* (“blood”), and *orgē* (“wrath”) in Rom 5:9–10 serve as clear pointers to the influence of Martyr Theology on Paul’s presentation of Jesus as a human being whose vicarious death serves as an atoning sacrifice and saving event (p. 106). The author’s argument is strong, though his point is obscured somewhat by his incorrect reference on p. 106 to 4 Macc 7:21–22 as an occurrence of the term *katallassō*, which occurs in Martyr Theology only at 2 Macc 1:5; 7:33; 8:29.

Jarvis Williams has made a reasonably strong case for the influence of Martyr Theology on the apostle Paul’s portrayal of Jesus’ death as an atoning sacrifice and saving event. While I am in broad agreement with Williams’s thesis, I offer two critiques that call into question certain points in his argument. First, Williams does not sufficiently address a fundamental difference between the atoning death of the martyrs, which atoned only for Israel, and Jesus’s death, which atoned for all, Jews and Gentiles. Eleazar in 4 Macc 6:28 asks for God to be merciful “to *your people*,” and the narrator records that the martyrs’ death became a ransom *for the sin of the nation* (4 Macc 17:21). In contrast, the “ungodly” (*asebēs*) such as Antiochus are not atoned for but await eternal punishment (cf. 4 Macc 12:11–12). However, Paul’s claim is that Jesus died “for the ungodly” (*hyper asebōn*, Rom 5:6), and “for all” (*hyper pantōn*, 2 Cor 5:14–15; 1 Tim 2:6), benefiting both Jews and Gentiles (Gal 3:13–14). Williams briefly acknowledges this to be a “fundamental difference” between Martyr Theology and Paul (pp. 122–23), but in my judgment he does not sufficiently address this point of disconnect. A potential solution for Williams may be to interpret Paul’s formulation of Jesus’ death “for all” as something of a

corrective to Martyr Theology's focus on national atonement. Williams suggests that Paul likely read Isa 52:13–53:12 through the lens of martyr theology, but perhaps Paul has recovered the Isaianic emphasis on “many nations” benefiting from the work of the Servant (Isa 52:15 MT; 53:11 MT; cf. 42:6; 49:6) that was not appropriated by Martyr Theology.

Second, Williams at times does not sufficiently establish the proposed parallels between Paul and Martyr Theology. For example, he claims that *exēgorasen* (“he redeemed”) in Gal 3:13 is “conceptually related” to *antipsychon* (“ransom”) in 4 Macc 6:29 and 17:22 (which should be 17:21), but not one of the verses he cites as evidence for this interpretation uses either of these terms (p. 113n128). He claims similarly that *apolytrōsis* (“redemption”) in Rom 3:24 is a synonym for *antipsychon* in 4 Maccabees (p. 88), but does not offer appropriate evidence for this, such as discussions in lexicons or usage of these terms elsewhere. These two critiques do not overturn the author's stimulating thesis that Martyr Theology has significantly influenced Paul's presentation of Jesus's death, but they do call for greater precision in argumentation and for further exploration of differences between Paul and Martyr Theology.

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HISTORY AND HISTORICAL THEOLOGY

Gerald L. Bray, ed. *We Believe in One God*. Ancient Christian Doctrine 1. Downers Grove: IVP, 2009. xlii + 159 pp. \$50.00.

John Anthony McGuckin, ed. *We Believe in One Lord Jesus Christ*. Ancient Christian Doctrine 2. Downers Grove: IVP, 2009. xxii + 191 pp. \$50.00.

Mark J. Edwards, ed. *We Believe in the Crucified and Risen Lord*. Ancient Christian Doctrine 3. Downers Grove: IVP, 2009. xl + 190 pp. \$50.00.

Joel C. Elowsky, ed. *We Believe in the Holy Spirit*. Ancient Christian Doctrine 4. Downers Grove: IVP, 2009. xxxiv + 309 pp. \$50.00.

Angelo Di Berardino, ed. *We Believe in One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church*. Ancient Christian Doctrine 5. Downers Grove: IVP, 2010. xxxii + 316 pp. \$50.00.

English-speaking evangelical church historians and historical theologians have always been interested in the history of Christianity in the British Isles and North America. This should surprise no one; these are, after all, our contexts, our forebears, our native language. For the most part, scholars who were interested in pre-modern church history and theology tended to focus on the Reformation era. This is also unremarkable, considering the reformational roots of the evangelical movement. But recent years have witnessed some new and perhaps surprising interests among evangelical scholars.

In the past generation, scholarly interest has shifted decisively toward the pre-Reformation period, particularly the Patristic era. Virtually every evangelical college or seminary of any size has at

least one historian or theologian with expertise in Patristic Studies. Many other evangelical Patristic specialists teach in university contexts. A number of schools, most notably Wheaton College, have hosted significant conferences or established research centers devoted to the early church. Influential periodicals such as *First Things* and *Touchstone* and initiatives like Evangelicals and Catholics Together have brought many evangelical thinkers in closer dialog with Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox scholars, furthering the growing evangelical interest in Patristics.

Evangelical publishers have expended considerable resources in promoting this agenda by publishing important studies by evangelicals (and others) committed to Patristic (and, to a lesser degree, Medieval) *ressourcement*. In recent years Eerdmans, Baker, Crossway, and Zondervan have all published scholarly studies and popular introductions to the early church and/or constructive proposals that are heavily influenced by Patristic theology and themes. But no publisher has invested more energy into (re) introducing evangelicals to the early church than InterVarsity Press.

IVP has been at the vanguard of evangelical engagement with the church fathers for well over a decade. First, they published the widely acclaimed Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture Series (ACCS), a twenty-nine volume project under the general editorship of Tom Oden. Each volume in the ACCS includes a scholarly introduction by the volume editor and compiles relevant Patristic commentary. IVP followed up on the success of the ACCS by publishing the Ancient Christian Texts Series (ACTS), an ongoing project under the general editorship of Oden and Gerald Bray. Unlike the ACCS, the ACTS produces new translations of Patristic commentaries in their entirety.

IVP's latest venture into Patristic Studies, also under the watchful guidance of Oden, is the five-volume Ancient Christian Doctrine Series (ACDS). According to Oden's series introduction at the beginning of the first volume, the ACDS is an ecumenical project that seeks to introduce modern readers, especially evangelicals, to the theological priorities of key Christian leaders between the first and eighth centuries. According to Oden, the series aims to "clarify the ancient ecumenical faith into which Christians of all times and places are baptized" (1:ix). Following the model of the ACCS, each volume compiles a range of Patristic quotes that function as commentary on each of the phrases of the Nicene Creed, "the most authoritative common confession of worldwide Christianity" (1:ix). Oden underscores that though each volume has been edited according to the "rigorous requirements of academic readers," the ACDS is first and foremost intended for the edification of pastors and laity (1:xvii)

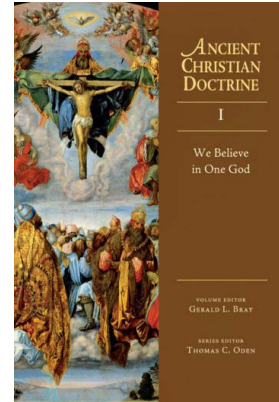
This review touches upon the entire ACDS, with emphasis on how evangelicals will presumably interact with the contents of each volume.

Volume 1: Gerald L. Bray, ed.,
We Believe in One God

The first volume is edited by Anglican evangelical historical theologian Gerald Bray, who currently serves with Latimer Trust in London and Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama. Bray's volume is dedicated to the Patristic doctrine of God. The creedal phrase under consideration is, "We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen." Bray argues that the primary concern of this section of the Nicene Creed is defending monotheism, which the early church understood to be a distinctively Trinitarian concept. The principle opponents to Christian monotheism were the Gnostics in the second and third centuries and Arius and his sympathizers in the fourth century.

For the most part, the Patristic selections Bray includes fortify an orthodox understanding of the Trinity, a doctrine that evangelicals have thankfully reemphasized in recent years. Much of the material is relatively familiar to any minister or student who has taken a church history survey course. Evangelicals who too often read late medieval Catholic views of tradition back into the Patristic era will be encouraged at the biblicism of the fathers. Evangelicals will also benefit from the discussion of canonization and the rule of faith (*regula fidei*), the latter an oral summary of the Bible's grand narrative that provided an authoritative interpretation of the OT and a key criterion in recognizing the canon of the NT.

Broad appreciation notwithstanding, many evangelicals will likely bristle at a couple of Trinitarian ideas enunciated during the Patristic era. Many pre-Nicene thinkers at least leaned toward subordinationist ideas, including Origen (1:69–70), Alexander (1:71), Basil the Great (1:72), and Hilary (1:73). This issue has been hotly debated in recent years in part because of its possible ramifications for how we understand gender roles. All evangelicals will reject an ontological subordination of the Son to the Father. Many will also reject any *eternal* functional subordination of the Son prior to his incarnation. The second controversial issue is the emphasis many church fathers placed upon the idea that each believer has a guardian angel (1:137–38). Though this idea is quite common to the piety of many grassroots evangelicals, most scholars reject the concept of guardian angels. On the whole, the first volume will likely enjoy sincere appreciation and general agreement from virtually any evangelical reader.



Volume 2: John Anthony McGuckin, ed.,
We Believe in One Lord Jesus Christ

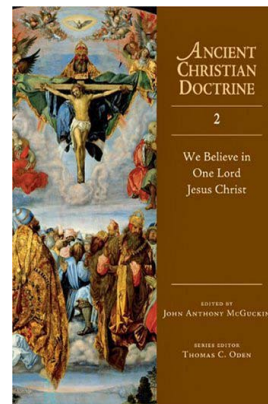
The second volume is dedicated to Patristic Christology. Editor John Anthony McGuckin is a distinguished Eastern Orthodox scholar affiliated with both Union Theological Seminary (New York) and Columbia University. The volume focuses on this part of the Nicene Creed:

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man.

In his introduction, McGuckin helpfully reminds readers that the early creeds were doxological theology, composed for use as baptismal confessions and prayers rather than dry theological treatises. He also acknowledges that Patristic Christology was often nuanced through confrontation with heresy, and was thus more often reactive rather than proactive. He affirms the Patristic idea that Christ's person is best understood in relation to his saving work. McGuckin also argues for a pre-critical reading of Patristic sources and remains hopeful that recovering the Patristic creedal tradition will result in a new ecumenism among Protestants, Catholics, and Orthodox believers. Some evangelicals will resonate with McGuckin's ecumenical goals, though most will likely be hesitant to embrace any ecumenism that downplays reformational emphases on the supreme authority of Scripture and justification by grace alone through faith alone.

The selections themselves are among the most familiar Patristic writings to evangelicals. Numerous quotations are culled from the writings of Athanasius and the Cappadocians, forged in combat with the so-called Arians and others who were hesitant to affirm the full deity of God the Son. Evangelicals will benefit from engaging Patristic emphases on Jesus as the fulfillment of OT promises, the eternity and creative power of the divine Logos, and the argument that the eternity of the Father—which was assumed by most all parties—necessarily implies the eternity of the Son, since fathers are not fathers until they have children. Evangelicals will also appreciate the Patristic commitment to a “Christology from above,” which stands in stark contrast to recent critical emphases on “Christology from below” (2:97–106). The many anti-Arian quotations, along with McGuckin's comments on the Patristic doctrine of the consubstantiality of the Father and Son, are a gold mine of helpful material.

Other material is less likely to resonate with evangelicals. The Eastern emphasis on deification, which was crucial to many christological arguments and continues to be emphasized in the Orthodox traditions, seems a less helpful way to articulate the process of individual salvation than the more common evangelical doctrines of progressive sanctification and final glorification (2:90–92). The controversial subordinationist tendencies referenced in Bray's volume also receive attention in this volume. Evangelicals will also be uncomfortable with the pronounced Mariology of many Patristic thinkers, for whom the virgin conception became the seedbed for speculations about Mary's perpetual virginity (2:129) and status as the “new Eve” in the economy of salvation (2:133–34).



Volume 3: Mark J. Edwards, ed.,
We Believe in the Crucified and Risen Lord

Theologian Mark Edwards of Christ Church, Oxford edits the third volume, which comments on the Creed's section devoted to Christ's crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension:

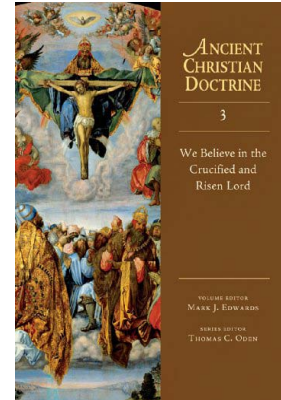
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

Edwards's introduction is a devastating critique of modern reconstructions of Patristic Christology, whether skeptically liberal or simplistically evangelical. Though more verbose (and at times abstruse) than his fellow editors, Edwards also delves a bit deeper into the key scholarly discussions concerning the early christological debates and developments within the catholic creedal tradition. The fathers argued that Jesus was (and remains) simultaneously truly God and truly man, though even orthodox thinkers disagreed concerning details of Christ's soul and/or spirit, intellect, and will(s); greater, though still not total agreement emerged in the sixth century, following the fifth ecumenical council in Constantinople in 553.

Edwards forcefully discounts a number of common scholarly conclusions. Logos-sarx Christology, or the idea that the divine Logos took the place of a human soul in Jesus, was rejected by early theologians, despite the efforts of twentieth-century scholars to ascribe this position to the ancients. Merely subjective views of the cross or theories that emphasize only Christ's victory over the evil powers miss the Patristic emphasis on Christ's objective conquering of sin; the latter was a central reason for Christ's incarnation and stands behind the Patristic (and Pauline) emphasis on Christ as the New Adam. Following his death, Jesus was resurrected with a real human body, but one that is both physical and spiritual and thus different and better than the sin-tainted bodies with which we are familiar.

The selections Edwards includes in his anthology reveal a wealth of deep reflections on Christ's death and resurrection that will be welcomed by evangelical readers. The fathers closely connected Christ's divinity and his saving acts; the former provides the foundation for the latter. Though early emphasis was placed upon the fact of Jesus' death, during the fourth century it became increasingly popular to emphasize the means of his death—the cross (3:24). The fathers emphasized the historical nature of the faith by emphasizing that Christ's death was at the hands of the Roman procurator Pontius Pilate and that he was buried in a real tomb that was widely believed to still be known and accessible to pilgrims, though fortunately very much empty (3:100). His resurrection was predicted in the Hebrew Scriptures and foreknown by Christ, which confirmed his ministry. He is presently reigning spiritually with the Father from heaven, but will return one day to judge all people and reign physically from the redeemed earth.

The fathers challenge some common evangelical assumptions, sometimes quite helpfully, other times less so. Unlike later medieval Catholic piety (sometimes aped by evangelicals), the Patristic tradition did not equate Christ's passion with the *degree* of Christ's physical sufferings, but rather with his humble *submission* to God's plan that he endure suffering on behalf of sinful humanity. This seems like a helpful corrective, especially in light of the way many evangelicals preach about the crucifixion



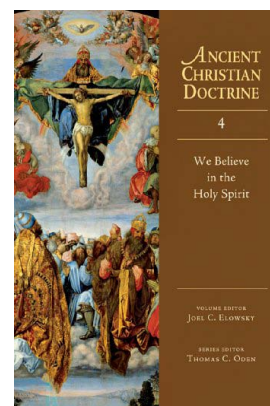
and responded to Mel Gibson's controversial film *The Passion of the Christ*. But most evangelicals would understandably object to other emphases, including Origen's connection of the incarnation and resurrection with allegorical, spiritual readings of Scripture (3:36) and the common "ransom" theories of the atonement found among many of the fathers in the Eastern tradition (3:122–25); the former is too ahistorical while the latter calls God's integrity into question.

Volume 4: Joel C. Elowsky, ed.,
We Believe in the Holy Spirit

Joel Elowsky, executive director of the Center for Early African Christianity, edits the fourth volume, which focuses on the person and work of the Holy Spirit. The Nicene Creed confesses, "We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the prophets." Roman Catholics and Protestants also confess that the Spirit proceeds from Father "and the Son," which is the source of a longstanding theological tension between Christians in the East and West.

Elowsky's introduction demonstrates how the orthodox consensus concerning the Holy Spirit developed alongside the fourth-century debates concerning the relationship between the Father and Son. He helpfully outlines the various ministries the early church fathers connected to the Spirit, including inspiring Scripture, indwelling and empowering the church, creating and granting life (both natural and eternal), and ushering believers through their progress in the faith. He also shows how early thinkers were considerably less settled as to the divinity of the Spirit than they were the Son. The Desert Fathers emphasized the Spirit's ministry, but said little of his place in the Godhead. Origen was imprecise, vacillating between the subordination of the Spirit and a high view of the Spirit's divinity. As a general rule, prior to the mid-fourth century the fathers focused more on the Spirit's work than his person. It took the low view of the Spirit's deity championed by the Pneumatomachi ("Spirit-fighters") to push the church, led by Athanasius and the especially the Cappadocians, to affirm the Spirit's divinity at the Constance of Constantinople. And even then the Council adopted language that was arguably simplistically biblicist in an effort to build as wide a consensus as possible; the Spirit's deity is clearly confessed, but not with the same degree of clarity as that of the Son. Augustine added further nuance to the orthodox understanding of the Spirit through his constructive, post-Constantinople proposals about relations within the Trinity.

Not only is Elowsky's introduction exhaustive, but the explanatory material in each chapter is more in-depth than that of his editorial colleagues in the ACDS. This is simultaneously helpful and frustrating. Elowsky is helpful because, as a general rule, he provides more background information and historical context than his fellow editors; his volume is an excellent starting place to begin studies of such controversial issues as the doctrine of theosis (deification) and the debate over the *filioque* clause. But this material, while immensely helpful, also leads to a greater degree of repetition between the volume introduction and the individual chapter introductions than is characteristic of the other volumes in the series. Elowsky's primary source selections not only delve deeply into Patristic Pneumatology, but also touch upon several other key doctrines, many of them controversial. Evangelicals will respond in a variety of ways, but it seems likely that many will be less comfortable with at least some Patristic



emphases in this volume (and the fifth volume) than in the first three; simply put, the earlier volumes speak to areas of greater theological consensus (Trinity, Christology) than the final two volumes (soteriology, ecclesiology).

The early church confessed the deity and personhood of the Spirit and affirmed his place in the Godhead, but some used feminine language to describe the Spirit while others were hesitant to ascribe any gender to the Spirit (4:18–19). It seems likely that many complementarian evangelicals will at least be hesitant to discount gendered understandings of the Spirit.

The fathers commented widely on the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit; Augustine’s view that an unrepentant spirit constitutes blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is quite common, though by no means uniform, among evangelicals (4:36).

Evangelicals will appreciate the Patristic emphasis on the Spirit’s role in inspiring Scripture (4:269–274), providing unity in the canon (4:274–76) and helping believers properly interpret the Bible (4:286–87). Charismatic and Pentecostal evangelicals may frown upon the Patristic contention that the miraculous gifts, particularly tongues-speaking, gradually diminished or even ceased in the post-apostolic era (4:283–84).

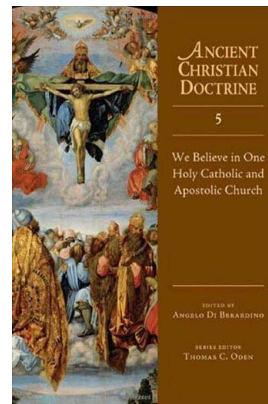
Evangelicals will appreciate the Patristic emphasis on the Spirit’s role as the giver of life, and Elowsky helpfully breaks down this broad concept into several subcategories. But the particulars will surely elicit varied responses from evangelical readers. Few will reject the idea that the Spirit plays a key role in creation and recreation, both physically and spiritually. But the widespread Patristic belief that the Spirit incorporates believers into the church through water baptism will be too close to a form of baptismal regeneration for most evangelicals (4:56). The extended discussion of church discipline in the early church is extremely helpful and will be welcomed by many evangelical readers, though most will likely reject the common Patristic tendency to disallow, or at least limit opportunities for post-baptismal repentance for public sins (4:66–68).

Evangelicals will greatly benefit from engaging Patristic thoughts on justification, which constitutes a lengthy chapter (4:90–136). Though the church fathers were less nuanced in their views of this central doctrine, they were in fact closer (though not always identical) to later Protestant views than is often assumed. It is true that they did not always make as clear a distinction between justification and sanctification as the reformers later would, but it would be both anachronistic and unfair to ascribe a belief in some form of “works salvation” to the Patristic era. Patristic controversy centered on the Trinity and Christology in the fourth century and free will in the fifth century, so these doctrines received greater attention than doctrines that became more controversial during the sixteenth century, including justification, imputation, and sanctification.

Elowsky’s selections on theosis and the procession of the Spirit, as well as his contextual remarks, provide an excellent introduction for evangelicals interested in studying these Patristic themes. As mentioned in reference to McGuckin’s volume, most evangelicals will likely be hesitant to uncritically embrace deification, at least as a better alternative than progressive sanctification and final glorification; the latter seem to flow more naturally from a reformational (and biblical) emphasis on justification by faith alone. Evangelicals will probably react in various ways to the procession debate. Some will no doubt agree with the Western addition of the *filioque* clause because of the Johannine emphasis on the Son’s sending of the Spirit. Others, perhaps for ecumenical reasons, will likely prefer the older Eastern idea that the Spirit proceeds at least *primarily* from the Father.

Volume 5: Angelo Di Berardino, ed.,
We Believe in One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church

The final volume in the series is edited by Angelo Di Berardino of the Augustinian Patristic Institute in Rome. The volume focuses on ecclesiology and eschatology by examining the creedal phrase, “We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.” In his introduction and explanatory sections, Di Berardino recounts Christianity’s gradual transition from a Jewish sect to a Gentile church, though it is unclear whether the editor sees this transition as Christ’s actual plan or merely the circumstances that developed after Christ’s death and resurrection. As the church continued to grow, a leadership structure developed, which Di Berardino interprets along episcopal lines. As with other theological matters, Patristic ecclesiology developed largely in response to heretical movements, especially Gnosticism.



We are all tempted to read our ecclesiological convictions into both the Scriptures and the Patristic period, and at times Di Berardino’s Roman Catholicism understandably colors his interpretations, as already evidenced in his views of Patristic polity. Many evangelicals will push back against his assumption that the NT teaches some form of baptismal regeneration (5:xxvii) and his preference for Petrine supremacy among the apostles (5:xxxi). However, his discussion of the different metaphors and images used in the NT to describe the church, while unoriginal, will serve as a helpful reminder to the large number of evangelicals who relegate ecclesiology to a place somewhere between neglect and *adiaphora*. His discussion of the church’s character as one, holy, catholic, and apostolic is very charitable and will be appreciated by many evangelical readers, even those who tend to be very hesitant about Roman Catholicism.

In the primary source selections themselves, evangelicals will find a wide variety of opinions related to ecclesiology and eschatology. Most evangelicals will likely appreciate the general Patristic emphasis on eschatology, both personal and cosmic, and premillennialists in particular will resonate with the pre-Origen emphasis on this view among some early thinkers (5:161–67). Patristic emphasis on the universal church more than the local church and advocacy of infant baptism (5:107–9) will incur a variety of responses, depending upon individual preferences in these perennially controversial matters. Evangelicals will appreciate the Patristic emphasis on the doctrine of adoption (5:117–23) and most will agree with the majoritarian position in the early church that unbelievers suffer eternal torment in hell, a doctrine that has recently been called into question by some left-wing evangelicals such as Rob Bell.

Not surprisingly, evangelicals will also resist many Patristic views from this era. Most will likely reject the common allegorical readings of the Song of Songs as a picture of the marital relationship between Christ and his church, though perhaps some who identify with the theological interpretation of Scripture movement will agree with this view. With the possible exception of some Anglican evangelicals, most will also dismiss the Patristic argument for apostolic succession (5:77–86), though one might argue that many of the fathers were more concerned with the succession of sound doctrine, which was to be guarded by bishops, than they were with the succession of the bishopric itself. Other ideas evangelicals will refuse to accept include advocacy of baptismal regeneration, which was widespread (5:95–97, 101–07, 124–38), universal salvation, a minority view advocated by Origen and Gregory of Nyssa (5:167–71),

and a nascent form of purgatory (5:243–44); the latter would of course become Catholic dogma during the Medieval era.

Because volume five concludes the ACDS, it includes some resources in addition to the primary sources and Di Berardino's comments. Series editor Oden adds a short concluding essay that for the most part revisits the same themes of his series introduction in volume one. Also included is a very helpful selection of biographical sketches of Patristic thinkers and brief descriptions of anonymous works included in the ACDS. There is also a helpful timeline that visualizes when the various works were likely written.

Conclusion

The ACDS is a massive undertaking; we are indebted to Tom Oden and his team of scholars for their work in producing this landmark work. The series will find a variety of uses among evangelicals. Professors will find a wealth of primary source material that can be incorporated into lectures in subjects such as systematic theology, church history, and historical theology. Students in advanced theological courses or electives in Patristic thought will benefit from engaging these volumes. Many pastors and laypeople will find devotional and catechetical uses for the series. Though most educated evangelicals are familiar with some of the church fathers, the ACDS will help introduce many evangelicals to the actual writings of the key theologians of the Patristic period.

It remains to be seen how much this series will contribute to ecumenical relations between evangelicals and the Roman Catholic and Orthodox traditions. Though there is widespread agreement on foundational issues such as the Trinity, Christology, and the basics of eschatology, there remain serious differences in matters of soteriology and ecclesiology; the former especially is considered an ecumenical “deal-breaker” by many, if not most, evangelicals. At the very least, the ACDS will contribute to greater evangelical appreciation for the Patristic tradition. Though evangelicals will not agree with all they find in these volumes, the ACDS provides an extremely helpful point of departure for those interested in Patristic *ressourcement*. This reviewer is hopeful that IVP and other publishers will launch similarly ambitious projects to aid evangelicals in rediscovering their Medieval and Reformation roots as well.

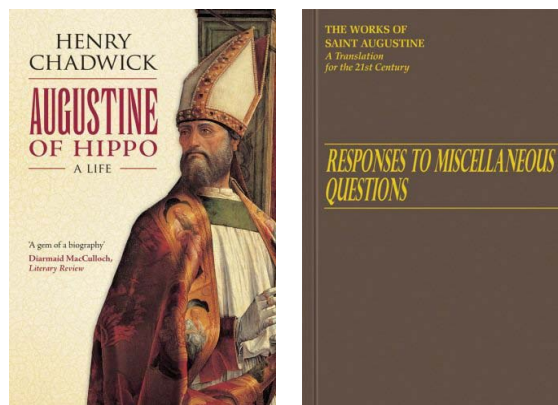
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Henry Chadwick. *Augustine of Hippo: A Life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. 208 pp. \$16.95.

Augustine. *Responses to Miscellaneous Questions*. Edited by Raymond Channing. Vol. 12, Part I—Books, in *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century*. New York: New City Press, 2008. 301 pp. \$44.00.

There are few theologians in church history as important as St. Augustine of Hippo (354–430), and there have been few historians in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries as capable of illuminating the life and theology of Augustine as Henry Chadwick. This review focuses on two recent books, the first by Chadwick and the second by Augustine himself.

Henry Chadwick (1920–2008) left behind a significant collection of writings on Augustine. He taught at Oxford and Cambridge and is perhaps most famous for his translation of *Confessions* (Oxford World Classics), which is, as Peter Brown says in the foreword, of “rare beauty and precision,” leading us “gently but firmly away from the popular image of an Augustine wrapped in sin and sex and brings us instead the joy and crackle of an intellectual of the fourth century AD” (p. vii). Chadwick was “a riveting intellectual narrator,” and *Augustine of Hippo: A Life* is the last work he wrote, discovered among his papers posthumously. Originally written in 1981 for the Past Masters series of Oxford University Press, the book was soon replaced in 1986 by Chadwick’s *Augustine: A Very Short Introduction*, a work very different in character and length. What we now have in *Augustine of Hippo: A Life* is a longer biography which, as Brown says, “enables us to savour to the full (as those shorter texts do not) the artistry of Chadwick” (p. viii). Such artistry is apparent when Chadwick paints a picture of Augustine as a *pastor*, a role other works neglect. Becoming a bishop, argues Chadwick, actually changed Augustine in a radical way.



The experience of doing the work of a bishop made far deeper and more obvious changes in Augustine’s character than even his conversion at Milan ten years before. He rapidly shed the tone of a dilettante eclectic picking out what he liked in Christianity and in Platonism. Shouldering the initially highly unwelcome responsibilities turned him into a great man such as he would never have become had he remained a professor of rhetoric. All the masterpieces on which later centuries looked back were without exception written during his busy life as bishop, not while he was a leisured young ‘don.’ Until his ordination as presbyter in 391, his ideal had been that of a Platonic elite within the Church, preserving contemplative detachment far from getting and spending, the seat and toil of the peasants on the vast African estates, or matrimonial squabbles and petty ambitions. (p. 76)

Here we see Augustine prefigure John Calvin in the sixteenth century, who also reluctantly took the pastorate at the plea of others. Nevertheless, in God’s providence, Augustine (and Calvin) were taken down from the high tower of intellectual detachment to serve the church. History again and again

shows us that it is in the mundane of common ecclesiastical duties that God often crafts the pastor-theologian, even preparing him for theological debate, as was the case with Augustine.

Chadwick again brings out the pastoral role of Augustine when he notes that in his sermons he spoke the vernacular of the people.

In his own preaching Augustine does not speak the demotic Latin of the streets, but is careful to avoid long sermons with complex sentences. Nothing is said indirectly or ironically, or to entertain. His eyes are not on his script or notes if any, but on his hearer's faces, and he is ready to stop or to shift the direction of his discourse immediately if he is losing their attention. (p. 88)

Like the God he served, Augustine sought to accommodate himself, always with the sanctification of God's people in mind.

Despite its strengths, there are serious and surprising weaknesses to Chadwick's work, particularly in his chapter "Freedom and Grace," where his attention is drawn to the Pelagian controversy. Several of these weaknesses must be examined. First, Chadwick writes of Pelagius, "No other writer of Christian antiquity speaks so incisively of 'faith alone'" (p. 146). Here Chadwick is simply in error, overlooking not only numerous theologians in "Christian antiquity" who far surpass Pelagius on the doctrine of *sola fide* but also overlooking the entire Pelagian fabric which distorts *sola fide* altogether. Chadwick would have been better assisted if he had paid closer attention to Benjamin B. Warfield when he wrote,

The struggle with Pelagianism was thus in reality a struggle for the very foundations of Christianity; and even more dangerously than in the previous theological and Christological controversies, here the practical substance of Christianity was in jeopardy. The real question at issue was whether there was any need for Christianity at all; whether by his own power man might not attain eternal felicity; whether the function of Christianity was to save, or only to render an eternity of happiness more easily attainable by man. (*Studies in Tertullian and Augustine* [The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield 4; New York: Oxford University Press, 1932], 291)

There is no getting around the fact that for Pelagius, man, by his own power, is able to merit eternal life as he inherits no corrupt nature from Adam. Nothing could be more in conflict with *sola fide* than this.

Second, to his credit, Chadwick does go on to highlight the emphasis Pelagius placed on free will as "unassisted in its decision to accept help," but even here Chadwick says it is a free will that is initiated by grace (p. 147). Chadwick fails to recognize that what Pelagius means by "grace" is, as Augustine would argue, not grace at all! Grace, for Pelagius, is a mere external *illuminatio* or revelation (enlightenment) of (a) the law of God (i.e., an acquired knowledge of the law), (b) creation, and (c) the example of Christ. As Gerald Bonner observes, such "a definition of Grace is clearly not what the New Testament understands by the word, as Augustine was not slow to point out" (*St. Augustine of Hippo* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963], 362).

Third, perhaps just as astonishing is Chadwick's statement that Augustine did not support the doctrine of total depravity (p. 154). Historians and theologians alike will find such a claim astounding given the numerous places where Augustine clearly does argue that corruption from Adam has infiltrated into every aspect of man's being. When Adam sinned, he brought all of his progeny from a *status integritatis* (state of integrity) to a *status corruptionis* (state of sin). Besides inheriting *originalis*

reatus (original guilt), Adam's progeny inherited a corrupt and depraved nature, leading Augustine to say with Paul in Rom 3:11, "There is none who seeks after God" (cf. *Nature and Grace*, 21; *The Punishment and Forgiveness of Sins*, 1.10; *Marriage and Desire*, 2.47). Augustine, reading Paul, argues that the corruption inherited from Adam is pervasive in nature, meaning that every aspect of man (will, mind, affections, etc.) is infected by sin so that no part of man escapes sin's pollution. Chadwick seems to ignore a multitude of passages where Augustine affirms total depravity just as strongly as Calvin did in the sixteenth century. Such a weakness shows Chadwick's tendency to neglect Augustine's strong Pauline thrust in his writings on sin, grace, and free will.

Though there are cautionary problems that must be avoided and corrected, overall, Chadwick's work is a helpful introduction to Augustine. However, the work is still a short one given the massive figure it seeks to portray. Consequently, while Chadwick's piece is fitting for the novice, Peter Brown's classic biography remains superior for those wanting to go deeper into the life and thought of Augustine (*Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* [rev. ed.; Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000]).

A second work that demands our attention is the release by New City Press of Augustine's *Responses to Miscellaneous Questions*. *Responses* contains within it three works: (1) Miscellany of Eighty-Three Questions (*De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus*), (2) Miscellany of Questions in Response to Simplician (*Ad Simplicianum de diversis quaestionibus*), and (3) Eight Questions of Dulcitius (*De octo Dulcitii quaestionibus*). These three works are relatively unknown outside of academic circles. As important as each of these pieces are, it is Augustine's answer to the questions of Simplician that may be the most important since, as Raymond Canning explains, in this document there "seems to have been a major change in Augustine's thinking about the role of divine grace in human activity, which is arguably the arena in which he made his greatest theological contribution and helped to shape the western mind until the present day" (p. 11). In Simplician's first question, Augustine advocates a position he later rejects when he answers Simplician's second question. In the first question, he argues for what would become known as a Semi-Pelagian view of grace (as seen in John Cassian), where "willing itself is in our power" (pp. I:1, 11). By our own free will and initiative we can fulfill righteousness, and God will respond to it with grace. However, in his answer to the second question, Augustine actually argues for the exact opposite, denying that salvation is dependent upon human free will at all. Building off of Rom 9:10–29, Augustine argues that God's electing choice is unconditional and that it is not man's will that initiates grace but rather it is divine grace that must redeem man's will. Augustine then turns to Matt 20:16 to argue for an effectual call that is only for the elect. Not all are visited by grace but only those who have been chosen. And yet there is no injustice with God in efficaciously calling some while leaving others since those not chosen are given what they do indeed deserve while those who are chosen are given what they do not deserve, namely, grace (pp. I:2,17). In other words, with those not chosen God exercises his justice while with those chosen God exercises his grace.

Furthermore, in *Revision II*:1, Augustine explains how at a later date he came to see how much his answer to the second question contradicted his answer to the first. He explains his change of view when he says,

In answering this question [on Rom 9:10] I in fact strove on behalf of the free choice of the human will, but God's grace conquered, and otherwise I would have been unable to arrive at understanding what the Apostle said with the most evident truthfulness, For who sets you apart? What do you possess that you have not received? But if you have received, why do you boast as though you had not received? (1 Cor 4:7). The martyr

Cyprian also, wishing to demonstrate this, summed it all up with this very title when he said, “no one must boast of anything since nothing is ours.”

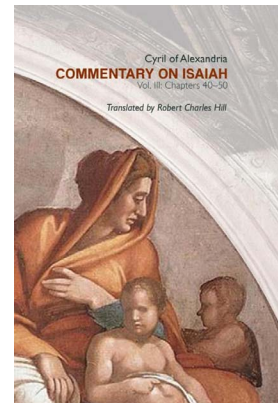
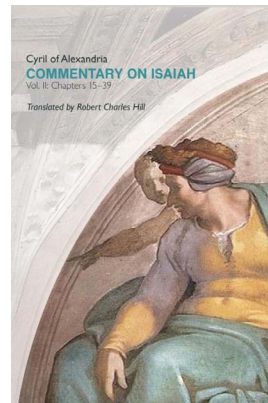
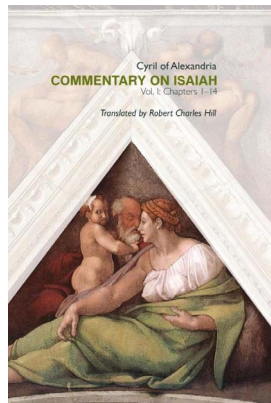
Canning asks the question, “For why, after having said what he did in the second, did he not immediately return to the first and revise it from the perspective of his new insight?” (p. 163). Perhaps we will never know the answer to such a question but nonetheless Augustine did correct himself, even if it was at a later date, thereby earning the title “Doctor of Grace.” What Augustine exemplifies in *Revision II* is a willingness to stand corrected by the Word of God, even revising his previous publications, should he be in error, a biblical trait often not practiced well today.

To conclude, both popular and academic interest in Augustine is bound to continue into the twenty-first century, as evident in the newly discovered sermons by François Dolbeau in Mainz and letters by Johannes Divjak in Marseilles. It is not an overstatement to say that perhaps no person in church history has been written on more than Augustine. Therefore, we will do well to pay heed to Nicholas R. Needham when he reminds us that down through the centuries, “a huge and mighty host of Western Europe’s most godly people and most influential Church leaders have sat at Augustine’s feet, and found rich food for their minds and hearts in the African’s masterly expositions of God’s way of salvation in Jesus Christ” (*The Triumph of Grace* [London: Grace Publications Trust, 2000], 11).

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Cyril of Alexandria. *Commentary on Isaiah* [vol. 1: chs. 1–14; vol. 2: chs. 15–39; vol. 3: chs. 40–50]. Edited and translated by Robert Charles Hill. 3 vols. Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2008. 373 pp., 348 pp., 263 pp. \$19.95 per volume.

Recent years have witnessed a resurgence of interest in patristic exegesis or the interpretation of the Bible among the early church fathers. This emphasis has been especially prominent among the burgeoning movement concerned with the theological interpretation of Scripture. Accompanying this rising tide of interest is a



growing number of fresh translations of ancient commentaries. The classic nineteenth-century edition of patristic literature, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* and the *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, largely ignored the fathers’ exegetical works, with a few exceptions such as the homilies of Augustine and Chrysostom. As a result, these new translations are making many ancient exegetical texts available to a wider audience for the first time.

Such is the case with Robert Hill's translation of Cyril of Alexandria's *Commentary on Isaiah*. Cyril's commentary is one of the few full-length Isaianic commentaries from the ancient church to have survived in complete form. Previously no translation of the text into any modern language existed, making it accessible only to those with advanced training in Greek and access to theological libraries. A word about the Greek text is in order. According to *Thesaurus Lingua Graeca*, the work runs to over 320,000 words, and so translating it is no small task. Furthermore, no true critical edition of the text exists. The only available edition is that included in volume 70 of *Patrologia Graeca* (PG), the nineteenth-century series known for its lack of attention to textual critical detail. In fact, the PG text is but a reprint of the seventeenth-century edition published by Cardinal Jean Aubert in Paris. This is the Greek text that Hill used for his translation, so readers should be aware that there are undoubtedly textual critical issues that remain unknown given the absence of a modern critical edition taking into account all the manuscripts that are known at present. It should also be noted that Cyril's commentary might be of interest to textual critics of the OT since he occasionally makes reference to variant readings in the Greek versions known to him.

Hill's capabilities as a translator are widely recognized, as he has been described by one scholar as "today's foremost interpreter and translator of the great biblical commentators and preachers of fourth- and fifth-century Antioch." His translation of Cyril is smooth and very readable, no small achievement given Cyril's penchant for rare words and his convoluted style. In the passages where I compared the English with the Greek text, I found Hill's translation to be faithful to the original, although at times he tends towards more of a loose rendering than a word-for-word rendition. Furthermore, Hill sometimes translates key terms, such as *skopos*, in various ways. While *skopos* can carry various connotations in ancient Greek literature, it is used most often in Cyril as a technical exegetical word describing the purpose or goal of a text. As such, it would have been helpful if Hill had translated it consistently throughout the work, so that it might be obvious to the reader when the word is being used. At any rate, those who wish to use the translation for academic purposes will need to have recourse to the original text anyway.

Three features of this edition make these volumes especially useful for the reader. One is the inclusion of a brief introduction to the text and to Cyril in the first volume. Furthermore, Hill has noted in his translation where a new page starts in the Greek text by including the page numbers from the PG edition in the English text. This allows for quick and easy comparison to the Greek text, although at times I found that a page number in PG had been skipped in Hill's translation. Moreover, each volume includes both a Scripture index, highlighting the many cross-references made by Cyril, and a general subject index. The latter is an index of Hill's comments in the endnotes, rather than to subjects discussed by Cyril himself.

I also have three critical comments to make about this edition. The first is a minor one. The modern chapter and verse divisions of Isaiah are noted in the passages cited in the body of Hill's text, but are not included at the top of every page. This is a minor inconvenience, as readers have to flip through the pages to find which passage in Isaiah is being discussed.

Second, Hill's translation does not reflect the fact that Cyril's original composition was made up of five books (*biblia*), some of which were divided into smaller divisions (called either *logoi* or *tomoi*). These original divisions might well have been arbitrary, but without them appearing in the English translation, it is impossible to tell what function they might have had in the original work. Highlighting them in the translation would have been useful to the reader.

Third, Hill's preference for Antiochene exegesis (i.e., that of Diodore, Theodore, and Theodoret) is readily apparent in his endnotes, as he periodically makes disparaging or dismissive remarks about Cyril's exegesis. He criticizes Cyril's loquacity, his confusion regarding historical events and persons, his lack of knowledge of Hebrew, and his tendency towards theological or spiritual interpretation. Cyril might have hoped for a more sympathetic translator. Still, Hill concedes that the commentary is "a work of dedication and balance," and suggests that it presents a much more pastoral picture of Cyril than the ecclesiastical thug he is often made out to be. Moreover, he praises the attention Cyril gives to factual issues in the text in comparison with previous Alexandrian interpreters.

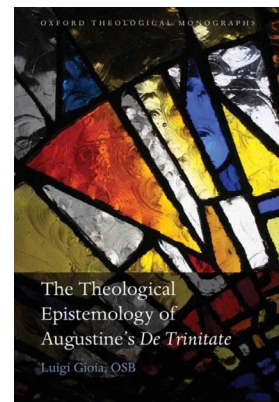
Despite these criticisms, Hill is to be commended for bringing to light this text that was previously buried in dusty old volumes of Greek and Latin. It is most unfortunate that he passed from this life before completing the entire project. Volume 3 takes one only through chapter 50 of Isaiah, meaning that the latter chapters of Isaiah, which are of especially great interest to Christian theology, are missing from this edition. Currently the publisher has no plans to commission another translator to finish the work, but it is hoped that someday someone might pick up the work where Hill left off and finish the worthy task he began.

The way forward for current research on patristic exegesis is a detailed look at specific authors and specific texts. Greater nuance is needed instead of the sweeping generalizations commonly made about early Christian interpretation of the Bible. Cyril's *Commentary on Isaiah* has only barely been discussed in the secondary literature. Perhaps Hill's translation of the text will inspire others to consider the theological and exegetical significance of the Alexandrian bishop's Isaianic interpretation.

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Luigi Gioia, OSB. *The Theological Epistemology of Augustine's De Trinitate*. Oxford Theological Monographs. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008. xvi + 330 pp. \$130.00.

Despite its lengthy gestation period of approximately twenty years, Augustine's *De Trinitate* was, according to its author, always intended to be read as one sustained, coherent inquiry into the heart of Christian faith. Many interpreters have failed to perceive the unity Augustine claims for his treatise, but according to Dom Gioia's proposal, this is largely because, too often, interpreters have remained fixated on its structure and sequential arrangement and neglectful of its focus on theological epistemology. Such a thesis could be read as importing modern philosophical concerns into the *De Trinitate*, but Gioia heads off this worry by avowing, "Augustine does not embark on an explicit reflection on the conditions of knowledge of God, but aims at introducing his reader into the *practice* of this knowledge and then, only retrospectively, determines its conditions not critically but theologically or, rather, from a theologically ruled critical point of view" (p. 3). On this reading, the coherence of the *De Trinitate* is explained by holding questions about the Triune divine identity together with questions about how human beings come to know or participate in that identity. The answer to these two sets of



questions, Gioia suggests, lies in viewing the former set as the explanation for the latter: “The Trinitarian identity of God is the only way to explain *how* we come to know him” (p. 3).

Gioia’s primary sparring partner is Olivier Du Roy’s 1966 monograph on the formation of Augustine’s Trinitarian theology, *L’intelligence de la foi en la Trinité selon S. Augustin* (Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes). For Du Roy, what Augustine believes about the Trinity remains independent from faith. Knowledge of God comes by way of an assumption that Plotinian hypostases are identical with the Christian Trinity. When that “anagogical” knowledge is frustrated by the vicissitudes of human weakness, however, only then does Augustine turn to the economy of salvation, invoking the incarnation as a kind of complementary way of knowing God and, thus, divorcing theological epistemology from the Christian narrative of salvation. In contrast to this picture, Gioia’s Augustine speaks with a Barthian accent of the Father, who, being invisible and immutable, reveals himself by way of Christ and the Holy Spirit. On this account, theological epistemology is a subset of soteriology (pp. 23, 107–17, 146)—or, more precisely, *coincides with* soteriology. If Du Roy’s Augustine finds human capacity insufficient for divine knowledge and is thereby driven back to the economy, Gioia shows an Augustine able to conceive of human insufficiency only retrospectively *from* the economy: “Only from the viewpoint gained by reconciliation and salvation are we able to discover the radical dependence of our being on God” (p. 23; cf. pp. 66–67).

In the early chapters of his monograph, Gioia highlights, primarily by way of a close reading of Augustine’s Book 4, the convergence between the doctrine of the Trinity and human knowledge of God precisely in the coincidence or identity between the divinely effected reconciliation between God and humanity and the revelation of the Father through Christ and the Spirit (pp. 32–34). Chapter 3 considers Augustine’s relationship to Platonic philosophy, concluding that it is employed largely for its ethical benefits, as a way of elucidating “the identification of God’s image in us, with a view to its reformation” (p. 64).

Chapter 4 examines Augustine’s Christology in this light. It deepens an appreciation for how Augustine will invoke Platonic categories only if they are chastened by according theological primacy to the economy as it is delineated in Scripture. Here Gioia takes aim at a common criticism of Augustine’s “psychological model” of the Trinity, namely, that it tends to take the “givens” of the construction of individual humans as reflective *simpliciter* of God’s Triune life. Gioia argues cogently that, on the contrary, “Our image of God does not simply consist in the fact that we are memory, knowledge, and love, but in the fact that God becomes the object of our memory, knowledge, and love—something possible only thanks to his self-manifestation and self-giving in Christ and the Holy Spirit” (pp. 82–83).

Gioia’s chapters 5 and 7 mark the transition from Augustine’s consideration of the Trinitarian “missions” in the economy (Books 1–7) to what those missions reveal about the inner-life of God, or, in modern terms, the “immanent Trinity.” Here the concern is—again with echoes of Barth—to guard the freedom of God so that “God remains unknowable even in his self-revelation” (pp. 116, 149). As “God from God,” the Son truly reveals the Father since our apprehension of him as such is dependent on his eternal relation of filiation to the Father (p. 119). The highly technical nature of Books 5–7 is best seen as owing its form and idiom to its polemical context, rather than as seeking to subsume what can be discerned of God’s Trinitarian life in the economy to an overarching ontological framework (pp. 158–61).

Having thus described the essential identity between reconciliation and revelation, in later chapters Gioia turns explicitly to the issue of human knowledge and posits an inextricable link between the

bent of the human will and knowledge. Neutrality is not an option, and any space for knowledge not already formed by love is thus eliminated (pp. 213, 218). Augustine “challenges the very possibility of philosophizing without Christ” (p. 219). This insight is then worked out in Gioia’s chapter 11 with a delimiting focus on anthropology. Here Gioia presses the point that human psychology is made a vehicle for understanding the Triune life not because of its intrinsic suitability for that purpose, as if the point were simply our “similarity with God” or innate “capacity” (p. 288), but rather as a means to explore our dynamic participation in God’s salvation (pp. 293–94).

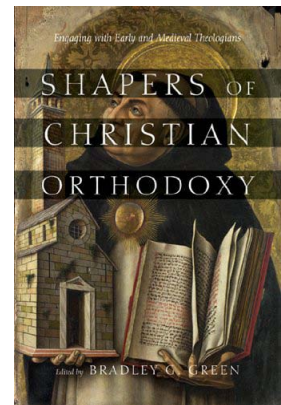
Because of its thoroughness (no relevant piece of secondary literature is left unmentioned), elegance (marred only by a large number of typos in the book’s final chapters), and lucid arrangement of its themes (mostly following the order of the *De Trinitate* itself), Gioia’s book will surely take its place among the growing number of sophisticated responses to the twentieth-century backlash against Augustine’s alleged misunderstanding of patristic (especially the Cappadocians’) Trinitarian theology. Along with the work of Rowan Williams, Michel René Barnes, Lewis Ayres, and others, Gioia’s book will go a long way towards demonstrating that Augustine, far from being a liability in engagement with fourth-century Nicene theology as well as the continuing development of contemporary Trinitarian theology, remains indispensable for any serious inquiry into the dogmatic and devotional heart of Christian teaching.

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Bradley G. Green, ed. *Shapers of Christian Orthodoxy: Engaging with Early and Medieval Theologians*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2010. 398 pp. \$30.00.

In *Shapers of Christian Orthodoxy*, Bradley G. Green compiles a collection of essays introducing students to theologians from the Patristic and Medieval eras. Green intends for this hortatory work to be an introduction to key figures, but also to teach theology students to “think theologically” (p. 13). He perceives an inherent need in supplementing the typical systematic theology lectures that can reduce a theologian or theological controversy to a bulleted list or simplified accounts. He acknowledges the balance between the sufficiency of Scripture in God’s self-revelation with the real actions of God in history that should include the epiphanies of theologians throughout history. For Green, this did not elevate historic theologians to a level of inerrancy, but it would hopefully reclaim their literature for evangelicals. Contributors not only introduce and explain the theology of certain theologians but also assess how evangelicals should be shaped by their respective theologians. While each of these essays are an excellent reflection of the Church Fathers, three stand out as representative of the whole: Irenaeus, Origen, and Anselm.

W. Brian Shelton begins by showing the relevance of the life and work of Irenaeus by discussing the contemporary conversation begun by popular authors like Bart Ehrman, Elaine Pagels, and Dan Brown, who have each contributed to the notion of Gnosticism as a rival suitor of souls against “orthodox” Christianity (p. 17). Shelton provides a succinct biography and overview of the works of Irenaeus. He



labels his discussion of Irenaeus's view of Scripture and revelation as epistemology. His discussion places Irenaeus into a category comfortable for many evangelicals' articulation of canonicity. For Shelton, Irenaeus had three categories of authority in establishing a rule of faith: apostolic tradition, Scripture, and catholicity (p. 29). These categories are similar to the common evangelical articulation that canonicity was based on orthodoxy, apostolicity, and catholicity. Shelton makes room for Irenaeus at the evangelical table without challenging the evangelical paradigm. Shelton also draws out commonalities between Irenaeus and dispensationalism by noting similarities in views on millennialism (pp. 48–50). Shelton does not, however, pass off Irenaeus as a modern evangelical, and he shows that Irenaeus's view of atonement was much larger than a "legal solution to sin" (p. 46). While he does not catalog points of disagreement between Irenaeus and evangelicalism, he points out that Irenaeus's view of the primacy of Rome and transubstantiation would cause difficulty for his holistic acceptance by evangelicals (pp. 53, 55).

Of the figures included in this work, none posed a stronger challenge than Bryan Litfin's topic: Origen. Litfin contributes an easily accessible essay that presumes little background in church history. He opens with an eager tone to rehabilitate Origen for the modern Christian. His discussion on asceticism is refreshing as is his praise of Origen's view of the magnitude of God. Litfin's highest praise for Origen comes from his view that evangelicals should be challenged by a hermeneutic that moves past the "original setting" (p. 147). Litfin ultimately undoes his praise in his final section by stating that there are so many places where Origen gets his exegesis wrong that one must wonder why anyone would weed through the garbage to reclaim a few kernels of truth (p. 146). Litfin also falls into the trap of importing the modern emphasis of substitutionary atonement into his criticism of Origen (p. 148). Despite the early language of rehabilitation, the essay neither reveals the current state of scholarship on Origen nor challenges it. The heavy caveats Litfin closes with waves people in to be challenged by Origen, but not transformed by him.

In a similar manner, David Hogg writes that evangelicals might be challenged by Anselm. Hogg notes that Anselm's life of reflection produced a "a manner and method by which he pursued truth" that was worthy of emulation (p. 332). Hogg identifies issues in Anselm's writings that might give evangelicals reason to pause; however, he explains how Anselm should challenge evangelicalism while still being transformed by him. Hogg's essay plucks Anselm out of the systematician's rubric and places him back into historical context. Hogg plainly states that Anselm did not seek to speak exhaustively about all the themes involved in salvation, but to offer a corrective to the ransom theory of atonement that was rampant in his own age (p. 334). In explaining the challenge of Anselm's prayers to saints, Hogg does not baptize the cult of saints into evangelicalism nor does he summarily dismiss Anselm on this point. Instead, he furthers the evangelical's need to mirror the life of a monk whose prayers proclaimed the triumph of Christ over the shackles of sin and death.

The individual essays vary in explaining how each theologian fit with an evangelical setting. Some end with strong caution; others offer apologetic explanations for the differences. Each essay provides a balanced approach by allowing the subjects to speak through their own words. While this work is hardly a primary source reader, each contributor uses large sections of quotes from original sources to both draw out the theology of the texts and introduce the readers to the works themselves.

Green accomplishes his purpose in supplementing theology lectures for students who have yet to study church history. While it would have been impossible to include every major figure in the early church, one name seems absent from the work. Nicea and Constantinople were each represented with

Athanasius and the Cappadocians. The inclusion of Cyril of Alexandria would have rounded out the volume by representing the Council of Chalcedon. Besides this one omission, Green and his contributors address a wonderful spectrum of theologians who are too often lost on the average evangelical church for being “too Orthodox” or “too Roman Catholic.” Even if readers are unmoved on a certain doctrinal point, each contributor masterfully articulates the pious lives of these theologians that reflected a commitment to Christ and scriptural reflection that both students and saints alike would do well to mirror.

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Denis R. Janz. *The Westminster Handbook to Martin Luther*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010. 184 pp. \$30.00.

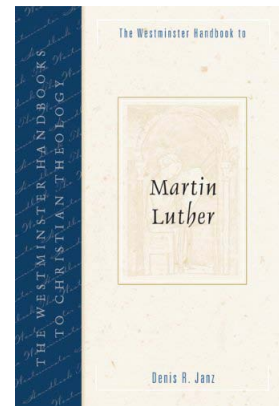
This volume joins a series entitled the Westminster Handbooks to Christian Theology, which has thus far addressed both movements (evangelical theology, medieval theology, and others) and individual theologians (Origen, Aquinas, and now Luther). The goal is to “assist scholars and students in finding concise and accurate treatments of important theological terms,” by providing entries “arranged in alphabetical format” (p. ix).

This contribution to the series is by Denis Janz, who, though teaching at Loyola University, is a Luther scholar with several volumes on Luther to his credit, as well as an excellent selection of primary texts from Reformation figures in his *A Reformation Reader: Primary Texts with Introductions*, which this reviewer has used with great profit, both personally and in the classroom. In the introduction, Janz states that he has written this book for scholars, students, and those he calls “seekers,” who he says “are sometimes found to be reading when more ‘well-adjusted’ people are watching prime-time television” and are “determined to rescue a few last fragments of truth and goodness and beauty from the toxic slagheaps of late modern society” (p. x). Spoken like a true church historian!

Janz also notes several distinguishing features of this work. Like all the other volumes in this series, it is an A–Z reference work and thus introduces readers to Luther through short essays on fifty-eight topics from *Anfechtung* to Worship. Another somewhat unusual feature is that there is no interaction with or reference to secondary literature in the essays. There is a brief bibliography at the end of the book (with fifty-two entries), but the essays themselves focus on numerous quotations from Luther’s writings (drawing from both the American edition and the *Weimarer Ausgabe*), as interpreted by Janz.

Not noted by Janz are some other distinguishing features. Most important among them are the short length of the essays. The fifty-eight topics are treated in only 143 pages, with five pages being the most any topic receives and topics like justification receiving slightly more than three pages. This feature increases the book’s usefulness for the introductory student and casual reader, but limits its helpfulness to the scholar, who would desire more thorough treatments, especially of crucial topics.

Another important feature is the necessarily selective nature of a volume such as this. Thus, while there are essays on the descent into hell, extreme unction, and Islam/Muslims, there is no entry on music



or preaching, indulgences or purgatory. Though some of these topics are mentioned in other essays, the lack of a specific treatment of some issues of some importance to Luther is another limitation. Of course, any volume like this must make some choices, and most of Janz's choices are sound; but most students of Luther will probably find a favorite topic or two omitted.

Of course, the most distinguishing feature of this work is that it presents Janz's interpretation of Luther's thought. And while he is a competent and seasoned scholar, his interpretations of some important ideas sound off-key to this reviewer. For example, he gives as Luther's idea of faith "the ability to understand and accept ourselves as the object of God's love" and adds, "This, Luther thought, is the key to finding happiness in life" (p. 59). He sees Luther as downplaying hell as a future destiny but emphasizing our present experience of it: "the only hell we really know about is the one we encounter in our lives. And this is the one Luther speaks about almost exclusively" (p. 71). Such ideas do not square with my own reading of Luther or the interpretation of a number of other Luther scholars.

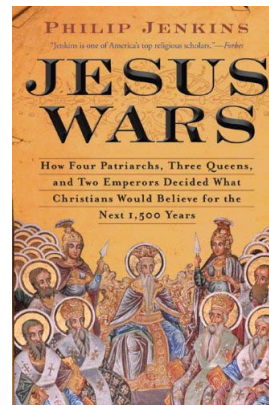
There were enough discordant notes of this type to require qualification of an endorsement of this book. While it is useful as a handbook, giving a fair introduction to various aspects of Luther's thought in an easily accessible format, I would not want it to be the only book about Luther a student read. Its best service would be to lead students into Luther's works themselves.

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Philip Jenkins. *Jesus Wars: How Four Patriarchs, Three Queens, and Two Emperors Decided What Christians Would Believe for the Next 1,500 Years*. New York: HarperOne, 2010. xxii + 352 pp. \$26.99.

Not unlike other eras of development within the life of Christianity, the fifth century proved to be a time of political and religious uncertainty—an instability with profound effects on Christian theology. Philip Jenkins, a noted scholar of historical and religious studies and professor at Penn State University, examines the political conflicts surrounding Christology as stated by the great Chalcedonian Council of 451. According to the author, many Christians rely upon authoritative statements of belief without understanding the motivations and context from which resulting doctrinal summaries flowed. Serving as an enlightening remedy to this reality, Jenkins provides an excellent resource for persons not wanting to be guilty of such uninformed belief.

Although Chalcedon established a particular Christology as official doctrine throughout the Roman Empire, Jenkins believes, "Chalcedon was not the only possible solution, nor was it an obvious or, perhaps, a logical one. Only the political victory of Chalcedon's supporters allowed that council's ideas to become the inevitable lens through which later generations interpret the Christian message" (p. xi). He undergirds this belief by arguing that Chalcedonians and their enemies rose and fell politically following the 451 council. At times, pro-Chalcedonians appeared to be the ones facing exclusion from established "orthodoxy" (p. 12). What became "Christianity" thus remained open to question throughout the following centuries. According to Jenkins, fifth-century Christians addressed such uncertainty by increasingly looking to four centers of Christianity for sound leadership: Antioch,



Rome, Alexandria, and Constantinople. Jenkins also notes Jerusalem's rise to prominence following 451. As these centers argued—often without much progress—concerning the nature of Christianity, imperial favor became the means of securing doctrinal victory over rival positions. Therefore, Roman emperors and their queens began to exercise the voice needed to finalize certain Christian beliefs. Imperial intervention did not so much force certain views as much as channel popular belief (p. 125). Despite imperial and ecclesiastical decrees, “heretical” groups such as the Monophysites and Nestorians continued to proclaim themselves to be valid expressions of Christianity and flourish in non-Western contexts. The implications of doctrinal and political struggles preceding and following Chalcedon brought about irreparable divisions within the Christian faith. Therefore, numerous unfortunate results of post-Chalcedonian wrangling came about: the Roman empire came to an end, Islam gained a sympathetic hearing, Christianity crumbled in much of Africa and Asia, and the Christian religion largely migrated to the European continent.

The author's central thesis rests upon two intellectual commitments from which he bases the remainder of his book. He states, “If religion shaped the political world, then politics forged the character of religion” and “The christological debate was settled by one straightforward issue: which side gained and held supremacy within the Christian Roman Empire and was therefore able to establish its particular view as orthodox” (p. xiv). Therefore, the advocates of a particular theological position who held the most political sway ultimately determined what subsequently came to be known as true Christian belief. Flowing out of these positions, several themes consistently emerge throughout the book: the issue of religious authority, church and state relations, correct interpretation of Scripture, the ethics of Christians in ecclesiastical and political leadership, and a correct view of salvation. From Jenkin's perspective, groups like the Monophysites, Nestorians, and Arians were not excluded because of doctrinal commitments as much as the “orthodox” groups had the political authority to declare them aberrant. Lest contemporary Christians view their orthodoxy as secure, Jenkins also addresses recent restatements of ancient Monophysite and Gnostic beliefs as well as restated solutions to such doctrinal problems. Therefore, Christian history is truly “a story of resurrections without end” (p. 271).

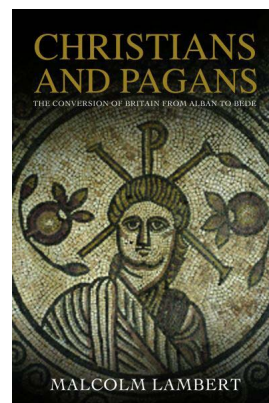
Jenkins provides a text that causes one to reexamine certain perspectives excluded from orthodox theology by the Western church. The author furthers the conversation regarding true and aberrant Christianity while providing an implicit cautionary message concerning the nature of theological exclusion. Although his point does not necessarily advocate a broadening of orthodox Christian doctrine, he certainly raises questions concerning groups traditionally considered heretical. His questions are well-taken, but some readers may desire stronger parameters as to what is actually “Christian.” One wonders if Jenkins simply allows all self-proclaimed Christians to be included in Christianity. While such luxuries may be afforded to historians, theologians will approach this issue with a different perspective. Readers may also take issue with the weight that he ascribes to political power in the development of established Christian theology. Certainly, ecclesiastical politics have marred the Christian religion and the influence of the state on the church has overstepped proper boundaries at times. These unfortunate realities do not, however, lead to the absolute conclusions proposed in this work. In fact, Christian history often includes theological expressions according to Chalcedonian definitions that directly contrast with the ones required by political compulsion. In such cases, Chalcedonian doctrine has survived or even prospered despite political opposition. Seemingly contrary to his own argument, Jenkins concedes this point later in the book (p. 269).

Jenkins's work is a helpful addition to Patristics studies and deserves attention from established scholars as well as students who are new to this field. While the book does not provide a close analysis of primary source material, it will prove to be a worthy introduction to the subjects examined. For example, Jenkins includes several appendices that define key persons and events. He also summarizes key church councils and theological positions throughout the work. Perhaps, the author's greatest contribution is that he provides a companion text to the numerous sources that address Patristic theology. Readers desiring to understand political impositions on and implications of Chalcedonian theological developments will discover an excellent resource in Jenkins's text.

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Malcolm Lambert. *Christians and Pagans: The Conversion of Britain from Alban to Bede*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010. xx + 329 pp. £30.00/\$50.00.

Malcolm Lambert, former reader in medieval history at Bristol University and author of a study on the heresies of the Middle Ages, has now turned his attention to the beginnings of Christianity in the British Isles. As the title of his book suggests, his focus in this work is on the conversion of Britain from paganism to Christianity during the period from St. Alban, the first reported Christian martyr in Britain, to the life of the Venerable Bede, by whose time it was legitimate to speak of a "Christian Britain." Lambert presents his methodology at the outset of the book, stating, "I believe the primary task of an historian is to tell, as far as he possibly can, what happened" (p. xv). In the opinion of this reviewer, he achieves his goal, and he does so using a wide variety of historical evidence to support the story he is telling.



The twists and turns in the story of Britain's conversion become increasingly clear as Lambert moves further along in the book, largely because the evidence at hand becomes more and more explicit. As he says in chapter 1, the beginnings of Christianity in Roman Britain are shrouded by an impenetrable fog created by the lack of documentary sources for the period. The earliest documentary evidence comes from the mid-third century, the likely date for the passion of Alban. Lambert also discusses archaeological discoveries from this early period such as Christian mosaics in Roman villas, elaborate communion vessels, and mobile lead tanks that were apparently used for baptisms in rural areas. These traces point to the existence of Christianity in the south and east of England, though Lambert also notes recent scholarship suggesting Christianity had a foothold in the northern military zone, especially along Hadrian's Wall.

With the breaking of links with Rome in the early fifth-century and the invasion of the pagan Germanic tribes later in the century, the early British church suffered a crisis. Evidence for the paganism of the invading peoples can be found in the burial objects recovered from Anglo-Saxon cemeteries. Moreover, the existence of funerary stones with epitaphs in Latin and ogham (an Irish script) testify to the advance of the British Church westward into places such as Wales and Cornwall, as it was gradually pushed out of its home in the south and east by the invading Anglo-Saxons.

Although the British church initially failed to convert the pagan invaders, it did produce Patrick, who left his native Britain to seek the conversion of Ireland, believing himself to be taking the gospel to the very ends of the earth. As Lambert points out, his example of *peregrinatio* inspired later monks such as Columba who in 563 founded a monastery on the Island of Iona in the Irish Sea off the coast of the ancient kingdom of Dál Riata. As centers of education and outposts of Christian culture, these monasteries served as springboards for missions to the pagan Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. Also significant in the conversion of the pagan Anglo-Saxons was the mission from Rome sent by Pope Gregory the Great in the late sixth century. Lambert gives a balanced presentation of the successes and setbacks of the Italian mission and the resulting clash with the existing traditions of the British church over the issues of the dating of Easter and the appropriate form of tonsure.

Amidst the confusion resulting from the Synod of Whitby in 664 arose one of the most fascinating of the characters in Lambert's tale, Theodore of Tarsus, a Greek-speaking monk who had lived in Rome and was appointed archbishop of Canterbury in 668. Theodore brought a fresh infusion of learning to the British scene, establishing a school in Canterbury and authoring biblical commentaries that demonstrate his extensive reading in the church fathers. Although his efforts brought him into conflict with some such as Wilfrid, bishop of York, Theodore left behind a more connected network of dioceses that proved vital to the unity of the church in the British Isles.

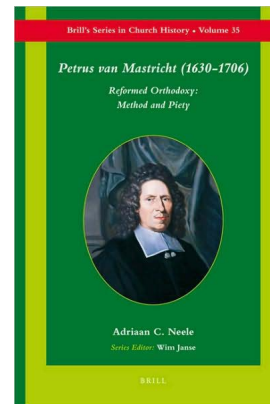
Lambert's story ends with the conversion of the Picts, the last of the British peoples to accept Christianity, and the life and career of Bede, the greatest of early British authors. By the time he wrote his *Ecclesiastical History*, it was possible for Bede to look back at the conversion of Britain as an accomplished fact, presenting the emergence of the English people as a new Israel chosen by God.

Lambert's straightforward approach is evident throughout the book. The rich variety of evidence upon which he draws—from ecclesiastically significant place names in Wales to an ogham inscription in Pictish found on the Orkney islands—strengthens his thesis and makes for an interesting read. The book is well written, including a vast amount of historical detail without losing sight of the overall narrative, and it should be accessible even for those with limited expertise in this period. Illustrations and plates, along with the maps outlining the spread of Christian sites throughout Britain, enliven the story he tells. The only thing that would make the book even better would be to include a bibliography. Although he regularly notes relevant secondary sources in the footnotes as he proceeds through the text, an index including all the secondary literature would be useful for other researchers and students. Despite this omission, Lambert's book gives a well-documented overview of Britain's remarkable transition from being an entirely pagan to a profoundly Christian nation.

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Adriaan C. Neele. *Petrus van Mastricht (1630–1706): Reformed Orthodoxy; Method and Piety*. Brill's Series in Church History 35. Leiden: Brill, 2009. viii + 344 pp. \$138.00.

Adriaan Neele's volume on Petrus van Mastricht's theological method is a significant addition to the burgeoning literature examining post-Reformation Reformed orthodoxy. The author's aim is "to demonstrate the relationship between exegesis, doctrine, elenctic, and *praxis* in the doctrine of God of Mastricht's *Theoretico-practica theologia*" (p. vii). In this way Neele endeavors to overturn the popular conception of Reformed orthodoxy as excessively concerned with abstract doctrine and too little concerned with careful exegesis or with the practical application of exegesis and doctrine. Seventeenth-century Reformed exegesis has often been pilloried as amounting to nothing more than proof-texts for rigid scholastic dogmas while Reformed piety has been characterized as mystical subjectivism, detached from both exegesis and dogma. Throughout the four parts that comprise this volume, Neele shows that, for Mastricht, exegesis, doctrine, elenctic (or polemic), and *praxis* form core theological components that cannot be neatly isolated from each other.



Part I (chs. 1–2) offers a detailed portrait of Mastricht's life as a pastor, professor, and polemicist. The purpose of this section is not strictly biographical, but rather to show that Mastricht's interests and expertise cannot be easily reduced to that of scholastic dogmatician. As a divinity student he was exposed to biblical studies, medieval scholasticism, the Reformed *loci* method, and the practical theology of his teachers, Voetius and Hoornbeek. After five years in the pastorate he commenced his academic career first as a professor of Hebrew and practical theology and later as professor of theology and philosophy. Through his writing and teaching, he gained a reputation as a renowned philologist, careful theologian, astute anti-Cartesian philosopher, and a reliable guide to the practical application of doctrine. Neele observes that many of Mastricht's works manifest the fourfold division in which he proceeds from biblical exegesis, to doctrinal formulation, to elenctic (though sometimes this is omitted), to practical application. This fourfold procedure is most perfectly followed in Mastricht's magnum opus, *Theoretico-practica theologia* (*TPT*).

Part II (chs. 3–4) examines Mastricht's chief premises in the *TPT*: prolegomena and faith. In his prolegomena Mastricht treats both the nature of theology and Scripture. He stresses that theology must be orderly and proposes that this order may be found in his fourfold method of exegesis, doctrine, elenctic, and *praxis*. Scripture, he insists, is the first integral part of theology, rather than an ancillary study. Touching faith, Mastricht makes the uncommon move of treating it immediately after discussing Scripture and before the *locus* on God. Neele regards this as evidence that Mastricht's piety is both exegetically based and inextricable from the way one approaches the various *loci* that follow, most notably that notoriously "abstract" Reformed doctrine of God.

Part III (chs. 5–8) offers a cross-section examination of Mastricht's doctrine of God as found in *TPT*, focusing in turn on exegesis (ch. 5), doctrine (ch. 6), elenctic (ch. 7), and *praxis* (ch. 8). Exegetically, Mastricht exhibits a close and careful reading of the Hebrew and Greek text; doctrinally, he develops his conclusions as expositions of the exegetical sections prior to providing reasonable arguments and a definition for the *locus*; elenctically, he is relatively concise and follows a *quaestio* method that draws conspicuously on his exegesis and doctrine and is formulated to strengthen the piety of his readers;

practically, he roots his counsel in the primary biblical texts used to establish the *locus* and articulates his applications in biblical language. Throughout this section Neele is not so much concerned with the actual dogmatic content of the *TPT* as he is with elucidating the fourfold theological method of its author. I suspect some readers may find this ubiquitous emphasis upon method to be a bit tedious at times.

Part IV (chapters 9–11) provides a more focused consideration of some salient aspects in Mastricht’s *locus* on God. Neele asks whether Mastricht’s doctrine of God really yields nothing more than the static “metaphysical idol” reputedly endorsed by Reformed orthodoxy, and he concludes that it does not. Following a brief discussion of the structure of the doctrine of God as found in Mastricht’s Reformed predecessors and contemporaries (ch. 9), Neele explores his use of the fourfold method in his treatment of divine simplicity (ch. 10) and the Holy Trinity (ch. 11). Rather than following the strict metaphysical account of Aquinas, Mastricht seeks to ground God’s simplicity in the biblical revelation of his spirituality. True, many of Aquinas’s metaphysical ingredients are still present, but they have been made subsidiary to the biblical data. Also, Mastricht emphasizes the soteriological implication of simplicity and spirituality in a way foreign to the medieval scholastic treatments of the doctrine. Polemically, he uses simplicity to counter those opponents he perceives as most dangerous to the church in his own day—Socinians, Cartesians, and the Remonstrants. His handling of the doctrine of the Trinity is intensely exegetical, which leads him to stress the economy of the Trinity with a particular accent upon the christological and pneumatological dimension. In this way the biblical God of covenant, rather than the God of the philosophers, is the primary focus. Neele concludes, “[T]he God of Mastricht is not a metaphysical construct but a Triune God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all His people throughout the ages: the God of the covenant” (p. 278).

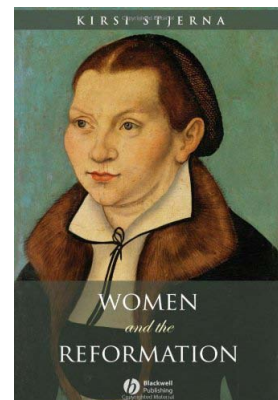
All told, Neele’s volume is a valuable continuation of the project begun by Richard Muller and others to reassess Reformed orthodoxy through an intensive and extensive investigation of its historical context, intellectual sources, and primary documents. In this Neele succeeds admirably, and his book whets one’s appetite for the forthcoming English translation of the *Theoretico-practica theologia*.

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Kirsi Stjerna. *Women and the Reformation*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008. viii + 280 pp. \$43.95.

Many readers of this journal have perused a three-volume set dating from the 1970s by the late Yale historian Roland Bainton of a nearly identical title to this work by Kirsi Stjerna, associate Professor of Reformation history at Gettysburg (PA) Lutheran Seminary. But in addition to being composed three decades apart, these works of so similar title are markedly different in purpose and in cadence.

Bainton’s three volumes—*Women of the Reformation in Germany and Italy* (1971), *Women of the Reformation in France and England* (1973), and *Women of the Reformation from Spain to Scandinavia* (1977)—were part of this Quaker historian’s larger “project” of rehabilitating persons customarily marginalized



in Reformation history, including Sebastian Castellio and Michael Servetus. Bainton's own affiliation with the oft-maligned Quaker tradition gave him an "eye" for others who had also been left in the "eddies" of the Reformation stream. In the case of *Women of the Reformation* at least, Bainton reaped nothing but praise for his efforts. And the reprinting of his three volumes in 2001 bears testimony to the value of his decades-old researches.

Stjerna, of course, has had a different motivation. Openly disclosing her stance as a feminist historian, she goes well beyond Bainton in maintaining that the story of Reformation women has not only suffered from neglect, but that the story of what women in fact contributed to this great cause has been suppressed. She takes the view that the Protestant Reformation too often constrained women by its insistence that the proper sphere for the ministry of women was no longer the convent but in the domestic duties of wife and mother. The movement, so full of promise in its earliest days, only imperfectly realized the ideal of the priesthood of all believers. "Teaching courses on the Reformation is no longer feasible without the inclusion of women as subjects in the story of the Reformation and its evaluation" is the theme articulated in her opening paragraph (p. 1) and pursued assiduously through twelve chapters of background study and character vignettes.

Her chapters are extremely well-researched; the volume of literature surveyed and named is truly impressive. In writing about her subject so capably, Stjerna for the most part conveys the learning of others; I found only two references to her own earlier essays. She consciously builds on the labors of not only the venerable Bainton, but of Charmarie Blaisdell, Miriam Chrisman, Natalie Z. Davis, and Jane Dempsey Douglass (to name but a few). It is clear that this fine book is the outgrowth of her own capable teaching of this material at Gettysburg in a class bearing the book's title. The massive bibliographies alone make a copy of this book essential for every theological library.

Stjerna's work is not the first on this theme read and pondered by this reviewer, but it is the most influential. Despite its tinge of feminist militancy, Stjerna has largely made her case that as to the actual "difference" that the Reformation might be alleged to have made for women, there is ample evidence that the life of females was relatively constant before and after the Reformation. Equal opportunities for learning, for elected public service, for church leadership, and for single women functioning as free individuals in society were just as remote under Protestant regimes as under Catholic. With the gradual closing of convents under Protestantism, even that distinct sphere in which church ministry was deemed legitimate by women to women evaporated.

And yet, with this cautionary principle established, Stjerna proceeds to describe chapter by chapter the individuals—some who left the convent to enter the novel role of "pastor's wife" (so Katie Von Bora, Katharine Schutz-Zell, Marie Dentière), some who used their royal positions to advance the cause of religious toleration for Lutherans and Huguenots (so Marguerite de Navarre, Jean D'Albret, Renée of France, Elizabeth von Brandenburg, and Elizabeth von Braunschweig), and some women of learning who faced great risk in writing apologetic works on behalf of the Reform (Argula von Grumbach, Olimpia Morata). It is a wonder that in the still very patriarchal sixteenth century, these Christian women accomplished so much when, very often, they were opposed by a suspicious public (for whom the notion of "pastor's wife" was self-contradictory), by royal husbands (often strenuously anti-Protestant), and academia (which then, and until the early twentieth century, had no place for a woman).

This marshaling of evidence should give conservative evangelicals pause. The reviewer, a "soft" complementarian, asks, "Are our churches and our evangelical agencies any more welcoming, any more affirming of such 'church mothers' in our time?" The sixteenth-century Protestant movement very often

owed its expansion and survival to just such persons as these. Instead of conservative evangelicalism taking a stance of resistance to the ministry of women, we need to press forward in the advancing and recognizing of all the ministry of women endorsed in the NT. There were and there are “Priscillas.” We also need an “eye” for the hand of providence in our civilization. Sixteenth-century rhetoric about the “monstrous regiment of women” was blind to this; the rhetoric ought not to be repeated now.

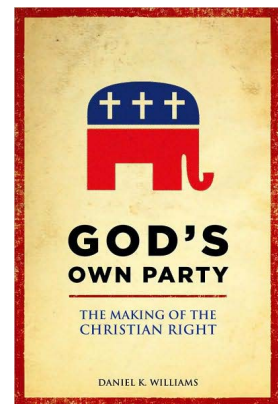
With this said, certain shortcomings of the volume must also be acknowledged. In a time when church history is one of the first disciplines to be rationalized given the economic pressures facing theological education, there will not be very many classes modeled after Stjerna’s own Gettysburg offering. Does the book therefore fondly presuppose a feminist-oriented readership and curriculum? Further, this is a book that will have readers rubbing their eyes repeatedly and rereading many sentences in order to grasp elusive meaning. Though the Finnish-American Stjerna praises her Blackwell copy-editor (p. viii), it is hard to know what to say about a volume from such a prestigious publishing house so plagued by poor word choice, stray words, and bad idioms. Copy-editors exist to prune away such problems. As the volume is reprinted, these blemishes need to be weeded out. And then there is the format. The Stjerna volume, just because so determined to relay in detail the harvest of studies in this field, has by its opting for in-text citation (rather than page-bottom or chapter-end) confronted us with a text in which page after page is larded with insertions about sources, and with insertions of paragraph-length content notes which are a complete distraction to the reader. Again, this is not what we expect from a Blackwell volume. In sum, here is a very fine volume capable of being made still more useful.

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Daniel K. Williams. *God’s Own Party: The Making of the Christian Right*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010. viii + 372 pp. \$29.95.

Apparently the writing of books about religion and politics is an unrelenting enterprise, especially monographs that focus on the political activities of conservative evangelicals and fundamentalists in modern America. Daniel Williams, assistant professor of history at the University of West Georgia, adds to the spate of scholarly tomes on this provocative subject with an engaging, thoroughly researched investigation of the emergence and development of the Christian Right as a formidable force in American electoral politics. The author, who initially launched his work as a dissertation at Brown University, offers a plausible historical account of how Christian conservatives—after decades of political engagement—eventually gained considerable strength and influence in the Republican Party. At the same time, as Williams soberly observes, they discovered “that they could win elections, but not change the culture” (p. 8).

Professor Williams suggests in his introduction that the uniqueness of this project is to be found in his attempt to trace the roots of conservative Protestant political activism back to the 1920s, when many of them defended Prohibition and battled against the teaching of evolution in public schools. Unfortunately, he misses an opportunity to extend his historical analysis even further back by ignoring



the contributions of Robert Handy's *A Christian America* (2nd ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984) and James Morone's *Hellfire Nation: The Politics of Sin in American History* (Yale: Yale University Press, 2003), both of which convincingly demonstrate that the evangelical Protestant impulse to establish a Christian moral order actually originated in the colonial era and often revealed a complicated ideological mix. Furthermore, the campaign against alcoholic beverages in the United States was not just a fundamentalist endeavor; many progressive and even liberal Protestants enthusiastically supported Prohibition, while the theologically and culturally conservative J. Gresham Machen opposed it. So it is not entirely clear how Christian efforts in the public square during the post-World War I era fit into the broader patterns that Williams unfolds to explain the rise of the Religious Right.

Nevertheless, the ensuing chapters include many colorful vignettes that enliven Williams's chronicle. For example, evangelist Billy Graham surfaces several times in the book, particularly in regard to his sometimes naïve relationships with American presidents. Moreover, the author examines other politically outspoken preachers like Carl McIntire, John R. Rice, Billy James Hargis, Bob Jones Jr., Bob Jones III, Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, and Tim LaHaye. He likewise is alert to the political impact of evangelical thinkers like Francis Schaeffer. Williams also treats institutional issues as he weighs the positions and effectiveness of groups such as the National Association of Evangelicals, the Moral Majority, Concerned Women for America, the Family Research Council, and the Christian Coalition. His overall scope is both ambitious and breathtaking.

At times, however, Williams exhibits some sloppiness in his handling of factual matters. For instance, his discussion of Harold Ockenga's endorsement of Richard Nixon in 1972 refers to the Boston minister's presidency of "Gordon-Conwell College and theological seminary" (p. 102), suggesting a fuzzy awareness of evangelical higher education. In addition, he mistakenly labels Harold Hughes, the late Democratic senator from Iowa, as a Republican (pp. 121–22). Perhaps Williams's most egregious gaffe concerns Jack Kemp's religious identity. In two distinct contexts he depicts the Republican vice presidential candidate in 1996 as a Roman Catholic (pp. 208, 240), even though Kemp was raised in a Christian Science home and later became a Presbyterian. In a similar vein, Williams describes Republican speechwriter Connie Marshner's husband as "a Catholic seminarian" (p. 135). These errors hardly inspire confidence in the author's attention to detail.

In the final analysis, *God's Own Party* succeeds in providing an informative perspective on the culture wars that have permeated the American political scene for the last several decades. At the same time, it is not so evident that Williams has achieved his goal of presenting "a chronological history of the Christian Right" (p. 9). Overall, his generalizations about conservative Christian political behavior are not sufficiently nuanced. He offers substantial data, which is often gleaned from archival sources, but ultimately he fails to connect all the dots. Hence, the terms "evangelical," "fundamentalist," and "Christian Right" are commonly employed as virtual synonyms, which implies far more historical continuity in Christian activism than is actually the case. For example, both Billy Graham and Jerry Falwell figure prominently in Williams's story, yet their styles, roles, and particular policy positions sometimes varied significantly. While Falwell was clearly part of the Christian Right, Graham cannot be so easily linked to it. In short, Williams's conceptual approach misses some of the complexity that

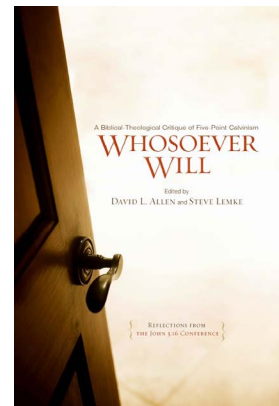
is has been manifest in the tangled threads of evangelical and fundamentalist political engagement in modern America.

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SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY AND BIOETHICS

David L. Allen and Steve W. Lemke, eds. *Whosoever Will: A Biblical-Theological Critique of Five-Point Calvinism*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2010. xiv + 306 pp. \$24.99.

On November 6–7, 2008, the John 3:16 conference took place at First Baptist Church in Woodstock, GA. The purpose of this conference was to critique five-point Calvinism biblically and theologically, especially in light of its current resurgence in the Southern Baptist Convention. Jerry Vines preached a sermon on John 3:16, and five other notable Southern Baptist scholars addressed each of the five points of Calvinism. All six of these presentations, edited for publication, make up part 1 of *Whosoever Will*. Five other essays, also written by Southern Baptist scholars, deal with other issues that arise from Calvinist theology and make up part 2 of the book. The editors are careful to stress in the introduction that none of the authors is a five-point Calvinist or a five-point Arminian and that all of them “stand in the great Baptist tradition that is neither fully Calvinist nor Arminian but is informed by both” (p. 7). The goal of the book is not to sweep the Southern Baptist Convention clean of Calvinism, but is instead to promote dialogue and to express irenic disagreement with Calvinist theology.



Whosoever Will unfortunately begins with the three weakest chapters in the book. Jerry Vines’s sermon on John 3:16, while a powerful exposition of this wonderful verse (I had the privilege of hearing it live in a chapel service at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary), suffers the same fate as most sermons and does not make the same impact in print. The sermon seems out of place next to the other ten chapters, which are all academic in nature. Paige Patterson follows with an essay on total depravity. He argues essentially for the Arminian position, stating that people are not born guilty before God (p. 38), people are hopeless in their sin but can still cry out to God (p. 43), and all of this is possible because of the Holy Spirit’s pre-regenerating grace (pp. 44–45). While Patterson explains what he believes the Bible says about total depravity, he does not interact with other possible interpretations of the passages he cites or other understandings of what it means to be dead in one’s sin. Richard Land writes the essay on the doctrine of election and argues for a view he calls congruent election, which he bases on his understanding of God’s relation to time. Land posits that because God exists in an “eternal now” he also has an eternal experience with all human beings, upon which he bases his election. Land does not devote much space to explaining this concept (pp. 55–59) or demonstrating how it makes better sense of Scripture than either conditional or unconditional election.

The next three chapters are the strongest chapters in the book. David Allen writes a clear, thorough, and perceptive essay on the extent of the atonement. He demonstrates why unlimited atonement is superior to limited atonement historically, logically, biblically, theologically, and practically. As a moderate Calvinist I appreciate his defense of unlimited atonement from a Calvinist perspective, as Allen quotes only Calvinists to support his position (p. 66). Steve Lemke, in addressing irresistible grace, is also clear and thorough, though I disagree with his rejection of irresistible grace. He presents a reasoned case for resistible grace from both a biblical and theological perspective. Both Allen and Lemke argue for the Arminian position concerning these two doctrines. The only chapter in the book that a five-point Calvinist could agree with is Kenneth Keathley's essay on perseverance and assurance. Keathley surveys the different positions on this doctrine, perceptively critiques them, and then proposes a nuanced Calvinist position that faithfully reflects the biblical teaching on assurance and perseverance.

The five essays in part 2 of *Whosoever Will* all accomplish their stated purposes, but most do little to advance the debate on the issues they address. Kevin Kennedy addresses John Calvin's view of the extent of the atonement, a topic that Allen addresses in his essay as well. Kennedy demonstrates that those who believe Calvin held to unlimited atonement have good reasons for their claim, but this is not really in dispute, as most scholars recognize that Calvin made several statements that seem to imply unlimited atonement and several that seem to imply limited atonement; this is why there is a dispute over his position. Malcolm Yarnell examines the potential impact of Calvinism on Baptist churches. While he correctly points out the errors of Calvinist ecclesiology, he does not do enough to demonstrate that these are serious concerns for Baptists, or that Baptists who are Calvinist in their theology are becoming Calvinist in their ecclesiology. R. Alan Street writes an excellent essay on the public invitation and Calvinism, demonstrating from both Scripture and history why all preachers, Calvinist or not, should publicly invite people to commit themselves to the gospel. Jeremy Evans reflects on determinism and human freedom, pointing out what he believes are the main problems with compatibilist freedom while endorsing libertarian freedom. He does not address the many responses published elsewhere to the problems he presents. Bruce Little ends the book with a chapter on God's sovereignty and evil, in which he demonstrates why he believes the Calvinistic view of sovereignty results in God being morally responsible for evil.

Whosoever Will certainly presents an alternative theological system to that of five-point Calvinism, but that alternative is simply Arminianism, with the exception of Keathley's position on the perseverance of the saints. The book argues for total depravity without original guilt or one's inability to choose God, pre-regenerating grace, election based on God's experience with humanity, unlimited atonement, resistible grace, and libertarian free will. It also provides a biblically and theologically based critique of five-point Calvinism. It is clear why the authors do not consider themselves to be Arminian (their view of assurance and perseverance), but it would be helpful and do more to advance the debate to admit that their views are much closer to Arminianism than Calvinism. For those desiring a solid defense of Baptist/Arminian soteriology, human freedom, and God's sovereignty, this book is a good resource, particularly the essays by Allen, Lemke, and Keathley. For those desiring a more balanced dialogue of these issues within a Southern Baptist context, I would recommend E. Ray Clendenen and Brad J. Waggoner, eds., *Calvinism: A Southern Baptist Dialogue* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2008).

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J. Todd Billings. *The Word of God for the People of God: An Entryway to the Theological Interpretation of Scripture*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010. xviii + 235 pp. £11.99/\$18.00.

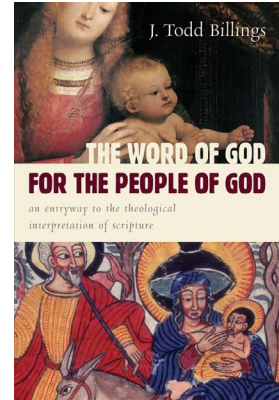
Billings joins a rising chorus of voices calling for “the theological interpretation of Scripture” (TIS), which “is, in many ways, simply the church’s attempt to read Scripture again after the hubris and polarities of the Enlightenment have begun to fade” (p. 224). TIS is “a multifaceted practice of a community of faith reading the Bible as God’s instrument of self-revelation and saving fellowship. It is not a single, discrete method or discipline; rather, it is a wide range of practices we use toward the goal of knowing God in Christ through Scripture” (p. xii).

In the first of six chapters, “Reading Scripture on the Journey of Faith Seeking Understanding,” Billings hopes we can be “unlearning our mastery over the biblical text and releasing it to be an instrument used by God for our transformation on the path of Jesus Christ” (p. 29). He discusses the need for a *rule of faith* as Christians approach Scripture. This emerges from Scripture (since ultimately the Scripture is its own interpreter) yet is also a lens through which Christians receive Scripture. He critiques the Enlightenment suspicion that “prior commitments are incompatible with knowledge, and that maps merely bias and distort rather than enable knowledge” (p. 27).

In chapter two, “Learning to Read Scripture Closely: A Theological Perspective on General Hermeneutics and Biblical Criticism,” like Augustine, Billings values human learning for biblical studies (knowledge of languages, history, etc.) and yet insists on a special approach since “the Bible is the Spirit’s instrument for leading Christians into a knowledge of the triune god on the path of Jesus Christ” (p. 33). “Critical methods need to be *recontextualized* within a theological framework; that is, they need to be evaluated and used according to terms that refuse to treat the Bible as nothing more than an object of historical inquiry” (p. 59). He employs Gadamer’s serious concept of play—responding to the text as another subject to which we are vulnerable rather than as an object of control. He dips into Ricoeur’s work on the imaginative power of metaphors and narratives. The Bible provides a possible world for readers to inhabit that leads to a new perspective on our own world.

In chapter three, “Revelation and Scripture Interpretation: Theological Decisions We (Must) Make,” Billings shows how functional theologies of revelation are operative whenever Christians interpret Scripture. Against the concept that the knowledge of God comes from natural reason (and against an anthropological starting point for revelation), Billings sides with Kierkegaard and Barth in affirming that revelation is an act of God through Scripture by the Spirit, a word external to us.

In his fourth chapter, “The Impact of the Reader’s Context: Discerning the Spirit’s Varied yet Bounded Work,” he challenges the idea that the Bible can mean anything you want it to mean (cultural relativism actually silences genuine debate about the meaning of texts and leaves us with a mute God). He argues for an indigenizing work of the Spirit in bringing the gospel to particular peoples (i.e., that Scripture will be received differently in different cultures), but there are doctrinal and ethical limits as we seek to discern the work of the Spirit in a given culture (all of which struggle with idolatry in various forms). We may use a hermeneutics of suspicion toward sinful interpreters, but always with trust toward the Scripture itself as the final standard in all Christian communities.



In Billings's fifth chapter on "The Value of Premodern Biblical Interpretation," he writes, "There is much that we can learn from the history of exegesis that we cannot learn simply from exegesis alone" (p. 188). Challenging what may be standard evangelical pulpit practice, he asserts, "To be content with the 'author's intended meaning' as the end to our reading of Scripture is to fail to perceive the church's own identity (as Christ's bride, growing in union with Christ), and the purpose of reading Scripture (participation in Christ by the Spirit)" (p. 162). Billings defends a spiritual reading of the OT since "Jesus Christ himself is the reorienting factor for all Christian biblical exegesis" (p. 167).

In the final chapter, "Scriptural Interpretation and Practices: Participation in the Triune Drama of Salvation," Billings suggests, "Biblical interpretation for Christians involves nothing less than a worshipful consecration of our practical lives to participate in the triune God's work, so that we may be mastered by the living Christ who speaks through Scripture" (p. 197). Our engagement with Scripture in meditation and in worship forms us deeper into the gospel.

Having taken an OT scholar for a wife during their doctoral studies at Harvard, the theologian Billings lives and writes for the marriage of dogmatics and biblical studies. Secular biblical scholars may find this proposal for a Trinitarian-shaped hermeneutic a narrow imposition of theological categories on exegesis. But Billings makes a compelling plea to Christian interpreters to remember who they are as disciples. Many evangelical readers would probably consider his hesitancy to identify God's word directly with the text of Scripture as one of the very few weaknesses of the work. I suspect it was inherited from Barth, whose strengths are well-employed here. Billings covers a vast amount of ground, but clearly and engagingly. This book makes an excellent and popularizing contribution to the field. His views are in broad sympathy with those of Kevin Vanhoozer and John Webster. "For Further Reading" sections are rich and inviting. Billings draws on his missionary and congregational experience to good and penetrating effect. I hope this *Entryway to the Theological Interpretation of Scripture* receives a wide reception, especially in college and seminary classrooms. Billings wants to engage not only our thinking, but our hands and hearts as we read Scripture to meet with the triune God, having our loves transformed.

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Carl E. Braaten. *Because of Christ: Memoirs of a Lutheran Theologian*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010. 192 pp. £11.99/\$18.00.

Carl Braaten has been one of the most prolific and influential American Lutheran theologians of the last half-century. The story of his theological travels and intellectual development reads like a Who's Who of twentieth-century Protestant theology and contains lessons for readers of this journal.

For example, his PhD advisor at Harvard was Paul Tillich, who advised Braaten to read not Tillich but the great theologians in the history of Christian thought. Soon Braaten concluded that Tillich had put history and eschatology onto a procrustean bed of essentialist ontology “that owes more to Plato than to the Bible” (p. 41). Braaten also discovered that Bultmann’s demythologizing project dissolved objective historical realities into an existential moment of decision. “Bultmann sidestepped the historicity of the resurrection of Jesus” (p. 41) and so emptied the apostolic kerygma of its historical contents.

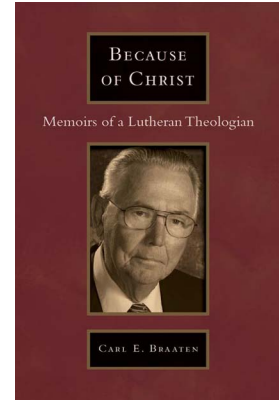
Along the way Braaten learned from the Niebuhr brothers but found that neither did theology in a Trinitarian framework or with a high Christology (p. 42). Barth was right when he said “the Bible is not humanity’s word about God but God’s word about humanity” (p. 62), but Barth was weak on the historical rootedness of revelation. Braaten found Pannenberg far more satisfying because he was able to overcome “a series of glaring dichotomies . . . between revelation and history, faith and reason, the historical Jesus and the kerygmatic Christ, the historicity of the resurrection and the interpretation of faith, Israel (old covenant) and the church (new covenant), Scripture and tradition” (p. 60). Braaten learned from Pannenberg that “history is the key to hermeneutical theory, a concern lacking in the theologies of both Barth and Bultmann” (p. 63).

By this time, in the mid-1960s, Braaten said he was seeing “the handwriting on the wall: Lutherans were joining the liberal Protestants calling for a new morality—love without law” (p. 67). He was also concluding that most Lutherans had misinterpreted Luther. The great reformer had never wanted to start a new Christianity or a new denomination named after himself, but to “summon the church to become truly evangelical, catholic, and orthodox” (p. xi). Braaten says that he has since worked for reunion among the orthodox churches because the existing divisions are a scandal in the light of Jesus’ high priestly prayer for unity (John 17:22–23).

Braaten scores Moltmann for jumping on the liberation theology bandwagon that makes praxis the new criterion for theology and faith (p. 99). Not only did popular liberation theology have Marxism at its base but it “brushed aside” the mystical and liturgical dimensions of Christian faith (p. 100).

During the 1970s and 1980s, Braaten met radical Christian feminist theology and found it wanting. He says that there is nothing wrong with using feminine metaphors and similes for God, as Scripture does, but that changing God’s name (from the traditional Trinitarian names) means adopting a new gospel. He quotes his friend and theological collaborator Robert Jenson: “A church ashamed of God’s name is ashamed of her God” (p. 113).

Braaten then recounts the sad story of the theological and numerical decline of the denomination in which he still serves as an ordained minister—the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). In this church, “theology is no longer considered a lifeline but a liability” (p. 126). No one who “bucks



the system gets elected to any office” (p. 132). In its publications such as *The Lutheran* magazine and at its publishing house (Augsburg Fortress), “censorship is massive, complete, and effective” (p. 132).

Braaten’s penultimate chapter recounts his work with Jenson to found the Center for Catholic and Evangelical Theology and its journal, *Pro Ecclesia*, which is now one of the premier theological journals in America. He says they started this Center and journal because of challenges to orthodox theology from a variety of sources: radical theological feminists were challenging the Triune identity of God; postmodern relativists were denouncing the authority of Scripture; quota systems and the cult of egalitarianism were undermining the church as the body of Christ; and the Lutheran doctrine of two kingdoms was being challenged by the Left, which equated the gospel mission with social causes, and the Right, which equated the two kingdoms. The common denominator in all these challenges to theological orthodoxy was a church conforming to culture (pp. 140–41).

In his last chapter Braaten takes on the straw that finally broke the ELCA camel’s back: homosexuality. He argues, “the biblical strictures against homosexual acts are true not because they are in the Bible; they are in the Bible because they are true.” Reason and nature (natural law) tell us “that the male and female organs are made for different functions . . . no books on anatomy, psychology, or sociology are needed” (p. 173).

Braaten’s story is not without its puzzling moments. He is rightly critical of the last century’s abundant departures from orthodoxy and takes his own church to task for losing its way, yet calls the Roman Catholic Church “authoritarian” for disciplining its own theologians who taught heresy—Küng, Curran, Boff, Schillebeeckx, and Haight (p. 71). He boasts that during the Vietnam War era while at Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago he preached a sermon in chapel comparing Abbie Hoffman, Jerry Rubin and the other “Chicago 7” to Socrates, Jesus, and Luther. Then he likened America to the Beast of Revelation because this country “forces all the poor people of the world to live off the crumbs that fall from its table” (p. 86). This seems to violate what he holds dear: the stricture that Christians must not confuse the two kingdoms. The otherwise wonderfully engaging book was poorly edited, for it contains more than a few repetitive passages.

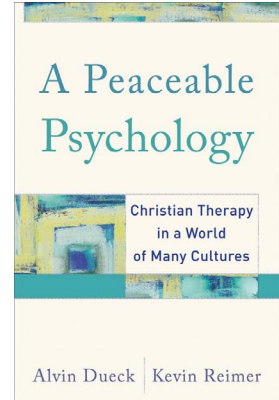
Evangelical theologians should be grateful for this memoir. Braaten shows us that a reform movement—both his Lutheranism and our evangelicalism—can go off the rails theologically if it looks more to human experience and the Enlightenment than to the great tradition of orthodox theology.

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Alvin Dueck and Kevin Reimer. *A Peaceable Psychology: Christian Therapy in a World of Many Cultures*. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2009. 288 pp. £14.99/\$24.99.

Alvin Dueck is a licensed psychologist and professor of the Integration of Psychology and Theology at Fuller Theological Seminary. Kevin Reimer is professor of psychology at Azusa Pacific University.

In *A Peaceable Psychology*, Dueck and Reimer offer a bold and compelling critique of how the Western psychologies often overrun and dismiss the cultural, ethnic, and religious uniqueness of its clients in a manner reflective of the violent intrusions of Constantine's crusades or imperial colonialism. The authors exhibit deep compassion and sensitivity as they illustrate their points through the suffering of men and women around the world who find healing more through engaging their deep pain with their own values, language, and traditions, than through the foreign ideologies and practices associated with the Western psychologies. As Dueck and Reimer "bring [their] theological convictions to bear on contemporary psychology/psychotherapy" (p. 10), they undermine the field of psychology's presuppositions of being foundational, scientific, transcultural, amoral, and thus, universal. They hope "to generate conversation emerging from a theologically, culturally, and politically sensitive psychotherapy" since "the hegemony of Western psychology is rapidly eroding the remnants of indigenous Christian understanding of the self, community, politics, and tradition" (pp. 10, 13). Why do the authors feel compelled to develop a cross-cultural psychology? In their own words, "our conviction [is] that to uncritically employ generalized psychological constructs risks imposing a psychology that is practically atheistic, undertaken as if God doesn't exist" (p. 13). Dueck and Reimer examine a therapeutic model "appropriate for sacral cultures that seek to live by the love and grace of God" (p. 14).



One will find much helpful insight in Dueck and Reimer's significant work, but one must carefully navigate through their persuasive arguments and indistinct proposals. In their desire to reach a broad audience (p. 15) while offering a psychology and practice characterized by an indigenous framework, one can walk away confused. For example,

A peaceable psychology does not impose a religious or political ideology. It begins with the particular web of beliefs the client brings to therapy and elicits the religious resources the client may possess. . . . Given the experience of Guatemalan Indians, Iraqi Sunnis, Tibetan Buddhists, Ukrainian Catholics, Ethiopian Christians, and other persecuted minority and religious ethnic groups . . . a peaceable psychology advocates for the voiceless and recognizes the gifts that they possess. (pp. 73–74).

However, the authors do not clearly show how their therapeutic framework might avoid a syncretistic and self-referential approach when interacting with other religions. If left to our own wisdom, we would all do "what is right in our own eyes" (cf. Judges 21:24–25). A psychology that flows from the gospel recognizes and addresses the differences in individuals, culture, language, traditions, and religion, yet is determined and driven by the God of the gospel.

After masterfully arguing against the colonializing machine of Western psychologies and arguing for a foundation built on the cross and resurrection of Jesus (pp. 18, 163, 182, 213, 226), the authors state that they "begin with the incarnate Word who is the source of life. It is not the abstract universal word

or symbol that is absolute or peaceable, but the concrete particular Word made flesh” (p. 75). But the reader can be confused by the following ambiguous assertions:

When the church reflects the Pentecost community, we will embrace plurality. We will have the freedom to use many languages. (p. 75)

Why not encourage multiple psychologies? To live in a highly pluralist, global community in which we recognize ethnic diversity, why might there not be multiple psychologies that undergird local identities? (p. 190)

Why not consider methodological pluralism . . . ? (p. 191)

These statements can be interpreted in a number of ways, but unfortunately the authors do not connect these assertions with their stated foundation of Jesus Christ. A psychology that flows from the gospel shows how the finished and enduring work of Christ brings order, clarity, and direction in a pluralistic world.

As the authors critique psychological practices, it is not clear if they are calling for a Christian uprising against the imperialist reign of contemporary psychology or if they are calling for the respect of the particular values of all indigenous clients and clinicians at any cost. On the one hand, they propose,

The alternative to empire is the political presence of the body of Christ, the church in society. . . . The church can be an alternative society in the midst of the empire. . . . We suggest two implications for Christian mental health practitioners: ecclesial identity and, when appropriate, subversive clinical practice. (pp. 54–55)

Unfortunately, on the other hand, they confess,

We admit we have no detailed blueprint for how a peaceable psychology should be conducted. . . . we have no manual. Though we think therapists might take more seriously their own thick religious heritage, we are tentative in our therapeutic strategies for the sake of our clients. (p. 202)

The authors, who identify gaping holes in Western psychotherapies, do not show how the written and living word of Jesus Christ serves as the corrective and cohesive ingredient for their proposed indigenous psychology. A psychology that flows from the gospel utilizes the spiritual disciplines of faith and repentance in relationship with the living Redeemer.

Overall, *A Peaceable Psychology* is an insightful and thought-provoking work that shows how the Western psychologies have mistreated their clients by dismissing their religious and cultural moorings. Even though Dueck and Reimer offer glimpses of how their peaceable psychology would differ, the reader will ultimately be left with more questions than answers regarding their therapeutic model.

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Craig A. Forney. *The Holy Trinity of American Sports: Civil Religion in Football, Baseball, and Basketball*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2010. £31.50/\$25.00.

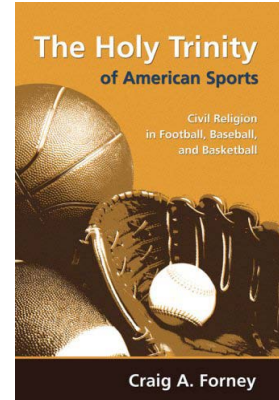
The study of the relationship between sport and religion has seen remarkable growth in the last quarter century. Craig Forney's book makes a contribution to this burgeoning field within religious studies, although the scope of his work has more to say about sociological issues in sport. Rather than deal with specific theological issues arising in sport, Forney's work offers a comparative analysis, showing how the three major sports in America portray nearly indistinguishable traditions of meaning and identity as many American civil practices. The symbolic representations, the author argues, pervade virtually every aspect of football, baseball and basketball.

He describes 'civil religion' in the United States as an idea of the founding fathers where the people are not ruled by a particular religious dogma. Instead, there should exist a 'national set of beliefs to unify the otherwise divided states' (p. 9). Forney identifies eight specific ways this set of beliefs aims at unifying the nation. Some of these include dedication to ritual acts and sacred stories, direction for the pursuit of truth and ethical behaviour, and provides motivation to do better by generating a 'strong sense of dissatisfying distance from ideals' (p. 14).

Forney then sets out to demonstrate how this civil religion has come to be expressed in each of the three major sports in American society. Then he turns his attention to the ways in which these three sports, a trinity of sorts, complement each other in pursuit of America's civil religion. Whereas in most cases these sports reflect the values of society, Forney concludes the book with a chapter focusing on his final tenet of civil religion where a society is united by the aspiration to become better. He suggests that while the trinity of American sport reflects social values in the other tenets of civil religion, sport lags behind in this final area. However, in doing so it strengthens the awareness of the need for improvement in areas like racial and gender inequalities. Society in general has done a better job in these regards than has the world of sport, but because of the unity to be a better society we are making some much needed progress.

While he does offer some compelling ideas throughout the book, there are two areas which had a negative impact on this reader. At times it seems that Forney is stretching to find a comparison. For instance, his chapter about baseball begins by linking the sport to the 'American mythology of a perfect world to come' (p. 67). He says that this is portrayed by a number of elements of the game, including the fact that the baseball is round (a perfect circle) and can be thrown at very high speeds. Forney says that the ball often travels 'too fast for the naked eye to follow, bringing vision of a world to come when objects will travel instantaneously' (p. 68). Add to this reaching illustration the idea that a baseball is white, the colour of purity. Forney likens the ball to the White house and other national monuments and points out that marked and discoloured balls are immediately replaced in a game since 'perfectionist expectations for the ball communicate a mythic anticipation for perfect way of life' (p. 68).

These symbolisms, among others he lists, are interesting ideas to consider. One of the most intriguing is the significance of the number three in American civil life and in baseball (i.e., three branches of government and three outs per inning). As I have already said, the relevance of some of these ideas appears to me a bit of an idealistic stretch. To be sure, one can see certain cultural symbolic



qualities acted out in a nation's games. This is reinforced by the fact that different countries adopt slightly different regulative rules that are idiosyncratic to that culture's way of life.

However, the impression given by Forney is that these elements somehow provide the motivation for the game and/or define the game in a specific way. If this were so, then we might also say that Americans' love of money is symbolized by the grass on the baseball field being green. I have my doubts about whether or not this is actually the best way to describe America's national pastimes. Players are not concerned that a blemished ball may take away from their conception of some future ideal world. They want a new ball because even the slightest of scuff marks or bruises can alter the trajectory of an otherwise beautifully thrown curveball.

So while the symbolism is there and the unifying beliefs of American civil religion are evident in all three sports, we might do better to describe them in terms of more abstract values than with such specifically detailed intricacies in how and why the sports are played.

The other area where I would suggest improvements to this book lies in the editing. Phrases like 'games provides a celebrative element' (p. 29) and 'the restrictive nature of humanity through highly the constrained use of the ball' (p. 54) are found throughout the book, making it a less pleasant read for those concerned with accurate grammar. It has the appearance of a drafted manuscript. I would suggest at least one more round of revisions to improve the quality and scholarship of this work.

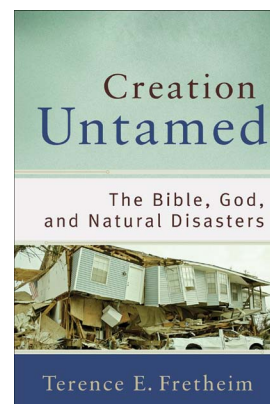
Though there were parts of this book I found enjoyable and interesting, it is not one I can recommend as a "must-read" for those interested in sport and religion. It certainly has some strong points like drawing the reader's attention to many of the underlying representations and metaphors of our deepest cultural values, but at times the author pushes these symbolisms to the extreme. Perhaps a second edition which takes into consideration these suggestions would make for a good resource in sport, religion, and society as it does present a lot of material to correlate all three.

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Terence E. Fretheim. *Creation Untamed: The Bible, God, and Natural Disasters*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010. 160 pp. £12.99/\$19.99.

The press cites Christian leaders on three topics: sex, money, and so-called biblical perspectives on natural disasters. In spite of the fact that this volume is part of a larger series entitled "Theological Explorations for the Church Catholic," the central premise of this book is quite controversial, and there is little evidence that it is based on doctrine held by the Christian church throughout the centuries. Many ideas echo process theology and open theism. At the heart of this book is the argument that natural disasters were an "integral part of creation before human beings showed up" (p. 3). This short book covers a wide range of material including creation, providence, prayer, the book of Job, Psalms, and the Genesis flood story.

There are several commendable aspects about this volume. Readers will appreciate the care that Fretheim takes in consistently doing exegesis and exposition before theology.



Key ideas are repeated throughout for the sake of clarity, and the volume is not encumbered by technical jargon or excessive footnotes. Despite the controversial nature, many will agree with Fretheim's concern that Christian leaders often link specific natural disasters with sinners. There is no doubt that work needs to be on the topic of divine judgment and creation theology. I heartily agree with Fretheim's call to work hard on this matter!

In Fretheim's model, God makes a decision to allow creation itself to be a co-creator. Creation has a role in creating itself! (p. 11). The world is eternally becoming in similar fashion to process theology. The world (even mud) takes on the status as a "non-human creature" (p. 22). Creation itself is given freedom and non-human creatures are released from "tight divine control" (p. 16). God does not unilaterally control creation but has partnered with it (p. 17). The creator is not, as Fretheim explains, "external" to creation (p. 24). This differs significantly from orthodox Christian doctrine because the world is both creator and creature. In this model, it is very difficult to tell the difference between creation and God. The nature of creation is so open and radically free that Fretheim suggests that God has made "false starts," "failures," and "embarrassments" (p. 21). And if suffering and disasters are "good" and "necessary" (p. 154), it is not clear that there will *ever* be a time when this will change.

All creatures are called to participate in this process of the "becoming of creation" (p. 15). Because God and the earth are co-creators, God and the earth are "ever in the process of becoming" (pp. 14, 26). The earth is a "dynamic reality" (p. 14) that is continually in process. Randomness and chaos reflect the "goodness" of the earth because they reflect growth and potential for development. Fretheim connects this model to open theism by stating, "God creates a dynamic world in which the future is open to a number of possibilities" (p. 17). This is unique because humans and non-human creatures are characterized by libertarian freedom.

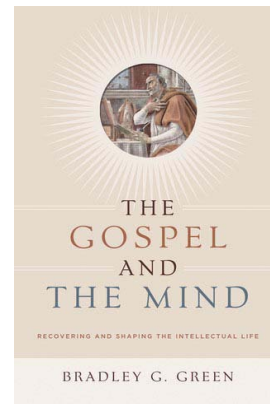
The evidence marshaled forth to support this claim is that the command to "subdue" the earth (Gen 1:28) is given before the fall. Fretheim provides a non-technical exegesis of the use of "good" and "very good" in Gen 1–2. From a macro-level perspective, Fretheim places too much weight on semantics without giving appropriate consideration to narrative elements. Fretheim concludes that if the earth was evaluated as both "good" and in need of being subdued, then the earth was not finished and natural disasters are an integral part of the earth process of growth and change. The problem with his proposal is that it is myopic and virtually ignores the presence of the Garden of Eden and the Fall. This proposal also raises questions about the nature of God. If the chaos of creation is intrinsically good, does this mean that God's nature is also characterized by chaos?

There are two other macro-level problems that stand out. First (despite Fretheim's obvious erudition and mastery of Semitic languages), this particular proposal is based in large-part on a fallacious *non sequitur* argument. Specifically, it does not follow that a model of creation that is based God's total sovereignty eliminates responsibility from creatures (pp. 10, 37). God's sovereignty does not demand fatalism. Second, there is little engagement with the doctrine of Christ as creator. There is an engaging Christ-centered examination of the cross and suffering but little about Jesus' role as the creator and sustainer of the cosmos. Hopefully this is one of the last spasms of open-theism literature. Unfortunately, Fretheim does not address any of the existing literature that critiques models of God and creation that are similar to his.

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Bradley G. Green. *The Gospel and the Mind: Recovering and Shaping the Intellectual Life*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2010. 192 pp. £11.99/\$16.99.

For some time I have had the gnawing suspicion that the real scandal of the evangelical mind is not, with apologies to Mark Noll, that there *is* no evangelical mind. Rather, the real scandal is that whatever evangelical mind there is has lost its grasp on the epistemological significance of the gospel and is therefore, in its fundamental orientation, an *essentially secular* mind. For example, it often seems that those of us who inhabit the world of evangelical higher education conceive of integrating faith and learning as a project that has less to do with exploring how all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Christ (cf. Col 2:3) than it does with attempting to cram the square peg of faith into the round hole of learning. Indeed, it seems that most of us conceive of the intellectual life in a fashion that pays mere lip service to the notion that “all knowledge is ultimately rooted in faith commitments” (p. 83), and in so doing we betray a form of “cognitive dissonance” (p. 76) that suggests that despite our best efforts to the contrary and all of our good intentions notwithstanding, we have fallen prey to what some would regard as a kind of “functional atheis[m]” (p. 75).



If this suspicion is tethered in any real way to habits of mind that are prevalent in the evangelical camp, one wonders if there is a solution to the problem and if there is therefore any hope for the recovery of an integrated, authentically evangelical mind. In this courageous, historically informed, and theologically sophisticated examination of “the link between the gospel and the intellectual life” (p. 58), Bradley Green argues that there is a solution and that there is indeed hope for evangelicals as well as for modern thinkers more generally. It is to be found in the recovery of the notion that since “There ultimately are no ‘nontheological matters’” (p. 76), “a return to the most promising life of the mind is ultimately a return to a life grounded in Christ and the cross, and in the larger Christian vision of things, where the gospel is central” (p. 26). “If what I am arguing is true,” Green concludes, “then the recovery of any sort of meaningful intellectual life will be rooted in Christ and the gospel” (p. 178).

At the foundation of Green’s beautifully written and remarkably encouraging repudiation of the prevailing tendency to view the intellectual life as a “neutral or autonomous” (p. 75) enterprise is his insistence that both the disintegration and the debilitating skepticism of the modern mind are grounded in its abandonment of the “central themes of the West’s Christian inheritance” (p. 26). “As the modern world has jettisoned its Christian intellectual inheritance,” he argues, “there has been a corresponding confusion about the value of the mind, even of the possibility of knowledge at all, whether of God or of the created order” (p. 26). In order to recover “a genuine and meaningful life of the mind” (p. 28), Green therefore insists that we must retrieve those themes that are essential to this inheritance, themes that will then “form the matrix of any promising and sustainable intellectual life” (p. 26) if the God of this world is in fact the God of the Bible, and if it is indeed true that “All intellectual discourse is—at a very fundamental level—theological . . .” (p. 20). To this end, Green labors to elucidate the “Christian theological themes” (p. 13) that provide “a coherent account of the possibility of the intellectual life” (p. 175)—themes having to do, for example, with the doctrine of creation, the teleological nature of the world that we live in, the atonement, and the moral nature of knowledge—and in so doing successfully establishes the “two main interlocking theses” that function as the “heart and soul” of his analysis: “(1) the Christian vision of God, man, and the world provides the necessary precondition of the recovery of

any meaningful intellectual life; (2) the Christian vision of God, man, and the world offers a particular, unique understanding of what the intellectual life might look like” (pp. 13–14).

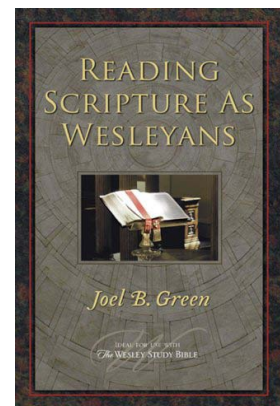
The Gospel and the Mind deserves a wide and careful reading by those who are interested in the contemporary state of the evangelical mind for a number of reasons. In my estimation, the most important of these has to do with the forthright manner in which Green brings the doctrine of creation and the authority of Scripture to bear upon the question of how we should think about the intellectual life given the christocentric nature of the world in which we live. In short, Green argues that because the God we serve is not “a deistic God” but the God who “created the world through the Son . . . and now *rules, governs, and sustains* the created order, guiding it to its appointed end . . . , nothing can be *truly* understood unless it is understood *in relation to the God who created and currently sustains the world*” (p. 162). Moreover, Green insists that because “we know as God’s creatures, moral agents in God’s world” who have the capacity to know only because he “is graciously sustaining us in all that we do and providing for us such that knowing can occur” (p. 164), “it is incumbent on us to know and understand things *in the light of who God is and what he has spoken*” (p. 163, emphasis added). In the final analysis, then, Green’s examination of the connection between the gospel and the life of the mind is essential reading for evangelicals who recognize that “as created beings, we are not autonomous” (p. 37), for it reminds us of the epistemological entailments of the Creator/creature distinction, the most important of which has to do with the central role that God’s Word *must* play in our exploration of the world that he has created and is sustaining from one moment to the next. Green rightly concludes,

Since the Creator God has spoken to us about the world he has created, it is *his* interpretation of reality that must pervade all of our intellectual and educational endeavors. . . . Our learning, therefore, must always seek to understand God’s interpretation of reality as revealed in Scripture, and we are always seeking to understand all of reality in light of what the triune God has spoken. (pp. 37–38)

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Joel B. Green. *Reading Scripture as Wesleyans*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2010. 186 pp. £10.99/\$15.00.

Joel Green has made his contribution to the growing attention to John Wesley’s use of Scripture. Although the title makes this work appear more prescriptive than the book actually is (a more fitting title would have been *Reading Scripture with Wesley*), it summarizes well how Wesley used Scripture. Green’s “sampling of the New Testament books” draws widely from Wesley’s sermons, letters, journal entries, and expository notes. Apparently Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, the Pastoral Epistles, Philemon, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, and Jude do not contain significant contributions since these letters are not included in the sampling. Despite this limitation, the book is advertised as a companion “ideal for use with” *The Wesleyan Study Bible* for which Green served as general editor. It is not precisely clear how this project functions as a



companion, but it is designed for individual or small group study with each chapter ending with several questions for reflection.

The author usually begins each chapter with his own introduction before proceeding to Wesley's reading of Scripture and theological interpretation. On a few occasions Green offers alternatives to or criticisms of Wesley's reading, but remains optimistic about Wesley overall while emphasizing Wesley's commitment to interpreting Scripture by Scripture and the rule of faith.

In a very important four-page introduction, Green acknowledges the methodist (lower case to refer to the ecclesial tradition) commitment to Scripture, but contends that methodists have not always known how to read Scripture *as methodists*. From the author's perspective, methodists have often fallen into one of two errors: some follow the "university or seminary" reading of Scripture, where faith is put on hold and spiritual formation is of no concern, while others reject a disciplined approach in favor of "taking the Bible literally." Neither, claims Green, is Wesleyan. Rather, Wesley found in Scripture "the journey of salvation" and, with an eye constantly on the soteriological message of Scripture, emphasized spiritual formation that becomes, for Green, characteristic of *the* Wesleyan reading of Scripture. The author's purpose, then, is to describe how Wesley read Scripture without falling into either of these faulty approaches.

In his articulation of the Wesleyan reading of Scripture, Green provides three coordinates that fix the Wesleyan reading and use of Scripture (pp. 37–38). The first concerns the reader's own interests, allegiances and character: Are we approaching Scripture to hear the voice of God? The second emphasizes the theological task of reading Scripture: Does our reading cohere with the orthodox faith of the church and induce us to further our journey of salvation? Finally, Wesleyans ought to use any tool that does not hinder but encourages the first two. Of primary interest is moving beyond mere historical research to our own spiritual formation. This is where I find Green to be most helpful. His background as an exegete is apparent and is typically insightful. He rightly emphasizes that Wesley never read Scripture "alone" and that theological interpretation takes place in the context of the church. Consequently, Wesley's theological reading and Green's comments are easily compatible with preaching notes or small group discussion.

From a theological standpoint, Green's introduction is especially thought-provoking and worthy of careful consideration. His description of the methodist dilemma is typical. However, the conditions giving rise to the problem are crucial and are not mentioned. It may be Green's failure to describe Wesley's alliance with a Reformed view of Scripture at several points that handicaps not only his description of the problem but also his solution. Certainly methodists today face a more complicated set of circumstances than choosing merely between an uncommitted reading of Scripture and an unqualified "literal" reading of Scripture. Green identifies two protagonists: he is especially concerned with the secularist who refuses to read the text theologically, but he also expresses concern for the "literalist." Insofar as he seeks to correct left-leaning interpreters, his comments should be well-taken. But his treatment of the other is suspect. Green refers to the latter as those who would "grasp the Bible's 'truth'" as foremost a matter of "events reported in the Bible [that] really happened just the way the Bible tells it" (p. 37) and who seek to know "what actually happened." According to Green, such knowledge would require an all-knowing perspective (p. 67). Furthermore, we should not seek to harmonize the differences between the Gospels in such a way because the meaning of the text is "spiritual" (p. 49). Again, in grappling with Wesley's use of science, Green seems to imply that there is tension between the claims of Scripture and science (pp. 5–6). Reading for spiritual formation does not require an unqualified

“literal” reading, but a historically grounded reading. Reading Green at this point brings Lessing’s ugly ditch to mind. Despite Green’s lack of careful qualification here, there remains some validity, I believe, in stressing that Wesleyans do not base their faith *merely* on “what actually happened” but more on what the actual events mean theologically. If this is what Green means when he writes that the significance of the Gospel events is “their inner, spiritual meaning,” one would expect an explicit statement in order to avoid possible conflict between the details of history and the substance of faith (p. 49).

To the extent that the author describes Wesley’s theological interpretation of Scripture, the book is useful for any student of Wesley even if the author’s interpretative remarks are less than satisfactory. The book’s title, however, promises more than it delivers. The question it raises remains largely unanswered. What does it mean to “read Scripture as Wesleyans?” The general principles described could as well refer simply to a Christian reading of Scripture, that is, reading with faith, interpreting Scripture with Scripture, and utilizing the history of interpretation. What it is that makes Green’s description peculiarly Wesleyan is uncertain. In fact, it may subtly confuse the uninformed reader into thinking that Wesleyans read Scripture differently than other Christians. A more balanced reading of Wesley would bring one to the conclusion that any difference between Wesleyans and other traditions emphasizing the primacy of Scripture is one of emphasis rather than essence.

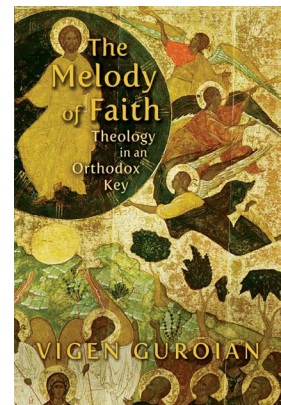
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Vigen Guroian. *The Melody of Faith: Theology in an Orthodox Key*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010. 184 pp. £8.99/\$14.00.

This reviewer has often been told by Orthodox people that one cannot grasp Eastern Orthodoxy through reading books; one has to experience it. To some degree, such a statement is true of any Christian tradition, but it is especially true of Orthodoxy, whose forms of expression and whose overarching themes are so seemingly foreign to Western Christians. But for those whose access to the world of Orthodoxy *is* limited to books, this new work by Vigen Guroian comes closer to enabling readers to feel the lifeblood of Eastern theology than any other book this reviewer has read.

Guroian, an Armenian-American who teaches Orthodox studies at the University of Virginia, writes in a reader-friendly, conversational style that makes this little book a delight to read. He moves effortlessly among various genres of material, analyzing quotations of the church fathers and of Eastern liturgical texts, discussing the theological meaning of certain icons, and even citing such artifacts of popular religious culture as C. S. Lewis’s *Chronicles of Narnia* and Mel Gibson’s *The Passion of the Christ*.

Guroian organizes the book around six major themes (he calls them “tone poems”) of Orthodox theology: “the litany of creation,” “the luminous moment of the apocalypse,” “divine therapy,” “Mother of God; Mother of holiness,” “the victorious cross,” and “the rhythm of the resurrection.” These are common themes in Western theology as well (with the exception—in the case of Protestantism—of the focus on Mary the Mother of God), and Guroian acquaints Western readers with the distinctive



Orthodox approach to these topics. I believe that in the process of reflecting on these themes, Guroian does a service to three different audiences within the Western Christian world.

First, Guroian's presentation speaks to a general Western Christian audience by helping to correct imbalances in our popular faith. For example, he succinctly critiques a theology of redemption that is exclusively juridical and rational, and argues for a more metaphorical theology in which the motif of healing plays a major role as well (pp. 50–51). Likewise, he emphasizes the uniqueness of humans as beings composed of body and soul and focuses the Christian hope on the reconstitution of the whole person through the resurrection of the body, not just the soul's survival of death (p. 129). These ideas are hardly new to Western theologians, but Guroian's popular Western audience can benefit greatly from his correctives.

Second, Guroian's work benefits Western theologians by introducing them to some ideas that are likely to be new to them. He speaks of creation as being anthropocentric but for a theocentric purpose (p. 16). He links the apocalypse and the liturgy as a way of introducing his readers to the Orthodox belief that the liturgy transports worshipers into the eschaton, so that the church lives in both the now and the not yet at once (p. 33). And most strikingly (and at least to Protestant theologians, most disturbingly), his extended discussion of Mary focuses on her role as both the mother of God incarnate and the mother of believers (p. 66) and describes her willingness to bear the Christ as her participation in the Son's *kenosis* by which our redemption was achieved (pp. 78–79, 88). These aspects of the book help to show how very different the world of Orthodoxy is from the West, and they give Western theologians a great deal to consider.

Third, Guroian's work speaks to those of us who know Orthodoxy well by helping us to hear voices from the non-Greek and non-Slavic Eastern tradition. Not surprisingly, Guroian makes substantial use of Armenian and Syrian sources, and these sources supplement the Greek and Russian sources with which Western scholars of Orthodoxy are more familiar. The agreement between these sources helps the knowledgeable reader to recognize the substantial unity among all the Eastern churches, both Chalcedonian and Oriental. Even though these groups are not in fellowship with one another, and even though Western textbooks label the Oriental churches as "Monophysite," the differences between them are more cultural and political than theological, and many today (including this reviewer) believe both groups are saying the same thing about Christ. Guroian's juxtaposition of Chalcedonian and Oriental Orthodox sources—without actually addressing the "Monophysite schism"—helps to strengthen the growing consensus that the two groups share the same faith.

This short book thus accomplishes a great deal. Most important, it provides an alternative to an excessively rational way of doing theology by exposing Western readers to the concept of theology as a celebration, a song. In the process of achieving its major aim, it speaks helpfully—and sometimes provocatively, even disturbingly—to Western Christians at all levels. Guroian's work should surely find a place as a textbook for courses on Eastern Christianity, and it will be useful as a secondary textbook for more general theology courses as well.

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Gregory Koukl. *Tactics: A Game Plan for Discussing Your Christian Convictions*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009. 208 pp.

Koukl has written a practical guide, accessible to any Christian. *Tactics* does not claim to be an apologetics textbook or even a book intended to develop a particular apologetic theory. It is simply a guide to having better conversations regarding one's Christian convictions.

The book is divided into two main sections: "The Game Plan" and "Finding the Flaws." With titles like, "Diplomacy or D-Day?", "Getting into the Driver's Seat: The Columbo Tactic," "Practical Suicide," and "Steamroller," one can see that this book is winsome and enjoyable to read. Koukl goes to great lengths to communicate at a level where any Christian will be able to learn from *Tactics*.

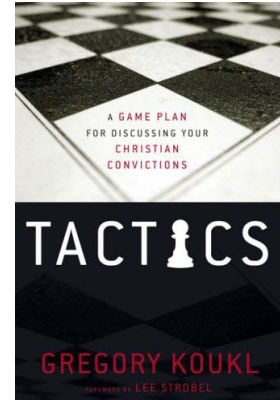
Part one, "The Game Plan," explains and develops what Koukl he calls "The Columbo Tactic." The name, of course, is taken from the American TV detective who on appearance seems to be completely clueless, but then by asking key probing questions is able to solve the mystery every time. Essentially, Koukl wants his readers to learn how to ask good questions to lead a conversation while avoiding arguments, all the while in control of the conversation.

Very helpfully though, before getting into the tactic, Koukl addresses some of the key reservations all Christians have with sharing their Christian convictions. He acknowledges that so many of these conversations can end up in disaster ("D-Day"), but explains how, by taking the approach he offers in this book, our conversations can be more diplomatic. He then goes on to establish a more modest goal than many will have when entering these conversations. Koukl's goal is not, necessarily, to see the person adopt the Christian's convictions and become converted as a result of that initial conversation. His goal is described as "leaving them with a stone in their shoe." In other words, the Christian can diplomatically walk through the conversation addressing the questions raised and leave the other person with a nagging idea that their worldview just doesn't work. This will hopefully lead to further conversations.

Part one is helpful on a number of levels. Unfortunately, I have been in a number of those D-Day conversations where what was intended to be a constructive discussion on Christianity ended up in a disastrous argument. Thinking carefully on how to ask better questions is a critical skill any Christian can develop. This same skill is helpful in any conversation—even those with other Christians where we are discussing subjects on which we do not agree.

At the same time part one is inadequate in that most of the conversations described seem to fall short of explaining the gospel to the non-Christian. I understand that I may not get to that every time, and I am looking for an opportunity to follow-up the initial conversation with more discussion. However, some of the conversations described in the book are with strangers one is likely to never see again (i.e., "The Witch in Wisconsin" in ch. 1). In the description of even these scenarios, it seems as though Koukl is stating that this is sufficient for communicating one's Christian convictions.

However, in the Wiccan example nothing is said that would even allude to the fact that Koukl's convictions are Christian. He helpfully shows her how she has major inconsistencies in her own worldview—i.e., she says she values all of life and is yet pro-choice. He clearly shows that he sees this as inadequate and that his conviction differs. But nothing he says would communicate to the lady that his convictions are Christian.



Again, I find the example of how to listen and how to ask probing questions very helpful. However, I would like to see more clearly how, even with strangers, I can clearly present my convictions as Christian, rooted in Scripture, and not just my convictions that happen to differ from theirs.

That is probably why part two, “Finding the Flaws,” is more helpful. Koukl basically shows the reader how to listen carefully to see the inadequate and inconsistent ways people will attempt to explain and defend their position. It is essentially a primer on logic written in a very helpful and engaging manner.

Any Christian would benefit from reading this section—probably more than once—for two reasons: (1) it helps Christians develop the tactics necessary to lead conversations regarding their Christian convictions, and (2) most of us do not realise how illogical and inconsistent we are ourselves. This section will help any Christian think more carefully about their own convictions and therefore as a result be more consistent in presenting them to others.

All through the book Koukl gives helpful illustrations, summaries, and simple steps virtually anyone can follow. Even with the weakness explained above, *Tactics* is still the first book I recommend to Christians who are looking to equip themselves to more effectively share their Christian convictions with their non-Christian friends, neighbours, coworkers, and relatives.

Joe Fleener

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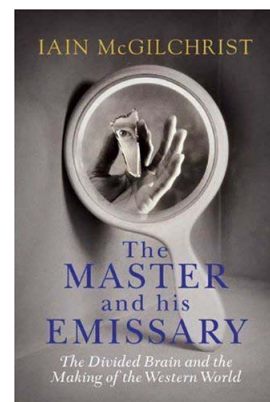
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Ian McGilchrist. *The Master and His Emissary: The Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009. 608 pp. £25.00/\$38.00.

Ian McGilchrist is a former Oxford literary scholar who trained in medicine and now works as a consulting psychiatrist and writer. For the past twenty years, he has pondered why the brain is divided into two hemispheres, instead of being an integrated, single organ. Utilizing the fruits of current neuroscientific investigation, McGilchrist acknowledges that virtually all functions once thought to be the province of one hemisphere (e.g., speech and language in the left hemisphere and imagination and emotion in the right), are, at least to a certain extent, mediated by both hemispheres. Nevertheless, he posits that the two hemispheres provide the individual with differing perspectives on the world. The right hemisphere promotes emotional sensitivity and empathy; an aesthetic sense, with an appreciation of beauty; knowledge and awe of the numinous, leading to a religious impulse; and an overall ability to place facts into context.

The left hemisphere allows focusing on details; communicating about them using language; and the ability to manipulate this knowledge to achieve desired ends. Citing examples from nature, McGilchrist hypothesizes why both of these perspectives may be necessary for a being’s thriving. For example, a bird can pick out edible seeds (utilizing primarily the left hemisphere) while maintaining vigilant surveillance of its environment to detect potential predators (mediated by the right hemisphere).

According to McGilchrist, mankind, at least in the West, unfortunately has had a predilection for drifting into epochs during which the left hemisphere becomes overwhelmingly dominant with the baleful consequences of dehumanization, environmental exploitation, and ruthless individualism—a



Hobbesian world of lives that are “brutish, nasty, and short.” Not surprisingly, the author suggests that we are in such an age currently. The “master and his emissary” image comes from a Nietzschean parable in which a virtuous ruler sends forth a redoubtable emissary to foster peaceful prosperity in his kingdom, only to have the counselor usurp the throne and wreak havoc and destruction on the realm. McGilchrist hopes that Western man will return to an equilibrium in which the wise emperor (the right cerebral hemisphere) and his formidable emissary (the left hemisphere) work synergistically.

The book is divided into two parts. Part one, “The Divided Brain,” provides the reader with some basic neuroscience to undergird comprehension of the author’s thesis. Part two, “How the Brain Has Shaped Our World,” surveys Western civilization, comparing and contrasting ages in which the left hemisphere was dominant (e.g., the Enlightenment) with those in which the “Master” and “Emissary” worked harmoniously (e.g., the Renaissance). A lengthy introduction and conclusion reinforce dominant themes, aiding the reader in seeing the entire Seuratian landscape of McGilchrist’s depiction of Western civilization and contemporary neuroscience, rather than merely the multitudinous individual points (i.e., fostering the right hemisphere keeping the left hemisphere in check).

McGilchrist’s breadth of knowledge is impressive, and *The Master and His Emissary* is accessible to the general reader. As with Jacques Barzun’s *From Dawn to Decadence*, the book provides the reader with a broad, erudite survey of Western civilization. Additionally, it exposes the reader to the reasoned judgment of one competent in science assessing the view that we derive “real” knowledge only with the scientific method; McGilchrist shows that this view is impoverished indeed and that it inexorably leads to dehumanizing man into a mere machine. McGilchrist’s repudiation of materialism, the default philosophy of many current Western “elites” and “intellectuals,” is refreshing, as is his measured assessment of religion.

The author recognizes, “Even the best scientists . . . cannot help anthropomorphizing” (p. 256), and *a fortiori* a literary scholar-cum psychiatrist cannot either. Thus, though his oft-repeated thesis is riddled with assertions that seem as nonsensical as Richard Dawkins’s designation of certain genes as “selfish” (one wonders if other genes are “envious,” “hedonistic,” etc.)—e.g., the left hemisphere is “confident, unreasonably optimistic, unwitting of what goes on in the right hemisphere, and yet in denial about its own limitations” (p. 131)—McGilchrist is wise enough to recognize that his conception is likely more metaphorical than factual. Indeed, *pace* Dickens’s Gradgrind, the author’s assertion that many of life’s most important insights are metaphors rather than facts is apposite. *The Master and His Emissary* provides the thoughtful believer with a more balanced view of what we currently know about the brain and ourselves than the settled “science” proffered by many of today’s self-styled “brights.”

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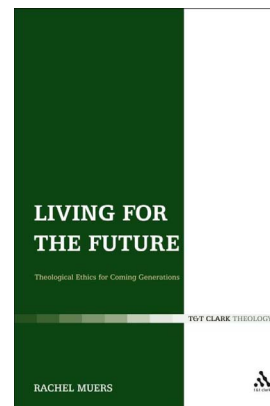
Rachel Muers. *Living for the Future: Theological Ethics for Coming Generations*. London: T&T Clark, 2008. ix + 216 pp. £65.00/\$130.00.

Rachel Muers's *Living for the Future* contends that "while Christians do not give up on the prayer of the kingdom of God, they also cannot give up the desire for a livable world for future generations, because God does not give up on God's love for the world" (p. 4). Yet few people, whether Christians or not, actually show concern for future generations. Muers demonstrates how theological ethics must maintain an openness and commitment to the future.

Muers focuses in chapter one on founding texts for intergenerational ethics, which "were written in the context of *revolution*" (p. 13), especially the revolutions of the eighteenth century. She addresses how the opinions and rights of future generations (who, in the eyes of some, do not even exist in any meaningful sense) can be brought to bear on contemporary concerns. These questions point to *theological* issues, and they "cannot be avoided, simply because relations of dependence cannot be avoided" (p. 28). This chapter is most helpful in highlighting intergenerational responsibility, the influence of "absent generations," and the contemporary parallel with the eighteenth century's revolutionary context.

Chapters two through four reflect on the biblical call to "choose life." Chapter two is best at bringing out implications present in OT texts such as the Psalms, but the treatment of NT passages (especially 1 Thessalonians) comes off a bit strained at points, as the connections Muers makes do not always seem grounded in the text. (The chapter also manifests an odd feature of the book: Scripture quotations appear in a different font rather than in quotation marks.) In all, this chapter demonstrates how much nuance and careful thinking is required to bring the Bible to bear on intergenerational ethics. Chapter three focuses on the repeated biblical prohibitions against child sacrifice and idolatry. Muers sees two consequences. First, these practices literally sacrifice future generations. Second, they also bind them to practices that cultivate death and make such practices the norm, reflecting what is worshiped (idols). Chapter four explores community. Muers attempts to connect accounts of intergenerational responsibility to influential recent approaches, dealing with Avner de-Shalit and Stanley Hauerwas. Then she explains 1 Thessalonians's use of "those outside" and "mind your own affairs" so that they helpfully connect to sustainability and future generations. There are calls to the community to abound in love for all (including future generations) not because they are identical but because they are similarly subjects and similarly called into complex relationships to God and to others (pp. 99–100). Her analysis takes account of the text in a creative way, but her comments about authorship ("if we can speak for the moment of Paul as a single author," p. 98) indicate that her rereading may be based upon unhelpful presuppositions.

In chapters five and six, Muers develops the theme of representative responsibility. Chapter five addresses "standing in someone else's place." Muers explores Bonhoeffer's use of the concept of "vicarious representative responsibility." Jesus' relationship to humanity provides an analogy. He "stands in" for us, and our freedom and living depends on this. Responsibility flows out of it, just as future generations' freedom, living, and responsibility flow out of the decisions of current generations. Chapter six develops "the idea that human incarnation implies dependence on a complex . . . network of material and social connections to others, and also implies participation in the processes whereby this embodied



life is passed on” (p. 127). Muers dwells on the image of a pregnant woman as encapsulating the idea of living for future generations. A concern for the present health of the current generation is a prerequisite for the healthy life of future generations. We should “see the work of particular mothers as a focus for what is going on all the time in the lives of communities and societies—the formation of the ‘coming generation”” (p. 150).

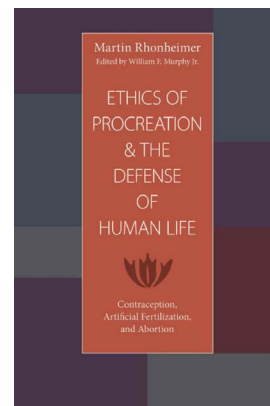
In the final two chapters, Muers addresses specific issues related to intergenerational responsibility. In chapter seven, she discusses the environment, focusing on Proverbs’s use of wisdom and folly. Regarding sustainability, we must make wise choices that leave the future open for coming generations rather than perpetuating cultures that abuse the gift of the earth. She examines theological anthropology, arguing for humans not as objects of value but as subjects who determine value (pp. 156–57). Chapter eight addresses genetics, developing two lines of thinking. First, today’s choices impact future generations, not only determining what types of people come into being, but also what visions of human flourishing and values are passed on. Second, Muers compares reading texts to choices about the genome. Just as, in her view, religious communities should leave texts open for future generations, we should utilize genomic changes in ways that do not over-determine future humans, removing their freedom and chance for development. Her insistence on leaving the text “open” and revisable (p. 191) may conflict with any current generation’s desire to pass on firm doctrinal truth as non-negotiable for future generations. Still, her point about refusing to over-determine the genetic future of humanity rings true.

Muers concludes with a brief afterword, noting that intergenerational responsibility has only become a more important topic in recent years. She calls for “Liberation from intergenerationally transmitted idolatry, from sustained patterns of deathly existence, and from the handing on of ‘misery’ from generation to generation . . . [which] comes by the grace of God within enfleshed existence, in and through intergenerational communities themselves” (p. 198). Muers does a good job of introducing the reader to some key questions and ways of thinking about intergenerational responsibility in light of Christian theology by exposing what is at the root of the problem: idolatry.

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Martin Rhonheimer. *Ethics of Procreation and the Defense of Human Life: Contraception, Artificial Fertilization, and Abortion*. Edited by William F. Murphy Jr. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2010. xxi + 309 pp. £35.50/\$39.95.

In his *Ethics of Procreation and the Defense of Human Life*, philosopher Martin Rhonheimer offers an exposition and defense of the Roman Catholic Church's teaching on the subjects of contraception (chs. 2–4), artificial reproduction (ch. 5), and abortion (chs. 6–7), especially as laid out in the papal encyclicals of Paul VI (*Humanae Vitae*) and John Paul II (*Evangelium Vitae, Veritatis Splendor*). Readers who are interested in gaining a deeper understanding of Catholic teachings on these matters will find it to be a worthwhile resource, of course, but the book is also a substantive contribution to philosophical discussions about the moral dimensions of human sexuality and procreation. It contains much that is worthy of consideration for Catholics and non-Catholics (indeed, non-Christians) alike.



All of Rhonheimer's arguments are grounded in a natural law approach to morality, and a principal strength of this text is his elucidation of this theory as a virtue-oriented understanding of rightness and wrongness. Critics often assume that all natural lawyers are "neo-thomists," holding that the application of natural law theory to sexual morality is merely a matter of determining what the functions of our reproductive organs are. Use of those organs in accordance with their functions would be morally permissible; using them in a way contrary to their functions would be morally impermissible. Rhonheimer argues that neo-thomism ought to be rejected. In its place, he defends a far more subtle theory. The details are complex, but the following summary seems fair. On Rhonheimer's version of natural law theory, what we are to seek is the *perfection* of the person, which consists in the exemplification of moral virtues. The moral rightness and wrongness of an act are determined in light of their relationship to the human ideal. This ideal is known through reason, specifically through reflection on the nature of human beings as unified bodily and spiritual beings. Such reflection also makes it possible to identify the morally significant "meaning" of a particular action, which is equivalent, at least roughly, to determining the substantive content of the moral law. In the case of reproductive ethics, for example, Rhonheimer believes that a correct analysis of human sexuality reveals that the meaning of intercourse is twofold—it unites husband and wife as one, and it is the means for the transmission of life—and that it is wrong to act so as to intentionally prevent intercourse from having either of its natural meanings.

Based on this conception of human sexuality and the natural law, Rhonheimer maintains that the use of contraception within marriage is morally wrong. He offers at least two distinct (though related) arguments for this view. First, as just noted, using contraception distorts the meaning of the marital union. A deep understanding of the human person, and hence, human sexuality, reveals the inseparability of the unitive and procreative meanings of intercourse. When sex is either non-unitive or (intentionally) non-procreative, it is no longer a truly marital union. It is a fundamentally different kind of act, and one that falls short of what human sexuality ought to be. When the possibility of procreation is intentionally thwarted, intercourse becomes the mere satisfaction of an impulse, "not a principle of union of two persons . . . [it transforms] spouses into *accomplices* of a mutual satisfaction of the impulses, where each with the other's help does something in relation to him- and herself" (p. 113). Openness to procreation is essential to morally good sexual intimacy by virtue of "elevating" mere sensuality, integrating it in the life of the spirit" through acceptance of the possibility of the transmission of life and

shared responsibility for any new life that is created as a result of the act (p. 114). This is a crucial point for Rhonheimer, as it makes clear why the two meanings of sexuality, on his view, are inextricably linked. Intuitions to the contrary notwithstanding, contraceptive sex *cannot* be genuinely unitive, because it lacks a further, transcendent purpose beyond the mere satisfaction of the individuals' desires.

Second, contraceptive acts are wrong because they violate the virtue of chastity (or temperance). The importance of this point cannot be overstated, especially for non-Catholics who may be prone to assume that the Church prohibits contraception either because she wants to promote the creation of new Catholics or because she is opposed to the use of "artificial" technologies. It is also important because it enables Rhonheimer to make a moral distinction between the decision to use contraception and the decision to engage in "periodic continence" in order to avoid conception. For Rhonheimer, *our attitude toward sex* is the fundamental locus of moral concern. The virtue of chastity involves a proper recognition of what human beings really are, or are at our best: rational beings who are not enslaved by their desires but whose desires are under the control of reason. This includes our desire for sex. The problem with contraception, in a nutshell, is that it removes, and is *designed and intended* to remove, any need for responsible self-control. The very point of contraception is to "render needless the responsible modification of sexual behavior" (p. 99).

I have dwelt at some length on the topic of contraception because I suspect that it is the issue on which readers of this journal are most likely to find Rhonheimer's claims objectionable or surprising. His discussion of artificial reproduction, however, is also worthy of close attention. Rhonheimer sees *in vitro* fertilization (IVF), along with other forms of artificial reproduction, as morally wrong primarily because it violates the requirements of justice. One fundamental principle of justice is that all persons are of equal worth and therefore worthy of equal treatment. Natural procreation supports fundamental human equality because it implies, on the part of parents, an *unconditional* acceptance of any person who is created as a result of the marital union. Artificial reproduction is problematic not because it is artificial, but because it makes the existence of a person directly dependent on the will of others, who cause the person to exist in order to satisfy their own desires. In Rhonheimer's words, it is as though the parents say to their child, "You live *because and in the measure in which we want it*" (p. 170). Thus IVF can be understood as the "mirror image" of abortion: the existence of a child is not something good in itself which is received as a gift, but rather as something which is good because it satisfies others' desires. Whether a child is wanted by its parents or not becomes the crucial factor in determining whether the child is of value, whether his existence is a good thing or not. It may be common for parents who conceive via IVF eventually to value their child for his own sake, but this fact does not retroactively render the initial decision morally permissible. It would be far better, Rhonheimer thinks, for sterile couples who desire to be parents to pursue adoption.

The last topic Rhonheimer addresses is abortion. Chapter 7 offers a helpful discussion of the relationship between law and morality as well as an overview of the history of abortion in American law since *Roe v. Wade* (and in Germany during the same time period). Chapter 6, however, in which Rhonheimer defends a strongly pro-life position and seeks to engage with pro-choice philosophers, is the weakest part of the book. Rhonheimer's argument for fetal personhood is hard to follow and risks begging the question; he places enormous emphasis on the claim that personhood is not a property that is had by things, but a fact about what persons are. I confess to being uncertain about what this distinction is supposed to mean (it does not seem to be equivalent to the distinction between accidental and essential properties), and Rhonheimer's discussion does not adequately engage (well-known)

arguments that *genetic* humanity does not imply *moral* humanity, that personhood can be understood as a degreed property, and that rights are grounded exclusively in a being's actual interests. I am extremely sympathetic with Rhonheimer's conclusions about all of these topics, but would not recommend his defense of them to an interested inquirer. Such a person would do much better turning to Francis Beckwith's *Defending Life* (Cambridge University Press, 2007).

Other weaknesses worth noting in this text are the author's rather dense prose and penchant for overstatement. The book demands quite a lot from the reader, even by the standards of academic philosophy and theology, and Rhonheimer has an unfortunate tendency to assert that one claim "follows" from another, or that something "must" be the case, even when it seems that, strictly speaking, this is not so. Overall, however, this is a very impressive work of moral philosophy, and one that deserves a wide hearing. Non-Catholic Christians, in particular, who have largely acquiesced to our broader culture's cavalier attitude toward contraception, will find much here that is worthy of serious reflection.

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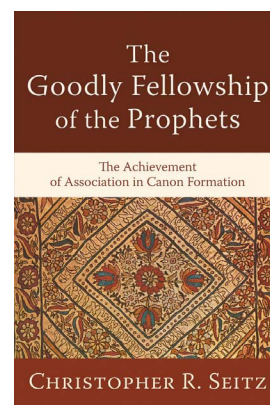
Christopher R. Seitz. *The Goodly Fellowship of the Prophets: The Achievement of Association in Canon Formation*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009. 136 pp. £13.99/\$20.00.

This book, dedicated to the memory of Brevard Childs (died 2007), summarises and builds on Seitz's earlier studies of canon formation. As a sincere admirer of Childs, Seitz seeks to take seriously the theological dimension of the historical process that led to the canon of Scripture as we know it. This book is a further contribution by Seitz to the program initiated by Childs, who spoke of "the search for the Christian Bible," namely, how is a believer in Christ to read and apply the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

The material in the book began its life as public lectures at Acadia Divinity College in Nova Scotia in 2007. There is inevitably some overlap in his discussion of the Book of the Twelve (= Minor Prophets) in his earlier book *Prophecy and Hermeneutics: Toward a New Introduction to the Prophets* (2007), as Seitz himself acknowledges. More annoying is the frequent repetition of ideas within the boundaries of the present volume; a little editing may have reduced this without loss of clarity. No doubt this is due to its origin as public lectures of a popular nature where repetition is a requirement.

Seitz sees an analogy between the Book of the Twelve as a coordinated prophetic anthology and the Pauline letter collection, with the first possibly influencing the formation and pattern of the second. This observation is a subset of his wider thesis that the OT is of central significance for NT canon formation. The thesis of Seitz is that Law and Prophets (excluding the disparate collection of Writings) provided an essential model for the arrangement of the NT.

The prophetic books (encompassing both Former and Latter Prophets) are, according to Seitz, coordinated by a number of important interconnections (e.g., synoptic passages, cross-references in the headings of certain prophetic books), in contrast to the books of the Writings, which remained discrete compositions and which can be found in a number of alternative orders. Seitz views the prophetic



division of the Hebrew Bible as “a canonical achievement of the first order” (p. 44). He disputes the assertion of John Barton that the order of biblical books is of small importance or that a theology was only “read in” to the canonical order at a later date. Nor does he follow Marvin Sweeney, who thinks in terms of *rival* Hebrew and Greek orders. This reviewer staunchly approves of Seitz’s judgment in these matters. Controversially, in the contemporary scholarly climate, Seitz argues that we can conceive of canon and scriptural authority *prior* to the closure of the sacred collection of books. Viewing as he does Law and Prophets as the core of the OT canon, Seitz asserts that the possible fluidity of the third canonical section (Writings) for a long period (even to post-NT times) is not crucial to the concepts of canonicity or authority.

The widespread conception of “Law and Prophets” in Seitz’s eyes gives priority to the tripartite Hebrew ordering of books over against the various Greek orders, and, for him, the fundamental divide is not Law/Prophets but Law-Prophets/Writings, given the evident fluidity of the order of books in the Writings. The works of the Writings have a “stand-alone” character; the order of books is more variable; and any particular order is of less hermeneutical weight.

Seitz provides a brief history of scholarly work on the Minor Prophets, wherein there has been an increasing appreciation of the literary cross-references between the twelve prophetic sections, so that the twelve prophets are to be read in the light of each other. Seitz himself tries to maintain a delicate balance between preserving the individuality of the twelve witnesses and appreciating the overall effect of the Twelve as a unified corpus. Likewise, he notices the links between Isaiah and Micah, Kings and Jeremiah, Kings and Isaiah, etc., that he views as editorial efforts at an achievement of association. An entirely different canonical logic applies to the Writings, whose books are not so much related to each other as they are to books in the Law and the Prophets, so that they can migrate in subsequent listings (e.g., Judges-Ruth, Kings-Chronicles).

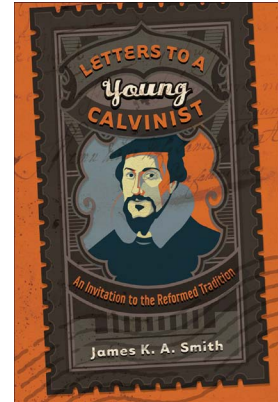
The Rule of Faith properly understood, says Seitz, relates the confession of Jesus as Lord with the OT (e.g., as in Irenaeus), so that it is really the OT that is the most significant factor in the formation of Christian theology and then the NT canon. The target of his comments, among others, is the recent work of C. D. Allert, wherein the Rule is elevated at the expense of the OT. So, for example, Deuteronomy’s function within the Pentateuch finds a correlation with John’s relationship with the Synoptics (p. 103). The Twelve find an analogy in the Pauline corpus; Hebrews, Catholic Epistles, and Revelation have a similar hermeneutical role as the Writings (e.g., Hebrews can migrate to the Pauline corpus; 1–3 John and Revelation have obvious connections with the Fourth Gospel).

I am a little amazed at his off-the-cuff remark that von Rad was correct in seeing apocalyptic as derived from wisdom circles, for I thought that von Rad had managed to convince only himself of such an unlikely thesis. Seitz needed to argue this case rather than just state it. Certainly the strong wisdom theme in Daniel helps to explain its home in the Writings rather than among other (?) prophetic books, but in the book of Daniel itself, wisdom is not really brought into relation with apocalyptic thought forms. This, however, is a quibble on my part. It is another example of Seitz’s fertile mind at work on an immensely important subject.

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James K. A. Smith. *Letters to a Young Calvinist: An Invitation to the Reformed Tradition*. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2010. 160 pp. £7.99/\$14.99.

These attractively written letters are fictional, written to ‘Jesse’ or (as the author says more than once) to the author’s earlier self. He is now a professor of philosophy at Calvin College. The letters set out a trajectory that makes more sense in the US than in the UK, I imagine. A young person, converted through the warmth and love of a baptistic community church, discovers the soteriology of Calvinism: out goes Arminianism, in comes a love for and a concern for doctrine, and with it a prideful and rather snooty disposition. Then the covenant: out goes individualism, in comes the corporate life of worship and community and paedobaptism. Then Abraham Kuyper: out goes the doctrine of the two kingdoms, in comes the cultural mandate, social action, a world and life view, the transforming of culture. From soteric Calvinism to cultural Calvinism.



According to Jesse’s correspondent, each of these steps involves a deeper or wider or higher appreciation of Calvinism. Here is a description of the apogee of the trajectory:

In my own pilgrimage, this has been the signal, prophetic contribution of the Reformed tradition in the contemporary American church: to remind us that creation is ‘very good’ (Gen 1:31). That is not to deny that the fall has not radically and comprehensively marred creation, distorting and perverting it, corrupting and corroding it. But it is precisely its theology of creation that animates the ‘big’ wide-angled Reformed understanding of redemption as the restoration of the entirety of the good creation. (p. 103)

Once, in my adolescence, I was a soteriological Calvinist, proud of it and boastful about what I knew about the finer points of doctrine, listening to John Piper and to recordings on election. But now I’ve grown up, and while not exactly putting away childish things, I have certainly put them in their place. No more pride, presumably. Oh dear.

I certainly hope that Jesse was not taken in by any of this. For here’s another trajectory.

My name is Leslie. I enjoyed the fellowship at my local Brethren Assembly, but there was a void. And then I heard, as if by chance, about the magnificent vision of Abraham Kuyper. Where have my fellow Brethren been, I wondered? I felt so good, so fulfilled: a Christian view of maths or politics or art. Transforming culture in the name of Jesus! A Christian world and life view! I could hold my head high. But slowly I began to have nagging doubts. Where is Jesus? Where is the cross? Idling in a Christian Reformed bookstore, fortuitously I discovered at the end of a shelf, hardly visible, a book of John Piper’s. It had to do with the glory of God, the enjoyment of God. Piper mentioned someone called Jonathan Edwards. I began to see all this in Scripture in a way that before had simply passed me by—the grace and glory of God revealed in the face of Jesus Christ, a new spiritual sense, life lived in the enjoyment of God, and I was transfixed by it. . . . I began to see that this world is not my home, and that one thing is needful. . . . By now, the boast of transforming the culture in the name of Jesus began to seem hollow and over the top. I knew that by God’s grace I should use my gifts and opportunities as best I could and to enjoy the good things that God has given to us. Nevertheless, I am a pilgrim and stranger, looking for a city which has foundations, whose maker and builder is God. . . .

Leslie comes to think that Kuyperianism is a blind alley. Cultural Calvinism does not fly; it cuts out and stalls. It is overly romantic, implicitly universalist, somewhat disregarding of the church, and

especially unmindful of what Augustine called the two cities and of what the Reformers, Luther and Calvin, called the two kingdoms, a rather different but allied notion. The Kuyperian stress on ‘antithesis’ has given way to the mantra about redeeming culture. Leslie comes to see that such ambition is even worse now that it has become environmentalised. We must care for the planet in the expectation that, as we do so, we shall help it to become a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. Is this biblical, Leslie asks? The Christian’s life in society—politics, culture, science—has taken on an eschatological burden which it is not able to bear.

Letters to a Young Calvinist is well-written, and a good read, and it makes some interesting points. But fictional letters do not by themselves amount to a very strong argument.

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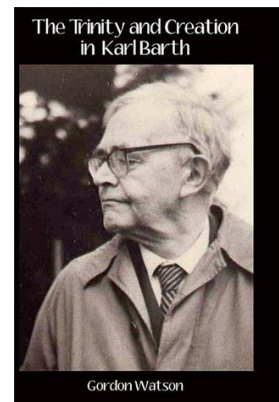
Gordon Watson. *The Trinity and Creation in Karl Barth*. Adelaide: ATF, 2008. xiv + 192 pp. £9.90/\$15.00.

Gordon Watson, emeritus professor of Systematic Theology at Brisbane’s Trinity Theological College, has revised and updated his 1995 study *God and Creature: The Trinity and Creation in Karl Barth*, a work that T. F. Torrance listed among a handful of exemplary books on Barth’s theology. Watson first develops Barth’s doctrine of God vis-à-vis revelation and Christology (chs. 1–2), then considers the Trinity-creature relation (chs. 3–4). Throughout the book Watson critiques Barth’s construal, culminating in a counter-proposal informed by Eastern theology.

Watson commences with Barth’s exodus from liberalism, a departure precipitated by revamping his doctrine of revelation. For Barth, revelation is God speaking, a divine-human encounter with implications for the doctrine of God. If God speaks (economically), then it is only God (immanently) who speaks: the God who speaks *is* the God who is revealed. Watson tracks Barth’s early insistence on revelation as an *event* of God’s transcendent grace (rather than a *habitus* internal to creatures, as in Schleiermacher et al.) until his doctrine of revelation reaches fruition through interaction with Anselm’s theological method.

The second chapter focuses on the content of Christian revelation: the Incarnation. Watson is indebted to Eberhard Jüngel’s interpretation of Barth’s doctrine of God—“God’s being is in becoming”—that is, God posits his immanent *being* with reference to his *becoming* incarnate. This is not intended to depict Hegel’s god who self-actualizes in history, but rather to underscore God’s freedom to make the Incarnation central to his *immanent* life. Accordingly, Barth’s Christology utilizes an anhypostatic-enhypostatic model to highlight God’s freely chosen assumption of human nature. Meanwhile, Barth’s Pneumatology treats the Holy Spirit as the appropriator of revelation to the creature and, on this basis, argues for the Spirit’s divinity. It is noteworthy that Barth describes God’s immanence (i.e., the Spirit’s divinity) by directly inferring from God’s economy (i.e., the Spirit’s role in applying revelation), a move that Watson challenges in his conclusion.

Chapters three and four exposit and critique Barth’s Trinity-creature relation. Watson’s basic complaint is that Barth underplays creaturely integrity, a charge evident in a couple ways. First, Barth’s



doctrine of revelation stresses God's Lordship so heavily that revelation is effected *despite* our natural faculties. Second, Watson argues that Barth maintained his fundamental rejection of an analogy of being throughout his career (for a similar argument, see Keith Johnson, *Karl Barth and the Analogia Entis*). In response, Watson considers the work of E. L. Mascall and T. F. Torrance as examples of having something positive to say about humanity. Torrance shows how both the Fathers and the Reformers regarded the Incarnation as an accommodation to humanity that *conforms to* our natural faculties. Consequently, Torrance can affirm a natural theology (and analogy of being) in the sense that creatures know God through the sanctified use of their own capacities. All this paves the way for Watson's counter-proposal.

The book concludes with an appeal to the Fathers to recover two interrelated concerns. First, Watson criticizes the Western tradition generally and Barth specifically for overvaluing dogmatics and undervaluing the liturgy. In particular, Western dogmatists often read God's economy onto his immanence; Watson likens this to the heretical Spirit-fighters who mistakenly interpreted the Spirit's economic submission as evidence of his non-divinity. In contrast, Basil's apophatic refusal to project God's economy onto his immanence demonstrates that God's revelation is an accommodation to our creaturely ways of knowing. Thus, we should rightly distinguish God's essence (experienced in the liturgy) from God's economic energies (the subject of dogmatics). Second, Watson opposes Barth's account of revelation since (almost) everything happens external to the creature. Instead, he contends that the Trinity-creature relation involves an ontological renewal of the creature that he does not hesitate to call "theosis" (p. 164).

Those following the debate between Bruce McCormack and George Hunsinger (among others) on the relation between election and Trinity in Barth's theology will note that Watson's interpretation does not fit either camp. With McCormack, he appears to affirm that God elects himself with reference to creation—God's immanent being is constituted by God's self-election to be incarnate. On the other hand, Watson also argues that God himself maintains a distinction between his immanent and economic life in the event of his self-positing (see pp. 60–64). Watson does not explain how these two assertions—that God's being is constituted by his economy and yet distinct from it—are reconciled. In light of the current antithesis between McCormack and Hunsinger, this is either a possibility for rapprochement or a misguided stand in no-man's land.

Overall, Watson's work may prove beneficial to thinkers like T. F. Torrance and the guild of Barth scholars, but its opaque, jargon-saturated language—exacerbated by frequent typographical errors—greatly diminishes its usefulness for students and pastors. Watson's critiques of Barthian excess may have some merit, but his counter-proposal has issues of its own. His insistence on theosis fails to clarify whether he intends a (Protestant-friendly) notion of the creature becoming fully human or whether he refers to union with God's essence. Further, the doctrine of God's energies overcompensates for any alleged errors in Barth's account; when God's essence and energies are divided in this way, it is possible for God's accommodation to become mere appearance and to undermine Jesus' decisive disclosure of the Father. In the end, Watson's study is valuable for flagging disagreements between Barth and the East, but less helpful in adjudicating the debate.

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ETHICS AND PASTORALIA

[Zondervan Bible Reference Bundle 2](http://www.logos.com/product/8575/zondervan-bible-reference-bundle-2). 47 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010. \$899.95. 18,570 pp. <http://www.logos.com/product/8575/zondervan-bible-reference-bundle-2>

Logos Bible Software and Zondervan have teamed up again to produce a second bundle of resources that Zondervan has already published in print. (Cf. my [review](#) of the first bundle in *Themelios* 35 [2010]: 365–67.) This 47-volume bundle contains six collections of evangelical resources—each also available for purchase individually:



1. [Commentaries](#) (8 vols.; 2001–2010). The only OT commentary is Bruce Waltke on Genesis, which is not part of a commentary series; it is definitely worth consulting for its robust exegetical and biblical-theological approach (some will not be convinced by his literary view of Gen 1–11). The two most valuable commentaries for preachers are in the new Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the NT: *Matthew* by Grant Osborne and *James* by Craig Blomberg and Mariam Kamell. ZECNT combines the strengths of BECNT and NIVAC; its format is ideal for sermon preparation because commentators address each biblical passage’s (1) literary context, (2) main idea, (3) translation and graphical layout, (4) structure, (5) exegetical outline, (6) meaning, and (7) application. The collection also includes the first two volumes of the Africa Bible Commentary Series (Samuel Ngewa, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus and Galatians*) and the first three volumes of Chuck Swindoll’s “Insights” on the entire NT (*John, Romans, and James, 1 and 2 Peter*).

2. [OT and NT Introductions](#) (9 vols.; 2003–2010). The second editions of the introductions to the OT (Tremper Longman and Raymond Dillard) and NT (D. A. Carson and Douglas Moo) are standard textbooks in evangelical seminaries. I recently edited an abridgment of the latter entitled *Introducing the New Testament*, also included in this collection ([reviewed](#) in *Themelios* 35 [2010]: 451–52). Andrew Hill and John Walton’s accessible OT survey is now in its third edition, and Robert Gundry’s NT survey is in its fourth. Gary Burge, Lynn Cohick, and Gene Green’s *The New Testament in Antiquity* is impressively illustrated, and three other books are more specific than whole-Testament introductions or surveys: (1) Gary Schnittjer’s *The Torah Story* surveys the Pentateuch; (2) Daniel Hays’s *The Message of the Prophets* surveys the nature of prophecy and the major and minor prophets; and (3) Mark Strauss’s *Four Portraits, One Jesus* surveys the Gospels and the historical Jesus.

3. [Hermeneutics](#) (4 vols.; 1996–2009). Scott Duvall and Daniel Hays’s *Grasping God’s Word* and Walter Kaiser and Moisés Silva’s *Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics* are both good textbooks now in their second editions; the former works well for undergraduates and the latter for first-year graduate students. *Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation* combines into a single volume six advanced books on hermeneutics that Moisés Silva edited from 1987 to 1994 (e.g., Philips Long’s *The Art of Biblical History*). Kevin Vanhoozer’s *Is There a Meaning in This Text?* is a seminal, sophisticated defense of author-oriented interpretation.

4. [Biblical Theology](#) (4 vols.; 2005–2009). Walter Kaiser’s *The Promise-Plan of God* and *Recovering the Unity of the Bible* update his past publications toward a whole-Bible biblical theology. Bruce Waltke’s 1,040-page *Old Testament Theology* and Frank Thielman’s *Theology of the New Testament* are user-friendly for students.

5. [Counterpoints](#) (14 vols.; 1996–2009). The Counterpoints series, currently containing about thirty volumes, debates controversial topics by having well-known advocates of particular views present their perspectives, followed by responses from advocates of opposing views. The fourteen volumes in this collection debate moving beyond the Bible to theology (four views), the book of Revelation (four views), law and gospel (five views), sanctification (five views), eternal security (four views), God and Canaanite genocide (four views), apologetics (five views), the Messianic movement (two views), the church growth movement (four views), church government (four views), baptism (four views), the Lord's Supper (four views), remarriage after divorce (three views), and the worship spectrum (six views). The debate-format of the Counterpoints series can be either valuable or dangerous depending on how particular debates are framed. Its value is minimized if positions are not sufficiently distinct or if it gives the impression that the debated issue is relatively unimportant since the various views are a smorgasbord of equally legitimate options. Its value is maximized when competent proponents of distinct positions clearly and winsomely compare and contrast their views, and that value characterizes this series.

6. [World Religions and Cults](#) (8 vols.; 2001–2009). This collection includes two general volumes and three specific volumes each on Mormonism and Islam; all eight volumes are accessible for lay people. The general reference works are Larry A. Nichols, George Mather, and Alvin Schmidt, *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Cults, Sects, and World Religions* and Ron Rhodes, *The Challenge of the Cults and New Religions*. The three on Mormonism are Francis Beckwith, Carl Mosser, and Paul Owen, eds., *The New Mormon Challenge*; Ross Anderson, *Understanding the Book of Mormon*; and Latayne Scott, *The Mormon Mirage*. The three on Islam are Timothy George, *Is the Father of Jesus the God of Muhammad?*; Mateen Ellass, *Understanding the Koran*; and John Azumah, *My Neighbour's Faith*.

The price for this bundle is steep, and users will value some books more than others. But all six collections are valuable, and every book is worth owning and using.

Electronic books are becoming increasingly popular, and publishers and consumers are confident that they will become more common with the proliferation of digital reading devices like the iPad, Nook, and Kindle. This is definitely the case with theological reference works such as lexicons, commentaries, and dictionaries, and it is increasingly the case with non-reference works.

I have enthusiastically used Logos for thirteen years, and my enthusiasm continues to grow. I would much rather own a book on the Logos platform than in print because it is significantly more efficient than using print resources: books in Logos are more versatile and searchable than print books, especially now that they are available on the [iPhone](#) (and other smart phones) and [iPad](#). The 47 volumes in Zondervan's second bundle are a valuable addition to one's electronic library.

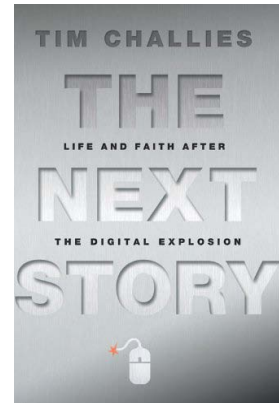
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MISSION AND CULTURE

Tim Challies. *The Next Story: Life and Faith after the Digital Explosion*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011. 224 pp. £12.99/\$19.99.

Tim Challies’s manual for living Christianly in a digital age deserves the attention of everyone caught in the current wave of the technological rush. *The Next Story* picks up where his first work left off, though it is far from *The Discipline of Spiritual Discernment* applied to technology. This book develops some of that material in both theory and methodology.

The Next Story comes in two parts: the first three chapters develop a Christian theory for the use of technology by understanding technology theologically, experientially, and historically. The second part applies that matrix to six aspects of digital technology. Along the way Challies hopes to answer the pressing question, “How has the digital explosion reshaped our understanding of ourselves, our world, and most importantly, our knowledge of God?” (pp. 4–5) Or as Zondervan’s promotional video asks, “Do you own technology, or does technology own you?”



Starting with God and the Creation Mandate provides the basis for connecting our digital devices to God and his moral world. Technology is the “creative activity of using tools to shape God’s creation for practical purposes” (p. 15). But the fall changed everything so that technology, the work of our hands, became an idol for human hearts, or at least became an enhancer and enabler of idols.

Chapter two teases out five facts about technology. First, technology involves both risk and opportunity. Second, every technology has a heart, an embedded ideology. Then, technology is ecological, not simply additive. It “changes the entire environment it operates in” with “cultural and societal” implications (pp. 32–33). Fourth, technology shifts power. And finally, technology is biological.

Concluding section one, chapter three sketches a primer in the history of technology. That we are situated in the day of the immediate image and not the day when “nothing moved faster than a horse” (p. 40) is both obvious and dangerously assumed. Yet, Challies argues, we are only at the start of digital domination.

In the second section (chs. 4–9), Challies provides a significant contribution to some macro aspects of digital technology. Chapter four shows how the “scope, speed, and reach” of our communication means that face-to-face communication has declined, words have been devalued, and restraining the tongue and keyboard have become a herculean task. The availability of ways to speak our mind and say what’s on our hearts now trumps “searching for chaste expression and precise meaning” (p. 71). Deserving serious consideration, chapter five lays out his proposals about technology and human identity. Because many of our digital technologies end up being a sphere or a place, “we can begin to identify with our media and feel more comfortable within them than outside of them” (91). Consequently, digital technologies bring a kind of joy to users. Here also Challies chastises cyberchurches as illegitimate and harmful (pp. 97–101).

Chapter six argues that there is something worse than texting and driving. Distraction actually undermines an essential step in sanctification, namely, renewing the mind. Accordingly, living virtuously assumes that Christians think deeply and biblically. Chapter seven shows how the sheer glut

of information is affecting us. The Proverb now reads, “In all your getting, get data.” Wisdom has fallen on hard times, giving way to facts, data, and information.

By juxtaposing the method of publishing an article in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* and one on Wikipedia, chapter eight shows that democratizing data means everyone becomes an authority. Beyond the problem of the wiki mentality, Google inclines people to call truth simply whatever is relevant (p. 159). All roads used to lead to Rome; now they are named Google and lead to Wikipedia. Finally, although you might expect mention of pornography in chapter nine, dealing with visibility and privacy, Challies considers instead the need for humility and respect that refuses both exploitation and exhibitionism.

Two weak points in the book are Challies’s theological definition of technology and also recalling one of Marshall McLuhan’s best, but most overstated, ideas, “The medium is the message.” Challies himself observes that McLuhan “likely overstates his case” (p. 31); however, McLuhan’s memorable phrase is unhelpfully imprecise, usually misinterpreted, and almost always misunderstood. Still, with enough qualifiers, Challies adapts McLuhan’s phrase responsibly. The more important weakness is the theological definition of technology. Challies builds his definition on Nancy Pearcey’s explanation of the Creation Mandate too quickly. No doubt it’s crucial to connect technology to the Creation Mandate and not-yet-fallen-humanity, especially as biblical theology grows in popularity and practice, but it short-circuits an important connection in the argument of the book. This problem is easily offset by a thoroughgoing anthropology that accounts for the Creation Mandate with its implications for technology.

The strengths of Challies’s work are numerous. It provides a matrix for discernment that is robustly theological, shows how to apply that matrix to disparate aspects of our digital lives, provides questions for reflection and straightforward applications, and displays genuine autobiographical humility (especially on p. 122 and the Epilogue). He shrewdly navigates the straights between a fundamentalist Facebook fast (touch not) and the ecumenical electronic embrace (everything is pure). Parents of Facebook-friending-pre-teens and texting-teens will want to repeatedly consider and reflect upon the Seven Steps on pp. 128–29. Also, theological students will likely not get a course on mastering technology as part of their graduate studies, and this resource fills that gap. The potential value of this straightforward, clear, biblically faithful paperback is great, though it will doubtfully be the last word on living Christianly in today’s digital world.

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Stanley Fish. *How to Write a Sentence (And How to Read One)*. New York: HarperCollins, 2011. 164 pp. \$19.99.

I waited in deep anticipation. Our first critical papers were being handed back during my last PhD course at Duke University. The famous and terrifying professor grumbled and slid them across the seminar table to his waiting victims, most crumpling like dry leaves in a furnace as they read his comments—and their grades. I, brazenly confident about what I saw as my subtle poststructuralist analysis of the ancient *sententiae* in Milton’s obscure Latin poem *Carmina Elegiaca*, simply smiled. I read the scrawled comments three times before I grasped what it meant that *there was no grade*: “Nice Forest. No Trees. Do it again. And this time make an argument.” I had never failed anything before. Who did he think he was?

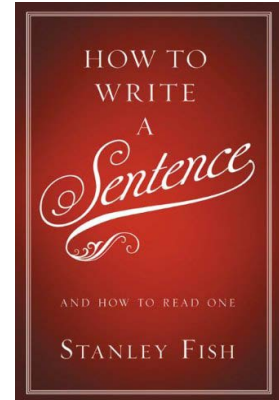
He was Stanley Fish, and he taught me more about both thinking and writing than all my other teachers combined. He really liked my paper a good deal, he told me later. He just hated my sentences.

After decades as America’s foremost Miltonist and literary theorist, one of America’s supremely influential academics has now graced us with a slim, readable volume about the great love of his life: sentences. “Some appreciate fine art; others appreciate fine wines. I appreciate fine sentences” (p. 3). At one point he marvels over a sentence from George Eliot’s *Middlemarch*, an elegiac and triumphant line about how the lives of good people are their own reward and praise, though they now rest in forgotten graves. Fish writes, “They are their own monuments, as is this quietly thrilling sentence” (p. 130). To which I say: as is yours.

How to Write a Sentence is the best book of its kind. It is not just about how to write a sentence: it is about how they work, why they work, and why you need to love them to read them and write them well. It is elegantly packaged and organized simply. Fish situates himself in the tradition of classics like Strunk and White’s *Elements of Style* but openly claims to outdo them (he is not known for his reticence). Yet his claim is in many ways justified. The book is eminently practical while being rooted in the aesthetics of language, and his thesis is simple. “My bottom line can be summarized in two statements: (1) a sentence is an organization of items in the world; and (2) a sentence is a structure of logical relationships” (p. 16). The bulk of his 160 pages is spent on exegesis of (and exulting in) that second premise.

Fish avoids teaching rules, and marshals his persuasiveness around numerous positive (and beautiful) examples that are analyzed more for their intriguing internal logics than by the dusty rules of syntax and grammar. His thesis is thus grounded in our real-life experience with words and the world rather than the abstractions of language as such. But this is not to say the book is an elementary read.

In one of the opening chapters, he rather disconcertingly insists that *content* is not at all what matters in a sentence—quite a feat, that: using a sentence to so assert. He argues counter-intuitively that *form* is where it is at. And so his method is to teach form as logical structure, delineating along the way several basic forms, and while perhaps not immediately familiar, they become so under his exemplar-laden tutelage. He deploys the Renaissance ideal of *imitation*—studying what Sir Philip Sidney calls “inventions fine”—in order that we build on a blueprint. Fish is thus firmly rooted in the tradition of Erasmus, Quintilian, and Cicero. Fine company, proven, and well-aged.



But by the end of the book, Fish comes full circle and argues (without rejecting his earlier remarks about form) that in fact *content is central*. How does he manage to give as well as to take away, here being a form addict, there a content junkie? He manages quite nicely, in fact—by collapsing this age-old distinction. Form is content; content, form. He is not the first to dismantle the binary, but his game is elegant. The trajectory is vintage Fish, and while the journey may feel momentarily disorienting, the destination—a deep love for sentences and a sense of appreciative awe before the wonder that is language—is more than satisfying. Even if you never plan to write a lick—if you just like to read fine sentences—then the book is worth more than what you’ll pay for it.

Any reader of theological bent will detect a powerful meme in Fish’s book: the recurrent foregrounding of biblical/theological sentences. We do get a stiff dose of Gertrude Stein, and Hemingway, and J. L. Austin, and Justice Scalia, and marvelous, inimitable Updike, and of course Milton. But his penultimate line is one of which he says “Although I have read and taught this sentence hundreds of times, it never fails to knock my socks off.” It is from Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress* and concerns Words and Life (1678):

Now he had not run far from his own door, but his wife and children perceiving it, began crying after him to return, but the man put his fingers in his ears, and ran on, crying, Life! life! eternal life.

Indeed.

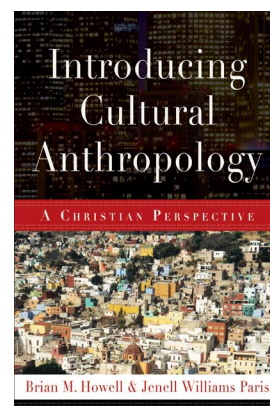
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Brian M. Howell and Jenell Williams Paris. *Introducing Cultural Anthropology: A Christian Perspective*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011. xii + 276 pp. \$29.99.

Adding to the growing number of books seeking to understand “culture,” this highly readable work explores cultural anthropology from a distinctly Christian perspective. Not slack on academic rigor, this book surveys broad features of the field, journeying through the history, definitions and common descriptions of terms and ideas used by cultural anthropologists, and doing so in ways attempting to both educate and integrate a Christian understanding of the discipline.

The book begins by describing the four fields of anthropology, methods intrinsic to cultural anthropology, and how it differs from other disciplines (ch. 1). In ch. 2, recounting less adequate ways of defining “culture,” the authors provide their careful definition as “the total way of life of a group of people that is learned, adaptive, shared, and integrated” (p. 36), utilizing the concept of “conversation” as the preferred metaphor (p. 40).

Chapter 3 reckons with the phenomena of language and its relationship between culture and society before attempting to sketch a Christian understanding of the creation of meaning as reflected in God’s self-revelation. Chapter 4 considers social structures related to status, race, ethnicity, class, etc., while highlighting how cultural anthropology assists Christians in addressing inequality (p. 83). Further



related to inequality, ch. 5 addresses gender and sexuality as understood by cultural anthropological lenses, and ch. 6 explores different modes of human subsistence, systems of exchange, and economic theories.

Concepts of power and political structures are taken up next (ch. 7), followed by the importance of kinship and marriage in particular societies (ch. 8). Religion, ritual, and myth are the subjects in ch. 9, while ch. 10 explores culture change in a globalized situation. The penultimate chapter presents the nature of anthropological “theory,” which, for Christians, the authors argue, “the various theoretical approaches can aid in understanding the data without contradicting or erasing faith commitments” (p. 244). And in the final chapter, the authors sketch practical ways how anthropology is vital to the Christian life, the life of the church, and missions.

As the subtitle renders, this book is written from *a Christian perspective*, casually observed by each chapter’s concluding devotions drawn from Scripture, reflecting further on the chapter’s theme(s). The text of each chapter also consists of at least one latter section seeking to synthesize or relate particular chapter content to either Christ, other biblical data, individual Christian, or the church’s involvement with the issues (present or historically). As such, their work overlaps somewhat with recent developments, not just in with missiology, but also in missional theology.

While the book suits as a perfect textbook for liberal arts courses on anthropology, these scholars are not just evangelical academics writing about anthropology. They are anthropologists, who have each conducted fieldwork in particular locations. Howell, associate professor of anthropology at Wheaton College, has conducted fieldwork in a small mountain village in the Northern Philippines. Paris, professor of anthropology and sociology at Messiah College, has intertwined her research with four years of ministry in the urban northwest quadrant of Washington, D.C. The degree of rigor for their fieldwork is a question for their anthropological colleagues, and not for this review.

However, despite being conversant with the field and being committed to a devotional, biblically considerate approach, the work seems to lack an overall depth, ethos, and gravity that some anthropology works might elicit. Admittedly, this is a textbook, not a monograph. But even the issues addressed, sometimes trivialized and sometimes creatively stretching compatibility with Christianity, the weightiness inherent to some issues is missing. For example, the 1994 Rwandan genocide is spoken of statistically (p. 210) in light of the colonial implications for the situation, rather than as a deeply moral and ethical issue in itself. Thus, the work seems to lack the “feeling” and “humanness” that cultural anthropology ought to evoke.

Not all evangelicals will be comfortable with some of their conclusions. For example, Paris argues that anthropological fieldwork “requires cultural relativism—a suspension of one’s own prejudgments for the sake of really understanding the perspective of the research informants” (p. 101). While this might have been stated more carefully as aspects of this demeanor are worth nothing, especially in cross-cultural ministry situations (her example is the LGBTQ community in D.C.), her statement goes too far.

This book also fails to reckon with the informing role theology ought to have in anthropological research, including the notion that some cultural practices will necessarily be deemed sinful if Jesus stands over all cultural reality and the Bible has spoken on certain matters under consideration. Every methodological approach to cultural anthropology [i.e., materialist, ecological, feminist, cultural Marxist, and other postmodern theories] cannot always be reconciled with Christianity (p. 244). In such case, it is unacceptable to suggest an absolving of tensions between cultural practices with the claim that

these and faith commitments do not cancel each other out. The gospel is neither compatible with every empirical approach to research, nor compatible with all cultural practices.

Further, anthropology and theology are not mutually exclusive entities, since the latter claims to give account of the former, and the reverse undermines the gospel's priority. Incidentally, the authors attribute a form of cultural relativism to a few evangelical theologians (pp. 60–61), claiming that they suggest cultures and language shape the creation of meaning. And yet, Howell and Paris completely overlook that these theologians have provided structures to deflect this very notion. Namely, they locate the meaning of "revelation" as something Spirit-determined and appropriated in particular cultural locations, rather than the much synthetically weaker "process" of being "guided by the Holy Spirit." Theologians they cite had distinctly theological aims in their appropriation of various theories (e.g., linguistic), employing ranges of sources but building something much different than sociolinguistic theories, or modifications thereof, can build.

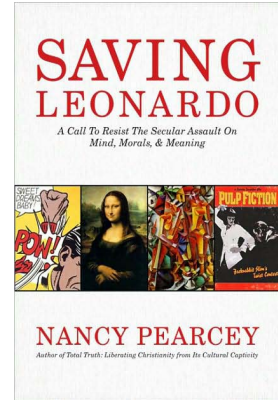
Frequent reference to the *imago Dei* might have also been aided by theology's reflection nurturing something more than the static and functional view. The eschatological *imago Dei* offers much more to assist their anthropological work. This work would have also been enhanced in conversation with theologians working with cultural theories or towards theological anthropologies. For example, Vanhoozer's work is never mentioned, nor is that of non-evangelical theologians like Tanner, Jenson, or Hauerwas. Thus they fail to account for well-developed conversations between systematic theologians, which could have lent a helping hand to some of the things they work towards articulating. This suggests that their work would have been well-served by borrowing more from Newbigin than Nida.

Accordingly, while a survey textbook cannot do everything, this book provides a delightful sketch through the field that will begin to see arguments for Christianity and cultural anthropology working together in mutually beneficial ways. And yet, any account of cultural anthropology deemed "Christian" ought to be concerned not merely to do anthropology *as* Christians, but rather to persist developing a distinctly Christian anthropology, concerned to account for the discipline as functionally significant while also subject to Jesus' lordship. And while a solid argument is made for the relevancy of cultural anthropology to Christian missions, for a theologically robust cultural anthropology developed by Christians who share as much of a concern for a theological accounting for their discipline as they are competent with cultural anthropology, one must look elsewhere.

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Nancy Pearcey. *Saving Leonardo: A Call to Resist the Secular Assault on Mind, Morals, and Meaning*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2010. 336 pp. £16.67/\$26.99.

Nancy Pearcey's *Saving Leonardo* is a counter-assault against the continual "global secularist" assault upon Christian thinking and creativity. The subtitle, *A Call to Resist the Secular Assault on Mind, Morals, and Meaning*, could not summarize the book more succinctly. Pearcey is unwilling to play defense in matters of culture and truth, but rather stands "on the front lines fighting to liberate society from its captivity to secular worldviews" (p. 278). Her message is one of redemption (*Saving*), specifically targeting the currently "secularized" medium of human cultural production (*Leonardo*), understanding that "The only way to drive out bad culture is with good culture" (p. 268).



In Schaefferesque fashion she argues that something has gone horribly wrong between the church and the arts that has allowed secularism to hijack the forms that once were integral with spreading Christian evangelism. The matter is one of worldviews, *holistic* Christianity versus *reductive* Global Secularism that must be countered by a broad assault mustering Christian artists to actively spread the biblical worldview, what is "rationally defensible, life affirming, and rooted in creation itself" (p. 3), in a humane, redemptive, and deeply convicting way (p. 273). Pearcey navigates possible pitfalls of worldview arguments (p. 277) and attempts to provide both worldview analysis and an open door for the gospel. Arguing that false ideas are the main obstacle to evangelism (p. 15) and that culture is the main vessel of secular meaning (p. 76), her worldview analysis serves the purpose of 2 Cor 10:4–5 in breaking down purported "strongholds" of anti-Christian truth. Borrowing the words of Voddie Baucham, *Saving Leonardo* is Pearcey's "game book" for active, "revolutionary" (p. 278) Christian confrontation with Global Secularism primarily in the world of artistic creation with the aim of spreading Truth.

As a "game book," *Saving Leonardo* provides both the rules of engagement and the plays themselves, a historical worldview break-down and a mandate for continued Christian artistry. As for the worldview breakdown, Part 1 defines the field: Global Secularism wrested the arts from Christianity. Pearcey attempts to identify the contemporary relevance of her analysis for today's controversial issues by theoretically articulating Global Secularism and its consequences for church and world; in other words, Pearcey gives "the tools to individualize our approach in presenting the gospel" (p. 246). Part 2 provides an example of fighting false ideas. With a "bird's-eye-view" (p. 3), Pearcey breaks secularism into "two paths," Romantic and Enlightenment, through which the world is deceived by Global Secularism as seen in the testimony of art, movies, philosophers, and writers. When the smoke clears, she lays out a mandate for Christian artists to resist secularism and to make visible and audible declarations of Christian beauty, harmony, and truth (Epilogue). The call is for nothing short of a "global cultural revolution" (p. 278).

However, while Pearcey offers an internally coherent and compelling argument, her book suffers fatally from at least one fault-line running through her rhetorical canvas: *intellectual reductionism*. Though Pearcey identifies secular worldviews as primarily reductive by making one aspect of creation absolute (p. 244), she returns reductionist absolutism with her own reductive analysis. The book's internal consistency belies the intellectual simplification required to reduce Western cultural history into discreet worldview boxes of Romantic and Enlightenment, or even "Global Secularism." Granted,

the problem is probably born less from any desire on the part of the author but rather from inter-mixed interpretations of Dooyeweerd, Rookmaaker, and Schaeffer combined with such a brief treatment of a truly monumental subject. But the problem is so endemic that *Saving Leonardo* is deprived of its aim by a Romanticism more Romantic than Wordsworth and a Postmodernism of the imagination.

If Pearcey's analysis provides tools, then the tools are either warped beyond use or fit for incredibly few existing parts. For example, her articulation of "postmodernism" cites *no* actual postmodernist and employs quotes by literary theorists Roland Barthes and Jürgen Habermas (p. 238) rather mistakenly (neither were postmodernists or wrote about postmodernism as such). Pearcey's "postmodernism" rests, as far as anyone can tell, on an authoritative void. She boxes postmodernism into pithy statements about relativism and "upper-story values" with no link to actual texts that run quite to the contrary. Writing from personal experience, an actual postmodernist would find her misnomers amusingly dismissible. Pearcey also reduces Buddhism to a "radically dehumanizing" pantheism (p. 204), an extreme misunderstanding of Buddhism that would not pose any pertinent argument to even initiate Zen thinkers. Pearcey's account of existentialism cites the relevant philosophers but reduces their thinking to upper story/lower story truth boxes avoiding existentialist critiques that pose problems for Christian thinking and art. Existentialists were not opposed to reason, as she claims (p. 225), but are often misleading. Existentialists destroyed the so-called "two realm theory of truth," but are less than judiciously forced into that dichotomy by Pearcey (p. 225).

The Christian worldview may indeed spread through artists in spite of reductive worldview analysis, but it is certainly no commendation in the eyes of the world for biblical truth to be associated with such poor quality analysis. Despite every good intention, because of unfair presentations of their views, *Saving Leonardo* drives away secular intellectuals who need the gospel as much as anyone. Surely Christians can do a better job of representing "worldviews" accurately so that Christians and non-Christians will explore truth and reality. Peter J. Leithart's *Solomon among the Postmoderns* (Brazos, 2008) does a much better job with this. Readers would also probably find in Grant Horner, *Meaning at the Movies: Becoming a Discerning Viewer* (Crossway, 2010), a more modest but helpful approach for Christians approaching culture, specifically in movies, with Bible-saturated, theologically based tools for gospel-centered discernment.

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