

THE NEW ATHEISM



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Book Reviews

Biblical Studies

***Joshua.* By Robert L. Hubbard Jr. The NIV Application Commentary. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009. 656 pages. Hardcover, \$34.99.**

This commentary is part of the Old Testament Series for the NIV Application Commentary. As this commentary series is now commonplace and known to scholars, the review will focus on broad impressions of the author's contributions.

The NIV Application Commentary is designed to "make the journey from our world back to the world of the Bible." The main goal is not only to explain the original meaning, but also to explore the contemporary significance. The authors keep to the structure and format of the series. The passages are dealt with in broad chunks—usually a chapter or a series of chapters. Each passage is discussed in three sections: Original Meaning, Bridging Contexts, and Contemporary Significance. The commentaries published so far in the Old Testament Series are excellent and the new Joshua commentary continues this tradition. The commentary series is written for pastors and expositors. Nevertheless, in spite of their emphasis on contemporary applications and accessibility, there is a scholarly undergirding. The authors address current critical issues in biblical studies, while still maintaining the authority of the text.

Hubbard takes on the unique task of guiding the reader from the original context of Joshua to applying the principles to modern day society. This is especially challenging since the contents of the book are for a specific time period in Iron Age Palestine and a particular period in the history of the Israelites. There are many cultural and theological questions (e.g. holy war, the ban, inheritance, Israel's right to the land, etc.) that are difficult to make a direct correspondence between text and life, an expositional goal that is primary to most evangelicals. Hubbard does an admirable job of staying true to the historical context and providing insights for using the book of Joshua as a guide to Christian living.

The commentary first discusses basic issues concerning the text of Joshua. It includes an introduction, outline, and selected bibliography. The introduction discusses the Israelite Conquest as an historical event, some theological issues such as Yahweh the warrior, holy war, and who does the promise land belong to today. While these discussions are brief, Hubbard demonstrates a depth of knowledge of the scholarly debate, particularly recent discussions of the historicity of the conquest. Most of the topics in the introduction are more fully discussed in the commentary. After the introduction, the exposition of the text follows according to the plan of the series format. At the end are four indices: Scripture, subject, author, and Hebrew words (transliterated).

One of the strengths of the commentary is the discussion of the various issues such as holy war, inheritance, and the Holy Land. Perhaps the best illustration is the application of the various inheritance and geographical data in the second part of Joshua that is usually avoided in the pulpit and personal Bible reading. Hubbard

skillfully introduces the reader to the ancient context of the biblical text, which is particularly insightful coming from someone familiar with the geography and land.

Hubbard does an excellent job of addressing archaeological issues as they are pertinent to the text (i.e., the destruction of Jericho and Ai, Hazor, etc.). As with most non-specialists, there is a disjuncture in the discussion of archaeology. For example, the archaeological discussion of Jericho and Ai focus on a fifteenth century dating of the Exodus while the discussion of Hazor is based on a thirteenth century dating. Most biblical archaeologists associate the hundreds of Iron Age I settlements with the conquest and settlement. These are not highlighted in the text, nor is there a discussion of the Late Bronze Age archaeology for the fifteenth century background. However, this disjuncture does not take away from the commentary nor the exegesis and insights from the text of Joshua. Hubbard does provide an excellent overview of theories of Israelite settlement in the introductory comments. A hidden gem is his solution and discussion of the problem of the archaeology of Ai.

One of the features of this commentary series is to discuss the text in large sections, usually complete chapters or series of chapters. There are pros and cons to this approach. A pastor or student will find it difficult to turn to a particular text or pericope and glean information or background data for that particular text, making it a challenge for the expositor to prepare an exegesis of the text. On the other hand, Old Testament narrative was not written for the twenty-first century expository sermon “text bites,” and the commentary on the texts needs to discuss the narrative in its entirety. This commentary is not valuable as a “quick reference.” I highly recommend that this be read in its entirety before any sustained study or preaching from the book of Joshua. Hubbard’s command of the text and its application for today brings difficult texts that are avoided by students of Scripture to the forefront. While the reader might disagree with some contemporary applications, Hubbard does an excellent job of making Joshua—with all of its battles and long lists of geographical terms—a useful book for the church’s edification and application.

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***Hebrews.* By David L. Allen. *The New American Commentary* 35. Nashville: B&H, 2010. 671 pages. Hardcover, \$32.99.**

David Allen is the Dean of the School of Theology and Professor of Preaching at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He wrote his dissertation on the Lukan authorship of Hebrews. An edited version of it has also recently been published. Allen is a sound expository preacher who shows in this commentary the sound exegetical work that lies behind his sermons on Hebrews. He states in his preface that “painstaking exegetical spade work” must precede “theological analysis” (10). Allen therefore follows his exegetical work on each unit of the epistle with a section called “theological implications.” He intends for his theological sections to synthesize the results of his exegetical work and bring out the theological significance of each unit of Hebrews. He generally executes his plan successfully. The reader may find it helpful to read the theological sections first.

Allen provides more syntactical observations than one generally finds in other volumes of the *New American Commentary*. He shows his own attentiveness to the Greek text and therefore encourages the reader to engage the Greek text as well. If you do not know Greek, his observations are not overly technical or hard

to understand. The commentary is well-footnoted and interacts with a variety of sources, including the standard commentaries, significant articles, and theological works. Such interaction shows his commitment to work from text to theology. He is obviously looking for sources that are trying to do the same thing that he is trying to do.

In terms of his theological emphases, Allen spends a lot of time on Hebrews 6, especially 6:4–6. These are some of the most difficult verses in the New Testament and Allen decides to engage them rather than to skirt them. His engagement is extensive. He brought to my attention a number of recent attempts to deal with these difficult verses. In short, Hebrews 6:4–6 says that it is impossible for those who “fall away” to repent. Allen spends a lot of time clarifying what it means for believers to “fall away.” He concludes that falling away does not mean apostasy, that is, a turning away from the Lord and return to the state of unbelief. Rather, falling away involves “willful disobedience to God” (377). “Genuine believers” who fall away are “forfeiting some new covenant blessings in this life as well as rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ” (377). Allen calls this the “Loss of Rewards” view. Even if one does not end up agreeing with his view, his discussion in this section is quite helpful and will prompt further discussion of the knotty issues in these verses.

Overall, Allen’s commentary is a worthwhile investment for anyone who is serious about studying the Bible. I am especially hopeful, given his position as a preaching professor, that the volume will encourage preachers to do more “painstaking exegetical spade work,” as well as more careful “theological analysis” (10). Allen’s sermons on Hebrews show the benefits of both. Readers of this commentary should access some of his sermons and find encouragement there in terms of how to preach the message of Hebrews. In the preface, Allen makes a few observations on how to preach Hebrews. He finds Hebrews to be a model for expository preachers, “In Hebrews we find all the ingredients necessary for solid expository preaching: careful but creative exegesis, theological reflection and reasoning, a balance of exhortation and encouragement, pungent illustration of truth, and practical application—all creatively constructed into a masterful sermon that makes use of rhetorical techniques for maximum effect on the hearers” (12). He exhorts us, saying, “We who preach should learn from this great expositor” (12). Amen.

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***The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown: An Introduction to the New Testament.* By Andreas J. Köstenberger, L. Scott Kellum, and Charles L. Quarles. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2009. 896 + xxi pages. Hardcover, \$59.99.**

The primary question on most people’s minds when they see a new New Testament introduction being published could be summarized as “What sets this particular introduction apart from the others?” In other words, “Why is this book necessary?” This question is more acute regarding conservative evangelical introductions which generally reach similar historical conclusions. Do the authors break any new ground?

The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown (TCCC) shares deep affinities with its popular evangelical predecessors (Carson and Moo, Guthrie) in regard to the traditional questions of New Testament introduction (authorship, date, provenance, and destination). Traditional authorship is defended, pseudonymity is rejected, and

early dates, within the New Testament authors' lifetimes, are defended. Beyond these similarities, there are several distinctive features of *TCCC* that set it apart as a unique contribution to pedagogy.

Apart from a few introductory and concluding chapters, each chapter in *TCCC* holds to a tripartite structure with the main headings History, Literature, and Theology. The section on history covers the traditional questions of New Testament introductions. The section on literature discusses the genre of the book, proposes an outline, and discusses the contents of the book. The section on theology analyses the primary theological themes of the book and its distinctive contribution to the New Testament canon. The authors begin in chapter one with a discussion of the nature and scope of Scripture, covering the formation of the canon, the transmission and translation of the New Testament, and inspiration and inerrancy. In chapter two the authors examine the Second Temple period as the background of the New Testament in terms of its history, literature, and theology. The books of the New Testament are studied in canonical order except for Paul's letters, which are studied chronologically, and Jude, which is grouped with the Petrine epistles. The authors close the book in chapter twenty-one with a discussion of the unity and diversity of the New Testament.

The emphasis on the theology of the New Testament, evident from the space devoted to the theology section in each chapter and the closing chapter on unity and diversity, goes beyond general New Testament introductions. This blend of New Testament introduction with New Testament theology, although adding to the length of the book, will be important for students who are able to take a New Testament survey class, but never have the opportunity for an advanced class on New Testament theology.

As should be expected, the chapters and bibliographies are up-to-date with recent scholarship (including works published in 2009), with extensive interaction with the new perspective on Paul. The student friendliness of the textbook is accentuated by helpful maps, sidebars, and an extensive glossary of terms at the end of the book. The study questions at the end of each chapter are generally well thought out and would be suitable for small group discussions in class, homework assignments, or short answer exam questions.

In addition to the first chapter on the nature of Scripture, where the authors set forth the basis of their hermeneutical presuppositions, the devotional sidebars throughout the text entitled "Something to Think About" evidence their evangelical stance. The intent of these sections, focused primarily on personal application, reflects the intent of the original authors of the New Testament, who wrote in order to produce life transformation in their readers and not simply detached, historical analysis (cf. John 20:31). While this feature will undoubtedly limit the textbook's reception in non-confessional institutions, the authors' historical arguments are based on publicly accessible historical data, and apart from the authors' rejection of methodological naturalism they employ widely agreed upon historical methodology.

Although it is only a minor complaint, chapters eleven (on 1 and 2 Thess) and twelve (on 1 and 2 Cor) would have been better if the books were treated consecutively in their entirety instead of moving back and forth between them. It is easier for a student to stay focused on the details of an individual book if they are discussed one at a time (as in chapter eighteen on the Petrine epistles and Jude).

The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown is as a solid contribution to evangelical scholarship that deserves the attention of professors and students alike. The amount

of space devoted to the theology of the documents, almost producing a New Testament Introduction/New Testament Theology hybrid, and the emphasis on the hermeneutical significance of Second Temple Judaism as the background of the New Testament are welcome distinctive contributions.

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***James.* By Dan G. McCartney. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009. 335+ xx pages. Hardcover, \$39.99.**

Dan McCartney contributes to the Baker Exegetical series with his commentary on James. The Baker series targets a wide audience, from the pastor seeking clear expositions, to the scholar seeking depth and precision (ix). McCartney's work accomplishes and surpasses these goals. Students and pastors will find the text direct and to the point, yet without any "dumbing down" of the material. At the same time, scholars will appreciate the extensive, up-to-date works cited as well as McCartney's thorough interaction with the most pressing issues of interpretation and text criticism.

In dealing with the text, McCartney recognizes the merits of some structural approaches but places greater value on central themes. These themes are recognized by length of discussion, structure within smaller textual units, and the interrelatedness of identified themes (62–63). Using this method, McCartney proposes that genuine faith is the controlling theme of James and that each issue is rooted in this idea. Thus, James 1 should be understood as an overview of the life of faith, and James 2 as a discourse about counterfeit faith. James 3 warns about the tongue's ability to portray genuine faith, while the strife in chapter 4 reveals a lack of faith. The merchants and landlords in 4:13–5:6 are "paradigms of unbelief" and "foils in contrast to the life of faith" (223). Finally, believers are encouraged to look in faith to God (5:7–18). McCartney's focused interpretation centered on faith makes his commentary an important contribution to the study of James. He convincingly writes, "The Epistle of James is properly seen as the epistle of genuine faith, not the epistle of works" (271).

Beyond his insight into the importance of themes, McCartney effectively demonstrates the relationship and cohesion of smaller text units. For example, exegetes often struggle to explain why the command against oaths (5:12) is sandwiched between the discussion about patience (5:7–10) and prayer (5:13–18). McCartney points out that people of faith resolve their problems by turning to God in prayer, rather than by impatiently making oaths. This is merely one example of how McCartney views James as a logical whole and finds connection between the various parts.

Yet, despite McCartney's ability to identify structure in James, it was here that I found the commentary's most glaring weakness. McCartney, following the suggestion of Bauckham, argues that proverbial statements are crucial and may even be a key to the structure of James (65). These statements (labeled apophthegms) are identified as short, memorable wisdom sayings in the third person indicative. Only seven verses in James, however, adhere to these parameters. In response, McCartney alters the definition to include verses which lack brevity and catchiness, yet still seem proverbial, and verses with verbs in the imperative. There are several problems with

such an approach. First, a rule with so many exceptions seems to be of questionable value. One wonders if the text is being forced to fit a mold. Furthermore, there are inconsistencies in the rule's application. Three out of the seven verses which fit the original definition are not used to mark transitions in McCartney's outline, but occur in the middle of a discourse. Subjectivity and the interpreter's need for a logical outline appear to reign in this paradigm. After all, verses considered pithy and proverbial by McCartney—verses such as “human wrath does not work God's justice” (1:20) or “friendship with the world is enmity with God” (4:4)—may strike other readers simply as matter-of-fact speech. McCartney would have done well, before relying so heavily on the role of proverbs in James, to develop a stronger definition and grounds for using this methodology.

This critique should not cause readers to avoid McCartney's commentary. The book's strengths far outweigh its weakness. McCartney deals skillfully with the text, avoiding unnecessary digression so as to keep the argument and thought flow in focus (e.g., 162). This is particularly evident in chapter two, the highly debated section on faith and works. McCartney devotes a section of the introduction as well as an excursus to the issue of James/Paul and faith/works so that his exegesis of chapter two can focus on the text. Elsewhere, McCartney acknowledges where adequate discussion has been achieved by other writers and refers readers accordingly (e.g., 157n8). McCartney shows his willingness to think independently by arriving at sometimes unpopular conclusions (171–72n39). He is careful in arriving at his conclusions, and does so only after presenting all sides of the issue (e.g., 214). Readers wanting a better understanding of the structure and message of James will do well to make use of McCartney's excellent commentary.

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***Magnifying God in Christ: A Summary of New Testament Theology.* By Thomas R. Schreiner Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009. 272 pages. Softcover, \$24.99.**

In 2008, Thomas Schreiner published *New Testament Theology*, a comprehensive analysis of the theological message of the New Testament. For this volume, Schreiner has pared down that larger work in an attempt to make his central message more palatable to a broad audience. Though both are aimed at pastors and students, this volume is designed to appeal to those wanting to work through a book with a less daunting page count. For this abbreviated edition, Schreiner explains that he has “eliminated virtually all footnotes” and points readers to his “larger work for more in-depth discussion” (9). Consequently, for many potential readers, this volume will relegate Schreiner's *New Testament Theology* to the reference shelf.

In comparing the two works, Schreiner has essentially reversed the order of his title and subtitle, highlighting more directly his thesis about the theology of the New Testament. Schreiner parses “magnifying God in Christ” by stating that “NT theology is God-focused, Christ-centered, and Spirit-saturated” (19). His work seeks to expose “the centrality of God in Christ in the concrete and specific witness of the NT as it unfolds God's saving work in history” (19). In other words, Schreiner argues that the thrust of the New Testament demonstrates that “God will receive all the glory for his work in Christ by the Spirit as he works out his purpose in redemptive history” (19). His goal is to demonstrate this reality inductively at the level of the individual books as well as on the level of the whole of the New Testament.

Those who own Schreiner's previous volume will not need to obtain this one, as it is functionally an abridgement of that work. However, Schreiner does add a brief "pastoral reflection" to the end of each chapter where he very quickly points to possible areas of application. For instance, in the reflection after the first chapter, Schreiner asks, "Does the already-not yet emphasis of the NT make any difference in Christian life and ministry?" (36). He argues that this framework can guard against "political utopian schemes" and the illusion that perfection can be achieved this side of Christ's return. This reality can remind believers that they are not yet free from the effects of sin, encourage spouses to treat one another with grace, keep parents from demanding perfection from their children, and protect individuals from debilitating guilt about how imperfectly they strive for holiness. This type of reflection is helpful, though some of the other sections are not quite as developed (e.g., 57, 77).

Schreiner has refashioned a valuable and edifying resource that will be especially useful to those who share his evangelical convictions regarding Scripture. As stated above, Schreiner's intended audience is "pastors and students" (9). Evangelical pastors will appreciate his interaction with critical issues and his able defense of many conservative positions. His central thesis is also encouraging for those in the church looking for an energetic articulation of what the New Testament is really all about. Students who have read other New Testament theologies will benefit from exposure to a thematic and inductive approach with a sustained thesis throughout. The size of this version might also better suit the book to New Testament courses at the undergraduate level or in a church setting.

As an entry point into Schreiner's theological reflections on New Testament theology, this streamlined version will be a welcome contribution for those looking for a manageable treatment of the subject.

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***The Goodly Fellowship of the Prophets: The Achievement of Association in Canon Formation.* By Christopher Seitz. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009. 136 pages. Softcover, \$19.99.**

For interpreters wishing to engage in canonical interpretation, the specific issue of the ordering of the biblical books often poses a problem. Is there any logic at work in the writings themselves apart from the handling of post-biblical redactors or the decisions of church councils? In this volume, Seitz takes up this type of question by examining the unique character of the prophetic division in the Hebrew Scriptures. The content of the book represents an edited form of public lectures given at Acadia Divinity College in Nova Scotia in 2007. In these lectures, Seitz argues that "the implications of canon formation are deeply imbedded in the processes of the Bible's coming to be" (12). For him, the prophetic corpus in the Hebrew Bible shows signs of interrelation at a fundamental level. His chief task in the book is to demonstrate that this association found in the formation of the canon is a unique achievement with considerable significance.

Seitz makes his case in four main parts. The first two chapters set the stage for his discussion and outline the contours of current canon research. Here Seitz stresses the need to recognize the integral role of the Old Testament in the formation of the Christian canon as a whole, the significance of stable groupings (e.g., the Book of the Twelve) within larger Old Testament divisions, and that later lists and orders are

rooted in prior canonical realities. Seitz then addresses the specific challenge of order and arrangement in standard Old Testament studies. The discussion regarding these matters is often mired by differing definitions of “canon.” Some hold that canon only signifies a collection that is “stable, closed” and “in fixed order” (52). Conversely, Seitz argues that there is significant stability and affiliation present within the writings themselves prior to final consolidation within a given community. For him, “early ‘canon formation’ means that it is possible to conceive of canon and scriptural authority in phases prior to closure” (54). These writings were viewed from their inception as the “word of God,” a trait that represents “Scripture’s inner nerve” (55). Because typical treatments of the prophets do not take questions of ordering and association into account, they often fail to recognize the internal relationships present in the biblical material.

In the last two chapters, Seitz contributes his own understanding of the way the major units of the canon formed. In the prophetic corpus, a unique achievement of “association” has taken place. Through intentional textual links, the former prophets are directly connected to the Law, the latter prophets are joined to the former, and the Twelve are associated with the three major prophets of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. As a combined whole, these writings form a kind of conceptual grammar of “Law-Prophets” (33). For Seitz, this ordering and association involves more than serendipitous contextual relationships. The fact that certain books migrate toward each other entails something internal and intrinsic to the writings themselves. As the prophetic books were being produced, they were quickly viewed in light of each other. The prophetic history of Israel (the former prophets) is positioned as the framework in which the prophetic discourse (the latter prophets) is to be read. Seitz’s concern is to trace out the way this “prophetic division of the Hebrew Bible was a canonical achievement of the first order.” He shows that “this achievement did not come at the closing phases but was there from the very beginning” (44). Thus, the shaping of the prophetic corpus begins with the writers associating their works with other prophetic works and continues as those who receive these writings do the same.

Chapter four then demonstrates the accomplishment of the Writings division in the Hebrew Bible. Seitz argues that the Writings are associated with the Law by means of a different logic than the one at work in the Prophets. Whereas the Prophets as a unit are associated with the Law, the individual documents that make up the Writings connect to the Law independent of one another as discrete witnesses. For Seitz, these other writings exist alongside the “Law-Prophets” canonical core. This loose association explains why individual writings from this division show up in various places in later orderings (e.g., the movement of Ruth or Daniel). Because these books were associated with the Law and Prophets independently, they could migrate to different positions. The Writings division, then, is a “library of books” directly related to elements of the Law and the Prophets but not necessarily linked to one another. Due to the nature of these writings, they do not need to be fixed in order to recognize the prevailing “canonical” function of a previously established Law-Prophets entity. The Writings along with the subsequent New Testament documents respond to and are shaped by that foundational witness.

One immediate benefit of Seitz’s work is that it furthers the discussion regarding the ordering of the biblical books in the Christian canon. His research enables an interpreter who is interested in doing canonical interpretation to account for various lists and orderings found in the extant manuscripts. For Seitz, if one understands the

logic of association between books that occurs during the composition/canonization phase of canon formation, the varying sequences can be better understood. Many of the divergent orders can be identified as departures or modifications of a stable three-part Hebrew canon of Law, Prophets, and Writings. The presence of rival orders does not trivialize or negate these earlier theological associations. As long as the function of the Law and the Prophets is recognized, then differing orders, be they ancient or contemporary, can be accepted and understood.

Seitz's discussion of the difference between two main understandings of "canon" is also instructive. For Seitz, limiting the concept of canon to the idea of "closure" or "list" is reductionistic and causes a misinterpretation of early manuscript evidence. If there was in fact a stable witness known as "Law-Prophets" that was formative for the rest of canonized Scripture, then the fact that a third division of Writings was not completely set at the time of the New Testament does not entail an entirely destabilized Old Testament canon. This possibility is particularly significant, as the status of the Old Testament at the time of the New Testament is a watershed issue in the canon debate. In his analysis, Seitz demonstrates the importance of carefully defining the terms used to describe canon formation and also the implications of those definitional decisions.

One repeated theme of Seitz's analysis is the foundational role of the Old Testament canon. For Seitz, the Old Testament sets the theological horizons that the New Testament writers conform to in their writings (50). What is more, the precedent of a stable Old Testament canonical witness of the Law and Prophets supplies the canonical concept and impetus for the formation of a New Testament canon (102). In other words, not only did the Old Testament shape the theology of the New Testament authors, but it also influenced the material shaping of the New Testament canon. For example, the Twelve could serve as a precedent for a Pauline Corpus of epistles written in varying contexts brought together to serve a larger audience (12). A stable Old Testament witness helps explain the motivation and impetus for the formation of a New Testament canon. In this regard, Seitz shows that the Rule of Faith was also dependent on the Old Testament and was deeply exegetical (21–23). This emphasis has the potential of shedding significant light on the nature of the development of the Christian canon as a whole.

One possible area for further reflection relates to Seitz's treatment of association in the Writings. In order to account for a perceived lack of stability in ordering, Seitz stresses that the members of the Writings were not intentionally associated with one another. However, in making this case, Seitz might minimize the association that is in fact present among these documents. Seitz himself concedes that there is a measure of stability at least among the grouping known as the Megilloth. One might ask if these writings were intentionally associated with one another, albeit with a different principle of association. The interconnections that are present in the Writings seem to be based on verbal links between books and similarity of genre. Thus, recognizing and defining the various types of association in the different corpora more directly would be helpful. Also, showing in more detail how the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel are interconnected with each other in addition to the way they connect with the former Prophets might strengthen Seitz's arguments for a tightly interrelated prophetic corpus. More generally, a clearer delineation of just what is involved in a book being "associated" with another would help readers evaluate the various claims Seitz makes.

Throughout this volume, Seitz draws on the work he has done on the book

of the Twelve in his previously published *Prophecy and Hermeneutics*. His work here also serves as a precursor to his forthcoming volume in Baker's Studies in Theological Interpretation series entitled *The Character of Christian Scripture: Canon and the Rule of Faith*. There, Seitz will continue the discussion broached in the present work and connect it to a broader treatment of Christian Scripture (10–11). Thus, as an independent monograph, there may be areas of Seitz's important project in need of additional development. However, as a brief yet substantive blueprint for further constructive work on the canon, this volume represents a valuable and engaging contribution.

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***Reading the Bible Intertextually*. Edited by Richard Hays, Stefan Alkier, and Leroy Huizenga. Waco: Baylor University Press, 2009. 334 pages. Hardcover, \$49.95.**

No text is an island. Books are not written in complete isolation from other texts, authors, or communities. Both explicitly and implicitly, authors often draw upon other texts in their own compositions. These assertions form the core of the concept of intertextuality. In order to understand the way biblical writers use Scripture, scholars and critics have engaged in intertextual studies and reflected on the methods of intertextual approaches. However, it is not always clear how the term and concept are being used. In *Reading the Bible Intertextually*, editors Stefan Alkier, Richard Hays, and Leroy Huizenga acknowledge these matters and seek to facilitate dialogue between various approaches to intertextual theory. The book itself consists of a collection of fourteen essays originally presented at the "Die Bibel im Dialog der Schriften" conference at Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt, Germany.

The editors divide the book into four main parts. Part I serves as the introduction to the book and sets the theoretical framework in which the rest of the essays will function. Part II contains six essays that provide examples of an intertextual interpretation of biblical texts. This section focuses mostly on the New Testament's use of Old Testament texts but also contains a few examples of the Old Testament's use of the Old Testament itself. After these biblical examples, Part III has five essays that investigate intertextual interpretation outside the boundaries of the canon. The textual possibilities here include ancient literary works as well as historical narratives from other periods. Part IV concludes the volume with further theoretical reflection on intertextuality and New Testament studies.

Because the purpose of the book is concerned with intertextual readings, many of the contributors define and defend the concept. In his two essays that bookend the work, Stefan Alkier grounds intertextuality in the linguistic discipline of semiotics. A semiotic approach views texts as "relational objects composed of signs" (3). Alkier specifically defines a "text" according to semiotic theory as "a complex verbal sign . . . that corresponds to a given expectation of reality" (7). In this model "texts *have* no meaning but rather enable the production of meaning in the act of reading" (3). This reading event involves unavoidable associations with other texts. For Alkier, intertextuality is not an addition to texts but rather "an intrinsic characteristic of textuality" (3). The result of this phenomenon is the "decentering and pluralizing of textual meaning" (3). Acknowledging this multiplicity, the pressing concern becomes the formation of criteria for discerning which textual connections are legitimate. In

ordering these criteria, there are both limited and unlimited concepts of intertextuality. Most intertextual approaches lean toward one of these two options.

In laying out a methodological framework, Alkier contrasts his approach with the other relevant models of meaning in the field of linguistics. He argues for a categorical semiotics in contrast to structuralist or post-structuralist semiotics. Structuralism viewed a text as a closed system of signs that could be discerned with reference solely to the object of study. In reaction to this model, post-structuralism shifted the focus to the limitless possibilities of meaning derived from elements outside of a text. Alternatively, Alkier argues for a model of categorical semiotics that seeks to encompass the concerns of the other two approaches. Categorical semiotics examines texts with the categories of *intratextual*, *intertextual*, and *extratextual* analysis. Intratextuality investigates the text itself as an independent entity in its own context. Intertextuality then examines the relationship a text has with one or more other texts. Extratextuality describes the way external and foreign elements interact with the text. These types of analysis build on each other and are ideally to be done in sequence.

In this scheme, the category of intertextuality can be approached from three perspectives. The production-oriented perspective investigates the intertextual connections that are “produced” by the author of a text. These connections are somehow marked in the text and are part of the “intertextual potential” of the original composition. These intentional or circumstantial “markings” serve as pointers to intertextual references. This perspective represents a narrow/limited conception of intertextuality. Alternatively, the reception-oriented perspective investigates the intertextual connections generated by the working context of the reader. This reception-oriented reading inquires about the “interweaving” of two texts either “in historically verifiable readings” or in “historically possible readings even if historical evidence is lacking” (10). The former angle on this perspective is tied to a limited conception of intertextual and the latter to an unlimited one. Finally, the experimental perspective examines the reading of two or more texts together without concern for whether or not they have any organic connection with each other (10). The example Alkier gives for this perspective is a study done on the “intertextual” relationship between *2 Kings*, *Revelation*, and *Gone with the Wind* (10–11). These categories of intertextuality make up the technical vocabulary that the rest of the contributors will use in articulating the type of intertextual analysis they employ.

Another important concept used throughout is the “universe of discourse” and the “model reader.” The universe of discourse is a phrase that denotes the contextual world in the mind of the reader. This universe is also referred to as an “encyclopedia” (8, 35–37). An encyclopedia is “the cultural framework in which the text is situated and from which the gaps of the text are filled” (8). The model reader is similar to the implied reader. An author of a text assumes a model reader who has a certain universe of discourse. This shared context allows for the production of meaning. Because much of intertextual study depends in some degree on the reception of texts by readers, these two concepts play a pivotal role in the overall discussion.

In addition to these methodological distinctions, the contributors in Part II also provide New Testament examples of intertextual connections with the Old Testament. Michael Schneider gives an intertextual reading of 1 Corinthians 10 by investigating how the words, images, and themes from the Pentateuch broaden and enhance Paul’s meaning. Eckart Reinmuth shows how the “narrative abbreviations” of the Adam story from Genesis function in the book of Romans. Leroy Huizenga

uses the Isaac narratives and its reception history in Jewish exegesis to highlight the Isaac/Jesus typology in the book of Matthew. Florian Wilk examines the way Paul uses, interprets, and reads the book of Isaiah as evidenced in his epistles. Richard Hays argues that Luke employs “intertextual narration” by drawing on an array of Old Testament texts and images in order to present Christ and the Church as the fulfillment and continuation of God’s plan for Israel. Finally, Marianne Grohmann shows the intertextual connections between the Song of Hannah and Psalm 113, and how Mary’s Magnificat in Luke alludes to both of them.

One of the primary strengths of this volume is the window it provides into the dialogue regarding intertextuality in the European context. As evidenced by these diverse essays, the international conversation is interdisciplinary, ecumenical, and rooted in linguistic analysis. This collection allows readers quickly to recognize these emphases and become aware of a broader perspective. Additionally, the discussion helps clarify the concept of intertextuality itself. For instance, Alkier’s formulations noted above provide a helpful guide to the spectrum of interpretive options and divergent understandings of the concept. This larger frame of reference will enable biblical interpreters to nuance the way they speak of the nature of intertextual relationships between texts. The practice of carefully attending to the widening layers of context (i.e., intratextual, intertextual, extratextual) in proper sequence is also a helpful reminder of the importance of a holistic textual interpretation.

The range of essays in the book also demonstrates what is at stake in the difference between a limited and an unlimited conception of intertextuality. As each contributor usually outlines his or her understanding of intertextuality, readers can quickly note the various ways in which texts are handled. Moreover, the essays show that one’s theory of intertextuality depends on one’s theory of textuality (42). For instance, if one views texts as fundamentally open and fluid, he or she will probably favor an unlimited conception of intertextuality. Recognizing this facet of the discussion should compel interpreters to think through their working definitions of text and textuality in a more comprehensive manner. These methodological elements have the potential of enhancing sound exegetical practice among biblical interpreters.

Alongside these strengths, there are also a few concerns and places for further reflection. Some elements of this dialogue might make hermeneutically conservative interpreters nervous. One example is the repeated assumption that the act of reading produces “limitless possibilities” for meaning. Though some criteria are given in the larger semiotic framework, they primarily deal with the aims of interpretation rather than with controls and restraints on divergent interpretive tendencies (237–39). Consequently, the general consensus in the book is definitely inclined toward a reader-oriented approach (43, 242–43). Indeed, an open conception of intertextuality requires the reader to be integrally involved in the generation of meaning. For instance, Alkier asserts that the meaning of a text “will change in every new act of reading and in every new combination of texts” (12).

There is also a strong ecumenical motivation in arguing for a plurality of meaning (e.g., 224). In parts of the book, there is an underlying assumption that a plurality of meaning necessarily contributes to an inclusive social order, and that a more narrow conception of meaning necessarily lends itself toward myopic authoritarianism. Some will question the viability of this correlation, as a plurality of meanings is nonetheless capable of producing close-minded fundamentalism. Conversely, a robust, multi-faceted understanding of the literal sense is also able to produce and

encourage gracious cultural/ideological interactions.

Because much of this discussion works from the vantage point of an expansive model of “meaning making,” entire sections of the book focus solely on extrabiblical material. As noted above, Part III is devoted to “intertextual interpretation outside the boundaries of the canon” (138). For example, Peter Möllendorff discusses the “mimetic potential” related to Lucian’s *True History* and Thomas Schmitz offers a comparison of two works by the Greek writer Nonnus. Though intriguing, these case studies have little to do with the interpretation of biblical texts. Further, in Parts I, III, and IV, the Old Testament is just another text in the “universe of discourse” and does not usually merit an interpretive priority. This feature resonates with the implicit tendency toward extratextual analysis in parts of the book. In this type of investigation, written texts are viewed as only a subset of a larger constellation of signs. Hans-Günter Heimbrock’s essay expands the notion of “text” in phenomenological terms (212–20). In this approach, there is no privileging of texts over even archeological objects. Thus, one can assert that “stones, coins, and apparatuses do not possess less sign character than writings” (247). This type of analysis is not in itself unprofitable. However, those who are interested in “reading *the Bible* intertextually” or who hold to a chastened view of intertextuality will find these elements less compelling.

One concluding reflection involves the possible role of the canon in the intertextual conversation. The concept of “canon” might constructively aid the process of forming controls for the limitless possibilities of meaning. An intentional recognition of canonical boundaries would limit and exclude many intertextual connections. However, a closed canon would actually produce and generate intertextual possibilities as well. (Schnieder raises this possibility in his essay [46]. George Aichele’s essay “Canon as Intertext: Restraint or Liberation?” treats this issue as well, albeit in a different manner [139–56]). By creating contextual relationships between a diverse set of texts, the canon provides a space where intertextual connections are realized. In this model, intertextual connections function within the atmosphere provided by the canon and do not need to journey into the outer space of extratextuality in order to generate fruitful meaning. This conception of intertextuality works within the framework of an author’s intention by means of a confessional-canonical starting point rather than a historical-critical one. Accordingly, readers who adopt a narrow view of intertextuality and are concerned with the communicative intention of authors will see the canon as a more constructive place for the generation of textual meaning than is often allowed for by the contributors.

These concerns aside, the editors achieve their purpose of providing access to a lively dialogue regarding intertextual theory and praxis. Biblical interpreters will benefit from thinking through intertextuality alongside these learned conversation partners.

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Theological Studies

***Four Views on Moving beyond the Bible to Theology.* Edited by Gary T. Meadors. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009. Softcover, \$19.99.**

Few events can be more confusing or discouraging to new Christians than to hear two individuals declaring that the Bible teaches opposing positions, or that the

Bible does not address an issue at all. Many Christians have realized that the Bible can be treated “like a dummy in the hands of a ventriloquist” (7). Consequently, there has been growing interest in the question not of what the Bible teaches, but of how the Bible teaches. *Four Views on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology* presents answers to the latter question in the popular Counterpoint format. Influenced by I. Howard Marshall’s *Beyond the Bible: Moving from Scripture to Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), this book is unique in the Counterpoint series in that the positions discussed are by no means fixed representatives—the field is still developing. Howard’s own principled model makes an appearance, but the diversity of the field is made evident in that editor Gary Meadors invited three additional scholars to reflect on the given views, and those scholars presented additional views.

In order to appreciate these various views more clearly, the reader should know that “beyond” does not imply the insufficiency of Scripture. As Meadors notes, when a church member greets a friend with a handshake rather than a holy kiss, he or she has moved beyond the Bible. Any time a pastor preaches a text of Scripture, he has moved beyond the Bible. These authors agree about the authority of the text; they disagree about how the Bible applies to contemporary issues. Most importantly, they disagree about the fundamental nature of Scripture: is it a reference manual for life or spirituality? a script? a roadmap? an enculturated story? The four contributors engage in a very lively (and valuable) debate over this important question.

“A Principlizing Model,” Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. Reviewed by Chris Johnson

Walter Kaiser presents the first view, the “principlizing model,” which reflects similar sentiments expressed in his well-known *Toward an Exegetical Theology*. In order to detail his basic approach, Kaiser first defines principlization: “To ‘principlize’ is to [re]state the author’s propositions, arguments, narrations, and illustrations in timeless abiding truths with special focus on the application of those truths to the current needs of the Church” (22). He is quick to distinguish principlization, which derives its conclusions from a careful study of the text, from allegorizing or spiritualizing. Following this explanation, Kaiser outlines how an interpreter would implement his method.

First, the interpreter must determine the subject of the passage in question (22). Second, the interpreter must determine the emphasis of the passage and also note any connections between its words, phrases, and clauses (23). Following this, the passage can be expressed as a propositional principle, regardless of genre. Kaiser offers a “Ladder of Abstraction” as a paradigm for moving from a specific biblical example to a general principle and then to a specific contemporary application. The text of Scripture provides the general principles. From the general principle the interpreter is able to draw out the underlying theological or moral principle and finally apply this to a specific contemporary situation. Kaiser demonstrates how his proposal functions by working through questions including euthanasia, the role of women in the church, homosexuality, and slavery, as well as abortion and stem cell research.

Kaiser closes his chapter with a brief interaction with I. Howard Marshall’s *Beyond the Bible*. Kaiser rejects Marshall’s conclusions by arguing that the biblical writers and early Christians really did not go beyond the text. Kaiser points to the idea of progressive revelation (but not the destructive forms of it) as a key to understanding what takes place between the Old and New Testaments. Kaiser argues that what some might call development and human discovery is actually the perfection

of God's revealed truth (47).

Kaiser's contribution is helpful in that he seeks to anchor theology firmly in Scripture. Although addressed indirectly, Kaiser's approach reveals a high view of Scripture. He wholeheartedly rejects the notion that the Bible is insufficient to address the complexity of modern ethical problems. He acknowledges that many modern dilemmas do not receive direct treatment in Scripture while also affirming that interpreters should not consider God's Word silent on these concerns.

In spite of his positive contributions, Kaiser's work does have some limitations. First, Kaiser devotes the bulk of his essay to test cases of his method. While he ought to be commended for showing how his proposal functions practically, one example would have been sufficient. In his preoccupation with the practical results of his method, Kaiser shifts the focus of the essay too closely upon the contemporary issues, while his conclusions on some of the issues are also particularly unsatisfying. For example, Kaiser's discussion on women and the church does illustrate an application of his principalizing approach, but he undermines his position with the brevity of his treatment. His conclusions on the role of women in the church satisfy his own convictions, but another interpreter could just as easily argue for the opposite viewpoint using Kaiser's method. One's conclusions then depend on the principles chosen.

Another weakness of Kaiser's work is that his approach tends to downplay any differences between the various genres of Scripture. To be fair, Kaiser seems to make an effort to avoid doing this. He distinguishes between the various genres and there is no doubt that he understands the differences. Yet his approach tends to reduce a passage to a rigid summary statement. This is not to argue against propositions but only to say that Kaiser's approach might lead an interpreter to miss unique aspects of the various genres in an effort to principalize a given passage.

Kaiser's proposal lends much to commend itself. His use of specific examples of how his method works in practice is helpful for anyone wishing to adopt his method in their own exegetical work. His approach offers the preacher a constructive way to avoid the moralizing and allegory that can often appear when working through the narrative passages of Scripture (especially Old Testament narrative). Kaiser's proposal also helps the interpreter engage other passages of the Old Testament that he might otherwise ignore. All in all, Kaiser's work in this chapter is quite a useful tool for any exegete.

"A Redemptive-Historical Model," Daniel M. Doriani. Reviewed by Billy Marsh

Daniel Doriani, senior pastor of Central Presbyterian Church and adjunct professor of New Testament at Covenant Seminary, presents doing theology in a "redemptive-historical model" (RHM) (75–76). In his first section, "Foundations for a Redemptive-Historical Interpretation," Doriani situates the RHM within classical evangelicalism surveying its scriptural presuppositions concerning the authority, sufficiency, and clarity of Scripture. In addition, he envisions the task of biblical interpretation and application as one of "technical skill, art, and personal commitment" (76).

Section two, "The Redemptive-Historical Method and its Way Beyond the Sacred Page," provides steps for doing theology beginning with exegesis and moving into theological interpretation and application. For Doriani, the interpreter seeks first the authorial intent with priority given to the writer's main point. Second, his

task is to synthesize the biblical data into a holistic theological reading of the Bible (84–85). Third, Doriani suggests that all Christian application should be understood through “the imitation of God/imitation of Christ motif” (86). And fourth, by highlighting the use of biblical narratives, he argues that these narratives ought to be viewed as paradigms for daily Christian living (87–88).

In his third section dedicated to surveying alternative approaches for going “beyond the sacred page,” Doriani does little more than briefly interact with the methodological fruits of the methods of I. H. Marshall and proponents of a trajectory or movement view of Scripture. Doriani’s fourth section entitled, “Going Beyond the Sacred Page through Casuistry,” encourages the use of “casuistry” for carefully moving beyond Scripture for constructing theology. He acknowledges the potential pitfalls of “casuistry”; nonetheless, Doriani sees the term’s appeal to a higher principle as beneficial for guidance through complex issues not directly addressed in Scripture.

In his final section, “Going Beyond the Sacred Page by Asking the Right Questions,” Doriani proffers four “questions the Bible endorses” to ask when applying Scripture’s teachings to everyday life: “What is my duty?” “What are the marks of a good character?” “What goals are worthy of my life energy?” “How can I gain a biblical worldview?” (102–03). For the remainder of his chapter, Doriani applies his “right” questions and his interpretive methodology to two controversial life-issues: gambling and women in the ministry.

Doriani’s contribution, although basic and orthodox in its presentation, affords instances that require critical evaluation. For example, within his first section, Doriani fails to give any real explanation of the distinctives of his model. In particular, the emphasis on “history” in his method’s title is never fully discussed. He does delve into the role of paradigmatic narratives for Christian application, but he does not clarify what he means by “redemptive-history” as the preferred way to perceive the Bible as canon. Doriani neglects to expound upon this fundamental feature in sufficient detail.

Doriani’s narrative approach is welcomed as a means of appropriating the character of Scripture, but weakened by his search for patterns within the biblical narratives. The discovery of patterns is helpful, but Doriani does not specify what constitutes a pattern. Moreover, is a series of patterns necessary to produce a norm or is a single occurrence sufficient (89)? Vanhoozer notes rightly in his response that here Doriani shifts from “prudence” into principalizing (130). Furthermore, when suggesting “casuistry” as another means of moving from the Bible to theology, Doriani’s appeal to higher principles seemed to depart from his narrative intent. With respect to his commitment to “the imitation of God/Christ motif,” “casuistry” needs to be brought into congruence with this form of application which Doriani identifies as the standard and goal of Christian character formation (86).

In conclusion, Doriani’s proposal is exactly what he says it is: “a call to return to diligent exegesis and the orthodoxies of interpretation” (118). One should respect Doriani’s commitment to a classical evangelical approach to Scripture, but the RHM itself finds insufficient treatment. The essay leaves the reader unsure as to why he or she ought to adopt the RHM in particular, notwithstanding the value of his theory of narrative for Christian ethics, which is not, however, reserved for Doriani’s approach alone. As a chapter in a Counterpoint book where one’s position is meant to achieve superiority and approval over other options, Doriani’s falls short of its potential to present a strong nuanced method, which is demonstrated by the fact

that both Kaiser and Vanhoozer spend more time agreeing with him than not.

“A Drama-of-Redemption Model,” Kevin J. Vanhoozer. Reviewed by Michael Economidis

The title of Vanhoozer’s contribution to Gary Meador’s *Four Views on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology* is apt. As in his *The Drama of Doctrine*, Vanhoozer, Blanchard Professor of Theology at Wheaton College, is greatly interested in the analogy of theater to Bible interpretation and Christian life and the relatedness of speech to act. He sets the stage, so to speak, by noting the dramatic quality of the Christian faith and relating the various aspects of theological work to aspects of the theater (155–62). From there, he discusses the viability of considering interpretative functions as a subset of performance. He wants to affirm this viability and understand “the criterion for normative appropriation [as] a function of what I shall term the implied canonical reader,” i.e., a disciple (169). The goal of this appropriation is the Theodramatic Vision, or reading a passage wisely, which is a “demonstration of theodramatic understanding, . . . not to apply but to appropriate [the Bible’s] message” (170). It requires creativity on the part of the performer, and Vanhoozer provides measuring rods to protect against poor theological improvisation: the canon sense, the catholic sensibility, and the rule of love (179–84). He then offers two case studies, Mary and transsexuality, and sums up the entirety of his essay and method with the acronym AAA (attend, appraise, advance) (198).

Vanhoozer’s concept and method here have much to commend them. The theater analogy seems particularly helpful in that it emphasizes the great need on the part of believers and of the world as a whole for those believers to play their part in the ongoing drama of redemption (160). It should also be mentioned that Vanhoozer’s vision of a grand drama in which all believers participate and into which they may also be led by appropriating the world “in front of” the text (166) is quite appealing. One might take issue, though, with the apparent false dichotomy between what Vanhoozer calls “abstract truth” and “concrete wisdom-in-fact” (159, cf. 178, 203). Yet, to neglect the attainment of knowledge, “abstract (propositional) truth,” is to neglect an important aspect of interpretation, which is still a vital area of life the neglect of which can only hinder the “performative” variety of interpretation.

With this dichotomy of “mental” and “performative” interpretation in mind, one might also note that perhaps the philosophy of interpretation might be reversed and augmented in Vanhoozer such that performance and mentation could be viewed as species of the genus interpretation (165). Doriani rightly notes that Scripture offers examples of believers being taught worldviews and propositions. Such a view would result in a much broader, arguably more functional method that would better define the relationship between doctrine and ethics.

A second issue concerns Vanhoozer’s statement to the effect that, “*Sacra pagina* is profitable for *sacra doctrina*, which in turn is profitable for *sacra vita* (holy living)” (154). It seems that Vanhoozer reverses the final two in theory, yet his practice seems to reflect the order of the quote. To focus on the appropriation of the world in front of the text (158, 166, 170) would be to focus on *sacra vita*, would it not? Thereby, one’s focus in reading and interpreting would decidedly not be on *sacra doctrina* primarily. This all assumes, though, that “doctrine” is not doctrine in the formulaic sense but in the sense of principle-by-which-to-live. To live by Scripture, to appropriate the drama into one’s own life, necessitates “concrete” guides (principles?), to incorporate. One does not simply appropriate godly living by osmosis through

reading. One reads, finds an example of how to live (principle), and incorporates (appropriates) that example into his life (159, 166–70, 172, 178–84, 198). Thus, ethical norms, as opposed to doctrines (formulas of belief), are the presuppositions of ethics. Yet, Vanhoozer does not distinguish between doctrines as ethical norms and doctrines as formulas of belief, so one wonders as to how Vanhoozer understands the process of interpretation correctly to function in light of his stated order and his practical usage.

One cannot, however, fault Vanhoozer's correct emphasis on the interpretive acting-out of the believer's faith. And, above all else in his essay, the call for appropriation of the text should bring his readers' focus back to a genre of interpretation that is often simply assumed, namely that interpretation demands submission on the part of the interpreter to immersion in the world of the text and to the authority thereby represented. Vanhoozer offers a complement to much of modern Bible study, yet it needs the steady, propositional support of traditional Bible study to provide anchorage.

“A Redemptive-Movement Model,” William J. Webb. Reviewed by Jonathan Wood

William J. Webb, known for his book *Slaves, Women and Homosexuals*, presents the Redemptive-Movement Model for moving from Scripture to theology. His contributions in *Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology* stands as a phrase of response in the conversation generated by his previous methodological assertions. This response comes to the reader's attention in the section, “Correcting Misconceptions,” which may be summarized as Webb's defense against the claims of his opponents that his approach endangers the verbal-plenary doctrine of revelation.

Webb argues that the task of the theologian is to go beyond the concrete specificity of the Bible lest he warrant accusation of stopping where the Bible stops. Webb's model for moving beyond the Bible depends upon simultaneously understanding the text from the perspectives of the original culture, the reader's culture, and the ultimate ethic projected by the spirit of the text. An essential part of Webb's model is that the spirit of the text produces incremental movement from the cultural ethic toward the ultimate ethic. Biblical study should seek to discern this “movement meaning,” which in turn should “tug at our heartstrings and beckon us to go further” (217). The hermeneutic Webb employs rests upon a strong idea of accommodation in which God met individuals at the point they could comprehend incremental moral progress.

Webb rightly draws attention to the limitation of a mindset which operates under the rubric of going only where the Bible goes and stopping only where the Bible stops. He views this method as inadequate for developing theology in cultures subsequent to the formation of the canon. His arguments provide emphasis to the inherent necessity of thinking beyond the words of the Bible in the task of theological formation. Additionally, Webb's approach rightly values cultural and historical context. However, this chapter raises several concerns.

First, it appears that Webb does not think that Scripture provides an ultimate ethic. Webb claims that the interpreter must look to the redemptive movement of the text to discover the trajectory on which one must continue to find the ultimate ethic. However, the definition of the redemptive movement in Scripture suffers from a vagueness that prevents the necessary boundaries by which trajectories springing from Scripture may be evaluated. The consequence of leaning so heavily on the

redemptive trajectory of Scripture is compromising the biblical canon as final and closed revelation. Webb defends himself on this point by affirming the New Testament as God's final revelation, yet he still perceives a distinction between the revelation of the New Testament and the implications of the redemptive-movement spirit of the text. The danger created is that such a hermeneutic for discerning the redemptive-movement element lacks interaction with the text as authoritative guide.

One manifestation of this is Webb's dependence upon the authority of extra-biblical sources instead of the text of Scripture itself to bear out the trajectory. For example, the movement of slavery texts toward an ultimate ethic of abolition depends upon discerning ancient Near Eastern context. Similarly, the development of corporal punishment texts away from the primitivism of spanking rides on non-inspired cultural law codes. Webb's method hinges on cultural artifacts for discerning the moral trajectories of Scripture. Perhaps the most significant consequence of Webb's approach is that the biblical text does not contain the ultimate ethic.

A final mention of Webb's method focuses on the scope of the theology produced by his method. A weakness of his contribution to the book, and perhaps his method in general, is overemphasis on the area of moral theology to the exclusion of other areas of theology. He does not discuss in what way the redemptive-movement elements of Scripture relate to the formulation of doctrine outside of moral theology. Perhaps looking at Webb's proposal in the light of the history of doctrinal development would reveal that many crucial doctrinal developments in areas such as Christology were not settled so much on the basis of a movement behind the text, but more so as a result of meditation upon the concrete particulars on the page.

Conclusion and Summary

The variety of methods of biblical interpretation and application—and the impact of that variety—cannot be ignored. Furthermore, the reviewers noted valuable aspects of each. The principlizing model correctly identifies objective revealed truth in Scripture. The redemptive-historical model correctly notes that the Bible centrally bears witness to God's eternal plan to redeem humanity to Himself through Jesus Christ. The drama-of-redemption model correctly emphasizes that the Bible is not merely to be read, but to be lived. The redemptive-movement model rightly recognizes that God gave the Bible at a particular nexus of history and culture which cannot be ignored in hermeneutics. Some of the authors recognize the complementary nature of their views, but each maintains a sense of tension between them. Readers will find themselves agreeing and disagreeing with elements of each of the views, underscoring the potential of this subject to generate growth as well as division.

Interestingly, Meadors brings in three additional scholars to present further reflections on the four views presented. Mark Strauss teaches New Testament at Bethel Seminary. He emphasizes the subjectivity of biblical interpretation and consequently minimizes the goal of discovering objective principles rather than practices. He sees value in affirming the historical-grammatical hermeneutic, but insists that a Bible reader cannot stay completely in the text, so to speak. He recognizes the huge limitations of Vanhoozer's drama metaphor and Webb's search for a so-called trajectory of the Spirit. He then proposes in their stead a model of the Bible as a bridge or a journey which, he admits, runs into those same limitations. Al Wolters teaches philosophy and Old Testament at Redeemer University College. He points out how each view falls short in the most challenging texts, especially those about child discipline, slavery, and gender subordination. Instead, he proposes that the

Bible does actually teach offensive positions to those in an enlightened Western context. In place of the four views, he offers general revelation (“creation revelation”) as the key to unlocking the Bible; it is the real context for the drama of humanity (to use Vanhoozer’s term) and it cannot be separated from historical conditioning. Christopher Wright directs Langham Partnership International. He sees elements of truth in each of the views presented and offers the case study of unclean meat to prove his claim. But rather than pick apart their weaknesses, he focuses on the need for a unifying, intentional approach to Scripture, whatever it may be. He proposes the story of Creation, Fall, Redemption, New Creation as that approach, emphasizing its missional perspective. In essence, Wright simply replaces the views with a missional hermeneutic, elegant (and very limited) in its simplicity.

Each of the three additional authors points out the unintended discrepancies and parallels in the four views. For example, where Vanhoozer would emphasize living out the story of forgiveness in the parable of the prodigal son, Kaiser would focus on the principle of forgiveness. But in what ways are these approaches really different? How can they be separated? When Doriani synthesizes Scripture into ethical statements, how is this different from the principlizing model? Yet when Doriani and Kaiser come to opposing conclusions about issues such as gender roles, how do they determine which is wrong? Clearly, often each of the contributors simply talk past one another. The diverse reactions of the additional contributors underscore just how difficult this debate is. Readers may not agree with the views, but they will learn a great deal.

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***Love Wins: A Book about Heaven, Hell, and the Fate of the Every Person Who Ever Lived.* By Rob Bell. New York: HarperCollins, 2011. 202 + xi pages. Softcover, \$22.99.**

Rob Bell, long-time pastor of Mars Hill Bible Church in Grand Rapids, and provocateur extraordinaire, provides another controversial, popular-level book in the vein of *Velvet Elvis* (2006) and *Sex God* (2008). Ever the deconstructionist, Bell continues his usual approach, begun in *Velvet Elvis*, of thought-provoking questioning. However, Bell is no religious anarchist. Rather, as he writes in the first chapter, “this isn’t just a book of questions. It’s a book of responses to these questions” (19). For this, he is to be commended. Rather than hiding his own certitude behind the veneer of “just asking questions,” Bell is an honest deconstructionist, signaling his intention to reconstruct, replacing what he is convinced is false with what he is certain is true. Specifically, he contends that the story of Jesus’ love triumphs over all other stories and that the oft-told stories of God’s judgment are misguided.

Surprisingly, there is much good in Bell’s book, as he raises some excellent questions, pressing evangelicalism in some areas in which fidelity to the Scriptures is often lacking. Pastorally, in an ecclesiological culture poor in Kingdom language and understanding, Bell repeatedly emphasizes Jesus’ words about its nearness, refusing (as did Jesus) to relegate it to a coming age; evangelicals would do well to heed his call to the message of the present reality and availability of the Kingdom. In a Baptist ecclesiological paradigm where a vote is considered a right, many lose sight of that fact, thinking that it is their Kingdom. Further, in bringing the Kingdom approach to bear on the individual level, Bell reminds us that eternal life, as depicted

in the Scriptures, is not simply life that lasts forever, but is also a state of life lived with the God the Eternal One. He writes, “Eternal life doesn’t start when we die; it starts now. It’s not about a life that begins at death; it’s about experiencing the kind of life now that can endure and survive even death” (59). This proper emphasis brings eternity to bear on everyday life where marriage, and parenting, and neighbors exist, which is exactly what Jesus intended when he inaugurated the Kingdom. Scripturally, a relationship with Christ is not about punching a ticket to “get to heaven” (cf. 178–79) but about life with Christ. Bell also properly situates ethics within the context of these eschatological realities (46), noting that our understanding of what the Kingdom is will drive how we live in the world, something the people of Heritage Park Baptist Church hear weekly. Finally, Bell is right that people—both individually and corporately—create living hells in this life through abuse (7), genocide (70), human trafficking (78), and other evils that human beings perpetuate against each other. In addition, by the choices they make many “choose to live in their own hells all the time” (114). In all these cases, Bell accurately portrays the scriptural realities regarding the kingdom, eternal life, and living hells.

But Bell only gets these things half right as he curiously falls into a sort of Ramist logic which insists on either-or, precluding the sort of both-and approach that fans of the postmodern epistemological move like Bell ostensibly embrace. For Bell, it seems that kingdom here-and-now precludes looking towards a greater kingdom that is coming, eternal life here-and-now excludes the greater eternal life that is coming, and hells of our own making as a result of sin preclude a greater hell that is coming. His commitment to this sort of logic shows up again in chapter seven, “The Good News Is Better Than That.” There, Bell is unwilling to hold in tension that God both judges sin and rescues us from His judgment of sin through the work of Christ “so that He might be both just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus” (Rom 3:26). If true, it can be said, contra Bell, that Jesus rescues us from God (182). In other words, in orthodox thought, God rescues us from God. This may be untenable in a strictly Ramist logic, but in a world in which the paradoxical incarnation of the Word of God turns all such logics on their head, it is true, nonetheless. Further, in this process, Bell rejects the historic orthodox understanding of divine simplicity—that God’s essence cannot be reduced to any one thing or attribute—and instead embraces the rather recent understanding of God as essentially love (177), a concept that grew out of nineteenth-century, European Protestant Liberalism.

Bell’s argument is also troubled by two general methodological problems: his selective use of history and his atomizing hermeneutical approach. First, Bell confidently and consistently posits that there are those in the mainstream of Christian history who have held to his views. In chapter four, “Does God Get What God Wants?,” he writes, “At the center of the Christian tradition since the first church have been a number who insist that history is not tragic, hell is not forever, and love, in the end, wins and all will be reconciled to God” (109). He points to Origen, whose apokatastasis—the restoration of all things, and thus universal salvation—was a perspective that was influential in the East, being picked up in whole or part by the Cappadocian fathers, but was ultimately condemned (even in the East) at the fifth ecumenical council, Constantinople II (553 AD). He also curiously lines up Jerome, Augustine, and Luther as supportive of his view that in order for God to “get what God wants,” everyone will be saved (106, 107). Here, Bell selectively appropriates historical figures (some wrongly) in order to garner support for his particular position.

Bell's approach to Scripture is comparably selective. In fact, his atomistic approach to the Scriptures ignores context, which should be the greatest determiner of meaning. A few examples should suffice. First, he takes multiple Old Testament texts that promise restoration to Israel and decontextualizes them, applying them to all people. Whatever "Israel" means, that question is paramount in understanding these texts. Second, in keeping with his embrace of apokatastasis, based on Ezekiel 16 and Matthew 11, he offers that there's still hope for Sodom and Gomorrah. In this particular instance, Bell claims that since Jesus condemns Capernaum, there must be hope for Sodom (83–85). But, in a passage about judgment, Jesus' intent is pretty clear: it will be worse for Capernaum on judgment day than it has been for Sodom, precisely because they reject Him. In other words, what they know about Him and do with what they know about Him matters quite a bit. Third, in what amounts to proof-texting, Bell lifts many verses from the gospels, including John 6, 10, and 12, in order to persuade his readers that all people will be saved through Jesus Christ. He specifically employs John 12:48 in order to persuade us to embrace nonjudgmental attitudes about the eternal destiny of people because "Jesus says, he 'did not come to judge the world, but to save the world'" (160). Although Bell is right that Christians are not judges, the theological argument of the book is muted by the very next verse that indicates that judgment is, indeed, coming: "The Word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day (John 12:48)." Fourth, decontextualization allows Bell to argue for a broadness in salvation that amounts to Christian pluralism, an "exclusivity on the other side of inclusivity" (155). Taking John 14:6 as his starting point, he writes "what [Jesus] doesn't say is how, or when, or in what manner the mechanism functions that gets people to God through him" (154). In this, he once again ignores context, for in the same chapter Jesus Himself gives faith as the "how" by which people come to God through Him. Overall, the broader context of John, informed by such verses as John 3:18 and 3:36, which indicate that salvation comes to those who believe, while judgment "remains" upon all who do not believe in Christ, is ignored. The common thread in all these examples is Bell's refusal to embrace a God that judges sin, which is not surprising considering that his burden from the beginning is to re-tell the "Jesus story" in such a way that "Jesus' message of love, peace, forgiveness, and joy" can be heard anew (viii). Without a doubt, this is a noble goal. However, if getting to "God's retelling of our story" (173), requires the fragmenting of the Scripture—an ironically modern approach—in order to retell it, then many Christians will reject it, choosing instead to read the Scripture with the pre-commitments of the early church, which believed that the Scriptures must be taken as a whole, a whole whose story teaches both that Christ came "because of our salvation" and that He would come again "to judge the living and the dead." Bell's story is different.

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***The Message of the Holy Spirit.* By Keith Warrington. Edited by Alec Motyer and John Stott. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2009. 288 pages. Paperback, \$18.00.**

Keith Warrington is the Vice-Principal and Director of Doctoral Studies at Regents Theological College in Cheshire, England. His background in missions work with Operation Mobilisation and pastoral experience at Ilkeston, Derbyshire and Bootle, Merseyside, as well as his self-proclaimed Pentecostal position are evident in this work in the Bible Speaks Today series (13).

Warrington claims that “the primary focus of this book is not the development of a dogmatic theology of the Spirit,” but rather “a theological exploration, practical, and biblically based,” which challenges readers to “apply” the “practical relevance” of the material (12–14, 245, 249). While at first glance the book appears to be a study of the Spirit in the Old and New Testaments, it is actually arranged topically as well as biblically such that, “each chapter is a separate exploration of an issue relating to” the Spirit (14). In each issue, Warrington emphasizes some combination of three characteristics of the Spirit: (1) the inexplicability of the Spirit, (2) personal encounters with the Spirit, and (3) the Spirit’s affirmation of the believer’s soteriological status as more important than His empowerment (12, 245). The idea of “inexplicability” seems to be that believers are invited to explore the Spirit but can never completely know Him (12, 16–17, 29, 249). These issues and characteristics are explored in four sections, including the Spirit in the: Old Testament, the Gospels, Acts, and the Epistles. As a major theme of the book, Warrington argues that since the Spirit leads believers into suffering as part of the fulfillment of their commission to preach the gospel, then they should look for His support to endure rather than remove suffering (76–84, 127–28, 169–70, 174).

The major contribution that Warrington makes to studies on the Spirit is his practical application of the material. In addition, pastors and teachers will appreciate his illustrations, some of which are from the internet in the late 1990’s to early 2000’s (174, 225–26), and others that are original (188, 243, 246). Another contribution of his work to the field of pneumatology is his biblically based discussion of the major pneumatological controversies from a conservative Pentecostal perspective that seems corrective of earlier and more radical interpretations. For example, in his discussions of tongues and spiritual gifts, he claims respectively that “the Spirit is interested in inclusion” (141) and “manifestation of ‘spiritual gifts’ does not indicate a superior spirituality” (180), which seems corrective of the exclusive two-tiered spirituality that still exists in some churches as a result of the doctrine of subsequence. His exegesis is nontechnical so that pastors and laypeople can easily understand it, yet still insightful so that academics can benefit from it.

The book’s bibliography (10) seems selective and is necessarily supplemented by numerous other sources in the work’s footnotes (cf. esp. 13–14). Following his Pentecostal position, Warrington’s sources seem weighted toward the Pentecostal-Charismatic view (10), but are counterbalanced by the numerous footnotes in the text referring to other views (87, 179, 189, 210). His bibliography and book are disproportionately focused on the New Testament with approximately only seventeen pages given to the Spirit in the Old Testament (20–22, 35–48) and with Matthew, Mark, and the General Epistles excluded from the study. His qualification of conducting a topical study may excuse these exclusions (14). However, attention to the works of Congar, Warfield, and Montague would help to round out his bibliography and expand his section on the Spirit in the Old Testament. Perhaps attention to

James Hamilton's *God's Indwelling Presence* may contribute to Warrington's study of John (chapters 7–9), since he touches on all three of Hamilton's main passages, John 7:39; 14:17; 16:7 (10, 85–117).

While Warrington's work is a good source for discovering Pentecostal theology, non-Pentecostals and non-Charismatics will find some of his conclusions troubling. In his discussion of spiritual gifts, Warrington, like Wayne Grudem, takes the "mediating position" that "a gift of the Spirit may be a natural gift that has been invested with supernatural energy by God," but some non-Pentecostal and non-Charismatics will find this view difficult since they seem to maintain a clearer distinction between spiritual gifts and natural abilities (48, 181–82). In his discussion of the Spirit's guidance (prophecy), Warrington attempts to preserve the Zwingli-Calvin Word-Spirit correlation (which was explicitly formulated to counteract the teachings of the enthusiasts of their time) but ultimately violates it by claiming that the Spirit reveals information not present in the Word and does so even after the close of the canon to the present (143–47). Many non-Pentecostal and non-Charismatics will be troubled by this view, as some believe it violates at least the sufficiency, authority, and inerrancy of Scripture. In fact, just after making the claim for "extrabiblical revelation" Warrington appears to deny inerrancy by claiming that the Spirit "provided particular *guidance* to local churches that *differed* from messages *offered to others*" (emphasis added, 147–48).

At the end of the book, Warrington provides a study guide with good application questions that also serves as a helpful summary overview of each chapter.

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***Salvation and Sovereignty: A Molinist Approach.* By Kenneth Keathley. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010. 232 pages. Softcover, \$24.99.**

In *Salvation and Sovereignty*, Kenneth Keathley seeks to provide an account of salvation which is faithful to the biblical witness, taking into account both the sovereign work of God's grace and a robust conception of human freedom. In order to accomplish this task Keathley appeals to the work of Luis Molina (1535–1600), a familiar figure to those aware of the debates about human freedom and divine foreknowledge in philosophy of religion. Molinism, says Keathley, forms an unlikely and radical "compatibilism" between "a Calvinist view of divine sovereignty and an Arminian view of human freedom," and does this by way of the doctrine of God's middle knowledge (5). God's "middle knowledge" is so called because it is found in the second of three logical moments of God's knowledge, between his natural knowledge and his free knowledge. God's natural knowledge is his knowledge of all possibilities, says Keathley, the knowledge of everything that *could* happen. God's free knowledge is his perfect knowledge of this world that he chose to create. This knowledge is referred to as free by Molina because it is a result of God's free choice to create this world rather than any of the other infinite possible worlds He could have created. So God's free knowledge is his knowledge of what *will* happen. God's middle knowledge, on the other hand, is his knowledge of what *would* happen; that is, it is God's knowledge of what any free creature would freely choose to do in any given circumstance. So, says Molina, God can use his middle knowledge (his knowledge of what are called counterfactuals of creaturely freedom) to engineer circumstances in

such a way that He can exercise sovereign control over his creation without violating the freedom of human beings. Molinism is not simply a philosophical system, but according to Keathley, has decisive biblical support (19–38).

Having established his Molinist framework in chapter one, Keathley begins to apply it to the doctrine of salvation. In chapter two he considers the question “Does God desire the salvation of all?” and answers in the affirmative. This answer, of course, creates another problem. If God desires all be saved, why are some damned? Keathley considers a number of options, and argues for a distinction between the antecedent and consequent wills of God. Antecedently, God wills that all be saved, and consequently he wills that faith be the condition for salvation. This position, Keathley argues, “seems to be the clear teaching of Scripture” (58).

In chapters three through seven, Keathley lays out a case for a soteriology that also makes use of the Molinist framework. As Keathley notes on the first page, his work is directed primarily at the Christian who finds himself “convinced of certain central tenets of Calvinism but not its corollaries.” Keathley himself finds the biblical evidence compelling for three of the points of TULIP: total depravity, unconditional election, and perseverance of the saints, but refashions these concepts in his own language. As to the others, Keathley rejects them out of hand, arguing that “[l]imited atonement and irresistible grace cannot be found in the Scriptures unless one first puts them there” (2). And so Keathley proceeds by replacing the TULIP acronym with the ROSES acronym suggested by Timothy George, and structuring the remainder of the book along those lines. Chapter three is devoted to Radical depravity, chapter four to Overcoming grace, chapter five to Sovereign election, chapter six to Eternal life, and chapter seven to Singular redemption. It is thus in chapters four and seven that Keathley mounts arguments against the TULIP points of irresistible grace and limited atonement for which he finds no support in Scripture. In chapter four he argues instead for a monergistic view of grace (one according to which God accomplishes our salvation without our cooperation) which is resistible, and in chapter seven he argues that Christ’s atoning work is sufficient for each and every individual (Christ died for each and every person in particular), but efficient only for those who believe (faith is a condition for salvation). It is worth noting that while Keathley most clearly opposes his position to Calvinism, his arguments serve equally well as responses to certain Arminian doctrines.

Keathley’s application of Molinism to the question of soteriology is both extensive and timely. Most impressive is the mere number of biblical references in the work. Keathley makes sure that his arguments are supported by the authority of the biblical text. In addition, Keathley is to be commended for tackling passages which appear to contradict his position. Keathley does not shy away from texts commonly used by Calvinists as support for their views (he spends several pages on Rom 9), and while his interpretation of these passages undoubtedly will remain a matter of dispute, Keathley makes his case with consistency and clarity. That said, there are a couple of statements whose ambiguity could be problematic. On page 116, Keathley writes, “there is nothing in the graciousness of salvation that entails (i.e., logically requires) that the opportunity to believe be withheld from all but the elect. In fact, *the overwhelming preponderance of Scripture* teaches the very opposite” (emphasis added). While I do not think this is what Keathley means, one could read this last statement as pointing to a conflict within the witness of Scripture. If “the overwhelming preponderance of Scripture” testifies to one thing, say, that the opportunity to believe is not withheld from all but the elect, one might infer

that there is in fact testimony in Scripture, albeit a significant minority, that the opportunity to believe is withheld from all but the elect. And thus there would be found a division in the testimony of the Word of God concerning a significant soteriological point. Here Keathley's work would benefit from a bit more clarity.

But such clarity is one of the strongest characteristics of Keathley's work on the whole. Although he is dealing with complicated philosophical and theological issues, Keathley is able to make them accessible to all, whether professional academic or not. Keathley achieves this clarity with language and style that is communicative, pleasant to read, and not overly technical. In certain places, this style of writing may hamper his argument somewhat. For instance, those familiar with the philosophical debates surrounding Molinism may find his explication of that doctrine a bit simplistic—but not to the degree that his understanding of the doctrine could not be defended on a more technical level. In addition, the structure of each chapter contributes greatly to understanding for readers of all levels. Keathley is comprehensive in his discussion of the various positions on each and every point, and summary charts help assist the reader in keeping all of the information organized. For these reasons, Keathley's work will make a significant contribution to anyone's library. Even those who disagree wholeheartedly with his conclusions will find great benefit in this work as a reference tool for the relevant positions and biblical passages.

For the most part, I agree with Paige Patterson's evaluation in the foreword when he says that Keathley "has a philosopher's reasoning, a theologian's grasp of Scripture, and a preacher's clarity" (x). But particularly as a philosopher, there is one point that I wish Keathley had argued with more vigor. In the course of explaining why he embraces soft libertarianism, Keathley explains the principle of alternative possibilities, a key component of any libertarian view of freedom. As Keathley writes, "A necessary component for liability is that, at a significant point in the chain of events, the ability to choose or refrain from choosing had to be genuinely available" (75). Here, as elsewhere, Keathley connects responsibility with alternative possibilities and a biblical understanding of freedom. According to Keathley, the Bible argues that we have freedom of responsibility, which requires agent causation, "the ability to be the originator of a decision, choice, or action" (77). The main argument offered here is that since humans are created in the image of God and since God is a causal agent, human beings are causal agents and thus possess some libertarian freedom (e.g., 8, 72). And since libertarian freedom entails responsibility (I know of no one who would argue otherwise), humans are responsible as well as free.

All of this is well and good, but Keathley's argument would be considerably strengthened if he moved in the other direction as well. Many Calvinists will dispute Keathley's claim that Scripture teaches that humans possess some libertarian freedom, nor will they find his appeal to the *imago dei* convincing. But no Calvinist would deny that Scripture clearly teaches that humans are responsible. If Keathley could provide a good argument that responsibility requires libertarian freedom, he would go a long way in helping his case. Unfortunately, Keathley seems to simply assume that human responsibility requires alternative possibilities and thus some form of libertarian freedom rather than argue for this point. From a philosophical standpoint, Keathley would need to respond to the work of Harry Frankfurt and John Martin Fischer, who have argued vehemently that humans can be responsible without having alternative possibilities and thus libertarian freedom. Keathley consults numerous philosophers, but the work of Frankfurt and Fischer cannot be found in his bibliography. Even if responding to these philosophers would be too technical

a task for this work (and thus obscure the argument rather than contribute to it), Keathley would be well served to argue the connection between libertarian freedom and human responsibility from both sides. Had he done so, he would have strengthened what is already an impressive piece of philosophical and biblical theology.

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***Trinitarian Theology for the Church: Scripture, Community, Worship.* Edited by Daniel J. Treier and David Lauber. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2009. 262 pages. Softcover, \$26.00.**

This work is a three-part collection of selected essays from the 2008 Wheaton College Theology Conference: “Scripture: The Bible and the Triune Economy,” “Community: The Trinity and Society,” and “Worship: Church Practices and the Triune Mission.” Due to the nature of this collection, one would not be able to find a single theme that penetrates throughout this work. However, that does not undermine the value of this book. Even one might be surprised with some of the varying positions concerning an identical issue or theologian. Nevertheless, such a theological disagreement among contributors makes this book more attractive because its readers would have a rare opportunity to compare opposite views from responsible scholars.

In the first section, “Scripture: The Bible and the Triune Economy,” Vanhoozer wrote the best and most provocative article in this book. When reading the Bible, argues Vanhoozer, its readers do not merely study the past report of God but they actually “can listen directly to the Divine voice itself speaking immediately in the Scripture word” (35). Vanhoozer’s trinitarian doctrine of the Bible is a synthesis of Barth’s theology of the Word and Wolterstorff’s “analytic philosophy” of divine speech (45). In opposition to extremely rationalized propositionalists, Vanhoozer reminds us of Barth’s theology of the Word, a theology that points to the necessity of listening to the sovereign Lord Jesus Christ who freely speaks the will of the Father through the Holy Spirit in the Bible. On the other hand, Vanhoozer rejects Barth’s anti-propositional position. Following Wolterstorff’s analysis of speech, Vanhoozer declares that a divine speech makes a divine action the revelation of God by assigning a specific meaning to that action. Barth’s disjunction between a divine action and human speech is meaningless because the Son of God speaks human words, both oral and written, as divine revelation. Therefore, Christians must accept biblical inerrancy. Again, however, biblical inerrancy should not be an excuse of ignoring the illuminating role of the Holy Spirit who witnesses to the living Christ, the Word of the Father. Edith M. Humphry establishes that the eternal functional subordination of the Son is essential to a biblical understanding of the Trinity. Humphry vigorously refutes reading *perichoresis* as “a round dance,” which theologically refuses any functional subordination of any divine Person within the Trinity. Etymologically, *perichoresis* does not derive from “*chora* (meaning ‘place’),” or “*chorus* (dance)” and, therefore, it means that the three divine Persons share the same place through mutual indwelling and interpenetration (95). Humphry accurately asserts that Augustine never denied the monarchy of the Father when defending the *filioque*.

In the second section, “Community: The Trinity and Society?,” John R. Franke praises the Cappadocian Fathers and Richard of St. Victor who opened a social

trinitarianism and saw community, not substance, as the divine nature of the Trinity. In Franke's view, Augustine is responsible for creating a psychological analogy of the Trinity—being, knowledge, and will—that fails to demonstrate the Godhead in terms of personhood. However, this reviewer challenges Franke to reread Augustine in *De Trinitate*, who was fully aware of a social analogy of persons like that of the Cappadocian Fathers. Augustine did not choose such a social analogy of plural persons because of the danger of tritheism. In fact, Richard did not suggest his exegesis of the communal nature of charity as an alternative to Augustine's trinitarianism. Augustine had already explained the interrelationship of the divine Persons in the immanent Trinity in light of the communal love of the Father (the lover), the Son (the beloved one), and the Holy Spirit (the mutual love between the Father and the Son). Unfortunately, Franke does not reflect recent scholarship led by Ayres and Barnes on Augustinian trinitarianism that attests considerable theological congruence between the Latin Church and the Greek Church regarding the Trinity.

In contrast to Franke, Mark Husbands is very critical of contemporary social trinitarians such as Volf. According to Husbands, Volf's social trinitarianism comes from his misreading of Gregory of Nyssa who never taught social and anthropological implications of the immanent Trinity for a human relationship. Husbands rightly warns of the "overrealized" eschatological orientation of social trinitarians who argue as if Christians could and should achieve the perfect *perichoresis*, the mutually dependent and interpenetrating life shared by the divine Persons of the Trinity, on earth (126). The Bible presents Jesus Christ as the sole realization of the perfect communion between God and man. Therefore, even the church and any Christian organization cannot manifest the perfect communal life within the triune God. Keith E. Johnson also points out the theological dangers of a utilitarian approach to the doctrine of the Trinity in the way that delineates the ontological distinction between the triune community of God and the creaturely community of humans. Johnson shows from the Bible that the divine commandment to imitate God is to imitate the incarnate God, Jesus Christ, in the economy, not the intertrinitarian life of God in eternity. Therefore, Christians should defy any attempt to justify religious pluralism or to weaken the uniqueness of God's redemptive work only found in Jesus Christ. Unlike Franke, Johnson commends Augustine's trinitarianism because of its ultimate goal to enjoy and honor the triune God, not to use the Trinity as a social model. Johnson suggests Augustine's *De Trinitate* as a good theological antidote for contemporary theologians' "functionalizing" of the doctrine of the Trinity in supporting egalitarianism and communal responsibility versus extreme individualism (160).

In the third section, "Worship: Church Practices and the Triune Mission," Gordon T. Smith notes that Christians often take baptism and the Lord's Supper as an encounter with the Father and the Son. He urges his readers to be open to the Holy Spirit who leads them to the fellowship of the triune God. Smith's thesis is commendable, and his critique is legitimate; however, most evangelical readers need to be alert to his strong sacramentalism that Catholics and Lutherans would appreciate more. Philip W. Butin's argument concerning prayers for the illumination of the Holy Spirit before reading and preaching the Bible deserves every contemporary preachers' attention. Unlike Vanhoozer, Butin fails to be critical of Barth's anti-propositional view on the inspiration of the Bible. Leanne Van Dyk presents the church's proclamation of the gospel as a way of participating in the triune God's mission. Interestingly, Dyk pays attention to not only worship and preaching but also to common daily things such as work and marriage as channels through which

one could participate in the triune community of God, for the gospel of salvation should certainly be visible outside the church.

This book would not be a textbook on the Trinity or helpful for lay people who want to understand the basic elements of the Trinity. Rather, this work is for advanced M. Div. students and could be useful as a book review for an elective class on the Trinity.

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Historical Studies

***Petrus van Mastricht (1630–1706), Reformed Orthodoxy: Method and Piety.* By Adriaan C. Neele. Leiden: Brill, 2009. 320 pages. Hardcover, \$138.00.**

In a letter to his ministerial student and friend, Joseph Bellamy, Jonathan Edwards recommends him to the work(s) of Petrus van Mastricht, saying, “take Mastricht for divinity in general, doctrine, practice, and controversy; or as an universal system of divinity; and it is much better than [Francis] Turretin, or any other book in the world, excepting the Bible, in my opinion” (11). Cotton Mather, another formidable New England theologian, likewise directs his ministerial candidates, saying, “I hope you will next unto the Sacred Scripture make Mastricht the storehouse to which you may resort continually, for in it the minister will find everything” (10). Lamentably, despite Mastricht’s formative influence(s) on early New England theological developments, few contemporary theologians even know his name.

Adriaan C. Neele’s, *Petrus van Mastricht (1630–1706), Reformed Orthodoxy: Method and Piety*, is the first ever monograph, exclusively devoted to the life and work of the German-Dutch theologian, Peter van Mastricht. A highly significant contribution to the field of post-Reformation studies, Neele’s work sets out “to demonstrate the relationship between exegesis, doctrine, elenctic, and *praxis* in the doctrine of God of Mastricht’s *Theoretico-Practica Theologia*” (vii). In demonstrating this relationship, Neele topples certain lopsided caricatures of Protestant Scholastic theologians as erudite, theologically myopic, and philosophically heavy-handed individuals by presenting Mastricht as an example of one concerned as much for the theory as for the practice of theology.

Following an illuminating introduction to the state of research in post-Reformation studies, Neele’s work proceeds in four main parts to a conclusion: (Part I) “The life and work of Petrus van Mastricht in the context of his time,” (Part II) “The premises of the *Theoretico-Practica Theologia*,” (Part III) “A cross-section the study of the doctrine of God,” and (Part IV) “An in-depth study of the doctrine of God” (v–vi).

In Part I (chs. 1–2), Neele provides the reader with extensive biography of Mastricht. He establishes Mastricht as a Reformed pastor, professor of Old Testament and Hebrew, church historian, systematic theologian, philologist, and anti-Cartesian philosopher. A consideration of Mastricht’s life and work, Neele argues, is critical to a proper understanding of post-Reformation theological sensibilities. He says, Mastricht’s “[consolidation] and codification of post-Reformation Reformed theology: exegesis, doctrine, elenctic, and *praxis*” into his *Theoretico-Practica Theologia*, provides the clearest indication of post-Reformation sensibilities of the relationship between theology and piety (281).

In Part II (chs. 3–4), Neele examines two premises to Mastricht’s *Theoretico-Practica Theologia*: (1) theological prolegomena and (2) faith. With respect to the former, Neele lays out Mastricht’s argument for the necessity of an “orderly” theological method (85–86). Beginning with Scripture, the so-called *norma normans* (the supreme authority) of the theological task, Mastricht argues for a number of subordinate norms (*norma normata*) that fulfill his methodological criterion. Ordered by their authoritative weight, these norms include: the first seven ecumenical creeds, Patristic fathers, Medieval doctors, and sixteenth century Reformers, as well as logic and a chastened philosophical (i.e. metaphysical) speculation (84). Neele describes how Mastricht’s theological method issues in a number of constructive (and quite compelling) doctrinal innovations, for example, his mediating account of the divine decrees (7–9). With respect to the second premise, Neele underscores the exceptional nature of faith to Mastricht’s doctrinal scheme. “[Resembling] more the earlier Reformed theology than [that] of his own time” (280), Neele shows Mastricht’s careful treatment of the doctrine faith as the essential link between theology as a science of the intellect, and theology as the practical “art of living to God” (93–95). The great value of Part II can hardly be overstated as a key to much of the remainder of Neele’s work.

Part III (chs. 5–8) consists of a highly instructive and detailed assessment of Mastricht’s theological method in four parts: exegesis, doctrine, elenctic (i.e., polemic), and *praxis*. In chapter 5, Neele demonstrates Mastricht’s historical-grammatical exegesis, emphasis on the original biblical languages, and use of comparative philology for the development of doctrine in chapter 6. Chapter 7 exhibits his use of a scholastic *quaestio* method of questions and answers whereby Mastricht defends his doctrinal formulations against foreseeable objections and counter-arguments (especially against Roman Catholicism, Socinianism, and Cartesianism). Chapter 8 reveals the force of Mastricht’s methodological effort, namely, the development a distinct theological structure that serves the Christian practice of piety, consisting chiefly in the exercise of faith, which he defines as love to God (201–02). Despite the rigor and great detail of these chapters, Neele’s primary interest is an exposition of the mechanics of Mastricht’s four-fold method, not a detailed exposition of the content of his doctrine.

In Part IV (chs. 9–11), Neele lays out Mastricht’s doctrine of God in even greater detail, setting the context for it in chapter 9 by assessing its expression in such Reformed Orthodox figures as William Ames, Johannes Cocceius, Wilhelmus a Brakel, and Herman Witsius. Chapters 10 and 11 serve as a sort of methodological road test, whereby Neele shows the implications of Mastricht’s four-fold theological structure, first for his account of “divine spirituality and simplicity” (221), and then “the Holy Trinity” (245).

Neele’s work concludes with a number of observations about Mastricht’s uniqueness within his own tradition, and his overall contribution to the development of post-Reformation Protestant scholastic theology. Broaching the disciplines of historical, biblical, systematic, and philosophical theology, Neele’s work is a formidable contribution to this ever-growing body of secondary literature.

Of the many virtues of Neele’s work, it is marked most by its clarity and precision. However, its chief virtue may for some also prove to be its chief vice, as such technical rigor may deter a wide readership, even amongst some professional theologians. Indeed, this is a work primarily for the trained technician—one familiar with Latin, Greek and Hebrew (as well as some Dutch and German)—and has

at least some advanced knowledge of systematic theology and seventeenth-century European philosophical developments. Though Neele's work is a steep steady climb, its contents and lucidity will surely not disappoint the patient and pensive reader.

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The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 26: Catalogues of Books. Edited by Peter J. Thuesen. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008. 496 + x pages. Hardcover, \$95.00.

Reading Jonathan Edwards: An Annotated Bibliography in Three Parts, 1729–2005. M.X. Lesser. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008. 691 + xii pages. Hardcover, \$145.00.

Similar in nature, yet different in content, these two volumes bring together two sets of bibliographies related to Jonathan Edwards studies. The first work, Edwards' *Catalogues of Books* edited by Peter Thuesen, compiles the numerous book lists Edwards kept, lists which reflected his reading interests, including books he wanted to obtain, books in his personal library, and books he commended to others for reading. In short, this volume comprises what Thuesen calls Edwards's own "bibliographic universe" (2). The second work, *Reading Jonathan Edwards* by M.X. Lesser, provides an annotated bibliography of all the works related to Jonathan Edwards studies since the eighteenth century, and represents the best existing volume summarizing the history of scholarship on "America's Augustine." Both works are for serious students of Jonathan Edwards.

Catalogues of Books represents the final volume (vol 26) of Yale University Press's critical edition of *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*. Since the inaugural volume appeared in 1957 (on the *Freedom of the Will*), Edwards specialists have labored by compiling and editing both Edwards' published and private writings, including his treatises, notebooks, and sermons. Many of the introductory essays to the volumes have been groundbreaking contributions to the field. With the appearance of the final volume, the completed *Works of Jonathan Edwards* will likely be the critical edition of Edwards' writings for the next century. Voracious readers who want more Edwards will be pleased to find out that the remaining unpublished materials (mostly sermons) are now available online in volumes 27–73 at The Jonathan Edwards Center at Yale University (edwards.yale.edu).

By focusing on lists of books that Edwards kept, *Catalogues of Books* might at first appear to be an odd selection for inclusion in the *Works*. Yet when we take into account the fact that one of the great difficulties in Edwards scholarship has been identifying prominent influences in his thought, the importance of this volume becomes apparent. Two main lists occupy most of this volume's pages, Edwards' "Catalogue," which was his running list of books he hoped to obtain, and his "Account Book," a list of books that Edwards lent out of his personal library to others. Edwards was a voracious reader, and throughout his life he sought to keep abreast of the prominent trends in European intellectual life, especially theological trends. As a pastor in central and western Massachusetts, his access to the latest works in theology was minimal at best, thus forcing him to rely upon book notices, ads, and reviews printed in English and Boston newspapers. Upon learning of a book that piqued his interest, he would note it in his "Catalogue" and have to wait

sometimes for years before he could gain access to it (if ever). We know from his later “Miscellanies” notebooks that whenever he would gain temporary access to a book (often borrowed from other ministers or from the small library of his local ministerial association), he would sometimes copy pages out of that work to have for later reference. The portrait emerging from these lists is one of an intensely inquisitive pastor-theologian struggling to survive in the midst of a bibliographic desert.

Thuesen’s editing is remarkable for its meticulous detail. While the 116-page introductory essay admirably introduces the reader to the various regions of Edwards’ bibliographic interests, the real editorial work can be found in the “Catalogue” and “Account” lists. For each of the hundreds of entries referred to in the volume, Thuesen found the bibliographic information of the actual edition to which Edwards most likely referred. Anyone who has compiled a bibliography can appreciate why it is that this work took years to complete.

Edwards’ reading habits and interests may be described as “eclectic.” While he shows an interest in Calvinist writings, Thuesen indicates that the “Catalogue” was “not a roster of unimpeachable Calvinist classics” (15). In fact Calvin is not even mentioned in Edwards’s lists found in this volume, and works in Reformed divinity only account for a fifth of the works entered into the “Catalogue” and 40 percent in his “Account” book. Reformed writers like Matthew Henry, John Gill, Thomas Manton, John Owen, Isaac Watts, and Philip Doddridge appear, a point that reflects his keen interest in the Reformed and Puritan traditions which he saw himself defending. Yet we also find a wider circle of theological interests: works by non-Calvinist Anglican writers (John Tillotson and Samuel Clarke), Cambridge Platonists (Ralph Cudworth), Arminians (Jean Le Clerc), Catholics (Fénelon, Pascal, and numerous Jansenists), Patristic writers (Cyprian, Chrysostom, Augustine), those involved in both sides of the English trinitarian controversies of the turn of the century (Samuel Clarke, John Jackson, Daniel Waterland, and George Bull), and a wide range of spiritual writings (Catholic Quietism, Lutheran Pietism, and the Jewish mystical *Cabbala*). Beyond theology Edwards showed interests in philosophical, scientific, historical, and political works, as well as some novels. Together, the book lists presented in this volume reveal that Edwards was not a parochial Reformed revival-preacher who tuned out the increasing anti-Calvinism and anti-Christian currents of his day. Rather, he was (or sought to be) a full participant in the theological and intellectual literature of the age, one who attempted to respond to the increasing secularization of the world with the best intellectual and philosophical tools available to him.

M.X. Lesser’s volume, *Reading Jonathan Edwards: An Annotated Bibliography in Three Parts, 1729–2005*, provides us with another “bibliographic universe,” the vast universe of secondary studies related to Edwards. Since his pastorate at Northampton, Jonathan Edwards has attracted the attention of critics and admirers, theologians and historians, as well as philosophers and English professors, who together have generated over 3,300 bibliographic entries on the man, his ministry, and his theology. This volume brings together all these works in one handy reference volume. The work is actually three books in one. Prior to this volume, Lesser, longtime professor of English at Northeastern University and editor of volume 19 of *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, published two earlier annotated bibliographies on Edwards scholarship (1729–1978 and 1979–1993). Here he unites those two volumes (updated with 140 new entries not published in the first editions) with a third section on Edwards scholarship from 1994–2005 which contains over 700

entries. The bibliography is structured chronologically, listing works that appeared by their year, then by the author's last name. Each entry is annotated, providing a succinct (3 to 8 line) description of aim, purpose, and argument of the entry. More important entries have lengthy annotations which sometimes reach over a page in length, a feature which enables junior Edwards scholars to come up to speed quickly on the important writings of any given Edwardsean sub-specialty. In addition, there are the three lengthy introductory essays that Lesser wrote for each part. These essays, totaling almost ninety pages, survey the prominent trends in Edwards scholarship over the last two centuries and serve as an excellent introduction to the history of Edwards scholarship. Any serious student of Jonathan Edwards, either academic writer or pastor-theologian who has adopted Edwards as a life-long theological companion, would benefit from this book.

These two volumes are definitely for Edwards specialists which is probably their one main drawback. They will not be of interest to readers who seek to read Edwards for theological and spiritual inspiration. If you are student or scholar who seeks to make academic contributions to Edwards studies, I would definitely encourage you to obtain both of these works. If you are a pastor who enjoys reading Edwards and would like to enter into the wider discussion on him made by other writers, I would encourage you to obtain *Reading Jonathan Edwards*. You will find it to be a resource that you will consult for years to come.

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***Andrew Fuller: Model Pastor-Theologian.* By Paul Brewster. Baptist Thought and Life. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010. 224 pages. Softcover, \$24.99.**

In his new book, *Andrew Fuller: Model Pastor-Theologian*, Paul Brewster contributes to the ongoing revival of Andrew Fuller studies. This developing interest in Fuller (an eighteenth-century English Particular Baptist) should warrant a hearty welcome from Baptists (and other free church traditions) because of his influential role in the recapturing of indiscriminate gospel proclamation and missionary endeavor among the eighteenth-century Particular Baptists. Fuller's significance as a theologian was great, and yet, the practical implications of his doctrinal convictions were no less noteworthy. Fuller tirelessly labored as the secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) and as a local pastor. And this brings us to the thesis of Brewster's new book: Fuller's theological vision was in no way a mere theoretical enterprise; rather, his theology animated his pastoral duties, and, for this reason, Fuller is a model for ministers today who are concerned about the connection between theology and practice.

Brewster begins this task by providing the reader with the historical context—Fuller's biographical data in particular. A review of Fuller's family background and early childhood is presented, leading up to his Christian conversion in his teenage years. This is important ground to cover since Fuller was raised under the shadow of hyper-Calvinism and, as a result, was hindered in his embrace of the gospel. Hyper-Calvinism argued that one cannot simply approach the cross of Christ. Individuals who maintained this "false" Calvinism (as Fuller called it) insisted that one must have a "warrant" of faith in order to come to the cross. Such a "warrant" as this was essentially an inner acknowledgment that one was among the elect. Fuller overcame, through the work of the Holy Spirit, this theological impediment and was converted

in 1769. Brewster goes on to examine Fuller's call to vocational ministry, his experiences as a pastor, and his service to the BMS leading up to his death.

Chapter two investigates Fuller's theological method. Though his theological education was informal, Fuller was a well informed and well grounded theologian. Brewster highlights several aspects of his doctrinal method. First, Fuller maintained the need for a system. Even though Scripture itself is not a systematic presentation of theology, a system is nonetheless a tool for the Christian, to be used as an aid in understanding sacred truth. Second, the Bible was primary and central in Fuller's theological process. For Fuller, no doctrinal system could supersede the role of Scripture. Brewster also discusses the role of personal experience and accountability as discernable characteristics in Fuller's theological method.

Brewster's third chapter analyzes Fuller's soteriological orientation. This theological exposition of Fuller's doctrine of salvation is carried out through the template of the five Dortian soteriological markers (TULIP). Essentially, Brewster (like Thomas Nettles) seems to affirm Fuller's faithfulness to all five points of Dortian Calvinism. Others have interpreted Fuller's soteriology differently over the years. James Leo Garrett, for example, has previously asserted that Fuller only maintained two points of Calvinism—though Garrett has recently reconsidered his position, affirming that Fuller was certainly in closer adherence to Dortian Calvinism than he had previously stated.

Brewster is also careful to include in this chapter a discussion on the various modifications in Fuller's Calvinistic soteriology. For instance, while maintaining an association with the doctrine of limited atonement, Fuller, argues Brewster, flirted with governmental language, though never abandoning the atonement as substitutionary. And, of course, Brewster highlights Fuller's commitment to an evangelical Calvinism—a Calvinism in which indiscriminate gospel proclamation is a key and prominent feature.

What impact did this theology have upon Fuller in a practical sense? Chapter four tackles this very question. Brewster explores Fuller's many and varied gospel labors. Fuller's role as a pastor, for example, is discussed here. He not only preached earnestly to his home congregation, but he also engaged in village preaching—laboring for the souls of lost humanity. And of course, Brewster examines Fuller's key involvement in the BMS as an administrator and a defender of missions. Brewster also rightly includes here a section on Fuller's role as an apologist for Christian truth. This section surveys Fuller's efforts against such ideologies as: Deism, Socinianism, Universalism, Sandemanianism, and Antinomianism. Brewster's book is concluded in chapter five and two helpful appendices are also included for the interested reader: a transcription of Fuller's confession of faith (appendix 1), and an article Fuller contributed to a theological dictionary on Calvinism (appendix 2).

One minor critique is in order here before Brewster's well deserved accolades begin. Brewster's interchangeable use of the terms "high-Calvinism" and "hyper-Calvinism" lacks precision, given the discernable differences between these two groups historically. Peter Toon, in *The Emergence of Hyper-Calvinism*, has argued convincingly that there are clear distinctions between high and hyper-Calvinism. High-Calvinism is a subtle hardening of John Calvin's theology beginning with Beza and later articulated at the Synod of Dort. Hyper-Calvinism is a further development in which (among other things) justification resides in eternity rather than in time and space (eternal justification), there are no offers of grace, and the moral law is not acknowledged as an aid in sanctification (antinomianism).

If this categorical template is valid, then it seems as though Fuller's role in developing evangelical Calvinism was a move away from hyper-Calvinism more so than high-Calvinism. This may be observed in Fuller's description of his childhood pastor. According to Fuller, Pastor Eve's ministry had little or nothing to say to the unbeliever. Brewster, as a result, describes Eve as having "shortcomings as an evangelist" (12). However, the real problem with Pastor Eve (and others who were oriented in this way) was not that he had shortcomings as an evangelist, but that he was no evangelist at all. And so, hyper-Calvinism seems to be the most accurate description for this theological distinction that Fuller spent much of his life combating. It should be noted, however, that Brewster's conflation of these two terms was an attempt to use the language that Fuller and others used in that day.

Regardless of this trifling criticism, Brewster's work on Fuller must surely be regarded as a gem. First, Brewster provides the reader with a meaningful introduction to the life and ministry of Andrew Fuller—and in doing so has reminded contemporary readers how a moderate or evangelical Calvinistic soteriology (Fullerism) is a viable option for Baptists today. Second, in the process of analyzing Fuller's doctrine and practice, Brewster directly engages Fuller's writings with great frequency, thus making this book a valuable resource to students of Baptist history, since a number of the quotes used are not available in Fuller's published works. Finally, Brewster's work is a success because it touches on an important facet in the Christian life, namely, that theology must never be a solely intellectual endeavor; rather, it must ever be connected to one's devotional and practical life. Andrew Fuller has been convincingly portrayed, by Paul Brewster, as an appropriate example of this important intersection between doctrine and practice.

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***Baptist Autographs in the John Rylands University Library of Manchester, 1741–1845.* Edited by Timothy D. Whelan. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2009. 522 + xxxvii pages. Hardcover, \$55.00.**

"The discovery of these Baptist letters within the autograph albums of the Thomas Raffles Collection and the Methodist Archives at the John Rylands Library of Manchester came about largely by accident" (xxi). So begins editor Timothy Whelan's volume of treasures collected and published for the benefit of all who take interest in English Baptist heritage. What started as the search for a single letter resulted in the discovery of more than 330 Baptist related letters, most of which were undocumented.

Whelan, associate professor in the department of literature and philosophy at Georgia Southern University, recounts in his introduction how Thomas Raffles (1788–1863), the longtime pastor of Great George Street Chapel in Liverpool, amassed a collection of letters and portraits. Upon his death, Raffles' collection was first given to the Lancashire Independent College and then later purchased and placed in the John Rylands Library. Whelan notes that "Raffles owned the largest private collection of Baptist letters from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries ever assembled" (xxviii). Of particular interest for Raffles was the correspondence of John Sutcliff, William Carey, and Andrew Fuller. In 1844, Joseph Angus, secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) and president of Regent's Park College, made arrangements with Raffles for the donation of two volumes of

letters related to the BMS to come upon Raffles' death. While this took place in 1863, several other volumes remained in Manchester largely untouched and unnoticed. With the arrival of Whelan's work, "now, after more than a century, a full accounting can be made of all the Baptist letters originally collected by Thomas Raffles and his son" (xxxix).

In addition to the Raffles Collection, Whelan also discovered a significant number of Baptist letters by John Gill, Robert Hall, Samuel Pearce and others contained within the Methodist Archives, a collection that came to the John Rylands Library only in 1977. All these findings leads Whelan to conclude that the Rylands Library "stands as one of the more significant depositories of Baptist archival materials in the United Kingdom" (xxxvii). Thankfully, through the editorial labors of Whelan, a portion of that depository is now available to a wider audience.

Whelan organizes his transcriptions of 267 letters into seven parts. The reader will appreciate the abundance of detailed footnotes that help provide context to each letter as well as establish connections between the authors, recipients, or other persons mentioned. One additional value to Whelan's volume is his 126 page "biographical index." This carefully prepared index provides a short description of each person referenced in the letters as well as further related documentation. Additional indices allow the reader to locate with ease specific individuals.

As one reads through this volume it is evident that the letters themselves are indeed treasures. Consider the 11 May 1792 entry from William Carey to John Sutcliff prior to the Northamptonshire Baptist Association meeting where Carey would preach his famous sermon that would lead to the formation of the BMS. Carey writes, "I have sent you 25 Copies of my *Enquiry*. Accept one yourself—and sell as many as you can—I hope to see you as you go to the Association" (60). Or consider the 6 August 1794 letter from Andrew Fuller to John Rippon stating that "for the first time I rec[eived] a Letter from each of our Brethren in India that are all well and as happy as can be expected" (68). Fuller here refers to the first report he received from Carey after Carey's departure in April 1793. Finally, consider the candid report from Carey to his sister, Ann Hobson, on 27 Nov 1798, "No one expects me to write about experience, or any of the common topics of Religion; nor to say anything about the Doctrines of the Gospel, but News, and continual accounts of marvelous things are expected from me. I have however no news to send, and as every thing here is the same, no Marvels" (92).

Baptist Autographs in the John Rylands University Library of Manchester, 1741–1845 presents both the historian and churchman with a resource worthy of mining for historical verification, personal anecdotes, insight into the lives of great men and women, and examples of piety in adversity and blessing. Aside from the opportunity to search for other previously undiscovered letters in Manchester, the reader will no doubt appreciate the privilege of reading the treasures provided at the result of the labors of Timothy D. Whelan.

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***Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1859–2009.* By Gregory A. Wills. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009. 566 pages. Hardcover, \$35.00.**

The sesquicentennial of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary is a significant milestone in Baptist history. Wills, one of its professors of church history, has

labored prodigiously to produce a sesquicentennial history.

Like many institutional histories, the book is organized around the nine presidencies (Boyce, Broadus, Whitsitt, Mullins, Sampey, Fuller, McCall, Honeycutt, and Mohler). Three chapters are devoted to Boyce with one being shared with Broadus. Two chapters each are given to Mullins, McCall, and Honeycutt. Sampey and Fuller share a chapter, and Whitsitt and Mohler have one.

To a large extent the volume is based on ground-breaking use of unpublished letters by and to Southern Seminary leaders. Trustee minutes and Baptist state papers are also utilized, but not the three histories of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

Predominating attention is given to doctrinal controversy. Teaching methods (such as the long used recitation method), publications by faculty members, student life, and the ministries of alumni (pastors, church staff members, teachers, missionaries, chaplains, et al) receive scant attention.

Certain questions and omissions call for answers. (1) Despite the high degree of faculty participation in governance, the exercise of presidential authority became an issue as early as the Mullins administration (286). Why? (2) Wills gives little attention to the policy of faculty inbreeding, which—for the School of Theology—extended from C.H. Toy (1869) to William A. Mueller (1948) and Eric C. Rust (1953) (350). (3) Although carefully reporting in great detail the 1958–1959 controversy (McCall vs. 13 professors) (357–404), the author passes over the rebuilding of the faculty as if it were automatic or incidental and posits instead the dubious theory of a “Prague Spring” of Southern Baptist liberalism (405–07). Absent is treatment of the significant work of Penrose St. Amant, Ray Summers, and Wayne E. Oates in saving the accreditation and restoring confidence. (4) Can Wills’ tracing of the anti-segregation stance implied in Southern’s invitation to Martin Luther King, Jr., to deliver the Gay Lectures (1962) as being an expression of “progressivism” (i.e., theological liberalism) (413–17) be compatible with the later stance against racism taken by Richard Land and the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission? (5) Since Southern was not the only SBC seminary after 1925, does not the relationship among the SBC seminaries deserve more attention, especially the struggles over Cooperative Program allocations and curriculum development?

A.T. Robertson’s publications and scholarship are indeed acknowledged, and the writings of C.H. Toy, E.Y. Mullins, W.O. Carver, Harold W. Tribble, J.B. Weatherspoon, and Dale Moody are treated, perhaps because they were/are controversial, but authors such as E.C. Dargan, W.J. McGlothlin, Gaines S. Dobbins, E.A. McDowell, H.H. Barnette, Rust, and Oates lack coverage.

Wills’ book is more thoroughly researched and more theological than Mueller’s *A History of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary* (1959), is less adequate as to curriculum and alumni than Mueller’s *The School of Providence and Prayer: A History of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary* (1969), and is more theological and less complete as to seminary personnel than Robert A. Baker’s *Tell the Generations Following: A History of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1908–1983* (1983).

Baptists are indebted to Wills for providing a detailed and readable examination of the theological history of Southern Seminary from its heroic founders—Boyce, Broadus, Manly, and Williams—with their struggles during and after the Civil War to its first decade of the 21st century as “an evangelical and Southern Baptist seminary” (536) with an all-time high enrollment (546).

But it is difficult to avoid what seems to be the unstated but permeating and

governing thesis of the book, namely, that Southern was on the right track, despite financial hardships, for its first forty years but from 1899 to 1994 was going in the wrong direction (being subject to the dangers of the authority of experience, historical criticism of the Bible, and liberalism/modernism [treated as synonyms]) until it was restored to its true foundation (biblical inerrancy, Dortian Calvinism, and gender complementarianism). Those who accept that thesis will likely find this volume to be more than sufficient, whereas those who do not will continue to look for the rest of the story.

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***W.H. Whitsitt: The Man and the Controversy.* By James H. Slatton. Macon: Mercer University Press, 2009. 348 + xx pages. Hardcover, \$40.00.**

James Slatton has produced a biography of William H. Whitsitt (1841–1911) worth reading. Granted permission by Whitsitt’s granddaughter, Slatton uses Whitsitt’s previously (and still currently) sealed diaries to provide a firsthand account of Whitsitt’s life and trials. Limited by the fact that the diaries recount only the events of 1885–1899, Slatton fills in the gaps to present a complete biography. When Slatton lets the diaries speak, and he does so with freedom and clarity, Whitsitt portrays a largely bitter and elitist temperament. However, when the diaries are silent, Slatton paints the picture of a heroic Whitsitt “hounded from office for his discovery of ‘an inconvenient truth’” (x). Thankfully, the reader gains enough access not only to draw his own conclusions but also to understand from where Slatton comes.

Slatton begins the volume in 1862 with the interruption of Whitsitt’s first pastorate by the Civil War. The War not only takes Whitsitt away from the Mill Creek Baptist Church in Nashville for a time, but also gives Whitsitt cause to leave his commitments to Landmarkism. Reared in a home that regularly read the *Tennessee Baptist* during the days of Landmark ascendancy, Whitsitt would have a front row seat as the movement grew in popularity and followed the writings of J.R. Graves, A.C. Dayton, and J.M. Pendleton. In fact, Graves would preach Whitsitt’s ordination sermon.

Slatton describes how several imprisonments during the war would provide Whitsitt the opportunity to associate with other Baptists throughout the country. Instead of finding them half-hearted and erroneous as he had been taught, Whitsitt found that these non-Landmark Baptists “often excelled me in the graces of the spirit” (14). Such experiences led Whitsitt to question his commitments and change his outlook leading him to altogether abandoning Landmarkism. By 1866, Whitsitt left Nashville and enrolled at the University of Virginia where his “conversion from Landmarkism was highly supported” (25). There he met John A. Broadus and eventually followed him to study at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary then located in Greenville, South Carolina. His time at the seminary led to further studies in Germany followed by a pastorate in Virginia until the seminary called him to join the faculty in 1872.

Slatton shows that during Whitsitt’s early years at Southern, he “developed into a gentlemen of considerable refinement as well as scholarship” (53). As Whitsitt took on more elite status he began to question his commitment to the Baptist tradition. He writes in his journal, “I am greatly oppressed by the fact that the spirit of

my people is foreign from my spirit; that they are far more narrow & pharisaical & sectarian than accounts with my conception of Christianity" (53). Whitsitt's decision to remain Baptist appears more of a decision based on practical considerations and a commitment to tradition than to any real doctrinal conviction. In fact, Slatton states that Whitsitt even "considered writing an article arguing that the New Testament model of church government as Baptists interpreted it was not suited to the present needs of the church" (55).

Crawford H. Toy became Whitsitt's closest friend and colleague at Southern. Toy, the nephew of R.B.C. Howell, also had studied in Germany after the war and came to hold a prominent position at Southern that garnered great popularity. However, the revelation of Toy's embrace of higher criticism led to Toy's dismissal from the seminary in 1879. Slatton depicts how Toy's departure stirred Whitsitt to embitterment toward both Boyce, the school's president, and Broadus, though he only expressed it in the pages of his diary. During the summer of 1880 Whitsitt traveled to London to pursue research to disprove the Landmark theory of Baptist origins and to show that Baptists began in 1641 as a part of the English Separatist movement. So enthralled with his discovery, Whitsitt determined to publish his findings anonymously through four articles in the New York *Independent*. Whitsitt would later regret posing as a non-Baptist in a pedobaptist publication. For all the controversy that surrounded Whitsitt in the years ahead, his momentary decision to publish in the *Independent* made all the difference for the outcome of his tenure at the seminary.

In 1885, Whitsitt began keeping the diary that Slatton describes as reflecting "his candid—and often uncomplimentary—opinions about his fellow professors" and thus part of the reason why he instructed it remained sealed for one hundred years (104). Slatton reprints several surprising statements from the diaries including Whitsitt's prediction that "the time must inevitably come when the Baptists shall give up the practice of immersion To surrender close communion will be a prelude to the surrender of immersion. Neither of them is consistent with other practices of the Baptists; the sooner they can be abolished the better" (113). In 1893, Whitsitt published his views on the origins of Baptists, this time under his own name, in *Johnson's Universal Cyclopedia*. This led to further skirmishes with the Landmarkers though these did not prevent Whitsitt's election as president of the seminary in 1895 after the death of Broadus. The challenges from the Landmarkers did continue, however, and when the revelation came that Whitsitt penned the 1880 articles in the *Independent* the smell of blood permeated the water.

Slatton pieces together all the intricacies of the Whitsitt controversy with helpful care. As an example, he shows that Whitsitt's choice to refer to the start of the practice of immersion by the English Baptists in 1641 as an "invention" rather than a "restoration" was no small mistake. For Whitsitt to imply that immersion was a practice foreign even to the early Christians of the New Testament and that the English Baptists were the first to institute the practice, drew ire from many. Whitsitt would later retract his statement affirming that John the Baptist did, in fact, practice immersion, but by then the opposition had mounted. Soon there came cause to believe that Whitsitt had authored other anonymous articles in the *Independent* advocating pedobaptism, and the result brought Whitsitt before the seminary Board of Trustees to read a statement of apology and retraction. At this point Slatton shows that Whitsitt and his supporters attempted to interpret the controversy as one concerning academic freedom and the right of Whitsitt to pursue research as he saw

fit. Whitsitt's supporters urged him not to resign and to continue to fight for "the freedom of research and the right of free speech in the Seminary" (244). However, it appears that they were overlooking Whitsitt's confessed dishonesty regarding the articles in the *Independent* as well as his stated commitment to adhere to the confession of faith of the seminary, the Abstract of Principles.

Eventually, Whitsitt would resign under pressure from both his allies and adversaries, though he would quickly come to regret that decision. Slatton rightly notes that Whitsitt's removal only served as a Landmark victory in part, as the next president did not share their views and Whitsitt's conclusions regarding Baptist origins would go on to serve as the dominate view among Baptists in the twentieth century. Slatton attempts to link the Whitsitt controversy with the "moderate-fundamentalist controversy" among Southern Baptists in the 1980s and 1990s by opining the merits of an academic freedom tethered to the priesthood of the believer. Slatton amazingly argues that merely to cite "freedom within the bounds of the institution's articles of faith" fails to accomplish the goal of ensuring that the "opinions of the masses" are "reflected in the teaching of the professors" (322–23). Slatton believes that "assemblies of the people—local and state associations and the national convention—were not really competent or feasible venues for adjudicating questions of fact, or science, or doctrine" (322). He concludes, in fact, that the Whitsitt controversy "evokes a haunting sense of *déjà vu*" for those who experienced the controversy among Southern Baptists in the late twentieth century.

Slatton's biography of Whitsitt captures and presents well a previously untold portion of Whitsitt's life and thought as recorded in Whitsitt's private diaries. Slatton's attention to detail, care for his subject matter, and desire to honor the family who gave him privileged access to the sealed materials comes through in a thoughtful, well organized, and engaging presentation. However, when Slatton leaves his primary task and attempts to make comparisons to Southern Baptist controversies of the immediate past, he skews the storyline and muddies the water of an otherwise helpful history.

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***Seminary in Crisis: The Strategic Response of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary to the SBC Controversy.* By William E. Hull. Atlanta: Baptist History and Heritage Society, 2009.**

In the heat of the Southern Baptist controversy some years ago, William E. Hull published his own brief assessment of the wrangle, which, as he described it, focused on the difference in how two contending factions in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) "do church." Though hardly a thorough analysis of the etiology of the conflict or a prognosis for the future, the insights garnered were often accurate and always stimulating. Those articles and his recent small monograph, *Seminary In Crisis*, demonstrate why Hull has always been my favorite liberal Southern Baptist commentator. While I sometimes think that Hull gets it wrong, he is always a thinker, attempting to make sense of the whole and seemingly never deliberately trying to mislead.

For example, in the preface of this slender but provocative volume, Hull assesses with candor most of the moderate (i.e., "liberal") attempts to evaluate the SBC landscape. Hull observes,

Now that the SBC Controversy is largely settled except for antagonisms at state and local levels, with the warring factions either off the scene or settled in new routines, it is time for moderates to begin investigating why they lost the denominational leadership that they had enjoyed for years. Some early accounts written in the pain of defeat were largely jeremiads against conservative perfidy, which may have provided therapy for the wounded but were ignored by conservatives who did not bother to read or respond. What we need now is neither finger-pointing nor breast-beating but a more rigorously self-critical look at how moderates discharged their leadership responsibilities in the thick of battle, not to blame but to understand why conservatives found it easier to win than they had ever imagined would be the case (ix).

In one prescient sentence Hull dismisses most of the moderate historiographical kitsch and pleads for rigorous analysis. Taking a sliver of the pie, Hull examines the responses of two successive presidents at Southern Seminary to the Conservative Renaissance in the Southern Baptist Convention as it impacted the life of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.

The “protagonists,” as Hull describes them, are Duke K. McCall and Roy L. Honeycutt. McCall, who served as president at Southern from 1981 to 1993, was at one time arguably the most powerful single figure in the SBC. He served as president of two seminaries and had a stint as the Executive Director of the Executive Committee of the SBC. He was a theological pragmatist, a politician, and a sometimes ruthless competitor. Now in his nineties, he was able to read and essentially approve Hull’s manuscript. Honeycutt (1926–2004) was a professor with a life lived largely in the academy, a gentle spirit for the most part. Hull’s thesis is that their personalities, as well as their personal histories, influenced and maybe even determined their opposite responses to the crisis they faced.

Hull introduces the issue at hand with a brief assessment of the origin of Southern Seminary. James P. Boyce is pictured as a classically educated elitist attempting to distill a modicum of learning in the “plainest” of ministers, placing these relatively untutored men side by side with those fortunate enough to have attended college. At this point Hull provides another motive for Boyce’s determination, one seldom admitted by moderates with less integrity than Hull.

Already, however, the challenge of the German model to confessional constraints had precipitated fierce conflict with the religious establishment on the Continent. To counter that reaction among his constituency in America, Boyce proposed that every professor subscribe to an agreed-upon declaration of doctrine that would assure the churches of the institution’s theological integrity (2).

Hull even admits that the tough sledding for the idea of a Southern Baptist seminary related to the constituency’s legitimate concern about one matter. “Finally, could a constituency already troubled by theological conflict be convinced that a faculty fully abreast of international scholarship would not compromise the most cherished convictions of the faith as some seminaries in the North had already begun to do?” (3).

The former provost at Southern concludes this introductory chapter with the observation that Southern has been a seminary wracked by controversy at regular

intervals since its inception. He refers to the Toy controversy (1879), the Whitsitt controversy (1896–99), the Mullins controversy (1925–28), the McCall controversy (1958–59) and the “one that has dominated the last thirty years (1979–2009).” He does not mention that each of these, with only one exception, was a doctrinal controversy, and even that one had its doctrinal component. In a nutshell, Hull proves that the original concern of many in the convention was well taken.

Turning to the real point of the book, Hull evaluates not only the men, McCall and Honeycutt, but also their presidencies. Hull paints McCall as a seasoned veteran of denominational politics, who saw clearly and early the threat of the Conservative Renaissance. In response, McCall developed numerous lines of defense including clever intellectual ways of discussing the nature of the Bible while carefully avoiding specific and divisive words. As a final position, McCall intended to exercise an obscure clause in Southern Seminary’s governance documents that would enable existing trustees to refuse to seat the newly elected trustees sent by the SBC. Once again, gratitude must be offered to Hull for admitting the existence and intent of this plan, which, at the time, was vigorously denied by moderates.

McCall’s “one clear, simple strategy” to risk everything on this idea is in contrast to the diverse, almost experimental, responses that were characteristic of Honeycutt. Hull presents Honeycutt as the faculty scholar thrust into an unwanted role as president of the seminary. There is no mention in the book of the widely circulated rumor that Hull himself wanted the presidency, but he certainly did have his supporters. To Hull’s way of thinking, Honeycutt’s attempts “to cooperate”—culminating in his signing of the Glorieta Statement, in which the presidents of the six SBC seminaries affirmed to the inerrancy of Scripture, igniting strong reactions from faculties at Southern, Southeastern and Midwestern—were indecisive and naive.

Little is said by Hull about contemporary Southern Seminary. That would fall outside the purview of his work. Clearly, the present posture of Southern would not encompass Hull’s dream. But, there is recognition that the seminary has flourished under Al Mohler and the conservative board of trustees.

By way of summation, Hull’s assessment of presidents McCall and Honeycutt is precise, colorful, and helpful. His understanding of the life of Southern during these two eras is that of an insider who knew what transpired. On the other hand, there is ample reason to suspect that Hull misrepresents Boyce. His general thesis that Boyce would not have sided with SBC conservatives seems flawed based on the handling of the Crawford Toy incident alone. Reading the theology of Boyce and the perspectives of Al Mohler suggests that the former would most probably rejoice that the latter had restored the Boyce legacy. Whatever the case, if you are a history buff or a Southern Baptist, Hull’s style and insights must not be missed. If you are a conservative, enjoy a book from the opposition that tends toward objectivity and inadvertently establishes the rightness of the conservative cause.

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Philosophical Studies

***God is Great, God is Good: Why Believing in God Is Reasonable and Responsible.* Edited by William Lane Craig and Chad Meister. Downers Grove: IVP, 2009. 272 pages. Softcover, \$19.00.**

Theism has been attacked over and over again throughout human history. Sometimes the attacks are subtle and almost passive in nature. Sometimes the attacks are fierce and draw blood. Within our own day, the new atheists are the latest attack upon theism and faith in general. Thus, *God is Great, God is Good* was written as a defense of theism against the new atheists' attacks. Giants of the Christian philosophical and theological world such as William Lane Craig (Professor of Philosophy at Talbot), Alister McGrath (Professor of Theology at King's College London), Chad Meister (Professor of Philosophy at Bethel College), Michael Murray (Professor of Humanities and Philosophy at Franklin and Marshall), Alvin Plantinga (former Professor of Philosophy at Notre Dame), and more, write to engage the new atheists' objections to theism head on. Additionally, the editors also include a dialogue between former atheistic philosopher Antony Flew and Christian philosopher Gary Habermas. All rally together to give the Christian thinker answers to the new atheists' arguments. As the editors note in the introduction "Our primary objective in compiling this book is to answer challenges advanced by the New Atheists and others raising objections to belief in God and the Christian faith" (9).

Within a review such as this, it would be beneficial to explain exactly who these new atheists are. The leaders of the movement are Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, Sam Harris, and Christopher Hitchens (*God is Great, God is Good* seems to directly counter Hitchens' book title *God Is Not Great*). Their "new-ness" has nothing to do with their beliefs about God; after all, atheists have been around for centuries, and though their arguments may vary some, their positions never do. These atheists were first classified "New Atheist" by WIRED magazine. They advance a simple and direct slogan: "No heaven. No hell. Just science" (7). So, it is not their beliefs or arguments that are new; rather, it is the aggressive nature in which they propagate their message—they are direct, combative, belittling, and disseminate their information on a popular level. Essentially, the contributors of *God is Great, God is Good* explain the new atheists viewpoint as this: one is either an atheistic evolutionist or one is an anti-intellectual that is philosophically and scientifically antiquated.

The book is divided into four parts. Each part takes an issue that is addressed by the new atheists and counters their arguments with sound, theistic arguments. Part 1 focuses on the existence of God. William Lane Craig, J.P. Moreland, and Paul Moser each take a chapter to show that there are valid and sound arguments for God's existence, and that it is not anti-intellectual or juvenile to believe in a divine, omnipotent Being who created all and sustains all. The overall aim in the section is to give the reader classical arguments which show that being a believer in a supernatural Being is not a sophistical or juvenile ideology, but is logical and coherent to sound philosophical and scientific reasoning.

Part 2 tackles issues in philosophy of science. John Polkinghorne, Michael J. Behe, and Michael J. Murray use the fine-tuning argument to show the necessity of there being a God. The fine-tuning argument states, simplistically, that life within the universe can only exist within precise (finely tuned) and exact characteristics; so precise and exact that it must have been created by an Intelligent Designer. In other

words, the parameters of existence are so narrow that the best explanation of such a universe is an Intelligent Designer.

Part 3 addresses one of the oldest and best arguments against theism—the problem of evil. Chad Meister, Alister McGrath, Paul Copan, and Jerry L. Walls show that God is omnibenevolent, omnipotent, and omniscient—yet, evil still exists. Chad Meister writes, “There is no logical contradiction between the two claims (that evil exists and God exists), for it could be the case that an all-powerful, all-knowing, and omnibenevolent God has good reason for allowing evil to exist and persist—perhaps, for example, for the greater good of one or more persons” (108). The authors highlight the moral argument for the existence of God; it makes no logical sense to claim God does not exist *and* claim that evil exists. Moral objectivism can only be true, the contributors reason, if there is a moral Law-Giver.

Part 4 focuses specifically on Christian belief. The section submits that the arguments against theism affect Christianity directly. Charles Taliaferro, Scot McKnight, Gary Habermas, and Mark Mittelberg show that the belief in Christ and his work is not an outdated stance that should be relegated to the Medieval era, but rather Christ’s work and life is historically verifiable and spiritually necessary. Additionally, the authors explain that special revelation is needed for one to know God personally.

God is Great, God is Good is a book written on a popular level. One does not need a philosophical background to understand the essays or arguments. Granted, the book is written for an educated crowd, but one need not have a degree in philosophy, biology, physics, or theology to understand the depth and precision of the arguments. The authors do a stellar job at making their essays readable and beneficial to modern theist. My only complaint is one does not get to see the new atheists’ response.

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***An Introduction to Nietzsche.* By Lucy Huskinson. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2009. 106 pages. Softcover, \$14.99.**

Friedrich Nietzsche is much maligned in Christian circles and most often criticism of him is justified. It is thus somewhat surprising and most certainly unique that anyone would attempt to approach Nietzsche’s thoughts as being relevant to Christians. Huskinson has commendably succeeded in displaying Nietzsche’s relevance to a complacent Christian church.

How is it possible that a philosopher who proclaimed a “death of God” movement be significant to the Christian church? Is it imaginable that this man whose writings are deeply controversial can have anything to say to the future of Christian discipleship? Perhaps more so than the so-called “new atheists,” Nietzsche may have unveiled something noteworthy, albeit not overwhelmingly profound, as to how Christians ought to be and act. Yet as Huskinson herself admits one cannot take this too far. After all, Nietzsche’s ideas cannot be seen to support Christianity since “Nietzsche rejects Christ” (80).

Many have tried to rationalize the thoughts of Nietzsche. However, because his ideas lack systematic cohesion, such attempts usually have mixed results. In addition, such attempts to bring order to a philosopher who would have shunned such a label, has led to wildly differing assessments as to Nietzsche’s motivations, priorities

as well as his train of thought.

As such, while Huskinson has a definite purpose in writing this work, she does not pretend that she has successfully solved the enigma surrounding the philosopher's many and controversial ideas. Her sole purpose seems to be to highlight "Nietzsche's search for, and explanation of authentic divinity" via the reevaluation of Christian values and the emphasis of what he regards to be an "affirmation of life" (xiii–xiv).

There are various key aspects of Nietzsche's thoughts that Huskinson helpfully highlights. One of these aspects is the concept of the "will to power" and its contrast with the "will to truth." The will to power has the purpose of accepting a "tension and creative dialogue between opposites [and in doing so emphasizes] human growth . . . in terms of infinite possibility and perspective, whereby we continually shape and reshape who we are" (4–5). In sharp contradistinction to the will to power, the will to truth is (for Nietzsche), where life is "lived according to a perceived fixed ideal" (6). Nietzsche views Christianity as a prime example of such a perceived fixed ideal.

In doing so, Nietzsche also believes that Christianity is the very embodiment of what many have (justifiably) accused Nietzsche of promoting—Nihilism. Huskinson is careful to point out that the philosopher is of the view that Christianity does not affirm life but rather "negates the meaningfulness of human life" (7). Christianity, he insists, treasures the use of reason that leads to objective truth, instead of prizing the emotions and instincts (8, 60).

Another problem with Christianity, according to Nietzsche is that it promotes what is termed a "slave morality" that included aspects that are undesirable, including "sin, guilt, pity, cruelty, good and evil," (11) as well as bad conscience and resentment (16–25). In contrast to this Huskinson mentions that Nietzsche's "master morality," is more fluid and hence varies according to different circumstances (13), affirms the self (14), and does not thrive on resentment of others (15).

For Nietzsche, Christianity has no use and no worth (42) and so when Nietzsche talks about his "death of God," Huskinson astutely indicates he is not so much attempting to pronounce a metaphysical assertion regarding God but merely indicating the changing of the times and the values of society (51); and perhaps he is also indicating the maturing of humanity from a pessimistic nihilism (as illustrated by Christian beliefs) to an active nihilism that is optimistic, free from fetters, and able to formulate new values creatively (35–54).

Nietzsche's ultimate man is the so-called *Übermensch*, frequently translated as 'superman.' Such a man is not ruled by reason but rules in chaos and his instincts (60). He creates out of his whim what he wishes in a child-like innocence without recourse to conscience and tradition and he constantly seeks to overcome himself in whatever way necessary (61–74). All in all, in all except the final chapter, Huskinson paints a portrait of Nietzsche's philosophy that seems (a) not only impossible to reconcile with Christianity but also (b) so inconsistent with the Christian faith that it is difficult to see much use for it.

However, the thrust or whole point of Huskinson's argument is revealed in the final chapter. She contends that what we can learn from Nietzsche is similar to what we can learn from Bonhoeffer (83). Christians must allow and invite test of their faith (82) in order to prove that their faith is not only genuine but worthy to be a way of life that an individual may embrace (84). Since Nietzsche not only did not find Christians in his surrounding who were willing to do that but also did not believe

that any Christian who had their faith tested who choose to remain in their faith, he viewed it as an unworthy way of life. Huskinson believes that this can be a “wake-up call for lazy Christians today” (89) and so she encourages followers of Christ to challenge themselves and question their prejudices as well as indulge in continual self-criticism in order to distill their faith into a purer version (92).

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***Time and Eternity.* By Brian Leftow. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009. 377 pages. Softcover, \$36.95**

Perhaps Augustine described man’s bafflement with time best: “What, then, is time? I know well enough what it is, provided that nobody asks me; but if I am asked what it is and try to explain, I am baffled” (Augustine, *Confessions* [New York: Penguin, 1961], 264). For centuries mankind has contemplated the ontology of time. In conjunction, theists have contemplated God’s relation to time. Many questions have been asked in light of these pursuits, such as: Does God exist outside of time? If God is eternal, how does He relate to temporally bound creatures? If God is temporal, how does He remain immutable? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each position? Brian Leftow, professor of philosophy at Oxford, seeks to answer these questions in his seminal book *Time and Eternity*.

Leftow details and defends divine timelessness. He claims that God is eternal (or outside of time), and that this ontological status entails his sovereignty, omniscience, and immutability. Leftow states that the aim of the book is “to articulate and defend the claim that God is in no way in time. If God is not in time . . . one must wonder what his relation to time is. Thus my second aim is to clarify the relations between a timeless being and temporal beings: between time and eternity” (3). He defends his thesis by adopting an Anselmian approach to God and time. Anselm held that “God is simultaneously present at discrete, non-simultaneous times . . . in other words, God is present at different times at once” (183). So the Anselmian view of God and time claims that God is eternal or non-temporal. He sees all time at once, yet time and existence continue on in temporal succession. The advantage of the Anselmian view of eternity, according to Leftow, is that one can hold a robust view of God’s omniscience, divine simplicity, and sovereignty while still maintaining a libertarian view of free will.

There are two intriguing aspects of Leftow’s book. Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of *Time and Eternity* is how Leftow details the views Augustine, Boethius, and Anselm had on God and his relation to time. In this way, Leftow branches contemporary and classical philosophical theology, noting how past thinkers have handled this topic, and how their solutions can help thinkers today. Interesting enough, Leftow argues that these ancient thinkers structured exceptional theories that have benefited contemporary philosophers in their pursuit of understanding God’s relation to time

A second intriguing aspect is that Leftow does not assume any particular theory of time. In most treatises on God’s relation to time, the author will first state his/her own view of time. For example, the author will construct their philosophy of time by taking a tensed or tenseless view, and then explain God’s relation to the said theory. From this point, the author will seek to show that their philosophy of time

is essential in his or her position of God's relation to time. Leftow, however, does not defend or propagate any philosophy of time. In fact, he seeks to show that both A- and B-theories of time will work in harmony with his view of Anselmian divine eternity. (He does seem to favor a tensed [or A-theory] view of time; however, he argues without assuming any particular theory of time.) Whether the reader will find this a benefit or hindrance depends on the reader's understanding and acceptance of Leftow's arguments. Either way, Leftow's stellar work and argumentation are easy to admire.

One disparaging feature of Leftow's book is his claim that eternity is some sort of "time" itself. God's eternity is a separate time series from our time series; but, it is a series which has not time, which he designates "null time." (51). This proposition seems obscure and inchoate. Leftow never really describes what it means to claim eternity can be classified as its own "time." This is not to say that Leftow does not attempt to describe what a "no time time" is; yet, this reviewer holds he was ultimately unsuccessful at dispelling any mystification. To be sure, the thought sounds fascinating, but ultimately it is underdeveloped. (It should be noted that this confusing taxonomy does not seem to weaken Leftow's overall argument.)

There is no mistaking that Leftow has contributed a significant work to the topic of divine timelessness. His work is detailed and thought-provoking. Even if one was opposed to a timeless view of God, this work should not and cannot be ignored. Anyone who is interested in further study and understanding of divine timelessness would be well served in reading this book. If one is just interested in quick arguments on divine timelessness, Leftow supplies a chapter titled "A Case for God's Timelessness," which would satisfy that interest. Many sections are very readable and stimulating for theologians and philosophers alike, although having a background in philosophical discourse and logic would help one better understand Leftow's ideals and arguments.

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***Whose Community? Which Interpretation? Philosophical Hermeneutics for the Church.* By Merold Westphal. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009. 160 pages. Softcover, \$19.99.**

Postmodernism poses, well, a poser for the Church. On the one hand, post-modern critiques of modernity have revealed that the emperor in fact has no clothes, that an imperialistic human reason guided by a scientific methodology cannot deliver what it has promised. Reason and method alone cannot deliver to us an unquestioned objectivity which systematically delivers all knowledge and truth. Postmodernism has reminded us that we are not God. On the other hand, after destroying the obelisks of modern epistemology, postmodernism has threatened to leave nothing but ruins in their place. Faith in human reason is replaced with despair. Everything is called into question, including our ability to communicate through speaking and writing, our access to knowledge of any sort, and the very existence of truth. Of particular concern to the church is the threat posed to the authority of Scripture. If texts cannot communicate meaning, if we have no access to truth, then the Word of God cannot be the Word of God for the church. In his brief but incisive *Whose Community? Which Interpretation?*, Merold Westphal seeks to sail biblical hermeneutics through the Scylla of deified reason and the Charybdis of postmodern relativism.

Westphal's main concern is to apply the hermeneutical insights of Hans-Georg Gadamer's *Truth and Method* to the church's reading of Scripture in such a way that Christians will recognize the influence of their tradition and community on their hermeneutic, but will not be left with an "anything goes" view of biblical interpretation. The first five chapters provide preparation for this task by placing Gadamer's work in both historical and contemporary context. Chapters six through nine familiarize the reader with Gadamer's theory, and the final three chapters explore the implications of that theory for biblical interpretation within the context of the church. This last point cannot be overemphasized, for Westphal recognizes the unique character of Scripture as the Word of God, which means that interpreting it is different from interpreting any other text. For example, Westphal notes that one cannot rightly interpret Scripture within the context of the church without taking into account "the witness of the Holy Spirit, not only in attesting to the Bible as divine revelation but also in teaching us what it means" (14).

While *Whose Community?* deals with complicated philosophical issues, it is not overly technical and should be accessible to the average reader. This accessibility is by design, as Westphal notes that all Christians are theologians who read and interpret Scripture, whether they do it in an academic, pastoral, or lay setting. Whether the Christian is writing academically, proclaiming the Word from the pulpit, or reading devotionally, he is involved in biblical interpretation. And because Christians live together in community, the ways in which individual Christians interpret Scripture are also the ways in which the church interprets Scripture. So Westphal rightly addresses his work to the individual Christians who make up the church, and keeps this individual/ecclesiastical dynamic in mind throughout.

Even if one finds oneself disagreeing with Westphal's conclusions, *Whose Community?* is worth the short read for the first nine chapters alone. After arguing for the necessity of interpretation in chapter one, Westphal provides a clear and concise summary of nineteenth- and twentieth-century hermeneutics, focusing on Schleiermacher and Dilthey, and then Heidegger, Gadamer, and Ricoeur. In doing so, Westphal argues against the "romantic" hermeneutic of the nineteenth century, characterized by psychologism (which views texts as insights into the minds of their authors as opposed to vehicles of communication about certain subjects) and objectivism (which takes a view of interpretation akin to the natural sciences, and thus intends to produce a single reading with universal validity). But he also rejects a thoroughly relativistic twentieth-century postmodern hermeneutic according in which no limit is imposed upon legitimate interpretations. Against both of these extreme views Westphal places Gadamer, whose hermeneutic he thinks can assist in the rehabilitation of tradition.

In the final chapters, Westphal seeks to apply Gadamerian hermeneutics for the benefit of the church by developing a model based on political liberalism (read here classical liberalism, not liberal as opposed to conservative), characterized by the notions of individual rights and limited government, and communitarianism, which provides an account of the good and a comprehensive list of virtues embedded in specific communities and their traditions. From liberalism one receives the concept of an overlapping consensus, while from communitarianism one gets values and practices within the context of a particular community. For, say, a Southern Baptist, the liberalism aspect of the model will provide what one might call the essentials of Christian faith, while the communitarian aspect will provide Baptist identity. Of course, the problem (which Westphal does not address directly) is in specifying

where the lines between the liberal and communitarian goals are to be drawn. But Westphal is optimistic that if the church adopts some general virtues (primarily humility, listening, and friendship) such problems can be resolved. Whatever one thinks of the potential for success in these matters, Westphal's book is a helpful read for any Christian interested in the essential practice of biblical interpretation.

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***Hermeneutics: An Introduction.* By Anthony C. Thiselton. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009. 424 pages. Softcover, \$30.00.**

Hermeneutics: An Introduction by Anthony C. Thiselton accomplishes what the title states. Thiselton's previous publications on the subject of hermeneutics—*New Horizons in Hermeneutics*, *The Two Horizons*, and the related *Hermeneutics of Doctrine*—all serve both the breadth and depth of this book. Thiselton is qualified to write an introductory work on hermeneutics not only as a result of the monographs previously mentioned, but also for his scholarship in the fields of New Testament studies and philosophy. This brings richness to Thiselton's perspective on hermeneutics by involving each of these fields in his summary and analysis of the field.

The book begins with three that define hermeneutics, offer explanation of its value, and set forth a methodological framework. Particularly noteworthy is Thiselton's definition of hermeneutics, his clarification of the differences between philosophical hermeneutics and traditional hermeneutics, and his perspective on presuppositions. Additionally, worthy of mention in these preliminary chapters is his description of the intersection of biblical studies, philosophy, and literary theory on the issue of interpretation. This description serves as an introduction to the categories that will be analyzed in historical order in the subsequent chapters. Thiselton offers an example of how the hermeneutical methods he discusses may be applied with the parables of Jesus, providing opportunity for illustration.

Following these initial chapters, Thiselton devotes the remainder of the book to analyzing, chapter by chapter, major historical movements in hermeneutics. Several chapters make notable contributions by providing an entry level analysis of the significant thinkers in hermeneutics. Chapter four provides an overview of the genesis of Christian hermeneutics as it developed out of a blended Jewish and Greek background. Beginning in this chapter, the book propels forward into a discussion of the characteristics of hermeneutics during the early church through the fourth century. Uniquely valuable contributions of the book, notable for their distillation of influential ideas overlooked by most, are found in chapters eleven and twelve. These chapters interact with the thought of Hans-Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur respectively. The historical analysis rounds out with chapters on the Reformation, Enlightenment, Schleiermacher, Bultmann, Barth, and postmodern hermeneutics in addition to others left unmentioned.

The book contains a set of features which make it a manageable introduction composing its greatest asset for those not already immersed in the field. First among these features is the brief list of books recommended for further reading appended to each chapter. Thiselton's characteristically encyclopedic style is made attainable by the definition of concepts which would perhaps be missed by those with no prior exposure. Additionally, the significant writers he discusses are introduced with

biographical material, and their major writings provide the outline for Thiselton's analysis. This tool prevents the necessity for the reader to be conversant with these writers before making use of this book.

This book demonstrates hermeneutics' status as a multidisciplinary enterprise where the reader must be critical, yet open. Thiselton's characteristic even-handed analysis comes to bear on the divergent influences on hermeneutics. The reader may find ample grounds for disagreement within the hermeneutics of Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Rorty, Jauss, Gadamer, Derrida and the others included in the book. Thiselton provides a model for evaluating the ideas of these writers as his interaction offers critique of their errors while also modeling how one may be instructed by the grain of truth, that may be found in many of the worst faults.

The element many readers will find missing is a constructive outline for biblical hermeneutics. The analysis in the book was written with an orientation to provide an historical overview of the field, as opposed to offering a detailed instructive hermeneutic. While the volume possesses no lack of evaluation from Thiselton, this book on its own is not intended to produce a complete framework for the reader. An added value of the book is that it addresses a lacuna of a few hermeneutical ideas. In order to make the book a more comprehensive introduction, one would hope to see chapters on the contemporary move toward theological interpretation, a discussion on the post-liberal approach, and a discussion on the historical-grammatical mindset which has dominated American evangelicalism. With these points stated, the broad scope accomplished in 355 readable pages is an impressive strength which makes it difficult to offer critique on this point. This book achieves the status of a competent introduction to hermeneutics and presents it as a valuable tool for students of hermeneutics and those seeking to bring cohesiveness to the many tributaries that relate to the field.

Jon Wood

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Studies in Ethics

***Christianity, Climate Change, and Sustainable Living.* By Nick Spencer, Robert White, and Virginia Vroblesky. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2009. 288 pages. \$16.99.**

Christianity, Climate Change, and Sustainable Living concentrates on the issue of climate change and responds to it from a Christian perspective. The book consists of three parts dealing with science, theology, and practice. The purpose of the book is to study the relationship of Christian faith to climate change and "sustainable living" (4). As a consequence of this exploration, the authors encourage readers "to understand" the reality of climate change—its causes and effects, "to envision the solution," and "to take their responsibilities seriously" (8).

The book is appreciated for two unique contributions. First, chapter 4 offers a study of ecology based on Isaiah 40–66, which is not so much a "substitute for the modern concept of sustainability, but an inspiring vision of what sustainable living could look like" (115). Few volumes intensively relate sustainable living with Isaiah 40–66 as this book does. Second, in chapter 6, the authors envisage a sustainable society in the future. Based upon the principles presented in previous chapters, the authors draw a vision of what sustainable living might look like if we lived according to the principles which they explore and explain.

This book is helpful in three ways. First, the book is very practical, offering its readers detailed “know-how” for living an ecologically well-balanced life, specifically in chapter 7. Second, the authors properly point out the spirituality that lies behind the issue of the global growth of greenhouse gases. Third, the book provides considerable helpful resources for further study of the environment.

Despite these profitable achievements, *Christianity, Climate Change, and Sustainable Living* needs three areas of improvement. First, the authors do not discuss opposing viewpoints. For example, providing scientific data, scholars in other evangelical circles assert that the current climate change is natural and is not the consequence of human activities. It would be better for the authors to have argued against those scholars with whom they disagree instead of simply noting that there is “spreading misinformation” (24). Second, in many cases, the authors have negative views about human culture and humans themselves. Of course, humans are corrupted because of the Fall; however, they and their cultures still have positive aspects. Third, the book has not contributed a thoroughly exegetical work of the Scriptures that are used for their arguments.

This book was written for a Western audience, especially for people who live in high-income industrialized nations (159). Nevertheless, this is helpful for those who are looking for a source which presents today’s trend in the evangelical camp on the issue of climate change.

Dae Jung Kim
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***The Indelible Image: The Theological and Ethical Thought World of the New Testament, Vol. I. The Individual Witnesses.* By Ben Witherington. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2009. 856 pages. Hardcover, \$50.00.**

Ben Witherington is a prolific writer, but this time he surpassed his former efforts by producing a two volume epic presentation on the theology and ethics of the New Testament, both of which are over 800 pages in length. Volume One focuses on the various ways that each of the contributory writers of the New Testament presented their witness of what Jesus Christ said and did to create a new God “image” through the words and actions of the gospel, with its resulting message and world shaping impact.

There are some interesting contributions that this volume brings to the discussion of the theological and ethical message of the New Testament. First, is that theology and ethics are not to be separated, but rather to be taken as a whole. Ethics is not seen as a derivative of theology, but rather the natural completion of its meaning. For instance, Witherington repeatedly underscores that salvation is not a completed act just by believing the message. There has to be a resulting life change and pattern for salvation to be a reality. In fact, he insists throughout this first tome that salvation can be lost when one does not live by the essence of the salvation type of life. It is interesting that he teaches in a Methodist Seminary (Asbury), because he seems well fitted for teaching in that theological context. The security of the believer was even disparaged in some of his interpretations. He rarely even explores and explains the passages that present that foundational theological concept. Nevertheless, his interpretation puts a heightened importance on the value of consistent Christian living out what one professes to believe about Christ and the moral life.

A second area of contribution is that of creating a type of biblical commentary

on the whole New Testament, through a fairly thorough exploration of the contribution which each New Testament author made to the theological and ethical content of the Christian message. There is a thoroughness and almost exhaustive dimension to the exploration of details of numerous passages of Scripture, along with comparisons and contrasts to other passages, as well as current literature of the biblical period. Witherington also makes an evangelical response to a considerable number of controversial issues of interpretation of various New Testament texts. He often engaged in giving extensive response to the writings of other current authors on those controversial issues, and at times his responses consumed so much space that it distracted the reader from Witherington's assessment of the biblical content itself. Nevertheless, the "subject index" at the end of the book is a useful tool for reviewing the various issues which are treated in this valuable volume. Also, it is instructive to note that Volume Two of this set of works by Witherington focuses on a considerable number of the theological and ethical issues in the New Testament. For anyone interested in having a thorough analysis of the theological and ethical content of the New Testament, these two volumes are a must read.

William E. Goff

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***The Indelible Image: The Theological and Ethical Thought World of the New Testament. Vol. II. The Collective Witness.* By Ben Witherington III. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2010. 838 pages. Hardcover, \$50.00.**

This second volume of New Testament studies by Ben Witherington follows a course of exploring the theological and ethical issues found within the corpus of the whole New Testament text. This work begins with connecting it to the first volume, as well as creating a "Prolegomena" question of whether it is possible to really find and develop a consistent theological and ethical trajectory within the New Testament. The solution to that dilemma is found in the ethical frame cast by Jesus himself. That frame is that of a cruciform image, one of sacrificial love to be understood and followed in the light of the new eschatological situation created by Christ (30–32; cf. 492). Witherington in his stylistic manner captures the uniqueness of the "symbolic universe" of Jesus and his impact on the theology and ethics of the New Testament writers:

Jesus sees himself as the straw that stirs the drink. He is the game-changing performer. He is the kingdom-bringer. He is the Son of Man savior figure meant to establish dominion on earth forever. The events that will change the eons and history as well stand before him, whereas for all the New Testament authors these first eschatological events stand behind them, and they have the benefit of hindsight and retrospective analysis.

In this second volume Witherington seems to create three sets of groupings on the issues presented, although he does not subdivide them in that distinct manner. The first section (Chapters 1 to 3) deals with interpretive orientations on the symbolic universe, or thought world of Jesus and the New Testament writers. The second section (Chapters 4 to 7), in contrast to Witherington's insistence that theology and ethics should be held together, is an exploration of what he calls "the census of the consensus" of theological themes in the New Testament. It is fair to recognize

that Witherington does make a conscious effort to blend ethical application into his theological discussions, and ethical explorations are customarily shown to have a theological formation and basis for action. The third section is five chapters (8 to 12) on Christian ethics in which he creates an analysis of a unique grouping of all of the books of the New Testament. These five chapters on ethics analyze groups of books, each of which reflects a unique symbolic world perspective. After a chapter of overview of ethical orientations (chapter 8), the author sets forth a chapter on the ethics of Jesus and his moral influence over his followers. He then groups 10 books (Matthew, John, James, Jude, Hebrews, 1–3 John, 1 Peter, and Revelation) in a study of ethics for Jewish Christians, followed by two chapters on ethics for Gentile Christians, including Paul's writings as well as Mark, Luke and 2 Peter. His final chapter is an effort to demonstrate that there is a "matrix of meaning" or a commonality in all of the theology and ethics of the New Testament, which is that Jesus Christ has a unique role in creating a lasting "indelible image" of God, his kingdom, and his eternal presence in the world.

The thoroughness of this second text and its organization in exploring the theological and ethical themes of the New Testament presents a challenging, and yet fruitful, exercise for any pastor or theology student. There is ample evidence that Witherington has the conviction that the New Testament is a collection of God inspired writings, which have an undeniable and unavoidable importance for those who would be serious followers of Jesus Christ.

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***Sex and the iWorld: Rethinking Relationship beyond an Age of Individualism.* By Dale S. Kuehne. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009. 235 pages. Softcover, \$19.99.**

The author is the professor of politics and executive director of the New Hampshire Institute of Politics at Saint Anselm College and pastor of the Emmanuel Covenant Church in Nashua, New Hampshire. His work serves as an analysis of why our western culture has left its traditional moorings (what he calls the "t world") and sailed boldly and belligerently into the turbulent and destructive seas of individualism ("i world"). His goal is to give guidance for how westerners, including Christians, can reorient themselves so that they can move onto the more solid ground of building and maintaining stable human relationships, as well as one with God (what he calls the "r world"). His effort is to reengineer a worldview that will guide westerners toward a livable and sustainable future.

He does not limit his focus to Christians, but attempts to project the need for and the philosophy to guide a relationship-based lifestyle that encompasses a larger, pluralistic audience. His approach is to invite any who will to enter the conversation on weighing significant values (relying often, but not exclusively on biblical values) and reasonable systems of human, family, and societal engagement. Although he invites all to join the conversation about the way to develop the relational life, he has a decided evangelical presentation in Part 2 of the book, in which he explains the role of having a healthy relationship with God, thus creating a sense of self-identity and worth for having a foundation for all the other relationships in life. His chapter 7, "From Hole Hearted to Whole Hearted: A Love Story," is a winsome and convincing appeal to postmodern thinkers to consider the potential of experiencing a redeeming relationship with God.

Throughout the book Kuehne challenges the postmoderns to reflect seriously on the weaknesses of individualistic freedom in contemporary sexual conduct. Then, in chapter 8, the author moves to the relationship side of the theme that is suggested in the introduction of the book—r sex: a treatment of how post moderns can reorient their private lives toward creating a stable and dynamically functional set of interpersonal skills that endure and endear them with others for all of life.

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Pastoral Ministries

***Gospel-Powered Parenting: How the Gospel Shapes and Transforms Parenting.* By William P. Farley. Phillipsburg: P&R, 2009. 233 pages. Softcover, \$12.99.**

William Farley has written an excellent book about the centrality of the gospel in Christian parenting. The thesis of the book states that, “Effective application of the gospel empowers parents to reach their children’s hearts” (40). With that in mind, Farley believes that the gospel provides everything a parent needs in order to succeed. Three experiences in his own life led him to this conclusion, the reading of the Bible, the influence of other couples in his church, and Reformed Theology, particularly the writings of Jonathan Edwards.

Farley begins the book by establishing five presuppositions the reader must adopt in order to apply his teaching. First, parenting is not easy. Parents need the grace of God during every stage of parenting. Second, parenting requires an understanding of both God’s Sovereignty and the parent’s responsibility to reach the child for Christ. Third, parenting that is effective involves an offensive approach. Fourth, Christian parents must have a clear grasp on the concept of new birth. To be born again is to experience a radical change and a new direction in life (28). Fifth, Christian parents center their lives around God, not their children.

The greatest strength in Farley’s book is its deep theological framework. Throughout the book the author avoids presenting parenting techniques. Instead he asserts that the fear of the Lord is at the heart of gospel-powered parenting. The fear of God, according to the author, unleashes the blessing and favor of God upon the family. He defines the fear of God as the realization that sin “always has consequences” (60). After establishing the fear of God as a firm foundation, Farley presents a theological explanation of the holiness of God, the wrath of God, and the infinitely offensive nature of sin (93). He also explores in detail the gracious gift of God offered through faith in Christ. Farley concludes this section by explaining the costly price God paid to redeem human kind from a helpless state. The remainder of the book addresses principles of leadership, fatherhood, discipline, spiritual training, and love.

The first principle is leading by example. Farley believes that modeling a godly marriage is the most powerful example a parent can offer the child. The greatest obstacle to becoming a godly example, on the other hand, is pride. The second principle highlighted by the author is the prominent role of the father. Throughout the book Farley emphasizes that “Christianity is a patriarchal religion” (125). Therefore the chief parent is the father. The third principle is discipline. The author encourages parents to adopt the following steps, expect obedience on the first command, put

discipline in the context of love, reference scripture, break the child's self-will, hold the child until he stops crying, rehearse the gospel, and invite the child to express repentance. The fourth principle is spiritual training which Farley compares to feeding the child a good spiritual diet. The author believes that teaching must be formal after the age of six. The last principle is love. Farley firmly believes that in order to love children biblically, the parent must always love God more. The love and fear of God compel the parent to love the child selflessly and sacrificially.

Toward the end of the book Farley also addresses the importance of affection in the Christian home. "Unless children feel their parents' love and acceptance, they will probably not internalize the lessons" the parent is trying to teach (205). The hallmarks of affection are focused attention (spending quality time with each child), eye contact, physical contact such as hugs and holding, and words of affirmation and encouragement. Farley concludes the book with a message of hope and comfort for parents. He asserts that the task of raising godly children is impossible without the grace of God. Mistakes and failures according to the author, are unavoidable, therefore the gospel is once again the parent's secure anchor. The guidance and forgiveness every parent needs are available at the cross.

Farley presents a strong argument for gospel-powered parenting. His focus is on a biblical philosophy of parenting, rather than on a series of steps to follow. However, he does offer some practical suggestions. He successfully defends his thesis with a strong theological foundation and a solid biblical understanding. He triumphs at communicating his deep fear of God, his love for his family and his desire to encourage parents to do likewise.

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Book Reviews

Biblical Studies

***Joshua.* By Robert L. Hubbard Jr. The NIV Application Commentary. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009. 656 pages. Hardcover, \$34.99.**

This commentary is part of the Old Testament Series for the NIV Application Commentary. As this commentary series is now commonplace and known to scholars, the review will focus on broad impressions of the author's contributions.

The NIV Application Commentary is designed to "make the journey from our world back to the world of the Bible." The main goal is not only to explain the original meaning, but also to explore the contemporary significance. The authors keep to the structure and format of the series. The passages are dealt with in broad chunks—usually a chapter or a series of chapters. Each passage is discussed in three sections: Original Meaning, Bridging Contexts, and Contemporary Significance. The commentaries published so far in the Old Testament Series are excellent and the new Joshua commentary continues this tradition. The commentary series is written for pastors and expositors. Nevertheless, in spite of their emphasis on contemporary applications and accessibility, there is a scholarly undergirding. The authors address current critical issues in biblical studies, while still maintaining the authority of the text.

Hubbard takes on the unique task of guiding the reader from the original context of Joshua to applying the principles to modern day society. This is especially challenging since the contents of the book are for a specific time period in Iron Age Palestine and a particular period in the history of the Israelites. There are many cultural and theological questions (e.g. holy war, the ban, inheritance, Israel's right to the land, etc.) that are difficult to make a direct correspondence between text and life, an expositional goal that is primary to most evangelicals. Hubbard does an admirable job of staying true to the historical context and providing insights for using the book of Joshua as a guide to Christian living.

The commentary first discusses basic issues concerning the text of Joshua. It includes an introduction, outline, and selected bibliography. The introduction discusses the Israelite Conquest as an historical event, some theological issues such as Yahweh the warrior, holy war, and who does the promise land belong to today. While these discussions are brief, Hubbard demonstrates a depth of knowledge of the scholarly debate, particularly recent discussions of the historicity of the conquest. Most of the topics in the introduction are more fully discussed in the commentary. After the introduction, the exposition of the text follows according to the plan of the series format. At the end are four indices: Scripture, subject, author, and Hebrew words (transliterated).

One of the strengths of the commentary is the discussion of the various issues such as holy war, inheritance, and the Holy Land. Perhaps the best illustration is the application of the various inheritance and geographical data in the second part of Joshua that is usually avoided in the pulpit and personal Bible reading. Hubbard

skillfully introduces the reader to the ancient context of the biblical text, which is particularly insightful coming from someone familiar with the geography and land.

Hubbard does an excellent job of addressing archaeological issues as they are pertinent to the text (i.e., the destruction of Jericho and Ai, Hazor, etc.). As with most non-specialists, there is a disjuncture in the discussion of archaeology. For example, the archaeological discussion of Jericho and Ai focus on a fifteenth century dating of the Exodus while the discussion of Hazor is based on a thirteenth century dating. Most biblical archaeologists associate the hundreds of Iron Age I settlements with the conquest and settlement. These are not highlighted in the text, nor is there a discussion of the Late Bronze Age archaeology for the fifteenth century background. However, this disjuncture does not take away from the commentary nor the exegesis and insights from the text of Joshua. Hubbard does provide an excellent overview of theories of Israelite settlement in the introductory comments. A hidden gem is his solution and discussion of the problem of the archaeology of Ai.

One of the features of this commentary series is to discuss the text in large sections, usually complete chapters or series of chapters. There are pros and cons to this approach. A pastor or student will find it difficult to turn to a particular text or pericope and glean information or background data for that particular text, making it a challenge for the expositor to prepare an exegesis of the text. On the other hand, Old Testament narrative was not written for the twenty-first century expository sermon “text bites,” and the commentary on the texts needs to discuss the narrative in its entirety. This commentary is not valuable as a “quick reference.” I highly recommend that this be read in its entirety before any sustained study or preaching from the book of Joshua. Hubbard’s command of the text and its application for today brings difficult texts that are avoided by students of Scripture to the forefront. While the reader might disagree with some contemporary applications, Hubbard does an excellent job of making Joshua—with all of its battles and long lists of geographical terms—a useful book for the church’s edification and application.

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***Hebrews.* By David L. Allen. The New American Commentary 35. Nashville: B&H, 2010. 671 pages. Hardcover, \$32.99.**

David Allen is the Dean of the School of Theology and Professor of Preaching at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He wrote his dissertation on the Lukan authorship of Hebrews. An edited version of it has also recently been published. Allen is a sound expository preacher who shows in this commentary the sound exegetical work that lies behind his sermons on Hebrews. He states in his preface that “painstaking exegetical spade work” must precede “theological analysis” (10). Allen therefore follows his exegetical work on each unit of the epistle with a section called “theological implications.” He intends for his theological sections to synthesize the results of his exegetical work and bring out the theological significance of each unit of Hebrews. He generally executes his plan successfully. The reader may find it helpful to read the theological sections first.

Allen provides more syntactical observations than one generally finds in other volumes of the New American Commentary. He shows his own attentiveness to the Greek text and therefore encourages the reader to engage the Greek text as well. If you do not know Greek, his observations are not overly technical or hard

to understand. The commentary is well-footnoted and interacts with a variety of sources, including the standard commentaries, significant articles, and theological works. Such interaction shows his commitment to work from text to theology. He is obviously looking for sources that are trying to do the same thing that he is trying to do.

In terms of his theological emphases, Allen spends a lot of time on Hebrews 6, especially 6:4–6. These are some of the most difficult verses in the New Testament and Allen decides to engage them rather than to skirt them. His engagement is extensive. He brought to my attention a number of recent attempts to deal with these difficult verses. In short, Hebrews 6:4–6 says that it is impossible for those who “fall away” to repent. Allen spends a lot of time clarifying what it means for believers to “fall away.” He concludes that falling away does not mean apostasy, that is, a turning away from the Lord and return to the state of unbelief. Rather, falling away involves “willful disobedience to God” (377). “Genuine believers” who fall away are “forfeiting some new covenant blessings in this life as well as rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ” (377). Allen calls this the “Loss of Rewards” view. Even if one does not end up agreeing with his view, his discussion in this section is quite helpful and will prompt further discussion of the knotty issues in these verses.

Overall, Allen’s commentary is a worthwhile investment for anyone who is serious about studying the Bible. I am especially hopeful, given his position as a preaching professor, that the volume will encourage preachers to do more “painstaking exegetical spade work,” as well as more careful “theological analysis” (10). Allen’s sermons on Hebrews show the benefits of both. Readers of this commentary should access some of his sermons and find encouragement there in terms of how to preach the message of Hebrews. In the preface, Allen makes a few observations on how to preach Hebrews. He finds Hebrews to be a model for expository preachers, “In Hebrews we find all the ingredients necessary for solid expositional preaching: careful but creative exegesis, theological reflection and reasoning, a balance of exhortation and encouragement, pungent illustration of truth, and practical application—all creatively constructed into a masterful sermon that makes use of rhetorical techniques for maximum effect on the hearers” (12). He exhorts us, saying, “We who preach should learn from this great expositor” (12). Amen.

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***The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown: An Introduction to the New Testament.* By Andreas J. Köstenberger, L. Scott Kellum, and Charles L. Quarles. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2009. 896 + xxi pages. Hardcover, \$59.99.**

The primary question on most people’s minds when they see a new New Testament introduction being published could be summarized as “What sets this particular introduction apart from the others?” In other words, “Why is this book necessary?” This question is more acute regarding conservative evangelical introductions which generally reach similar historical conclusions. Do the authors break any new ground?

The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown (TCCC) shares deep affinities with its popular evangelical predecessors (Carson and Moo, Guthrie) in regard to the traditional questions of New Testament introduction (authorship, date, provenance, and destination). Traditional authorship is defended, pseudonymity is rejected, and

early dates, within the New Testament authors' lifetimes, are defended. Beyond these similarities, there are several distinctive features of *TCCC* that set it apart as a unique contribution to pedagogy.

Apart from a few introductory and concluding chapters, each chapter in *TCCC* holds to a tripartite structure with the main headings History, Literature, and Theology. The section on history covers the traditional questions of New Testament introductions. The section on literature discusses the genre of the book, proposes an outline, and discusses the contents of the book. The section on theology analyses the primary theological themes of the book and its distinctive contribution to the New Testament canon. The authors begin in chapter one with a discussion of the nature and scope of Scripture, covering the formation of the canon, the transmission and translation of the New Testament, and inspiration and inerrancy. In chapter two the authors examine the Second Temple period as the background of the New Testament in terms of its history, literature, and theology. The books of the New Testament are studied in canonical order except for Paul's letters, which are studied chronologically, and Jude, which is grouped with the Petrine epistles. The authors close the book in chapter twenty-one with a discussion of the unity and diversity of the New Testament.

The emphasis on the theology of the New Testament, evident from the space devoted to the theology section in each chapter and the closing chapter on unity and diversity, goes beyond general New Testament introductions. This blend of New Testament introduction with New Testament theology, although adding to the length of the book, will be important for students who are able to take a New Testament survey class, but never have the opportunity for an advanced class on New Testament theology.

As should be expected, the chapters and bibliographies are up-to-date with recent scholarship (including works published in 2009), with extensive interaction with the new perspective on Paul. The student friendliness of the textbook is accentuated by helpful maps, sidebars, and an extensive glossary of terms at the end of the book. The study questions at the end of each chapter are generally well thought out and would be suitable for small group discussions in class, homework assignments, or short answer exam questions.

In addition to the first chapter on the nature of Scripture, where the authors set forth the basis of their hermeneutical presuppositions, the devotional sidebars throughout the text entitled "Something to Think About" evidence their evangelical stance. The intent of these sections, focused primarily on personal application, reflects the intent of the original authors of the New Testament, who wrote in order to produce life transformation in their readers and not simply detached, historical analysis (cf. John 20:31). While this feature will undoubtedly limit the textbook's reception in non-confessional institutions, the authors' historical arguments are based on publicly accessible historical data, and apart from the authors' rejection of methodological naturalism they employ widely agreed upon historical methodology.

Although it is only a minor complaint, chapters eleven (on 1 and 2 Thess) and twelve (on 1 and 2 Cor) would have been better if the books were treated consecutively in their entirety instead of moving back and forth between them. It is easier for a student to stay focused on the details of an individual book if they are discussed one at a time (as in chapter eighteen on the Petrine epistles and Jude).

The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown is as a solid contribution to evangelical scholarship that deserves the attention of professors and students alike. The amount

of space devoted to the theology of the documents, almost producing a New Testament Introduction/New Testament Theology hybrid, and the emphasis on the hermeneutical significance of Second Temple Judaism as the background of the New Testament are welcome distinctive contributions.

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***James.* By Dan G. McCartney. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009. 335+ xx pages. Hardcover, \$39.99.**

Dan McCartney contributes to the Baker Exegetical series with his commentary on James. The Baker series targets a wide audience, from the pastor seeking clear expositions, to the scholar seeking depth and precision (ix). McCartney's work accomplishes and surpasses these goals. Students and pastors will find the text direct and to the point, yet without any "dumbing down" of the material. At the same time, scholars will appreciate the extensive, up-to-date works cited as well as McCartney's thorough interaction with the most pressing issues of interpretation and text criticism.

In dealing with the text, McCartney recognizes the merits of some structural approaches but places greater value on central themes. These themes are recognized by length of discussion, structure within smaller textual units, and the interrelatedness of identified themes (62–63). Using this method, McCartney proposes that genuine faith is the controlling theme of James and that each issue is rooted in this idea. Thus, James 1 should be understood as an overview of the life of faith, and James 2 as a discourse about counterfeit faith. James 3 warns about the tongue's ability to portray genuine faith, while the strife in chapter 4 reveals a lack of faith. The merchants and landlords in 4:13–5:6 are "paradigms of unbelief" and "foils in contrast to the life of faith" (223). Finally, believers are encouraged to look in faith to God (5:7–18). McCartney's focused interpretation centered on faith makes his commentary an important contribution to the study of James. He convincingly writes, "The Epistle of James is properly seen as the epistle of genuine faith, not the epistle of works" (271).

Beyond his insight into the importance of themes, McCartney effectively demonstrates the relationship and cohesion of smaller text units. For example, exegetes often struggle to explain why the command against oaths (5:12) is sandwiched between the discussion about patience (5:7–10) and prayer (5:13–18). McCartney points out that people of faith resolve their problems by turning to God in prayer, rather than by impatiently making oaths. This is merely one example of how McCartney views James as a logical whole and finds connection between the various parts.

Yet, despite McCartney's ability to identify structure in James, it was here that I found the commentary's most glaring weakness. McCartney, following the suggestion of Bauckham, argues that proverbial statements are crucial and may even be a key to the structure of James (65). These statements (labeled apophthegms) are identified as short, memorable wisdom sayings in the third person indicative. Only seven verses in James, however, adhere to these parameters. In response, McCartney alters the definition to include verses which lack brevity and catchiness, yet still seem proverbial, and verses with verbs in the imperative. There are several problems with

such an approach. First, a rule with so many exceptions seems to be of questionable value. One wonders if the text is being forced to fit a mold. Furthermore, there are inconsistencies in the rule's application. Three out of the seven verses which fit the original definition are not used to mark transitions in McCartney's outline, but occur in the middle of a discourse. Subjectivity and the interpreter's need for a logical outline appear to reign in this paradigm. After all, verses considered pithy and proverbial by McCartney—verses such as “human wrath does not work God's justice” (1:20) or “friendship with the world is enmity with God” (4:4)—may strike other readers simply as matter-of-fact speech. McCartney would have done well, before relying so heavily on the role of proverbs in James, to develop a stronger definition and grounds for using this methodology.

This critique should not cause readers to avoid McCartney's commentary. The book's strengths far outweigh its weakness. McCartney deals skillfully with the text, avoiding unnecessary digression so as to keep the argument and thought flow in focus (e.g., 162). This is particularly evident in chapter two, the highly debated section on faith and works. McCartney devotes a section of the introduction as well as an excursus to the issue of James/Paul and faith/works so that his exegesis of chapter two can focus on the text. Elsewhere, McCartney acknowledges where adequate discussion has been achieved by other writers and refers readers accordingly (e.g., 157n8). McCartney shows his willingness to think independently by arriving at sometimes unpopular conclusions (171–72n39). He is careful in arriving at his conclusions, and does so only after presenting all sides of the issue (e.g., 214). Readers wanting a better understanding of the structure and message of James will do well to make use of McCartney's excellent commentary.

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***Magnifying God in Christ: A Summary of New Testament Theology.* By Thomas R. Schreiner Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009. 272 pages. Softcover, \$24.99.**

In 2008, Thomas Schreiner published *New Testament Theology*, a comprehensive analysis of the theological message of the New Testament. For this volume, Schreiner has pared down that larger work in an attempt to make his central message more palatable to a broad audience. Though both are aimed at pastors and students, this volume is designed to appeal to those wanting to work through a book with a less daunting page count. For this abbreviated edition, Schreiner explains that he has “eliminated virtually all footnotes” and points readers to his “larger work for more in-depth discussion” (9). Consequently, for many potential readers, this volume will relegate Schreiner's *New Testament Theology* to the reference shelf.

In comparing the two works, Schreiner has essentially reversed the order of his title and subtitle, highlighting more directly his thesis about the theology of the New Testament. Schreiner parses “magnifying God in Christ” by stating that “NT theology is God-focused, Christ-centered, and Spirit-saturated” (19). His work seeks to expose “the centrality of God in Christ in the concrete and specific witness of the NT as it unfolds God's saving work in history” (19). In other words, Schreiner argues that the thrust of the New Testament demonstrates that “God will receive all the glory for his work in Christ by the Spirit as he works out his purpose in redemptive history” (19). His goal is to demonstrate this reality inductively at the level of the individual books as well as on the level of the whole of the New Testament.

Those who own Schreiner's previous volume will not need to obtain this one, as it is functionally an abridgement of that work. However, Schreiner does add a brief "pastoral reflection" to the end of each chapter where he very quickly points to possible areas of application. For instance, in the reflection after the first chapter, Schreiner asks, "Does the already-not yet emphasis of the NT make any difference in Christian life and ministry?" (36). He argues that this framework can guard against "political utopian schemes" and the illusion that perfection can be achieved this side of Christ's return. This reality can remind believers that they are not yet free from the effects of sin, encourage spouses to treat one another with grace, keep parents from demanding perfection from their children, and protect individuals from debilitating guilt about how imperfectly they strive for holiness. This type of reflection is helpful, though some of the other sections are not quite as developed (e.g., 57, 77).

Schreiner has refashioned a valuable and edifying resource that will be especially useful to those who share his evangelical convictions regarding Scripture. As stated above, Schreiner's intended audience is "pastors and students" (9). Evangelical pastors will appreciate his interaction with critical issues and his able defense of many conservative positions. His central thesis is also encouraging for those in the church looking for an energetic articulation of what the New Testament is really all about. Students who have read other New Testament theologies will benefit from exposure to a thematic and inductive approach with a sustained thesis throughout. The size of this version might also better suit the book to New Testament courses at the undergraduate level or in a church setting.

As an entry point into Schreiner's theological reflections on New Testament theology, this streamlined version will be a welcome contribution for those looking for a manageable treatment of the subject.

Ched Spellman

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***The Goodly Fellowship of the Prophets: The Achievement of Association in Canon Formation.* By Christopher Seitz. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009. 136 pages. Softcover, \$19.99.**

For interpreters wishing to engage in canonical interpretation, the specific issue of the ordering of the biblical books often poses a problem. Is there any logic at work in the writings themselves apart from the handling of post-biblical redactors or the decisions of church councils? In this volume, Seitz takes up this type of question by examining the unique character of the prophetic division in the Hebrew Scriptures. The content of the book represents an edited form of public lectures given at Acadia Divinity College in Nova Scotia in 2007. In these lectures, Seitz argues that "the implications of canon formation are deeply imbedded in the processes of the Bible's coming to be" (12). For him, the prophetic corpus in the Hebrew Bible shows signs of interrelation at a fundamental level. His chief task in the book is to demonstrate that this association found in the formation of the canon is a unique achievement with considerable significance.

Seitz makes his case in four main parts. The first two chapters set the stage for his discussion and outline the contours of current canon research. Here Seitz stresses the need to recognize the integral role of the Old Testament in the formation of the Christian canon as a whole, the significance of stable groupings (e.g., the Book of the Twelve) within larger Old Testament divisions, and that later lists and orders are

rooted in prior canonical realities. Seitz then addresses the specific challenge of order and arrangement in standard Old Testament studies. The discussion regarding these matters is often mired by differing definitions of "canon." Some hold that canon only signifies a collection that is "stable, closed" and "in fixed order" (52). Conversely, Seitz argues that there is significant stability and affiliation present within the writings themselves prior to final consolidation within a given community. For him, "early 'canon formation' means that it is possible to conceive of canon and scriptural authority in phases prior to closure" (54). These writings were viewed from their inception as the "word of God," a trait that represents "Scripture's inner nerve" (55). Because typical treatments of the prophets do not take questions of ordering and association into account, they often fail to recognize the internal relationships present in the biblical material.

In the last two chapters, Seitz contributes his own understanding of the way the major units of the canon formed. In the prophetic corpus, a unique achievement of "association" has taken place. Through intentional textual links, the former prophets are directly connected to the Law, the latter prophets are joined to the former, and the Twelve are associated with the three major prophets of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. As a combined whole, these writings form a kind of conceptual grammar of "Law-Prophets" (33). For Seitz, this ordering and association involves more than serendipitous contextual relationships. The fact that certain books migrate toward each other entails something internal and intrinsic to the writings themselves. As the prophetic books were being produced, they were quickly viewed in light of each other. The prophetic history of Israel (the former prophets) is positioned as the framework in which the prophetic discourse (the latter prophets) is to be read. Seitz's concern is to trace out the way this "prophetic division of the Hebrew Bible was a canonical achievement of the first order." He shows that "this achievement did not come at the closing phases but was there from the very beginning" (44). Thus, the shaping of the prophetic corpus begins with the writers associating their works with other prophetic works and continues as those who receive these writings do the same.

Chapter four then demonstrates the accomplishment of the Writings division in the Hebrew Bible. Seitz argues that the Writings are associated with the Law by means of a different logic than the one at work in the Prophets. Whereas the Prophets as a unit are associated with the Law, the individual documents that make up the Writings connect to the Law independent of one another as discrete witnesses. For Seitz, these other writings exist alongside the "Law-Prophets" canonical core. This loose association explains why individual writings from this division show up in various places in later orderings (e.g., the movement of Ruth or Daniel). Because these books were associated with the Law and Prophets independently, they could migrate to different positions. The Writings division, then, is a "library of books" directly related to elements of the Law and the Prophets but not necessarily linked to one another. Due to the nature of these writings, they do not need to be fixed in order to recognize the prevailing "canonical" function of a previously established Law-Prophets entity. The Writings along with the subsequent New Testament documents respond to and are shaped by that foundational witness.

One immediate benefit of Seitz's work is that it furthers the discussion regarding the ordering of the biblical books in the Christian canon. His research enables an interpreter who is interested in doing canonical interpretation to account for various lists and orderings found in the extant manuscripts. For Seitz, if one understands the

logic of association between books that occurs during the composition/canonization phase of canon formation, the varying sequences can be better understood. Many of the divergent orders can be identified as departures or modifications of a stable three-part Hebrew canon of Law, Prophets, and Writings. The presence of rival orders does not trivialize or negate these earlier theological associations. As long as the function of the Law and the Prophets is recognized, then differing orders, be they ancient or contemporary, can be accepted and understood.

Seitz's discussion of the difference between two main understandings of "canon" is also instructive. For Seitz, limiting the concept of canon to the idea of "closure" or "list" is reductionistic and causes a misinterpretation of early manuscript evidence. If there was in fact a stable witness known as "Law-Prophets" that was formative for the rest of canonized Scripture, then the fact that a third division of Writings was not completely set at the time of the New Testament does not entail an entirely destabilized Old Testament canon. This possibility is particularly significant, as the status of the Old Testament at the time of the New Testament is a watershed issue in the canon debate. In his analysis, Seitz demonstrates the importance of carefully defining the terms used to describe canon formation and also the implications of those definitional decisions.

One repeated theme of Seitz's analysis is the foundational role of the Old Testament canon. For Seitz, the Old Testament sets the theological horizons that the New Testament writers conform to in their writings (50). What is more, the precedent of a stable Old Testament canonical witness of the Law and Prophets supplies the canonical concept and impetus for the formation of a New Testament canon (102). In other words, not only did the Old Testament shape the theology of the New Testament authors, but it also influenced the material shaping of the New Testament canon. For example, the Twelve could serve as a precedent for a Pauline Corpus of epistles written in varying contexts brought together to serve a larger audience (12). A stable Old Testament witness helps explain the motivation and impetus for the formation of a New Testament canon. In this regard, Seitz shows that the Rule of Faith was also dependent on the Old Testament and was deeply exegetical (21–23). This emphasis has the potential of shedding significant light on the nature of the development of the Christian canon as a whole.

One possible area for further reflection relates to Seitz's treatment of association in the Writings. In order to account for a perceived lack of stability in ordering, Seitz stresses that the members of the Writings were not intentionally associated with one another. However, in making this case, Seitz might minimize the association that is in fact present among these documents. Seitz himself concedes that there is a measure of stability at least among the grouping known as the Megilloth. One might ask if these writings were intentionally associated with one another, albeit with a different principle of association. The interconnections that are present in the Writings seem to be based on verbal links between books and similarity of genre. Thus, recognizing and defining the various types of association in the different corpora more directly would be helpful. Also, showing in more detail how the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel are interconnected with each other in addition to the way they connect with the former Prophets might strengthen Seitz's arguments for a tightly interrelated prophetic corpus. More generally, a clearer delineation of just what is involved in a book being "associated" with another would help readers evaluate the various claims Seitz makes.

Throughout this volume, Seitz draws on the work he has done on the book

of the Twelve in his previously published *Prophecy and Hermeneutics*. His work here also serves as a precursor to his forthcoming volume in Baker's Studies in Theological Interpretation series entitled *The Character of Christian Scripture: Canon and the Rule of Faith*. There, Seitz will continue the discussion broached in the present work and connect it to a broader treatment of Christian Scripture (10–11). Thus, as an independent monograph, there may be areas of Seitz's important project in need of additional development. However, as a brief yet substantive blueprint for further constructive work on the canon, this volume represents a valuable and engaging contribution.

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Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

***Reading the Bible Intertextually*. Edited by Richard Hays, Stefan Alkier, and Leroy Huizenga. Waco: Baylor University Press, 2009. 334 pages. Hardcover, \$49.95.**

No text is an island. Books are not written in complete isolation from other texts, authors, or communities. Both explicitly and implicitly, authors often draw upon other texts in their own compositions. These assertions form the core of the concept of intertextuality. In order to understand the way biblical writers use Scripture, scholars and critics have engaged in intertextual studies and reflected on the methods of intertextual approaches. However, it is not always clear how the term and concept are being used. In *Reading the Bible Intertextually*, editors Stefan Alkier, Richard Hays, and Leroy Huizenga acknowledge these matters and seek to facilitate dialogue between various approaches to intertextual theory. The book itself consists of a collection of fourteen essays originally presented at the "Die Bibel im Dialog der Schriften" conference at Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt, Germany.

The editors divide the book into four main parts. Part I serves as the introduction to the book and sets the theoretical framework in which the rest of the essays will function. Part II contains six essays that provide examples of an intertextual interpretation of biblical texts. This section focuses mostly on the New Testament's use of Old Testament texts but also contains a few examples of the Old Testament's use of the Old Testament itself. After these biblical examples, Part III has five essays that investigate intertextual interpretation outside the boundaries of the canon. The textual possibilities here include ancient literary works as well as historical narratives from other periods. Part IV concludes the volume with further theoretical reflection on intertextuality and New Testament studies.

Because the purpose of the book is concerned with intertextual readings, many of the contributors define and defend the concept. In his two essays that bookend the work, Stefan Alkier grounds intertextuality in the linguistic discipline of semiotics. A semiotic approach views texts as "relational objects composed of signs" (3). Alkier specifically defines a "text" according to semiotic theory as "a complex verbal sign . . . that corresponds to a given expectation of reality" (7). In this model "texts *have* no meaning but rather enable the production of meaning in the act of reading" (3). This reading event involves unavoidable associations with other texts. For Alkier, intertextuality is not an addition to texts but rather "an intrinsic characteristic of textuality" (3). The result of this phenomenon is the "decentering and pluralizing of textual meaning" (3). Acknowledging this multiplicity, the pressing concern becomes the formation of criteria for discerning which textual connections are legitimate. In

ordering these criteria, there are both limited and unlimited concepts of intertextuality. Most intertextual approaches lean toward one of these two options.

In laying out a methodological framework, Alkier contrasts his approach with the other relevant models of meaning in the field of linguistics. He argues for a categorical semiotics in contrast to structuralist or post-structuralist semiotics. Structuralism viewed a text as a closed system of signs that could be discerned with reference solely to the object of study. In reaction to this model, post-structuralism shifted the focus to the limitless possibilities of meaning derived from elements outside of a text. Alternatively, Alkier argues for a model of categorical semiotics that seeks to encompass the concerns of the other two approaches. Categorical semiotics examines texts with the categories of *intratextual*, *intertextual*, and *extratextual* analysis. Intratextuality investigates the text itself as an independent entity in its own context. Intertextuality then examines the relationship a text has with one or more other texts. Extratextuality describes the way external and foreign elements interact with the text. These types of analysis build on each other and are ideally to be done in sequence.

In this scheme, the category of intertextuality can be approached from three perspectives. The production-oriented perspective investigates the intertextual connections that are “produced” by the author of a text. These connections are somehow marked in the text and are part of the “intertextual potential” of the original composition. These intentional or circumstantial “markings” serve as pointers to intertextual references. This perspective represents a narrow/limited conception of intertextuality. Alternatively, the reception-oriented perspective investigates the intertextual connections generated by the working context of the reader. This reception-oriented reading inquires about the “interweaving” of two texts either “in historically verifiable readings” or in “historically possible readings even if historical evidence is lacking” (10). The former angle on this perspective is tied to a limited conception of intertextual and the latter to an unlimited one. Finally, the experimental perspective examines the reading of two or more texts together without concern for whether or not they have any organic connection with each other (10). The example Alkier gives for this perspective is a study done on the “intertextual” relationship between *2 Kings*, *Revelation*, and *Gone with the Wind* (10–11). These categories of intertextuality make up the technical vocabulary that the rest of the contributors will use in articulating the type of intertextual analysis they employ.

Another important concept used throughout is the “universe of discourse” and the “model reader.” The universe of discourse is a phrase that denotes the contextual world in the mind of the reader. This universe is also referred to as an “encyclopedia” (8, 35–37). An encyclopedia is “the cultural framework in which the text is situated and from which the gaps of the text are filled” (8). The model reader is similar to the implied reader. An author of a text assumes a model reader who has a certain universe of discourse. This shared context allows for the production of meaning. Because much of intertextual study depends in some degree on the reception of texts by readers, these two concepts play a pivotal role in the overall discussion.

In addition to these methodological distinctions, the contributors in Part II also provide New Testament examples of intertextual connections with the Old Testament. Michael Schneider gives an intertextual reading of 1 Corinthians 10 by investigating how the words, images, and themes from the Pentateuch broaden and enhance Paul’s meaning. Eckart Reinmuth shows how the “narrative abbreviations” of the Adam story from Genesis function in the book of Romans. Leroy Huizenga

uses the Isaac narratives and its reception history in Jewish exegesis to highlight the Isaac/Jesus typology in the book of Matthew. Florian Wilk examines the way Paul uses, interprets, and reads the book of Isaiah as evidenced in his epistles. Richard Hays argues that Luke employs “intertextual narration” by drawing on an array of Old Testament texts and images in order to present Christ and the Church as the fulfillment and continuation of God’s plan for Israel. Finally, Marianne Grohmann shows the intertextual connections between the Song of Hannah and Psalm 113, and how Mary’s Magnificat in Luke alludes to both of them.

One of the primary strengths of this volume is the window it provides into the dialogue regarding intertextuality in the European context. As evidenced by these diverse essays, the international conversation is interdisciplinary, ecumenical, and rooted in linguistic analysis. This collection allows readers quickly to recognize these emphases and become aware of a broader perspective. Additionally, the discussion helps clarify the concept of intertextuality itself. For instance, Alkier’s formulations noted above provide a helpful guide to the spectrum of interpretive options and divergent understandings of the concept. This larger frame of reference will enable biblical interpreters to nuance the way they speak of the nature of intertextual relationships between texts. The practice of carefully attending to the widening layers of context (i.e., intratextual, intertextual, extratextual) in proper sequence is also a helpful reminder of the importance of a holistic textual interpretation.

The range of essays in the book also demonstrates what is at stake in the difference between a limited and an unlimited conception of intertextuality. As each contributor usually outlines his or her understanding of intertextuality, readers can quickly note the various ways in which texts are handled. Moreover, the essays show that one’s theory of intertextuality depends on one’s theory of textuality (42). For instance, if one views texts as fundamentally open and fluid, he or she will probably favor an unlimited conception of intertextuality. Recognizing this facet of the discussion should compel interpreters to think through their working definitions of text and textuality in a more comprehensive manner. These methodological elements have the potential of enhancing sound exegetical practice among biblical interpreters.

Alongside these strengths, there are also a few concerns and places for further reflection. Some elements of this dialogue might make hermeneutically conservative interpreters nervous. One example is the repeated assumption that the act of reading produces “limitless possibilities” for meaning. Though some criteria are given in the larger semiotic framework, they primarily deal with the aims of interpretation rather than with controls and restraints on divergent interpretive tendencies (237–39). Consequently, the general consensus in the book is definitely inclined toward a reader-oriented approach (43, 242–43). Indeed, an open conception of intertextuality requires the reader to be integrally involved in the generation of meaning. For instance, Alkier asserts that the meaning of a text “will change in every new act of reading and in every new combination of texts” (12).

There is also a strong ecumenical motivation in arguing for a plurality of meaning (e.g., 224). In parts of the book, there is an underlying assumption that a plurality of meaning necessarily contributes to an inclusive social order, and that a more narrow conception of meaning necessarily lends itself toward myopic authoritarianism. Some will question the viability of this correlation, as a plurality of meanings is nonetheless capable of producing close-minded fundamentalism. Conversely, a robust, multi-faceted understanding of the literal sense is also able to produce and

encourage gracious cultural/ideological interactions.

Because much of this discussion works from the vantage point of an expansive model of “meaning making,” entire sections of the book focus solely on extrabiblical material. As noted above, Part III is devoted to “intertextual interpretation outside the boundaries of the canon” (138). For example, Peter Möllendorff discusses the “mimetic potential” related to Lucian’s *True History* and Thomas Schmitz offers a comparison of two works by the Greek writer Nonnus. Though intriguing, these case studies have little to do with the interpretation of biblical texts. Further, in Parts I, III, and IV, the Old Testament is just another text in the “universe of discourse” and does not usually merit an interpretive priority. This feature resonates with the implicit tendency toward extratextual analysis in parts of the book. In this type of investigation, written texts are viewed as only a subset of a larger constellation of signs. Hans-Günter Heimbrock’s essay expands the notion of “text” in phenomenological terms (212–20). In this approach, there is no privileging of texts over even archeological objects. Thus, one can assert that “stones, coins, and apparatuses do not possess less sign character than writings” (247). This type of analysis is not in itself unprofitable. However, those who are interested in “reading *the Bible* intertextually” or who hold to a chastened view of intertextuality will find these elements less compelling.

One concluding reflection involves the possible role of the canon in the intertextual conversation. The concept of “canon” might constructively aid the process of forming controls for the limitless possibilities of meaning. An intentional recognition of canonical boundaries would limit and exclude many intertextual connections. However, a closed canon would actually produce and generate intertextual possibilities as well. (Schnieder raises this possibility in his essay [46]. George Aichele’s essay “Canon as Intertext: Restraint or Liberation?” treats this issue as well, albeit in a different manner [139–56]). By creating contextual relationships between a diverse set of texts, the canon provides a space where intertextual connections are realized. In this model, intertextual connections function within the atmosphere provided by the canon and do not need to journey into the outer space of extratextuality in order to generate fruitful meaning. This conception of intertextuality works within the framework of an author’s intention by means of a confessional-canonical starting point rather than a historical-critical one. Accordingly, readers who adopt a narrow view of intertextuality and are concerned with the communicative intention of authors will see the canon as a more constructive place for the generation of textual meaning than is often allowed for by the contributors.

These concerns aside, the editors achieve their purpose of providing access to a lively dialogue regarding intertextual theory and praxis. Biblical interpreters will benefit from thinking through intertextuality alongside these learned conversation partners.

Ched Spellman

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Theological Studies

***Four Views on Moving beyond the Bible to Theology.* Edited by Gary T. Meadors. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009. Softcover, \$19.99.**

Few events can be more confusing or discouraging to new Christians than to hear two individuals declaring that the Bible teaches opposing positions, or that the

Bible does not address an issue at all. Many Christians have realized that the Bible can be treated “like a dummy in the hands of a ventriloquist” (7). Consequently, there has been growing interest in the question not of what the Bible teaches, but of how the Bible teaches. *Four Views on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology* presents answers to the latter question in the popular Counterpoint format. Influenced by I. Howard Marshall’s *Beyond the Bible: Moving from Scripture to Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), this book is unique in the Counterpoint series in that the positions discussed are by no means fixed representatives—the field is still developing. Howard’s own principled model makes an appearance, but the diversity of the field is made evident in that editor Gary Meadors invited three additional scholars to reflect on the given views, and those scholars presented additional views.

In order to appreciate these various views more clearly, the reader should know that “beyond” does not imply the insufficiency of Scripture. As Meadors notes, when a church member greets a friend with a handshake rather than a holy kiss, he or she has moved beyond the Bible. Any time a pastor preaches a text of Scripture, he has moved beyond the Bible. These authors agree about the authority of the text; they disagree about how the Bible applies to contemporary issues. Most importantly, they disagree about the fundamental nature of Scripture: is it a reference manual for life or spirituality? a script? a roadmap? an enculturated story? The four contributors engage in a very lively (and valuable) debate over this important question.

“A Principializing Model,” Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. Reviewed by Chris Johnson

Walter Kaiser presents the first view, the “principalizing model,” which reflects similar sentiments expressed in his well-known *Toward an Exegetical Theology*. In order to detail his basic approach, Kaiser first defines principalization: “To ‘principalize’ is to [re]state the author’s propositions, arguments, narrations, and illustrations in timeless abiding truths with special focus on the application of those truths to the current needs of the Church” (22). He is quick to distinguish principalization, which derives its conclusions from a careful study of the text, from allegorizing or spiritualizing. Following this explanation, Kaiser outlines how an interpreter would implement his method.

First, the interpreter must determine the subject of the passage in question (22). Second, the interpreter must determine the emphasis of the passage and also note any connections between its words, phrases, and clauses (23). Following this, the passage can be expressed as a propositional principle, regardless of genre. Kaiser offers a “Ladder of Abstraction” as a paradigm for moving from a specific biblical example to a general principle and then to a specific contemporary application. The text of Scripture provides the general principles. From the general principle the interpreter is able to draw out the underlying theological or moral principle and finally apply this to a specific contemporary situation. Kaiser demonstrates how his proposal functions by working through questions including euthanasia, the role of women in the church, homosexuality, and slavery, as well as abortion and stem cell research.

Kaiser closes his chapter with a brief interaction with I. Howard Marshall’s *Beyond the Bible*. Kaiser rejects Marshall’s conclusions by arguing that the biblical writers and early Christians really did not go beyond the text. Kaiser points to the idea of progressive revelation (but not the destructive forms of it) as a key to understanding what takes place between the Old and New Testaments. Kaiser argues that what some might call development and human discovery is actually the perfection

of God's revealed truth (47).

Kaiser's contribution is helpful in that he seeks to anchor theology firmly in Scripture. Although addressed indirectly, Kaiser's approach reveals a high view of Scripture. He wholeheartedly rejects the notion that the Bible is insufficient to address the complexity of modern ethical problems. He acknowledges that many modern dilemmas do not receive direct treatment in Scripture while also affirming that interpreters should not consider God's Word silent on these concerns.

In spite of his positive contributions, Kaiser's work does have some limitations. First, Kaiser devotes the bulk of his essay to test cases of his method. While he ought to be commended for showing how his proposal functions practically, one example would have been sufficient. In his preoccupation with the practical results of his method, Kaiser shifts the focus of the essay too closely upon the contemporary issues, while his conclusions on some of the issues are also particularly unsatisfying. For example, Kaiser's discussion on women and the church does illustrate an application of his principalizing approach, but he undermines his position with the brevity of his treatment. His conclusions on the role of women in the church satisfy his own convictions, but another interpreter could just as easily argue for the opposite viewpoint using Kaiser's method. One's conclusions then depend on the principles chosen.

Another weakness of Kaiser's work is that his approach tends to downplay any differences between the various genres of Scripture. To be fair, Kaiser seems to make an effort to avoid doing this. He distinguishes between the various genres and there is no doubt that he understands the differences. Yet his approach tends to reduce a passage to a rigid summary statement. This is not to argue against propositions but only to say that Kaiser's approach might lead an interpreter to miss unique aspects of the various genres in an effort to principalize a given passage.

Kaiser's proposal lends much to commend itself. His use of specific examples of how his method works in practice is helpful for anyone wishing to adopt his method in their own exegetical work. His approach offers the preacher a constructive way to avoid the moralizing and allegory that can often appear when working through the narrative passages of Scripture (especially Old Testament narrative). Kaiser's proposal also helps the interpreter engage other passages of the Old Testament that he might otherwise ignore. All in all, Kaiser's work in this chapter is quite a useful tool for any exegete.

"A Redemptive-Historical Model," Daniel M. Doriani. Reviewed by Billy Marsh

Daniel Doriani, senior pastor of Central Presbyterian Church and adjunct professor of New Testament at Covenant Seminary, presents doing theology in a "redemptive-historical model" (RHM) (75–76). In his first section, "Foundations for a Redemptive-Historical Interpretation," Doriani situates the RHM within classical evangelicalism surveying its scriptural presuppositions concerning the authority, sufficiency, and clarity of Scripture. In addition, he envisions the task of biblical interpretation and application as one of "technical skill, art, and personal commitment" (76).

Section two, "The Redemptive-Historical Method and its Way Beyond the Sacred Page," provides steps for doing theology beginning with exegesis and moving into theological interpretation and application. For Doriani, the interpreter seeks first the authorial intent with priority given to the writer's main point. Second, his

task is to synthesize the biblical data into a holistic theological reading of the Bible (84–85). Third, Doriani suggests that all Christian application should be understood through “the imitation of God/imitation of Christ motif” (86). And fourth, by highlighting the use of biblical narratives, he argues that these narratives ought to be viewed as paradigms for daily Christian living (87–88).

In his third section dedicated to surveying alternative approaches for going “beyond the sacred page,” Doriani does little more than briefly interact with the methodological fruits of the methods of I. H. Marshall and proponents of a trajectory or movement view of Scripture. Doriani’s fourth section entitled, “Going Beyond the Sacred Page through Casuistry,” encourages the use of “casuistry” for carefully moving beyond Scripture for constructing theology. He acknowledges the potential pitfalls of “casuistry”; nonetheless, Doriani sees the term’s appeal to a higher principle as beneficial for guidance through complex issues not directly addressed in Scripture.

In his final section, “Going Beyond the Sacred Page by Asking the Right Questions,” Doriani proffers four “questions the Bible endorses” to ask when applying Scripture’s teachings to everyday life: “What is my duty?” “What are the marks of a good character?” “What goals are worthy of my life energy?” “How can I gain a biblical worldview?” (102–03). For the remainder of his chapter, Doriani applies his “right” questions and his interpretive methodology to two controversial life-issues: gambling and women in the ministry.

Doriani’s contribution, although basic and orthodox in its presentation, affords instances that require critical evaluation. For example, within his first section, Doriani fails to give any real explanation of the distinctives of his model. In particular, the emphasis on “history” in his method’s title is never fully discussed. He does delve into the role of paradigmatic narratives for Christian application, but he does not clarify what he means by “redemptive-history” as the preferred way to perceive the Bible as canon. Doriani neglects to expound upon this fundamental feature in sufficient detail.

Doriani’s narrative approach is welcomed as a means of appropriating the character of Scripture, but weakened by his search for patterns within the biblical narratives. The discovery of patterns is helpful, but Doriani does not specify what constitutes a pattern. Moreover, is a series of patterns necessary to produce a norm or is a single occurrence sufficient (89)? Vanhoozer notes rightly in his response that here Doriani shifts from “prudence” into principalizing (130). Furthermore, when suggesting “casuistry” as another means of moving from the Bible to theology, Doriani’s appeal to higher principles seemed to depart from his narrative intent. With respect to his commitment to “the imitation of God/Christ motif,” “casuistry” needs to be brought into congruence with this form of application which Doriani identifies as the standard and goal of Christian character formation (86).

In conclusion, Doriani’s proposal is exactly what he says it is: “a call to return to diligent exegesis and the orthodoxies of interpretation” (118). One should respect Doriani’s commitment to a classical evangelical approach to Scripture, but the RHM itself finds insufficient treatment. The essay leaves the reader unsure as to why he or she ought to adopt the RHM in particular, notwithstanding the value of his theory of narrative for Christian ethics, which is not, however, reserved for Doriani’s approach alone. As a chapter in a Counterpoint book where one’s position is meant to achieve superiority and approval over other options, Doriani’s falls short of its potential to present a strong nuanced method, which is demonstrated by the fact

that both Kaiser and Vanhoozer spend more time agreeing with him than not.

“A Drama-of-Redemption Model,” Kevin J. Vanhoozer. Reviewed by Michael Economidis

The title of Vanhoozer’s contribution to Gary Meador’s *Four Views on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology* is apt. As in his *The Drama of Doctrine*, Vanhoozer, Blanchard Professor of Theology at Wheaton College, is greatly interested in the analogy of theater to Bible interpretation and Christian life and the relatedness of speech to act. He sets the stage, so to speak, by noting the dramatic quality of the Christian faith and relating the various aspects of theological work to aspects of the theater (155–62). From there, he discusses the viability of considering interpretative functions as a subset of performance. He wants to affirm this viability and understand “the criterion for normative appropriation [as] a function of what I shall term the implied canonical reader,” i.e., a disciple (169). The goal of this appropriation is the Theodramatic Vision, or reading a passage wisely, which is a “demonstration of theodramatic understanding, . . . not to apply but to appropriate [the Bible’s] message” (170). It requires creativity on the part of the performer, and Vanhoozer provides measuring rods to protect against poor theological improvisation: the canon sense, the catholic sensibility, and the rule of love (179–84). He then offers two case studies, Mary and transsexuality, and sums up the entirety of his essay and method with the acronym AAA (attend, appraise, advance) (198).

Vanhoozer’s concept and method here have much to commend them. The theater analogy seems particularly helpful in that it emphasizes the great need on the part of believers and of the world as a whole for those believers to play their part in the ongoing drama of redemption (160). It should also be mentioned that Vanhoozer’s vision of a grand drama in which all believers participate and into which they may also be led by appropriating the world “in front of” the text (166) is quite appealing. One might take issue, though, with the apparent false dichotomy between what Vanhoozer calls “abstract truth” and “concrete wisdom-in-fact” (159, cf. 178, 203). Yet, to neglect the attainment of knowledge, “abstract (propositional) truth,” is to neglect an important aspect of interpretation, which is still a vital area of life the neglect of which can only hinder the “performative” variety of interpretation.

With this dichotomy of “mental” and “performative” interpretation in mind, one might also note that perhaps the philosophy of interpretation might be reversed and augmented in Vanhoozer such that performance and mentation could be viewed as species of the genus interpretation (165). Doriani rightly notes that Scripture offers examples of believers being taught worldviews and propositions. Such a view would result in a much broader, arguably more functional method that would better define the relationship between doctrine and ethics.

A second issue concerns Vanhoozer’s statement to the effect that, “*Sacra pagina* is profitable for *sacra doctrina*, which in turn is profitable for *sacra vita* (holy living)” (154). It seems that Vanhoozer reverses the final two in theory, yet his practice seems to reflect the order of the quote. To focus on the appropriation of the world in front of the text (158, 166, 170) would be to focus on *sacra vita*, would it not? Thereby, one’s focus in reading and interpreting would decidedly not be on *sacra doctrina* primarily. This all assumes, though, that “doctrine” is not doctrine in the formulaic sense but in the sense of principle-by-which-to-live. To live by Scripture, to appropriate the drama into one’s own life, necessitates “concrete” guides (principles?), to incorporate. One does not simply appropriate godly living by osmosis through

reading. One reads, finds an example of how to live (principle), and incorporates (appropriates) that example into his life (159, 166–70, 172, 178–84, 198). Thus, ethical norms, as opposed to doctrines (formulas of belief), are the presuppositions of ethics. Yet, Vanhoozer does not distinguish between doctrines as ethical norms and doctrines as formulas of belief, so one wonders as to how Vanhoozer understands the process of interpretation correctly to function in light of his stated order and his practical usage.

One cannot, however, fault Vanhoozer's correct emphasis on the interpretive acting-out of the believer's faith. And, above all else in his essay, the call for appropriation of the text should bring his readers' focus back to a genre of interpretation that is often simply assumed, namely that interpretation demands submission on the part of the interpreter to immersion in the world of the text and to the authority thereby represented. Vanhoozer offers a complement to much of modern Bible study, yet it needs the steady, propositional support of traditional Bible study to provide anchorage.

"A Redemptive-Movement Model," William J. Webb. Reviewed by Jonathan Wood

William J. Webb, known for his book *Slaves, Women and Homosexuals*, presents the Redemptive-Movement Model for moving from Scripture to theology. His contributions in *Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology* stands as a phrase of response in the conversation generated by his previous methodological assertions. This response comes to the reader's attention in the section, "Correcting Misconceptions," which may be summarized as Webb's defense against the claims of his opponents that his approach endangers the verbal-plenary doctrine of revelation.

Webb argues that the task of the theologian is to go beyond the concrete specificity of the Bible lest he warrant accusation of stopping where the Bible stops. Webb's model for moving beyond the Bible depends upon simultaneously understanding the text from the perspectives of the original culture, the reader's culture, and the ultimate ethic projected by the spirit of the text. An essential part of Webb's model is that the spirit of the text produces incremental movement from the cultural ethic toward the ultimate ethic. Biblical study should seek to discern this "movement meaning," which in turn should "tug at our heartstrings and beckon us to go further" (217). The hermeneutic Webb employs rests upon a strong idea of accommodation in which God met individuals at the point they could comprehend incremental moral progress.

Webb rightly draws attention to the limitation of a mindset which operates under the rubric of going only where the Bible goes and stopping only where the Bible stops. He views this method as inadequate for developing theology in cultures subsequent to the formation of the canon. His arguments provide emphasis to the inherent necessity of thinking beyond the words of the Bible in the task of theological formation. Additionally, Webb's approach rightly values cultural and historical context. However, this chapter raises several concerns.

First, it appears that Webb does not think that Scripture provides an ultimate ethic. Webb claims that the interpreter must look to the redemptive movement of the text to discover the trajectory on which one must continue to find the ultimate ethic. However, the definition of the redemptive movement in Scripture suffers from a vagueness that prevents the necessary boundaries by which trajectories springing from Scripture may be evaluated. The consequence of leaning so heavily on the

redemptive trajectory of Scripture is compromising the biblical canon as final and closed revelation. Webb defends himself on this point by affirming the New Testament as God's final revelation, yet he still perceives a distinction between the revelation of the New Testament and the implications of the redemptive-movement spirit of the text. The danger created is that such a hermeneutic for discerning the redemptive-movement element lacks interaction with the text as authoritative guide.

One manifestation of this is Webb's dependence upon the authority of extra-biblical sources instead of the text of Scripture itself to bear out the trajectory. For example, the movement of slavery texts toward an ultimate ethic of abolition depends upon discerning ancient Near Eastern context. Similarly, the development of corporal punishment texts away from the primitivism of spanking rides on non-inspired cultural law codes. Webb's method hinges on cultural artifacts for discerning the moral trajectories of Scripture. Perhaps the most significant consequence of Webb's approach is that the biblical text does not contain the ultimate ethic.

A final mention of Webb's method focuses on the scope of the theology produced by his method. A weakness of his contribution to the book, and perhaps his method in general, is overemphasis on the area of moral theology to the exclusion of other areas of theology. He does not discuss in what way the redemptive-movement elements of Scripture relate to the formulation of doctrine outside of moral theology. Perhaps looking at Webb's proposal in the light of the history of doctrinal development would reveal that many crucial doctrinal developments in areas such as Christology were not settled so much on the basis of a movement behind the text, but more so as a result of meditation upon the concrete particulars on the page.

Conclusion and Summary

The variety of methods of biblical interpretation and application—and the impact of that variety—cannot be ignored. Furthermore, the reviewers noted valuable aspects of each. The principlizing model correctly identifies objective revealed truth in Scripture. The redemptive-historical model correctly notes that the Bible centrally bears witness to God's eternal plan to redeem humanity to Himself through Jesus Christ. The drama-of-redemption model correctly emphasizes that the Bible is not merely to be read, but to be lived. The redemptive-movement model rightly recognizes that God gave the Bible at a particular nexus of history and culture which cannot be ignored in hermeneutics. Some of the authors recognize the complementary nature of their views, but each maintains a sense of tension between them. Readers will find themselves agreeing and disagreeing with elements of each of the views, underscoring the potential of this subject to generate growth as well as division.

Interestingly, Meadors brings in three additional scholars to present further reflections on the four views presented. Mark Strauss teaches New Testament at Bethel Seminary. He emphasizes the subjectivity of biblical interpretation and consequently minimizes the goal of discovering objective principles rather than practices. He sees value in affirming the historical-grammatical hermeneutic, but insists that a Bible reader cannot stay completely in the text, so to speak. He recognizes the huge limitations of Vanhoozer's drama metaphor and Webb's search for a so-called trajectory of the Spirit. He then proposes in their stead a model of the Bible as a bridge or a journey which, he admits, runs into those same limitations. Al Wolters teaches philosophy and Old Testament at Redeemer University College. He points out how each view falls short in the most challenging texts, especially those about child discipline, slavery, and gender subordination. Instead, he proposes that the

Bible does actually teach offensive positions to those in an enlightened Western context. In place of the four views, he offers general revelation (“creation revelation”) as the key to unlocking the Bible; it is the real context for the drama of humanity (to use Vanhoozer’s term) and it cannot be separated from historical conditioning. Christopher Wright directs Langham Partnership International. He sees elements of truth in each of the views presented and offers the case study of unclean meat to prove his claim. But rather than pick apart their weaknesses, he focuses on the need for a unifying, intentional approach to Scripture, whatever it may be. He proposes the story of Creation, Fall, Redemption, New Creation as that approach, emphasizing its missional perspective. In essence, Wright simply replaces the views with a missional hermeneutic, elegant (and very limited) in its simplicity.

Each of the three additional authors points out the unintended discrepancies and parallels in the four views. For example, where Vanhoozer would emphasize living out the story of forgiveness in the parable of the prodigal son, Kaiser would focus on the principle of forgiveness. But in what ways are these approaches really different? How can they be separated? When Doriani synthesizes Scripture into ethical statements, how is this different from the principlizing model? Yet when Doriani and Kaiser come to opposing conclusions about issues such as gender roles, how do they determine which is wrong? Clearly, often each of the contributors simply talk past one another. The diverse reactions of the additional contributors underscore just how difficult this debate is. Readers may not agree with the views, but they will learn a great deal.

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***Love Wins: A Book about Heaven, Hell, and the Fate of the Every Person Who Ever Lived.* By Rob Bell. New York: HarperCollins, 2011. 202 + xi pages. Softcover, \$22.99.**

Rob Bell, long-time pastor of Mars Hill Bible Church in Grand Rapids, and provocateur extraordinaire, provides another controversial, popular-level book in the vein of *Velvet Elvis* (2006) and *Sex God* (2008). Ever the deconstructionist, Bell continues his usual approach, begun in *Velvet Elvis*, of thought-provoking questioning. However, Bell is no religious anarchist. Rather, as he writes in the first chapter, “this isn’t just a book of questions. It’s a book of responses to these questions” (19). For this, he is to be commended. Rather than hiding his own certitude behind the veneer of “just asking questions,” Bell is an honest deconstructionist, signaling his intention to reconstruct, replacing what he is convinced is false with what he is certain is true. Specifically, he contends that the story of Jesus’ love triumphs over all other stories and that the oft-told stories of God’s judgment are misguided.

Surprisingly, there is much good in Bell’s book, as he raises some excellent questions, pressing evangelicalism in some areas in which fidelity to the Scriptures is often lacking. Pastorally, in an ecclesiological culture poor in Kingdom language and understanding, Bell repeatedly emphasizes Jesus’ words about its nearness, refusing (as did Jesus) to relegate it to a coming age; evangelicals would do well to heed his call to the message of the present reality and availability of the Kingdom. In a Baptist ecclesiological paradigm where a vote is considered a right, many lose sight of that fact, thinking that it is their Kingdom. Further, in bringing the Kingdom approach to bear on the individual level, Bell reminds us that eternal life, as depicted

in the Scriptures, is not simply life that lasts forever, but is also a state of life lived with the God the Eternal One. He writes, “Eternal life doesn’t start when we die; it starts now. It’s not about a life that begins at death; it’s about experiencing the kind of life now that can endure and survive even death” (59). This proper emphasis brings eternity to bear on everyday life where marriage, and parenting, and neighbors exist, which is exactly what Jesus intended when he inaugurated the Kingdom. Scripturally, a relationship with Christ is not about punching a ticket to “get to heaven” (cf. 178–79) but about life with Christ. Bell also properly situates ethics within the context of these eschatological realities (46), noting that our understanding of what the Kingdom is will drive how we live in the world, something the people of Heritage Park Baptist Church hear weekly. Finally, Bell is right that people—both individually and corporately—create living hells in this life through abuse (7), genocide (70), human trafficking (78), and other evils that human beings perpetuate against each other. In addition, by the choices they make many “choose to live in their own hells all the time” (114). In all these cases, Bell accurately portrays the scriptural realities regarding the kingdom, eternal life, and living hells.

But Bell only gets these things half right as he curiously falls into a sort of Ramist logic which insists on either-or, precluding the sort of both-and approach that fans of the postmodern epistemological move like Bell ostensibly embrace. For Bell, it seems that kingdom here-and-now precludes looking towards a greater kingdom that is coming, eternal life here-and-now excludes the greater eternal life that is coming, and hells of our own making as a result of sin preclude a greater hell that is coming. His commitment to this sort of logic shows up again in chapter seven, “The Good News Is Better Than That.” There, Bell is unwilling to hold in tension that God both judges sin and rescues us from His judgment of sin through the work of Christ “so that He might be both just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus” (Rom 3:26). If true, it can be said, *contra* Bell, that Jesus rescues us from God (182). In other words, in orthodox thought, God rescues us from God. This may be untenable in a strictly Ramist logic, but in a world in which the paradoxical incarnation of the Word of God turns all such logics on their head, it is true, nonetheless. Further, in this process, Bell rejects the historic orthodox understanding of divine simplicity—that God’s essence cannot be reduced to any one thing or attribute—and instead embraces the rather recent understanding of God as essentially love (177), a concept that grew out of nineteenth-century, European Protestant Liberalism.

Bell’s argument is also troubled by two general methodological problems: his selective use of history and his atomizing hermeneutical approach. First, Bell confidently and consistently posits that there are those in the mainstream of Christian history who have held to his views. In chapter four, “Does God Get What God Wants?,” he writes, “At the center of the Christian tradition since the first church have been a number who insist that history is not tragic, hell is not forever, and love, in the end, wins and all will be reconciled to God” (109). He points to Origen, whose *apokatastasis*—the restoration of all things, and thus universal salvation—was a perspective that was influential in the East, being picked up in whole or part by the Cappadocian fathers, but was ultimately condemned (even in the East) at the fifth ecumenical council, Constantinople II (553 AD). He also curiously lines up Jerome, Augustine, and Luther as supportive of his view that in order for God to “get what God wants,” everyone will be saved (106, 107). Here, Bell selectively appropriates historical figures (some wrongly) in order to garner support for his particular position.

Bell's approach to Scripture is comparably selective. In fact, his atomistic approach to the Scriptures ignores context, which should be the greatest determiner of meaning. A few examples should suffice. First, he takes multiple Old Testament texts that promise restoration to Israel and decontextualizes them, applying them to all people. Whatever "Israel" means, that question is paramount in understanding these texts. Second, in keeping with his embrace of apokatastasis, based on Ezekiel 16 and Matthew 11, he offers that there's still hope for Sodom and Gomorrah. In this particular instance, Bell claims that since Jesus condemns Capernaum, there must be hope for Sodom (83–85). But, in a passage about judgment, Jesus' intent is pretty clear: it will be worse for Capernaum on judgment day than it has been for Sodom, precisely because they reject Him. In other words, what they know about Him and do with what they know about Him matters quite a bit. Third, in what amounts to proof-texting, Bell lifts many verses from the gospels, including John 6, 10, and 12, in order to persuade his readers that all people will be saved through Jesus Christ. He specifically employs John 12:48 in order to persuade us to embrace nonjudgmental attitudes about the eternal destiny of people because "Jesus says, he 'did not come to judge the world, but to save the world'" (160). Although Bell is right that Christians are not judges, the theological argument of the book is muted by the very next verse that indicates that judgment is, indeed, coming: "The Word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day (John 12:48)." Fourth, decontextualization allows Bell to argue for a broadness in salvation that amounts to Christian pluralism, an "exclusivity on the other side of inclusivity" (155). Taking John 14:6 as his starting point, he writes "what [Jesus] doesn't say is how, or when, or in what manner the mechanism functions that gets people to God through him" (154). In this, he once again ignores context, for in the same chapter Jesus Himself gives faith as the "how" by which people come to God through Him. Overall, the broader context of John, informed by such verses as John 3:18 and 3:36, which indicate that salvation comes to those who believe, while judgment "remains" upon all who do not believe in Christ, is ignored. The common thread in all these examples is Bell's refusal to embrace a God that judges sin, which is not surprising considering that his burden from the beginning is to re-tell the "Jesus story" in such a way that "Jesus' message of love, peace, forgiveness, and joy" can be heard anew (viii). Without a doubt, this is a noble goal. However, if getting to "God's retelling of our story" (173), requires the fragmenting of the Scripture—an ironically modern approach—in order to retell it, then many Christians will reject it, choosing instead to read the Scripture with the pre-commitments of the early church, which believed that the Scriptures must be taken as a whole, a whole whose story teaches both that Christ came "because of our salvation" and that He would come again "to judge the living and the dead." Bell's story is different.

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***The Message of the Holy Spirit.* By Keith Warrington. Edited by Alec Motyer and John Stott. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2009. 288 pages. Paperback, \$18.00.**

Keith Warrington is the Vice-Principal and Director of Doctoral Studies at Regents Theological College in Cheshire, England. His background in missions work with Operation Mobilisation and pastoral experience at Ilkeston, Derbyshire and Bootle, Merseyside, as well as his self-proclaimed Pentecostal position are evident in this work in the Bible Speaks Today series (13).

Warrington claims that “the primary focus of this book is not the development of a dogmatic theology of the Spirit,” but rather “a theological exploration, practical, and biblically based,” which challenges readers to “apply” the “practical relevance” of the material (12–14, 245, 249). While at first glance the book appears to be a study of the Spirit in the Old and New Testaments, it is actually arranged topically as well as biblically such that, “each chapter is a separate exploration of an issue relating to” the Spirit (14). In each issue, Warrington emphasizes some combination of three characteristics of the Spirit: (1) the inexplicability of the Spirit, (2) personal encounters with the Spirit, and (3) the Spirit’s affirmation of the believer’s soteriological status as more important than His empowerment (12, 245). The idea of “inexplicability” seems to be that believers are invited to explore the Spirit but can never completely know Him (12, 16–17, 29, 249). These issues and characteristics are explored in four sections, including the Spirit in the: Old Testament, the Gospels, Acts, and the Epistles. As a major theme of the book, Warrington argues that since the Spirit leads believers into suffering as part of the fulfillment of their commission to preach the gospel, then they should look for His support to endure rather than remove suffering (76–84, 127–28, 169–70, 174).

The major contribution that Warrington makes to studies on the Spirit is his practical application of the material. In addition, pastors and teachers will appreciate his illustrations, some of which are from the internet in the late 1990’s to early 2000’s (174, 225–26), and others that are original (188, 243, 246). Another contribution of his work to the field of pneumatology is his biblically based discussion of the major pneumatological controversies from a conservative Pentecostal perspective that seems corrective of earlier and more radical interpretations. For example, in his discussions of tongues and spiritual gifts, he claims respectively that “the Spirit is interested in inclusion” (141) and “manifestation of ‘spiritual gifts’ does not indicate a superior spirituality” (180), which seems corrective of the exclusive two-tiered spirituality that still exists in some churches as a result of the doctrine of subsequence. His exegesis is nontechnical so that pastors and laypeople can easily understand it, yet still insightful so that academics can benefit from it.

The book’s bibliography (10) seems selective and is necessarily supplemented by numerous other sources in the work’s footnotes (cf. esp. 13–14). Following his Pentecostal position, Warrington’s sources seem weighted toward the Pentecostal-Charismatic view (10), but are counterbalanced by the numerous footnotes in the text referring to other views (87, 179, 189, 210). His bibliography and book are disproportionately focused on the New Testament with approximately only seventeen pages given to the Spirit in the Old Testament (20–22, 35–48) and with Matthew, Mark, and the General Epistles excluded from the study. His qualification of conducting a topical study may excuse these exclusions (14). However, attention to the works of Congar, Warfield, and Montague would help to round out his bibliography and expand his section on the Spirit in the Old Testament. Perhaps attention to

James Hamilton's *God's Indwelling Presence* may contribute to Warrington's study of John (chapters 7–9), since he touches on all three of Hamilton's main passages, John 7:39; 14:17; 16:7 (10, 85–117).

While Warrington's work is a good source for discovering Pentecostal theology, non-Pentecostals and non-Charismatics will find some of his conclusions troubling. In his discussion of spiritual gifts, Warrington, like Wayne Grudem, takes the "mediating position" that "a gift of the Spirit may be a natural gift that has been invested with supernatural energy by God," but some non-Pentecostal and non-Charismatics will find this view difficult since they seem to maintain a clearer distinction between spiritual gifts and natural abilities (48, 181–82). In his discussion of the Spirit's guidance (prophecy), Warrington attempts to preserve the Zwingli-Calvin Word-Spirit correlation (which was explicitly formulated to counteract the teachings of the enthusiasts of their time) but ultimately violates it by claiming that the Spirit reveals information not present in the Word and does so even after the close of the canon to the present (143–47). Many non-Pentecostal and non-Charismatics will be troubled by this view, as some believe it violates at least the sufficiency, authority, and inerrancy of Scripture. In fact, just after making the claim for "extrabiblical revelation" Warrington appears to deny inerrancy by claiming that the Spirit "provided particular *guidance* to local churches that *differed* from messages *offered to others*" (emphasis added, 147–48).

At the end of the book, Warrington provides a study guide with good application questions that also serves as a helpful summary overview of each chapter.

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***Salvation and Sovereignty: A Molinist Approach.* By Kenneth Keathley. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010. 232 pages. Softcover, \$24.99.**

In *Salvation and Sovereignty*, Kenneth Keathley seeks to provide an account of salvation which is faithful to the biblical witness, taking into account both the sovereign work of God's grace and a robust conception of human freedom. In order to accomplish this task Keathley appeals to the work of Luis Molina (1535–1600), a familiar figure to those aware of the debates about human freedom and divine foreknowledge in philosophy of religion. Molinism, says Keathley, forms an unlikely and radical "compatibilism" between "a Calvinist view of divine sovereignty and an Arminian view of human freedom," and does this by way of the doctrine of God's middle knowledge (5). God's "middle knowledge" is so called because it is found in the second of three logical moments of God's knowledge, between his natural knowledge and his free knowledge. God's natural knowledge is his knowledge of all possibilities, says Keathley, the knowledge of everything that *could* happen. God's free knowledge is his perfect knowledge of this world that he chose to create. This knowledge is referred to as free by Molina because it is a result of God's free choice to create this world rather than any of the other infinite possible worlds He could have created. So God's free knowledge is his knowledge of what *will* happen. God's middle knowledge, on the other hand, is his knowledge of what *would* happen; that is, it is God's knowledge of what any free creature would freely choose to do in any given circumstance. So, says Molina, God can use his middle knowledge (his knowledge of what are called counterfactuals of creaturely freedom) to engineer circumstances in

such a way that He can exercise sovereign control over his creation without violating the freedom of human beings. Molinism is not simply a philosophical system, but according to Keathley, has decisive biblical support (19–38).

Having established his Molinist framework in chapter one, Keathley begins to apply it to the doctrine of salvation. In chapter two he considers the question “Does God desire the salvation of all?” and answers in the affirmative. This answer, of course, creates another problem. If God desires all be saved, why are some damned? Keathley considers a number of options, and argues for a distinction between the antecedent and consequent wills of God. Antecedently, God wills that all be saved, and consequently he wills that faith be the condition for salvation. This position, Keathley argues, “seems to be the clear teaching of Scripture” (58).

In chapters three through seven, Keathley lays out a case for a soteriology that also makes use of the Molinist framework. As Keathley notes on the first page, his work is directed primarily at the Christian who finds himself “convinced of certain central tenets of Calvinism but not its corollaries.” Keathley himself finds the biblical evidence compelling for three of the points of TULIP: total depravity, unconditional election, and perseverance of the saints, but refashions these concepts in his own language. As to the others, Keathley rejects them out of hand, arguing that “[l]imited atonement and irresistible grace cannot be found in the Scriptures unless one first puts them there” (2). And so Keathley proceeds by replacing the TULIP acronym with the ROSES acronym suggested by Timothy George, and structuring the remainder of the book along those lines. Chapter three is devoted to Radical depravity, chapter four to Overcoming grace, chapter five to Sovereign election, chapter six to Eternal life, and chapter seven to Singular redemption. It is thus in chapters four and seven that Keathley mounts arguments against the TULIP points of irresistible grace and limited atonement for which he finds no support in Scripture. In chapter four he argues instead for a monergistic view of grace (one according to which God accomplishes our salvation without our cooperation) which is resistible, and in chapter seven he argues that Christ’s atoning work is sufficient for each and every individual (Christ died for each and every person in particular), but efficient only for those who believe (faith is a condition for salvation). It is worth noting that while Keathley most clearly opposes his position to Calvinism, his arguments serve equally well as responses to certain Arminian doctrines.

Keathley’s application of Molinism to the question of soteriology is both extensive and timely. Most impressive is the mere number of biblical references in the work. Keathley makes sure that his arguments are supported by the authority of the biblical text. In addition, Keathley is to be commended for tackling passages which appear to contradict his position. Keathley does not shy away from texts commonly used by Calvinists as support for their views (he spends several pages on Rom 9), and while his interpretation of these passages undoubtedly will remain a matter of dispute, Keathley makes his case with consistency and clarity. That said, there are a couple of statements whose ambiguity could be problematic. On page 116, Keathley writes, “there is nothing in the graciousness of salvation that entails (i.e., logically requires) that the opportunity to believe be withheld from all but the elect. In fact, *the overwhelming preponderance of Scripture* teaches the very opposite” (emphasis added). While I do not think this is what Keathley means, one could read this last statement as pointing to a conflict within the witness of Scripture. If “the overwhelming preponderance of Scripture” testifies to one thing, say, that the opportunity to believe is not withheld from all but the elect, one might infer

that there is in fact testimony in Scripture, albeit a significant minority, that the opportunity to believe is withheld from all but the elect. And thus there would be found a division in the testimony of the Word of God concerning a significant soteriological point. Here Keathley's work would benefit from a bit more clarity.

But such clarity is one of the strongest characteristics of Keathley's work on the whole. Although he is dealing with complicated philosophical and theological issues, Keathley is able to make them accessible to all, whether professional academic or not. Keathley achieves this clarity with language and style that is communicative, pleasant to read, and not overly technical. In certain places, this style of writing may hamper his argument somewhat. For instance, those familiar with the philosophical debates surrounding Molinism may find his explication of that doctrine a bit simplistic—but not to the degree that his understanding of the doctrine could not be defended on a more technical level. In addition, the structure of each chapter contributes greatly to understanding for readers of all levels. Keathley is comprehensive in his discussion of the various positions on each and every point, and summary charts help assist the reader in keeping all of the information organized. For these reasons, Keathley's work will make a significant contribution to anyone's library. Even those who disagree wholeheartedly with his conclusions will find great benefit in this work as a reference tool for the relevant positions and biblical passages.

For the most part, I agree with Paige Patterson's evaluation in the foreword when he says that Keathley "has a philosopher's reasoning, a theologian's grasp of Scripture, and a preacher's clarity" (x). But particularly as a philosopher, there is one point that I wish Keathley had argued with more vigor. In the course of explaining why he embraces soft libertarianism, Keathley explains the principle of alternative possibilities, a key component of any libertarian view of freedom. As Keathley writes, "A necessary component for liability is that, at a significant point in the chain of events, the ability to choose or refrain from choosing had to be genuinely available" (75). Here, as elsewhere, Keathley connects responsibility with alternative possibilities and a biblical understanding of freedom. According to Keathley, the Bible argues that we have freedom of responsibility, which requires agent causation, "the ability to be the originator of a decision, choice, or action" (77). The main argument offered here is that since humans are created in the image of God and since God is a causal agent, human beings are causal agents and thus possess some libertarian freedom (e.g., 8, 72). And since libertarian freedom entails responsibility (I know of no one who would argue otherwise), humans are responsible as well as free.

All of this is well and good, but Keathley's argument would be considerably strengthened if he moved in the other direction as well. Many Calvinists will dispute Keathley's claim that Scripture teaches that humans possess some libertarian freedom, nor will they find his appeal to the *imago dei* convincing. But no Calvinist would deny that Scripture clearly teaches that humans are responsible. If Keathley could provide a good argument that responsibility requires libertarian freedom, he would go a long way in helping his case. Unfortunately, Keathley seems to simply assume that human responsibility requires alternative possibilities and thus some form of libertarian freedom rather than argue for this point. From a philosophical standpoint, Keathley would need to respond to the work of Harry Frankfurt and John Martin Fischer, who have argued vehemently that humans can be responsible without having alternative possibilities and thus libertarian freedom. Keathley consults numerous philosophers, but the work of Frankfurt and Fischer cannot be found in his bibliography. Even if responding to these philosophers would be too technical

a task for this work (and thus obscure the argument rather than contribute to it), Keathley would be well served to argue the connection between libertarian freedom and human responsibility from both sides. Had he done so, he would have strengthened what is already an impressive piece of philosophical and biblical theology.

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***Trinitarian Theology for the Church: Scripture, Community, Worship.* Edited by Daniel J. Treier and David Lauber. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2009. 262 pages. Softcover, \$26.00.**

This work is a three-part collection of selected essays from the 2008 Wheaton College Theology Conference: “Scripture: The Bible and the Triune Economy,” “Community: The Trinity and Society,” and “Worship: Church Practices and the Triune Mission.” Due to the nature of this collection, one would not be able to find a single theme that penetrates throughout this work. However, that does not undermine the value of this book. Even one might be surprised with some of the varying positions concerning an identical issue or theologian. Nevertheless, such a theological disagreement among contributors makes this book more attractive because its readers would have a rare opportunity to compare opposite views from responsible scholars.

In the first section, “Scripture: The Bible and the Triune Economy,” Vanhoozer wrote the best and most provocative article in this book. When reading the Bible, argues Vanhoozer, its readers do not merely study the past report of God but they actually “can listen directly to the Divine voice itself speaking immediately in the Scripture word” (35). Vanhoozer’s trinitarian doctrine of the Bible is a synthesis of Barth’s theology of the Word and Wolterstorff’s “analytic philosophy” of divine speech (45). In opposition to extremely rationalized propositionalists, Vanhoozer reminds us of Barth’s theology of the Word, a theology that points to the necessity of listening to the sovereign Lord Jesus Christ who freely speaks the will of the Father through the Holy Spirit in the Bible. On the other hand, Vanhoozer rejects Barth’s anti-propositional position. Following Wolterstorff’s analysis of speech, Vanhoozer declares that a divine speech makes a divine action the revelation of God by assigning a specific meaning to that action. Barth’s disjunction between a divine action and human speech is meaningless because the Son of God speaks human words, both oral and written, as divine revelation. Therefore, Christians must accept biblical inerrancy. Again, however, biblical inerrancy should not be an excuse of ignoring the illuminating role of the Holy Spirit who witnesses to the living Christ, the Word of the Father. Edith M. Humphry establishes that the eternal functional subordination of the Son is essential to a biblical understanding of the Trinity. Humphry vigorously refutes reading *perichoresis* as “a round dance,” which theologically refuses any functional subordination of any divine Person within the Trinity. Etymologically, *perichoresis* does not derive from “*chora* (meaning ‘place’),” or “*chorus* (dance)” and, therefore, it means that the three divine Persons share the same place through mutual indwelling and interpenetration (95). Humphry accurately asserts that Augustine never denied the monarchy of the Father when defending the *filioque*.

In the second section, “Community: The Trinity and Society?,” John R. Franke praises the Cappadocian Fathers and Richard of St. Victor who opened a social

trinitarianism and saw community, not substance, as the divine nature of the Trinity. In Franke's view, Augustine is responsible for creating a psychological analogy of the Trinity—being, knowledge, and will—that fails to demonstrate the Godhead in terms of personhood. However, this reviewer challenges Franke to reread Augustine in *De Trinitate*, who was fully aware of a social analogy of persons like that of the Cappadocian Fathers. Augustine did not choose such a social analogy of plural persons because of the danger of tritheism. In fact, Richard did not suggest his exegesis of the communal nature of charity as an alternative to Augustine's trinitarianism. Augustine had already explained the interrelationship of the divine Persons in the immanent Trinity in light of the communal love of the Father (the lover), the Son (the beloved one), and the Holy Spirit (the mutual love between the Father and the Son). Unfortunately, Franke does not reflect recent scholarship led by Ayres and Barnes on Augustinian trinitarianism that attests considerable theological congruence between the Latin Church and the Greek Church regarding the Trinity.

In contrast to Franke, Mark Husbands is very critical of contemporary social trinitarians such as Volf. According to Husbands, Volf's social trinitarianism comes from his misreading of Gregory of Nyssa who never taught social and anthropological implications of the immanent Trinity for a human relationship. Husbands rightly warns of the "overrealized" eschatological orientation of social trinitarians who argue as if Christians could and should achieve the perfect *perichoresis*, the mutually dependent and interpenetrating life shared by the divine Persons of the Trinity, on earth (126). The Bible presents Jesus Christ as the sole realization of the perfect communion between God and man. Therefore, even the church and any Christian organization cannot manifest the perfect communal life within the triune God. Keith E. Johnson also points out the theological dangers of a utilitarian approach to the doctrine of the Trinity in the way that delineates the ontological distinction between the triune community of God and the creaturely community of humans. Johnson shows from the Bible that the divine commandment to imitate God is to imitate the incarnate God, Jesus Christ, in the economy, not the intertrinitarian life of God in eternity. Therefore, Christians should defy any attempt to justify religious pluralism or to weaken the uniqueness of God's redemptive work only found in Jesus Christ. Unlike Franke, Johnson commends Augustine's trinitarianism because of its ultimate goal to enjoy and honor the triune God, not to use the Trinity as a social model. Johnson suggests Augustine's *De Trinitate* as a good theological antidote for contemporary theologians' "functionalizing" of the doctrine of the Trinity in supporting egalitarianism and communal responsibility versus extreme individualism (160).

In the third section, "Worship: Church Practices and the Triune Mission," Gordon T. Smith notes that Christians often take baptism and the Lord's Supper as an encounter with the Father and the Son. He urges his readers to be open to the Holy Spirit who leads them to the fellowship of the triune God. Smith's thesis is commendable, and his critique is legitimate; however, most evangelical readers need to be alert to his strong sacramentalism that Catholics and Lutherans would appreciate more. Philip W. Butin's argument concerning prayers for the illumination of the Holy Spirit before reading and preaching the Bible deserves every contemporary preachers' attention. Unlike Vanhoozer, Butin fails to be critical of Barth's anti-propositional view on the inspiration of the Bible. Leanne Van Dyk presents the church's proclamation of the gospel as a way of participating in the triune God's mission. Interestingly, Dyk pays attention to not only worship and preaching but also to common daily things such as work and marriage as channels through which

one could participate in the triune community of God, for the gospel of salvation should certainly be visible outside the church.

This book would not be a textbook on the Trinity or helpful for lay people who want to understand the basic elements of the Trinity. Rather, this work is for advanced M. Div. students and could be useful as a book review for an elective class on the Trinity.

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Historical Studies

***Petrus van Mastricht (1630–1706), Reformed Orthodoxy: Method and Piety.* By Adriaan C. Neele. Leiden: Brill, 2009. 320 pages. Hardcover, \$138.00.**

In a letter to his ministerial student and friend, Joseph Bellamy, Jonathan Edwards recommends him to the work(s) of Petrus van Mastricht, saying, “take Mastricht for divinity in general, doctrine, practice, and controversy; or as an universal system of divinity; and it is much better than [Francis] Turretin, or any other book in the world, excepting the Bible, in my opinion” (11). Cotton Mather, another formidable New England theologian, likewise directs his ministerial candidates, saying, “I hope you will next unto the Sacred Scripture make Mastricht the storehouse to which you may resort continually, for in it the minister will find everything” (10). Lamentably, despite Mastricht’s formative influence(s) on early New England theological developments, few contemporary theologians even know his name.

Adriaan C. Neele’s, *Petrus van Mastricht (1630–1706), Reformed Orthodoxy: Method and Piety*, is the first ever monograph, exclusively devoted to the life and work of the German-Dutch theologian, Peter van Mastricht. A highly significant contribution to the field of post-Reformation studies, Neele’s work sets out “to demonstrate the relationship between exegesis, doctrine, elenctic, and *praxis* in the doctrine of God of Mastricht’s *Theoretico-Practica Theologia*” (vii). In demonstrating this relationship, Neele topples certain lopsided caricatures of Protestant Scholastic theologians as erudite, theologically myopic, and philosophically heavy-handed individuals by presenting Mastricht as an example of one concerned as much for the theory as for the practice of theology.

Following an illuminating introduction to the state of research in post-Reformation studies, Neele’s work proceeds in four main parts to a conclusion: (Part I) “The life and work of Petrus van Mastricht in the context of his time,” (Part II) “The premises of the *Theoretico-Practica Theologia*,” (Part III) “A cross-section the study of the doctrine of God,” and (Part IV) “An in-depth study of the doctrine of God” (v–vi).

In Part I (chs. 1–2), Neele provides the reader with extensive biography of Mastricht. He establishes Mastricht as a Reformed pastor, professor of Old Testament and Hebrew, church historian, systematic theologian, philologist, and anti-Cartesian philosopher. A consideration of Mastricht’s life and work, Neele argues, is critical to a proper understanding of post-Reformation theological sensibilities. He says, Mastricht’s “[consolidation] and codification of post-Reformation Reformed theology: exegesis, doctrine, elenctic, and *praxis*” into his *Theoretico-Practica Theologia*, provides the clearest indication of post-Reformation sensibilities of the relationship between theology and piety (281).

In Part II (chs. 3–4), Neele examines two premises to Mastricht's *Theoretico-Practica Theologia*: (1) theological prolegomena and (2) faith. With respect to the former, Neele lays out Mastricht's argument for the necessity of an "orderly" theological method (85–86). Beginning with Scripture, the so-called *norma normans* (the supreme authority) of the theological task, Mastricht argues for a number of subordinate norms (*norma normata*) that fulfill his methodological criterion. Ordered by their authoritative weight, these norms include: the first seven ecumenical creeds, Patristic fathers, Medieval doctors, and sixteenth century Reformers, as well as logic and a chastened philosophical (i.e. metaphysical) speculation (84). Neele describes how Mastricht's theological method issues in a number of constructive (and quite compelling) doctrinal innovations, for example, his mediating account of the divine decrees (7–9). With respect to the second premise, Neele underscores the exceptional nature of faith to Mastricht's doctrinal scheme. "[Resembling] more the earlier Reformed theology than [that] of his own time" (280), Neele shows Mastricht's careful treatment of the doctrine faith as the essential link between theology as a science of the intellect, and theology as the practical "art of living to God" (93–95). The great value of Part II can hardly be overstated as a key to much of the remainder of Neele's work.

Part III (chs. 5–8) consists of a highly instructive and detailed assessment of Mastricht's theological method in four parts: exegesis, doctrine, elenctic (i.e., polemic), and *praxis*. In chapter 5, Neele demonstrates Mastricht's historical-grammatical exegesis, emphasis on the original biblical languages, and use of comparative philology for the development of doctrine in chapter 6. Chapter 7 exhibits his use of a scholastic *quaestio* method of questions and answers whereby Mastricht defends his doctrinal formulations against foreseeable objections and counter-arguments (especially against Roman Catholicism, Socinianism, and Cartesianism). Chapter 8 reveals the force of Mastricht's methodological effort, namely, the development a distinct theological structure that serves the Christian practice of piety, consisting chiefly in the exercise of faith, which he defines as love to God (201–02). Despite the rigor and great detail of these chapters, Neele's primary interest is an exposition of the mechanics of Mastricht's four-fold method, not a detailed exposition of the content of his doctrine.

In Part IV (chs. 9–11), Neele lays out Mastricht's doctrine of God in even greater detail, setting the context for it in chapter 9 by assessing its expression in such Reformed Orthodox figures as William Ames, Johannes Cocceius, Wilhelmus a Brakel, and Herman Witsius. Chapters 10 and 11 serve as a sort of methodological road test, whereby Neele shows the implications of Mastricht's four-fold theological structure, first for his account of "divine spirituality and simplicity" (221), and then "the Holy Trinity" (245).

Neele's work concludes with a number of observations about Mastricht's uniqueness within his own tradition, and his overall contribution to the development of post-Reformation Protestant scholastic theology. Broaching the disciplines of historical, biblical, systematic, and philosophical theology, Neele's work is a formidable contribution to this ever-growing body of secondary literature.

Of the many virtues of Neele's work, it is marked most by its clarity and precision. However, its chief virtue may for some also prove to be its chief vice, as such technical rigor may deter a wide readership, even amongst some professional theologians. Indeed, this is a work primarily for the trained technician—one familiar with Latin, Greek and Hebrew (as well as some Dutch and German)—and has

at least some advanced knowledge of systematic theology and seventeenth-century European philosophical developments. Though Neele's work is a steep steady climb, its contents and lucidity will surely not disappoint the patient and pensive reader.

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***The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 26: Catalogues of Books.* Edited by Peter J. Thuesen. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008. 496 + x pages. Hardcover, \$95.00.**

***Reading Jonathan Edwards: An Annotated Bibliography in Three Parts, 1729–2005.* M.X. Lesser. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008. 691 + xii pages. Hardcover, \$145.00.**

Similar in nature, yet different in content, these two volumes bring together two sets of bibliographies related to Jonathan Edwards studies. The first work, Edwards' *Catalogues of Books* edited by Peter Thuesen, compiles the numerous book lists Edwards kept, lists which reflected his reading interests, including books he wanted to obtain, books in his personal library, and books he commended to others for reading. In short, this volume comprises what Thuesen calls Edwards's own "bibliographic universe" (2). The second work, *Reading Jonathan Edwards* by M.X. Lesser, provides an annotated bibliography of all the works related to Jonathan Edwards studies since the eighteenth century, and represents the best existing volume summarizing the history of scholarship on "America's Augustine." Both works are for serious students of Jonathan Edwards.

Catalogues of Books represents the final volume (vol 26) of Yale University Press's critical edition of *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*. Since the inaugural volume appeared in 1957 (on the *Freedom of the Will*), Edwards specialists have labored by compiling and editing both Edwards' published and private writings, including his treatises, notebooks, and sermons. Many of the introductory essays to the volumes have been groundbreaking contributions to the field. With the appearance of the final volume, the completed *Works of Jonathan Edwards* will likely be the critical edition of Edwards' writings for the next century. Voracious readers who want more Edwards will be pleased to find out that the remaining unpublished materials (mostly sermons) are now available online in volumes 27–73 at The Jonathan Edwards Center at Yale University (edwards.yale.edu).

By focusing on lists of books that Edwards kept, *Catalogues of Books* might at first appear to be an odd selection for inclusion in the *Works*. Yet when we take into account the fact that one of the great difficulties in Edwards scholarship has been identifying prominent influences in his thought, the importance of this volume becomes apparent. Two main lists occupy most of this volume's pages, Edwards' "Catalogue," which was his running list of books he hoped to obtain, and his "Account Book," a list of books that Edwards lent out of his personal library to others. Edwards was a voracious reader, and throughout his life he sought to keep abreast of the prominent trends in European intellectual life, especially theological trends. As a pastor in central and western Massachusetts, his access to the latest works in theology was minimal at best, thus forcing him to rely upon book notices, ads, and reviews printed in English and Boston newspapers. Upon learning of a book that piqued his interest, he would note it in his "Catalogue" and have to wait

sometimes for years before he could gain access to it (if ever). We know from his later “Miscellanies” notebooks that whenever he would gain temporary access to a book (often borrowed from other ministers or from the small library of his local ministerial association), he would sometimes copy pages out of that work to have for later reference. The portrait emerging from these lists is one of an intensely inquisitive pastor-theologian struggling to survive in the midst of a bibliographic desert.

Thuesen’s editing is remarkable for its meticulous detail. While the 116-page introductory essay admirably introduces the reader to the various regions of Edwards’ bibliographic interests, the real editorial work can be found in the “Catalogue” and “Account” lists. For each of the hundreds of entries referred to in the volume, Thuesen found the bibliographic information of the actual edition to which Edwards most likely referred. Anyone who has compiled a bibliography can appreciate why it is that this work took years to complete.

Edwards’ reading habits and interests may be described as “eclectic.” While he shows an interest in Calvinist writings, Thuesen indicates that the “Catalogue” was “not a roster of unimpeachable Calvinist classics” (15). In fact Calvin is not even mentioned in Edwards’s lists found in this volume, and works in Reformed divinity only account for a fifth of the works entered into the “Catalogue” and 40 percent in his “Account” book. Reformed writers like Matthew Henry, John Gill, Thomas Manton, John Owen, Isaac Watts, and Philip Doddridge appear, a point that reflects his keen interest in the Reformed and Puritan traditions which he saw himself defending. Yet we also find a wider circle of theological interests: works by non-Calvinist Anglican writers (John Tillotson and Samuel Clarke), Cambridge Platonists (Ralph Cudworth), Arminians (Jean Le Clerc), Catholics (Fénelon, Pascal, and numerous Jansenists), Patristic writers (Cyprian, Chrysostom, Augustine), those involved in both sides of the English trinitarian controversies of the turn of the century (Samuel Clarke, John Jackson, Daniel Waterland, and George Bull), and a wide range of spiritual writings (Catholic Quietism, Lutheran Pietism, and the Jewish mystical *Cabbala*). Beyond theology Edwards showed interests in philosophical, scientific, historical, and political works, as well as some novels. Together, the book lists presented in this volume reveal that Edwards was not a parochial Reformed revival-preacher who tuned out the increasing anti-Calvinism and anti-Christian currents of his day. Rather, he was (or sought to be) a full participant in the theological and intellectual literature of the age, one who attempted to respond to the increasing secularization of the world with the best intellectual and philosophical tools available to him.

M.X. Lesser’s volume, *Reading Jonathan Edwards: An Annotated Bibliography in Three Parts, 1729–2005*, provides us with another “bibliographic universe,” the vast universe of secondary studies related to Edwards. Since his pastorate at Northampton, Jonathan Edwards has attracted the attention of critics and admirers, theologians and historians, as well as philosophers and English professors, who together have generated over 3,300 bibliographic entries on the man, his ministry, and his theology. This volume brings together all these works in one handy reference volume. The work is actually three books in one. Prior to this volume, Lesser, longtime professor of English at Northeastern University and editor of volume 19 of *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, published two earlier annotated bibliographies on Edwards scholarship (1729–1978 and 1979–1993). Here he unites those two volumes (updated with 140 new entries not published in the first editions) with a third section on Edwards scholarship from 1994–2005 which contains over 700

entries. The bibliography is structured chronologically, listing works that appeared by their year, then by the author's last name. Each entry is annotated, providing a succinct (3 to 8 line) description of aim, purpose, and argument of the entry. More important entries have lengthy annotations which sometimes reach over a page in length, a feature which enables junior Edwards scholars to come up to speed quickly on the important writings of any given Edwardsean sub-specialty. In addition, there are the three lengthy introductory essays that Lesser wrote for each part. These essays, totaling almost ninety pages, survey the prominent trends in Edwards scholarship over the last two centuries and serve as an excellent introduction to the history of Edwards scholarship. Any serious student of Jonathan Edwards, either academic writer or pastor-theologian who has adopted Edwards as a life-long theological companion, would benefit from this book.

These two volumes are definitely for Edwards specialists which is probably their one main drawback. They will not be of interest to readers who seek to read Edwards for theological and spiritual inspiration. If you are student or scholar who seeks to make academic contributions to Edwards studies, I would definitely encourage you to obtain both of these works. If you are a pastor who enjoys reading Edwards and would like to enter into the wider discussion on him made by other writers, I would encourage you to obtain *Reading Jonathan Edwards*. You will find it to be a resource that you will consult for years to come.

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***Andrew Fuller: Model Pastor-Theologian.* By Paul Brewster. Baptist Thought and Life. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010. 224 pages. Softcover, \$24.99.**

In his new book, *Andrew Fuller: Model Pastor-Theologian*, Paul Brewster contributes to the ongoing revival of Andrew Fuller studies. This developing interest in Fuller (an eighteenth-century English Particular Baptist) should warrant a hearty welcome from Baptists (and other free church traditions) because of his influential role in the recapturing of indiscriminate gospel proclamation and missionary endeavor among the eighteenth-century Particular Baptists. Fuller's significance as a theologian was great, and yet, the practical implications of his doctrinal convictions were no less noteworthy. Fuller tirelessly labored as the secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) and as a local pastor. And this brings us to the thesis of Brewster's new book: Fuller's theological vision was in no way a mere theoretical enterprise; rather, his theology animated his pastoral duties, and, for this reason, Fuller is a model for ministers today who are concerned about the connection between theology and practice.

Brewster begins this task by providing the reader with the historical context—Fuller's biographical data in particular. A review of Fuller's family background and early childhood is presented, leading up to his Christian conversion in his teenage years. This is important ground to cover since Fuller was raised under the shadow of hyper-Calvinism and, as a result, was hindered in his embrace of the gospel. Hyper-Calvinism argued that one cannot simply approach the cross of Christ. Individuals who maintained this "false" Calvinism (as Fuller called it) insisted that one must have a "warrant" of faith in order to come to the cross. Such a "warrant" as this was essentially an inner acknowledgment that one was among the elect. Fuller overcame, through the work of the Holy Spirit, this theological impediment and was converted

in 1769. Brewster goes on to examine Fuller's call to vocational ministry, his experiences as a pastor, and his service to the BMS leading up to his death.

Chapter two investigates Fuller's theological method. Though his theological education was informal, Fuller was a well informed and well grounded theologian. Brewster highlights several aspects of his doctrinal method. First, Fuller maintained the need for a system. Even though Scripture itself is not a systematic presentation of theology, a system is nonetheless a tool for the Christian, to be used as an aid in understanding sacred truth. Second, the Bible was primary and central in Fuller's theological process. For Fuller, no doctrinal system could supersede the role of Scripture. Brewster also discusses the role of personal experience and accountability as discernable characteristics in Fuller's theological method.

Brewster's third chapter analyzes Fuller's soteriological orientation. This theological exposition of Fuller's doctrine of salvation is carried out through the template of the five Dortian soteriological markers (TULIP). Essentially, Brewster (like Thomas Nettles) seems to affirm Fuller's faithfulness to all five points of Dortian Calvinism. Others have interpreted Fuller's soteriology differently over the years. James Leo Garrett, for example, has previously asserted that Fuller only maintained two points of Calvinism—though Garrett has recently reconsidered his position, affirming that Fuller was certainly in closer adherence to Dortian Calvinism than he had previously stated.

Brewster is also careful to include in this chapter a discussion on the various modifications in Fuller's Calvinistic soteriology. For instance, while maintaining an association with the doctrine of limited atonement, Fuller, argues Brewster, flirted with governmental language, though never abandoning the atonement as substitutionary. And, of course, Brewster highlights Fuller's commitment to an evangelical Calvinism—a Calvinism in which indiscriminate gospel proclamation is a key and prominent feature.

What impact did this theology have upon Fuller in a practical sense? Chapter four tackles this very question. Brewster explores Fuller's many and varied gospel labors. Fuller's role as a pastor, for example, is discussed here. He not only preached earnestly to his home congregation, but he also engaged in village preaching—laboring for the souls of lost humanity. And of course, Brewster examines Fuller's key involvement in the BMS as an administrator and a defender of missions. Brewster also rightly includes here a section on Fuller's role as an apologist for Christian truth. This section surveys Fuller's efforts against such ideologies as: Deism, Socinianism, Universalism, Sandemanianism, and Antinomianism. Brewster's book is concluded in chapter five and two helpful appendices are also included for the interested reader: a transcription of Fuller's confession of faith (appendix 1), and an article Fuller contributed to a theological dictionary on Calvinism (appendix 2).

One minor critique is in order here before Brewster's well deserved accolades begin. Brewster's interchangeable use of the terms "high-Calvinism" and "hyper-Calvinism" lacks precision, given the discernable differences between these two groups historically. Peter Toon, in *The Emergence of Hyper-Calvinism*, has argued convincingly that there are clear distinctions between high and hyper-Calvinism. High-Calvinism is a subtle hardening of John Calvin's theology beginning with Beza and later articulated at the Synod of Dort. Hyper-Calvinism is a further development in which (among other things) justification resides in eternity rather than in time and space (eternal justification), there are no offers of grace, and the moral law is not acknowledged as an aid in sanctification (antinomianism).

If this categorical template is valid, then it seems as though Fuller's role in developing evangelical Calvinism was a move away from hyper-Calvinism more so than high-Calvinism. This may be observed in Fuller's description of his childhood pastor. According to Fuller, Pastor Eve's ministry had little or nothing to say to the unbeliever. Brewster, as a result, describes Eve as having "shortcomings as an evangelist" (12). However, the real problem with Pastor Eve (and others who were oriented in this way) was not that he had shortcomings as an evangelist, but that he was no evangelist at all. And so, hyper-Calvinism seems to be the most accurate description for this theological distinction that Fuller spent much of his life combating. It should be noted, however, that Brewster's conflation of these two terms was an attempt to use the language that Fuller and others used in that day.

Regardless of this trifling criticism, Brewster's work on Fuller must surely be regarded as a gem. First, Brewster provides the reader with a meaningful introduction to the life and ministry of Andrew Fuller—and in doing so has reminded contemporary readers how a moderate or evangelical Calvinistic soteriology (Fullerism) is a viable option for Baptists today. Second, in the process of analyzing Fuller's doctrine and practice, Brewster directly engages Fuller's writings with great frequency, thus making this book a valuable resource to students of Baptist history, since a number of the quotes used are not available in Fuller's published works. Finally, Brewster's work is a success because it touches on an important facet in the Christian life, namely, that theology must never be a solely intellectual endeavor; rather, it must ever be connected to one's devotional and practical life. Andrew Fuller has been convincingly portrayed, by Paul Brewster, as an appropriate example of this important intersection between doctrine and practice.

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***Baptist Autographs in the John Rylands University Library of Manchester, 1741–1845.* Edited by Timothy D. Whelan. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2009. 522 + xxxvii pages. Hardcover, \$55.00.**

"The discovery of these Baptist letters within the autograph albums of the Thomas Raffles Collection and the Methodist Archives at the John Rylands Library of Manchester came about largely by accident" (xxi). So begins editor Timothy Whelan's volume of treasures collected and published for the benefit of all who take interest in English Baptist heritage. What started as the search for a single letter resulted in the discovery of more than 330 Baptist related letters, most of which were undocumented.

Whelan, associate professor in the department of literature and philosophy at Georgia Southern University, recounts in his introduction how Thomas Raffles (1788–1863), the longtime pastor of Great George Street Chapel in Liverpool, amassed a collection of letters and portraits. Upon his death, Raffles' collection was first given to the Lancashire Independent College and then later purchased and placed in the John Rylands Library. Whelan notes that "Raffles owned the largest private collection of Baptist letters from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries ever assembled" (xxviii). Of particular interest for Raffles was the correspondence of John Sutcliff, William Carey, and Andrew Fuller. In 1844, Joseph Angus, secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) and president of Regent's Park College, made arrangements with Raffles for the donation of two volumes of

letters related to the BMS to come upon Raffles' death. While this took place in 1863, several other volumes remained in Manchester largely untouched and unnoticed. With the arrival of Whelan's work, "now, after more than a century, a full accounting can be made of all the Baptist letters originally collected by Thomas Raffles and his son" (xxx).

In addition to the Raffles Collection, Whelan also discovered a significant number of Baptist letters by John Gill, Robert Hall, Samuel Pearce and others contained within the Methodist Archives, a collection that came to the John Rylands Library only in 1977. All these findings leads Whelan to conclude that the Rylands Library "stands as one of the more significant depositories of Baptist archival materials in the United Kingdom" (xxxvii). Thankfully, through the editorial labors of Whelan, a portion of that depository is now available to a wider audience.

Whelan organizes his transcriptions of 267 letters into seven parts. The reader will appreciate the abundance of detailed footnotes that help provide context to each letter as well as establish connections between the authors, recipients, or other persons mentioned. One additional value to Whelan's volume is his 126 page "biographical index." This carefully prepared index provides a short description of each person referenced in the letters as well as further related documentation. Additional indices allow the reader to locate with ease specific individuals.

As one reads through this volume it is evident that the letters themselves are indeed treasures. Consider the 11 May 1792 entry from William Carey to John Sutcliff prior to the Northamptonshire Baptist Association meeting where Carey would preach his famous sermon that would lead to the formation of the BMS. Carey writes, "I have sent you 25 Copies of my *Enquiry*. Accept one yourself—and sell as many as you can—I hope to see you as you go to the Association" (60). Or consider the 6 August 1794 letter from Andrew Fuller to John Rippon stating that "for the first time I rec[eived] a Letter from each of our Brethren in India that are all well and as happy as can be expected" (68). Fuller here refers to the first report he received from Carey after Carey's departure in April 1793. Finally, consider the candid report from Carey to his sister, Ann Hobson, on 27 Nov 1798, "No one expects me to write about experience, or any of the common topics of Religion; nor to say anything about the Doctrines of the Gospel, but News, and continual accounts of marvelous things are expected from me. I have however no news to send, and as every thing here is the same, no Marvels" (92).

Baptist Autographs in the John Rylands University Library of Manchester, 1741–1845 presents both the historian and churchman with a resource worthy of mining for historical verification, personal anecdotes, insight into the lives of great men and women, and examples of piety in adversity and blessing. Aside from the opportunity to search for other previously undiscovered letters in Manchester, the reader will no doubt appreciate the privilege of reading the treasures provided at the result of the labors of Timothy D. Whelan.

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***Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1859–2009.* By Gregory A. Wills. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009. 566 pages. Hardcover, \$35.00.**

The sesquicentennial of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary is a significant milestone in Baptist history. Wills, one of its professors of church history, has

labored prodigiously to produce a sesquicentennial history.

Like many institutional histories, the book is organized around the nine presidencies (Boyce, Broadus, Whitsitt, Mullins, Sampey, Fuller, McCall, Honeycutt, and Mohler). Three chapters are devoted to Boyce with one being shared with Broadus. Two chapters each are given to Mullins, McCall, and Honeycutt. Sampey and Fuller share a chapter, and Whitsitt and Mohler have one.

To a large extent the volume is based on ground-breaking use of unpublished letters by and to Southern Seminary leaders. Trustee minutes and Baptist state papers are also utilized, but not the three histories of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

Predominating attention is given to doctrinal controversy. Teaching methods (such as the long used recitation method), publications by faculty members, student life, and the ministries of alumni (pastors, church staff members, teachers, missionaries, chaplains, et al) receive scant attention.

Certain questions and omissions call for answers. (1) Despite the high degree of faculty participation in governance, the exercise of presidential authority became an issue as early as the Mullins administration (286). Why? (2) Wills gives little attention to the policy of faculty inbreeding, which—for the School of Theology—extended from C.H. Toy (1869) to William A. Mueller (1948) and Eric C. Rust (1953) (350). (3) Although carefully reporting in great detail the 1958–1959 controversy (McCall vs. 13 professors) (357–404), the author passes over the rebuilding of the faculty as if it were automatic or incidental and posits instead the dubious theory of a “Prague Spring” of Southern Baptist liberalism (405–07). Absent is treatment of the significant work of Penrose St. Amant, Ray Summers, and Wayne E. Oates in saving the accreditation and restoring confidence. (4) Can Wills’ tracing of the anti-segregation stance implied in Southern’s invitation to Martin Luther King, Jr., to deliver the Gay Lectures (1962) as being an expression of “progressivism” (i.e., theological liberalism) (413–17) be compatible with the later stance against racism taken by Richard Land and the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission? (5) Since Southern was not the only SBC seminary after 1925, does not the relationship among the SBC seminaries deserve more attention, especially the struggles over Cooperative Program allocations and curriculum development?

A.T. Robertson’s publications and scholarship are indeed acknowledged, and the writings of C.H. Toy, E.Y. Mullins, W.O. Carver, Harold W. Tribble, J.B. Weatherspoon, and Dale Moody are treated, perhaps because they were/are controversial, but authors such as E.C. Dargan, W.J. McGlothlin, Gaines S. Dobbins, E.A. McDowell, H.H. Barnette, Rust, and Oates lack coverage.

Wills’ book is more thoroughly researched and more theological than Mueller’s *A History of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary* (1959), is less adequate as to curriculum and alumni than Mueller’s *The School of Providence and Prayer: A History of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary* (1969), and is more theological and less complete as to seminary personnel than Robert A. Baker’s *Tell the Generations Following: A History of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1908–1983* (1983).

Baptists are indebted to Wills for providing a detailed and readable examination of the theological history of Southern Seminary from its heroic founders—Boyce, Broadus, Manly, and Williams—with their struggles during and after the Civil War to its first decade of the 21st century as “an evangelical and Southern Baptist seminary” (536) with an all-time high enrollment (546).

But it is difficult to avoid what seems to be the unstated but permeating and

governing thesis of the book, namely, that Southern was on the right track, despite financial hardships, for its first forty years but from 1899 to 1994 was going in the wrong direction (being subject to the dangers of the authority of experience, historical criticism of the Bible, and liberalism/modernism [treated as synonyms]) until it was restored to its true foundation (biblical inerrancy, Dortian Calvinism, and gender complementarianism). Those who accept that thesis will likely find this volume to be more than sufficient, whereas those who do not will continue to look for the rest of the story.

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***W.H. Whitsitt: The Man and the Controversy.* By James H. Slatton. Macon: Mercer University Press, 2009. 348 + xx pages. Hardcover, \$40.00.**

James Slatton has produced a biography of William H. Whitsitt (1841–1911) worth reading. Granted permission by Whitsitt’s granddaughter, Slatton uses Whitsitt’s previously (and still currently) sealed diaries to provide a firsthand account of Whitsitt’s life and trials. Limited by the fact that the diaries recount only the events of 1885–1899, Slatton fills in the gaps to present a complete biography. When Slatton lets the diaries speak, and he does so with freedom and clarity, Whitsitt portrays a largely bitter and elitist temperament. However, when the diaries are silent, Slatton paints the picture of a heroic Whitsitt “hounded from office for his discovery of ‘an inconvenient truth’” (x). Thankfully, the reader gains enough access not only to draw his own conclusions but also to understand from where Slatton comes.

Slatton begins the volume in 1862 with the interruption of Whitsitt’s first pastorate by the Civil War. The War not only takes Whitsitt away from the Mill Creek Baptist Church in Nashville for a time, but also gives Whitsitt cause to leave his commitments to Landmarkism. Reared in a home that regularly read the *Tennessee Baptist* during the days of Landmark ascendancy, Whitsitt would have a front row seat as the movement grew in popularity and followed the writings of J.R. Graves, A.C. Dayton, and J.M. Pendleton. In fact, Graves would preach Whitsitt’s ordination sermon.

Slatton describes how several imprisonments during the war would provide Whitsitt the opportunity to associate with other Baptists throughout the country. Instead of finding them half-hearted and erroneous as he had been taught, Whitsitt found that these non-Landmark Baptists “often excelled me in the graces of the spirit” (14). Such experiences led Whitsitt to question his commitments and change his outlook leading him to altogether abandoning Landmarkism. By 1866, Whitsitt left Nashville and enrolled at the University of Virginia where his “conversion from Landmarkism was highly supported” (25). There he met John A. Broadus and eventually followed him to study at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary then located in Greenville, South Carolina. His time at the seminary led to further studies in Germany followed by a pastorate in Virginia until the seminary called him to join the faculty in 1872.

Slatton shows that during Whitsitt’s early years at Southern, he “developed into a gentlemen of considerable refinement as well as scholarship” (53). As Whitsitt took on more elite status he began to question his commitment to the Baptist tradition. He writes in his journal, “I am greatly oppressed by the fact that the spirit of

my people is foreign from my spirit; that they are far more narrow & pharisaical & sectarian than accounts with my conception of Christianity” (53). Whitsitt’s decision to remain Baptist appears more of a decision based on practical considerations and a commitment to tradition than to any real doctrinal conviction. In fact, Slatton states that Whitsitt even “considered writing an article arguing that the New Testament model of church government as Baptists interpreted it was not suited to the present needs of the church” (55).

Crawford H. Toy became Whitsitt’s closest friend and colleague at Southern. Toy, the nephew of R.B.C. Howell, also had studied in Germany after the war and came to hold a prominent position at Southern that garnered great popularity. However, the revelation of Toy’s embrace of higher criticism led to Toy’s dismissal from the seminary in 1879. Slatton depicts how Toy’s departure stirred Whitsitt to embitterment toward both Boyce, the school’s president, and Broadus, though he only expressed it in the pages of his diary. During the summer of 1880 Whitsitt traveled to London to pursue research to disprove the Landmark theory of Baptist origins and to show that Baptists began in 1641 as a part of the English Separatist movement. So enthralled with his discovery, Whitsitt determined to publish his findings anonymously through four articles in the *New York Independent*. Whitsitt would later regret posing as a non-Baptist in a pedobaptist publication. For all the controversy that surrounded Whitsitt in the years ahead, his momentary decision to publish in the *Independent* made all the difference for the outcome of his tenure at the seminary.

In 1885, Whitsitt began keeping the diary that Slatton describes as reflecting “his candid—and often uncomplimentary—opinions about his fellow professors” and thus part of the reason why he instructed it remained sealed for one hundred years (104). Slatton reprints several surprising statements from the diaries including Whitsitt’s prediction that “the time must inevitably come when the Baptists shall give up the practice of immersion To surrender close communion will be a prelude to the surrender of immersion. Neither of them is consistent with other practices of the Baptists; the sooner they can be abolished the better” (113). In 1893, Whitsitt published his views on the origins of Baptists, this time under his own name, in *Johnson’s Universal Cyclopaedia*. This led to further skirmishes with the Landmarkers though these did not prevent Whitsitt’s election as president of the seminary in 1895 after the death of Broadus. The challenges from the Landmarkers did continue, however, and when the revelation came that Whitsitt penned the 1880 articles in the *Independent* the smell of blood permeated the water.

Slatton pieces together all the intricacies of the Whitsitt controversy with helpful care. As an example, he shows that Whitsitt’s choice to refer to the start of the practice of immersion by the English Baptists in 1641 as an “invention” rather than a “restoration” was no small mistake. For Whitsitt to imply that immersion was a practice foreign even to the early Christians of the New Testament and that the English Baptists were the first to institute the practice, drew ire from many. Whitsitt would later retract his statement affirming that John the Baptist did, in fact, practice immersion, but by then the opposition had mounted. Soon there came cause to believe that Whitsitt had authored other anonymous articles in the *Independent* advocating pedobaptism, and the result brought Whitsitt before the seminary Board of Trustees to read a statement of apology and retraction. At this point Slatton shows that Whitsitt and his supporters attempted to interpret the controversy as one concerning academic freedom and the right of Whitsitt to pursue research as he saw

fit. Whitsitt's supporters urged him not to resign and to continue to fight for "the freedom of research and the right of free speech in the Seminary" (244). However, it appears that they were overlooking Whitsitt's confessed dishonesty regarding the articles in the *Independent* as well as his stated commitment to adhere to the confession of faith of the seminary, the Abstract of Principles.

Eventually, Whitsitt would resign under pressure from both his allies and adversaries, though he would quickly come to regret that decision. Slatton rightly notes that Whitsitt's removal only served as a Landmark victory in part, as the next president did not share their views and Whitsitt's conclusions regarding Baptist origins would go on to serve as the dominate view among Baptists in the twentieth century. Slatton attempts to link the Whitsitt controversy with the "moderate-fundamentalist controversy" among Southern Baptists in the 1980s and 1990s by opining the merits of an academic freedom tethered to the priesthood of the believer. Slatton amazingly argues that merely to cite "freedom within the bounds of the institution's articles of faith" fails to accomplish the goal of ensuring that the "opinions of the masses" are "reflected in the teaching of the professors" (322–23). Slatton believes that "assemblies of the people—local and state associations and the national convention—were not really competent or feasible venues for adjudicating questions of fact, or science, or doctrine" (322). He concludes, in fact, that the Whitsitt controversy "evokes a haunting sense of *déjà vu*" for those who experienced the controversy among Southern Baptists in the late twentieth century.

Slatton's biography of Whitsitt captures and presents well a previously untold portion of Whitsitt's life and thought as recorded in Whitsitt's private diaries. Slatton's attention to detail, care for his subject matter, and desire to honor the family who gave him privileged access to the sealed materials comes through in a thoughtful, well organized, and engaging presentation. However, when Slatton leaves his primary task and attempts to make comparisons to Southern Baptist controversies of the immediate past, he skews the storyline and muddies the water of an otherwise helpful history.

Jason G. Duesing

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

***Seminary in Crisis: The Strategic Response of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary to the SBC Controversy.* By William E. Hull. Atlanta: Baptist History and Heritage Society, 2009.**

In the heat of the Southern Baptist controversy some years ago, William E. Hull published his own brief assessment of the wrangle, which, as he described it, focused on the difference in how two contending factions in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) "do church." Though hardly a thorough analysis of the etiology of the conflict or a prognosis for the future, the insights garnered were often accurate and always stimulating. Those articles and his recent small monograph, *Seminary In Crisis*, demonstrate why Hull has always been my favorite liberal Southern Baptist commentator. While I sometimes think that Hull gets it wrong, he is always a thinker, attempting to make sense of the whole and seemingly never deliberately trying to mislead.

For example, in the preface of this slender but provocative volume, Hull assesses with candor most of the moderate (i.e., "liberal") attempts to evaluate the SBC landscape. Hull observes,

Now that the SBC Controversy is largely settled except for antagonisms at state and local levels, with the warring factions either off the scene or settled in new routines, it is time for moderates to begin investigating why they lost the denominational leadership that they had enjoyed for years. Some early accounts written in the pain of defeat were largely jeremiads against conservative perfidy, which may have provided therapy for the wounded but were ignored by conservatives who did not bother to read or respond. What we need now is neither finger-pointing nor breast-beating but a more rigorously self-critical look at how moderates discharged their leadership responsibilities in the thick of battle, not to blame but to understand why conservatives found it easier to win than they had ever imagined would be the case (ix).

In one prescient sentence Hull dismisses most of the moderate historiographical kitsch and pleads for rigorous analysis. Taking a sliver of the pie, Hull examines the responses of two successive presidents at Southern Seminary to the Conservative Renaissance in the Southern Baptist Convention as it impacted the life of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.

The “protagonists,” as Hull describes them, are Duke K. McCall and Roy L. Honeycutt. McCall, who served as president at Southern from 1981 to 1993, was at one time arguably the most powerful single figure in the SBC. He served as president of two seminaries and had a stint as the Executive Director of the Executive Committee of the SBC. He was a theological pragmatist, a politician, and a sometimes ruthless competitor. Now in his nineties, he was able to read and essentially approve Hull’s manuscript. Honeycutt (1926–2004) was a professor with a life lived largely in the academy, a gentle spirit for the most part. Hull’s thesis is that their personalities, as well as their personal histories, influenced and maybe even determined their opposite responses to the crisis they faced.

Hull introduces the issue at hand with a brief assessment of the origin of Southern Seminary. James P. Boyce is pictured as a classically educated elitist attempting to distill a modicum of learning in the “plainest” of ministers, placing these relatively untutored men side by side with those fortunate enough to have attended college. At this point Hull provides another motive for Boyce’s determination, one seldom admitted by moderates with less integrity than Hull.

Already, however, the challenge of the German model to confessional constraints had precipitated fierce conflict with the religious establishment on the Continent. To counter that reaction among his constituency in America, Boyce proposed that every professor subscribe to an agreed-upon declaration of doctrine that would assure the churches of the institution’s theological integrity (2).

Hull even admits that the tough sledding for the idea of a Southern Baptist seminary related to the constituency’s legitimate concern about one matter. “Finally, could a constituency already troubled by theological conflict be convinced that a faculty fully abreast of international scholarship would not compromise the most cherished convictions of the faith as some seminaries in the North had already begun to do?” (3).

The former provost at Southern concludes this introductory chapter with the observation that Southern has been a seminary wracked by controversy at regular

intervals since its inception. He refers to the Toy controversy (1879), the Whitsitt controversy (1896–99), the Mullins controversy (1925–28), the McCall controversy (1958–59) and the “one that has dominated the last thirty years (1979–2009).” He does not mention that each of these, with only one exception, was a doctrinal controversy, and even that one had its doctrinal component. In a nutshell, Hull proves that the original concern of many in the convention was well taken.

Turning to the real point of the book, Hull evaluates not only the men, McCall and Honeycutt, but also their presidencies. Hull paints McCall as a seasoned veteran of denominational politics, who saw clearly and early the threat of the Conservative Renaissance. In response, McCall developed numerous lines of defense including clever intellectual ways of discussing the nature of the Bible while carefully avoiding specific and divisive words. As a final position, McCall intended to exercise an obscure clause in Southern Seminary’s governance documents that would enable existing trustees to refuse to seat the newly elected trustees sent by the SBC. Once again, gratitude must be offered to Hull for admitting the existence and intent of this plan, which, at the time, was vigorously denied by moderates.

McCall’s “one clear, simple strategy” to risk everything on this idea is in contrast to the diverse, almost experimental, responses that were characteristic of Honeycutt. Hull presents Honeycutt as the faculty scholar thrust into an unwanted role as president of the seminary. There is no mention in the book of the widely circulated rumor that Hull himself wanted the presidency, but he certainly did have his supporters. To Hull’s way of thinking, Honeycutt’s attempts “to cooperate”—culminating in his signing of the Glorieta Statement, in which the presidents of the six SBC seminaries affirmed to the inerrancy of Scripture, igniting strong reactions from faculties at Southern, Southeastern and Midwestern—were indecisive and naive.

Little is said by Hull about contemporary Southern Seminary. That would fall outside the purview of his work. Clearly, the present posture of Southern would not encompass Hull’s dream. But, there is recognition that the seminary has flourished under Al Mohler and the conservative board of trustees.

By way of summation, Hull’s assessment of presidents McCall and Honeycutt is precise, colorful, and helpful. His understanding of the life of Southern during these two eras is that of an insider who knew what transpired. On the other hand, there is ample reason to suspect that Hull misrepresents Boyce. His general thesis that Boyce would not have sided with SBC conservatives seems flawed based on the handling of the Crawford Toy incident alone. Reading the theology of Boyce and the perspectives of Al Mohler suggests that the former would most probably rejoice that the latter had restored the Boyce legacy. Whatever the case, if you are a history buff or a Southern Baptist, Hull’s style and insights must not be missed. If you are a conservative, enjoy a book from the opposition that tends toward objectivity and inadvertently establishes the rightness of the conservative cause.

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Philosophical Studies

***God is Great, God is Good: Why Believing in God Is Reasonable and Responsible.* Edited by William Lane Craig and Chad Meister. Downers Grove: IVP, 2009. 272 pages. Softcover, \$19.00.**

Theism has been attacked over and over again throughout human history. Sometimes the attacks are subtle and almost passive in nature. Sometimes the attacks are fierce and draw blood. Within our own day, the new atheists are the latest attack upon theism and faith in general. Thus, *God is Great, God is Good* was written as a defense of theism against the new atheists' attacks. Giants of the Christian philosophical and theological world such as William Lane Craig (Professor of Philosophy at Talbot), Alister McGrath (Professor of Theology at King's College London), Chad Meister (Professor of Philosophy at Bethel College), Michael Murray (Professor of Humanities and Philosophy at Franklin and Marshall), Alvin Plantinga (former Professor of Philosophy at Notre Dame), and more, write to engage the new atheists' objections to theism head on. Additionally, the editors also include a dialogue between former atheistic philosopher Antony Flew and Christian philosopher Gary Habermas. All rally together to give the Christian thinker answers to the new atheists' arguments. As the editors note in the introduction "Our primary objective in compiling this book is to answer challenges advanced by the New Atheists and others raising objections to belief in God and the Christian faith" (9).

Within a review such as this, it would be beneficial to explain exactly who these new atheists are. The leaders of the movement are Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, Sam Harris, and Christopher Hitchens (*God is Great, God is Good* seems to directly counter Hitchens' book title *God Is Not Great*). Their "new-ness" has nothing to do with their beliefs about God; after all, atheists have been around for centuries, and though their arguments may vary some, their positions never do. These atheists were first classified "New Atheist" by WIRED magazine. They advance a simple and direct slogan: "No heaven. No hell. Just science" (7). So, it is not their beliefs or arguments that are new; rather, it is the aggressive nature in which they propagate their message—they are direct, combative, belittling, and disseminate their information on a popular level. Essentially, the contributors of *God is Great, God is Good* explain the new atheists viewpoint as this: one is either an atheistic evolutionist or one is an anti-intellectual that is philosophically and scientifically antiquated.

The book is divided into four parts. Each part takes an issue that is addressed by the new atheists and counters their arguments with sound, theistic arguments. Part 1 focuses on the existence of God. William Lane Craig, J.P. Moreland, and Paul Moser each take a chapter to show that there are valid and sound arguments for God's existence, and that it is not anti-intellectual or juvenile to believe in a divine, omnipotent Being who created all and sustains all. The overall aim in the section is to give the reader classical arguments which show that being a believer in a supernatural Being is not a sophisticated or juvenile ideology, but is logical and coherent to sound philosophical and scientific reasoning.

Part 2 tackles issues in philosophy of science. John Polkinghorne, Michael J. Behe, and Michael J. Murray use the fine-tuning argument to show the necessity of there being a God. The fine-tuning argument states, simplistically, that life within the universe can only exist within precise (finely tuned) and exact characteristics; so precise and exact that it must have been created by an Intelligent Designer. In other

words, the parameters of existence are so narrow that the best explanation of such a universe is an Intelligent Designer.

Part 3 addresses one of the oldest and best arguments against theism—the problem of evil. Chad Meister, Alister McGrath, Paul Copan, and Jerry L. Walls show that God is omnibenevolent, omnipotent, and omniscient—yet, evil still exists. Chad Meister writes, “There is no logical contradiction between the two claims (that evil exists and God exists), for it could be the case that an all-powerful, all-knowing, and omnibenevolent God has good reason for allowing evil to exist and persist—perhaps, for example, for the greater good of one or more persons” (108). The authors highlight the moral argument for the existence of God; it makes no logical sense to claim God does not exist *and* claim that evil exists. Moral objectivism can only be true, the contributors reason, if there is a moral Law-Giver.

Part 4 focuses specifically on Christian belief. The section submits that the arguments against theism affect Christianity directly. Charles Taliaferro, Scot McKnight, Gary Habermas, and Mark Mittelberg show that the belief in Christ and his work is not an outdated stance that should be relegated to the Medieval era, but rather Christ’s work and life is historically verifiable and spiritually necessary. Additionally, the authors explain that special revelation is needed for one to know God personally.

God is Great, God is Good is a book written on a popular level. One does not need a philosophical background to understand the essays or arguments. Granted, the book is written for an educated crowd, but one need not have a degree in philosophy, biology, physics, or theology to understand the depth and precision of the arguments. The authors do a stellar job at making their essays readable and beneficial to modern theist. My only complaint is one does not get to see the new atheists’ response.

Chad Meeks

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***An Introduction to Nietzsche.* By Lucy Huskinson. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2009. 106 pages. Softcover, \$14.99.**

Friedrich Nietzsche is much maligned in Christian circles and most often criticism of him is justified. It is thus somewhat surprising and most certainly unique that anyone would attempt to approach Nietzsche’s thoughts as being relevant to Christians. Huskinson has commendably succeeded in displaying Nietzsche’s relevance to a complacent Christian church.

How is it possible that a philosopher who proclaimed a “death of God” movement be significant to the Christian church? Is it imaginable that this man whose writings are deeply controversial can have anything to say to the future of Christian discipleship? Perhaps more so than the so-called “new atheists,” Nietzsche may have unveiled something noteworthy, albeit not overwhelmingly profound, as to how Christians ought to be and act. Yet as Huskinson herself admits one cannot take this too far. After all, Nietzsche’s ideas cannot be seen to support Christianity since “Nietzsche rejects Christ” (80).

Many have tried to rationalize the thoughts of Nietzsche. However, because his ideas lack systematic cohesion, such attempts usually have mixed results. In addition, such attempts to bring order to a philosopher who would have shunned such a label, has led to wildly differing assessments as to Nietzsche’s motivations, priorities

as well as his train of thought.

As such, while Huskinson has a definite purpose in writing this work, she does not pretend that she has successfully solved the enigma surrounding the philosopher's many and controversial ideas. Her sole purpose seems to be to highlight "Nietzsche's search for, and explanation of authentic divinity" via the reevaluation of Christian values and the emphasis of what he regards to be an "affirmation of life" (xiii–xiv).

There are various key aspects of Nietzsche's thoughts that Huskinson helpfully highlights. One of these aspects is the concept of the "will to power" and its contrast with the "will to truth." The will to power has the purpose of accepting a "tension and creative dialogue between opposites [and in doing so emphasizes] human growth . . . in terms of infinite possibility and perspective, whereby we continually shape and reshape who we are" (4–5). In sharp contradistinction to the will to power, the will to truth is (for Nietzsche), where life is "lived according to a perceived fixed ideal" (6). Nietzsche views Christianity as a prime example of such a perceived fixed ideal.

In doing so, Nietzsche also believes that Christianity is the very embodiment of what many have (justifiably) accused Nietzsche of promoting—Nihilism. Huskinson is careful to point out that the philosopher is of the view that Christianity does not affirm life but rather "negates the meaningfulness of human life" (7). Christianity, he insists, treasures the use of reason that leads to objective truth, instead of prizing the emotions and instincts (8, 60).

Another problem with Christianity, according to Nietzsche is that it promotes what is termed a "slave morality" that included aspects that are undesirable, including "sin, guilt, pity, cruelty, good and evil," (11) as well as bad conscience and resentment (16–25). In contrast to this Huskinson mentions that Nietzsche's "master morality," is more fluid and hence varies according to different circumstances (13), affirms the self (14), and does not thrive on resentment of others (15).

For Nietzsche, Christianity has no use and no worth (42) and so when Nietzsche talks about his "death of God," Huskinson astutely indicates he is not so much attempting to pronounce a metaphysical assertion regarding God but merely indicating the changing of the times and the values of society (51); and perhaps he is also indicating the maturing of humanity from a pessimistic nihilism (as illustrated by Christian beliefs) to an active nihilism that is optimistic, free from fetters, and able to able to formulate new values creatively (35–54).

Nietzsche's ultimate man is the so-called *Übermensch*, frequently translated as 'superman.' Such a man is not ruled by reason but rules in chaos and his instincts (60). He creates out of his whim what he wishes in a child-like innocence without recourse to conscience and tradition and he constantly seeks to overcome himself in whatever way necessary (61–74). All in all, in all except the final chapter, Huskinson paints a portrait of Nietzsche's philosophy that seems (a) not only impossible to reconcile with Christianity but also (b) so inconsistent with the Christian faith that it is difficult to see much use for it.

However, the thrust or whole point of Huskinson's argument is revealed in the final chapter. She contends that what we can learn from Nietzsche is similar to what we can learn from Bonhoeffer (83). Christians must allow and invite test of their faith (82) in order to prove that their faith is not only genuine but worthy to be a way of life that an individual may embrace (84). Since Nietzsche not only did not find Christians in his surrounding who were willing to do that but also did not believe

that any Christian who had their faith tested who choose to remain in their faith, he viewed it as an unworthy way of life. Huskinson believes that this can be a “wake-up call for lazy Christians today” (89) and so she encourages followers of Christ to challenge themselves and question their prejudices as well as indulge in continual self-criticism in order to distill their faith into a purer version (92).

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***Time and Eternity.* By Brian Leftow. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009. 377 pages. Softcover, \$36.95**

Perhaps Augustine described man’s bafflement with time best: “What, then, is time? I know well enough what it is, provided that nobody asks me; but if I am asked what it is and try to explain, I am baffled” (Augustine, *Confessions* [New York: Penguin, 1961], 264). For centuries mankind has contemplated the ontology of time. In conjunction, theists have contemplated God’s relation to time. Many questions have been asked in light of these pursuits, such as: Does God exist outside of time? If God is eternal, how does He relate to temporally bound creatures? If God is temporal, how does He remain immutable? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each position? Brian Leftow, professor of philosophy at Oxford, seeks to answer these questions in his seminal book *Time and Eternity*.

Leftow details and defends divine timelessness. He claims that God is eternal (or outside of time), and that this ontological status entails his sovereignty, omniscience, and immutability. Leftow states that the aim of the book is “to articulate and defend the claim that God is in no way in time. If God is not in time . . . one must wonder what his relation to time is. Thus my second aim is to clarify the relations between a timeless being and temporal beings: between time and eternity” (3). He defends his thesis by adopting an Anselmian approach to God and time. Anselm held that “God is simultaneously present at discrete, non-simultaneous times . . . in other words, God is present at different times at once” (183). So the Anselmian view of God and time claims that God is eternal or non-temporal. He sees all time at once, yet time and existence continue on in temporal succession. The advantage of the Anselmian view of eternity, according to Leftow, is that one can hold a robust view of God’s omniscience, divine simplicity, and sovereignty while still maintaining a libertarian view of free will.

There are two intriguing aspects of Leftow’s book. Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of *Time and Eternity* is how Leftow details the views Augustine, Boethius, and Anselm had on God and his relation to time. In this way, Leftow branches contemporary and classical philosophical theology, noting how past thinkers have handled this topic, and how their solutions can help thinkers today. Interesting enough, Leftow argues that these ancient thinkers structured exceptional theories that have benefited contemporary philosophers in their pursuit of understanding God’s relation to time

A second intriguing aspect is that Leftow does not assume any particular theory of time. In most treatises on God’s relation to time, the author will first state his/her own view of time. For example, the author will construct their philosophy of time by taking a tensed or tenseless view, and then explain God’s relation to the said theory. From this point, the author will seek to show that their philosophy of time

is essential in his or her position of God's relation to time. Leftow, however, does not defend or propagate any philosophy of time. In fact, he seeks to show that both A- and B-theories of time will work in harmony with his view of Anselmian divine eternity. (He does seem to favor a tensed [or A-theory] view of time; however, he argues without assuming any particular theory of time.) Whether the reader will find this a benefit or hindrance depends on the reader's understanding and acceptance of Leftow's arguments. Either way, Leftow's stellar work and argumentation are easy to admire.

One disparaging feature of Leftow's book is his claim that eternity is some sort of "time" itself. God's eternity is a separate time series from our time series; but, it is a series which has not time, which he designates "null time." (51). This proposition seems obscure and inchoate. Leftow never really describes what it means to claim eternity can be classified as its own "time." This is not to say that Leftow does not attempt to describe what a "no time time" is; yet, this reviewer holds he was ultimately unsuccessful at dispelling any mystification. To be sure, the thought sounds fascinating, but ultimately it is underdeveloped. (It should be noted that this confusing taxonomy does not seem to weaken Leftow's overall argument.)

There is no mistaking that Leftow has contributed a significant work to the topic of divine timelessness. His work is detailed and thought-provoking. Even if one was opposed to a timeless view of God, this work should not and cannot be ignored. Anyone who is interested in further study and understanding of divine timelessness would be well served in reading this book. If one is just interested in quick arguments on divine timelessness, Leftow supplies a chapter titled "A Case for God's Timelessness," which would satisfy that interest. Many sections are very readable and stimulating for theologians and philosophers alike, although having a background in philosophical discourse and logic would help one better understand Leftow's ideals and arguments.

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***Whose Community? Which Interpretation? Philosophical Hermeneutics for the Church.* By Merold Westphal. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009. 160 pages. Softcover, \$19.99.**

Postmodernism poses, well, a poser for the Church. On the one hand, postmodern critiques of modernity have revealed that the emperor in fact has no clothes, that an imperialistic human reason guided by a scientific methodology cannot deliver what it has promised. Reason and method alone cannot deliver to us an unquestioned objectivity which systematically delivers all knowledge and truth. Postmodernism has reminded us that we are not God. On the other hand, after destroying the obelisks of modern epistemology, postmodernism has threatened to leave nothing but ruins in their place. Faith in human reason is replaced with despair. Everything is called into question, including our ability to communicate through speaking and writing, our access to knowledge of any sort, and the very existence of truth. Of particular concern to the church is the threat posed to the authority of Scripture. If texts cannot communicate meaning, if we have no access to truth, then the Word of God cannot be the Word of God for the church. In his brief but incisive *Whose Community? Which Interpretation?*, Merold Westphal seeks to sail biblical hermeneutics through the Scylla of deified reason and the Charybdis of postmodern relativism.

Westphal's main concern is to apply the hermeneutical insights of Hans-Georg Gadamer's *Truth and Method* to the church's reading of Scripture in such a way that Christians will recognize the influence of their tradition and community on their hermeneutic, but will not be left with an "anything goes" view of biblical interpretation. The first five chapters provide preparation for this task by placing Gadamer's work in both historical and contemporary context. Chapters six through nine familiarize the reader with Gadamer's theory, and the final three chapters explore the implications of that theory for biblical interpretation within the context of the church. This last point cannot be overemphasized, for Westphal recognizes the unique character of Scripture as the Word of God, which means that interpreting it is different from interpreting any other text. For example, Westphal notes that one cannot rightly interpret Scripture within the context of the church without taking into account "the witness of the Holy Spirit, not only in attesting to the Bible as divine revelation but also in teaching us what it means" (14).

While *Whose Community?* deals with complicated philosophical issues, it is not overly technical and should be accessible to the average reader. This accessibility is by design, as Westphal notes that all Christians are theologians who read and interpret Scripture, whether they do it in an academic, pastoral, or lay setting. Whether the Christian is writing academically, proclaiming the Word from the pulpit, or reading devotionally, he is involved in biblical interpretation. And because Christians live together in community, the ways in which individual Christians interpret Scripture are also the ways in which the church interprets Scripture. So Westphal rightly addresses his work to the individual Christians who make up the church, and keeps this individual/ecclesiastical dynamic in mind throughout.

Even if one finds oneself disagreeing with Westphal's conclusions, *Whose Community?* is worth the short read for the first nine chapters alone. After arguing for the necessity of interpretation in chapter one, Westphal provides a clear and concise summary of nineteenth- and twentieth-century hermeneutics, focusing on Schleiermacher and Dilthey, and then Heidegger, Gadamer, and Ricoeur. In doing so, Westphal argues against the "romantic" hermeneutic of the nineteenth century, characterized by psychologism (which views texts as insights into the minds of their authors as opposed to vehicles of communication about certain subjects) and objectivism (which takes a view of interpretation akin to the natural sciences, and thus intends to produce a single reading with universal validity). But he also rejects a thoroughly relativistic twentieth-century postmodern hermeneutic according in which no limit is imposed upon legitimate interpretations. Against both of these extreme views Westphal places Gadamer, whose hermeneutic he thinks can assist in the rehabilitation of tradition.

In the final chapters, Westphal seeks to apply Gadamerian hermeneutics for the benefit of the church by developing a model based on political liberalism (read here classical liberalism, not liberal as opposed to conservative), characterized by the notions of individual rights and limited government, and communitarianism, which provides an account of the good and a comprehensive list of virtues embedded in specific communities and their traditions. From liberalism one receives the concept of an overlapping consensus, while from communitarianism one gets values and practices within the context of a particular community. For, say, a Southern Baptist, the liberalism aspect of the model will provide what one might call the essentials of Christian faith, while the communitarian aspect will provide Baptist identity. Of course, the problem (which Westphal does not address directly) is in specifying

where the lines between the liberal and communitarian goals are to be drawn. But Westphal is optimistic that if the church adopts some general virtues (primarily humility, listening, and friendship) such problems can be resolved. Whatever one thinks of the potential for success in these matters, Westphal's book is a helpful read for any Christian interested in the essential practice of biblical interpretation.

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***Hermeneutics: An Introduction.* By Anthony C. Thiselton. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009. 424 pages. Softcover, \$30.00.**

Hermeneutics: An Introduction by Anthony C. Thiselton accomplishes what the title states. Thiselton's previous publications on the subject of hermeneutics—*New Horizons in Hermeneutics*, *The Two Horizons*, and the related *Hermeneutics of Doctrine*—all serve both the breadth and depth of this book. Thiselton is qualified to write an introductory work on hermeneutics not only as a result of the monographs previously mentioned, but also for his scholarship in the fields of New Testament studies and philosophy. This brings richness to Thiselton's perspective on hermeneutics by involving each of these fields in his summary and analysis of the field.

The book begins with three that define hermeneutics, offer explanation of its value, and set forth a methodological framework. Particularly noteworthy is Thiselton's definition of hermeneutics, his clarification of the differences between philosophical hermeneutics and traditional hermeneutics, and his perspective on presuppositions. Additionally, worthy of mention in these preliminary chapters is his description of the intersection of biblical studies, philosophy, and literary theory on the issue of interpretation. This description serves as an introduction to the categories that will be analyzed in historical order in the subsequent chapters. Thiselton offers an example of how the hermeneutical methods he discusses may be applied with the parables of Jesus, providing opportunity for illustration.

Following these initial chapters, Thiselton devotes the remainder of the book to analyzing, chapter by chapter, major historical movements in hermeneutics. Several chapters make notable contributions by providing an entry level analysis of the significant thinkers in hermeneutics. Chapter four provides an overview of the genesis of Christian hermeneutics as it developed out of a blended Jewish and Greek background. Beginning in this chapter, the book propels forward into a discussion of the characteristics of hermeneutics during the early church through the fourth century. Uniquely valuable contributions of the book, notable for their distillation of influential ideas overlooked by most, are found in chapters eleven and twelve. These chapters interact with the thought of Hans-Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricoeur respectively. The historical analysis rounds out with chapters on the Reformation, Enlightenment, Schleiermacher, Bultmann, Barth, and postmodern hermeneutics in addition to others left unmentioned.

The book contains a set of features which make it a manageable introduction composing its greatest asset for those not already immersed in the field. First among these features is the brief list of books recommended for further reading appended to each chapter. Thiselton's characteristically encyclopedic style is made attainable by the definition of concepts which would perhaps be missed by those with no prior exposure. Additionally, the significant writers he discusses are introduced with

biographical material, and their major writings provide the outline for Thiselton's analysis. This tool prevents the necessity for the reader to be conversant with these writers before making use of this book.

This book demonstrates hermeneutics' status as a multidisciplinary enterprise where the reader must be critical, yet open. Thiselton's characteristic even-handed analysis comes to bear on the divergent influences on hermeneutics. The reader may find ample grounds for disagreement within the hermeneutics of Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Rorty, Jaus, Gadamer, Derrida and the others included in the book. Thiselton provides a model for evaluating the ideas of these writers as his interaction offers critique of their errors while also modeling how one may be instructed by the grain of truth, that may be found in many of the worst faults.

The element many readers will find missing is a constructive outline for biblical hermeneutics. The analysis in the book was written with an orientation to provide an historical overview of the field, as opposed to offering a detailed instructive hermeneutic. While the volume possesses no lack of evaluation from Thiselton, this book on its own is not intended to produce a complete framework for the reader. An added value of the book is that it addresses a lacuna of a few hermeneutical ideas. In order to make the book a more comprehensive introduction, one would hope to see chapters on the contemporary move toward theological interpretation, a discussion on the post-liberal approach, and a discussion on the historical-grammatical mindset which has dominated American evangelicalism. With these points stated, the broad scope accomplished in 355 readable pages is an impressive strength which makes it difficult to offer critique on this point. This book achieves the status of a competent introduction to hermeneutics and presents it as a valuable tool for students of hermeneutics and those seeking to bring cohesiveness to the many tributaries that relate to the field.

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Studies in Ethics

***Christianity, Climate Change, and Sustainable Living.* By Nick Spencer, Robert White, and Virginia Vrobesky. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2009. 288 pages. \$16.99.**

Christianity, Climate Change, and Sustainable Living concentrates on the issue of climate change and responds to it from a Christian perspective. The book consists of three parts dealing with science, theology, and practice. The purpose of the book is to study the relationship of Christian faith to climate change and "sustainable living" (4). As a consequence of this exploration, the authors encourage readers "to understand" the reality of climate change—its causes and effects, "to envision the solution," and "to take their responsibilities seriously" (8).

The book is appreciated for two unique contributions. First, chapter 4 offers a study of ecology based on Isaiah 40–66, which is not so much a "substitute for the modern concept of sustainability, but an inspiring vision of what sustainable living could look like" (115). Few volumes intensively relate sustainable living with Isaiah 40–66 as this book does. Second, in chapter 6, the authors envisage a sustainable society in the future. Based upon the principles presented in previous chapters, the authors draw a vision of what sustainable living might look like if we lived according to the principles which they explore and explain.

This book is helpful in three ways. First, the book is very practical, offering its readers detailed “know-how” for living an ecologically well-balanced life, specifically in chapter 7. Second, the authors properly point out the spirituality that lies behind the issue of the global growth of greenhouse gases. Third, the book provides considerable helpful resources for further study of the environment.

Despite these profitable achievements, *Christianity, Climate Change, and Sustainable Living* needs three areas of improvement. First, the authors do not discuss opposing viewpoints. For example, providing scientific data, scholars in other evangelical circles assert that the current climate change is natural and is not the consequence of human activities. It would be better for the authors to have argued against those scholars with whom they disagree instead of simply noting that there is “spreading misinformation” (24). Second, in many cases, the authors have negative views about human culture and humans themselves. Of course, humans are corrupted because of the Fall; however, they and their cultures still have positive aspects. Third, the book has not contributed a thoroughly exegetical work of the Scriptures that are used for their arguments.

This book was written for a Western audience, especially for people who live in high-income industrialized nations (159). Nevertheless, this is helpful for those who are looking for a source which presents today’s trend in the evangelical camp on the issue of climate change.

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***The Indelible Image: The Theological and Ethical Thought World of the New Testament, Vol. I. The Individual Witnesses.* By Ben Witherington. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2009. 856 pages. Hardcover, \$50.00.**

Ben Witherington is a prolific writer, but this time he surpassed his former efforts by producing a two volume epic presentation on the theology and ethics of the New Testament, both of which are over 800 pages in length. Volume One focuses on the various ways that each of the contributory writers of the New Testament presented their witness of what Jesus Christ said and did to create a new God “image” through the words and actions of the gospel, with its resulting message and world shaping impact.

There are some interesting contributions that this volume brings to the discussion of the theological and ethical message of the New Testament. First, is that theology and ethics are not to be separated, but rather to be taken as a whole. Ethics is not seen as a derivative of theology, but rather the natural completion of its meaning. For instance, Witherington repeatedly underscores that salvation is not a completed act just by believing the message. There has to be a resulting life change and pattern for salvation to be a reality. In fact, he insists throughout this first tome that salvation can be lost when one does not live by the essence of the salvation type of life. It is interesting that he teaches in a Methodist Seminary (Asbury), because he seems well fitted for teaching in that theological context. The security of the believer was even disparaged in some of his interpretations. He rarely even explores and explains the passages that present that foundational theological concept. Nevertheless, his interpretation puts a heightened importance on the value of consistent Christian living out what one professes to believe about Christ and the moral life.

A second area of contribution is that of creating a type of biblical commentary

on the whole New Testament, through a fairly thorough exploration of the contribution which each New Testament author made to the theological and ethical content of the Christian message. There is a thoroughness and almost exhaustive dimension to the exploration of details of numerous passages of Scripture, along with comparisons and contrasts to other passages, as well as current literature of the biblical period. Witherington also makes an evangelical response to a considerable number of controversial issues of interpretation of various New Testament texts. He often engaged in giving extensive response to the writings of other current authors on those controversial issues, and at times his responses consumed so much space that it distracted the reader from Witherington's assessment of the biblical content itself. Nevertheless, the "subject index" at the end of the book is a useful tool for reviewing the various issues which are treated in this valuable volume. Also, it is instructive to note that Volume Two of this set of works by Witherington focuses on a considerable number of the theological and ethical issues in the New Testament. For anyone interested in having a thorough analysis of the theological and ethical content of the New Testament, these two volumes are a must read.

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***The Indelible Image: The Theological and Ethical Thought World of the New Testament. Vol. II. The Collective Witness.* By Ben Witherington III. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2010. 838 pages. Hardcover, \$50.00.**

This second volume of New Testament studies by Ben Witherington follows a course of exploring the theological and ethical issues found within the corpus of the whole New Testament text. This work begins with connecting it to the first volume, as well as creating a "Prolegomena" question of whether it is possible to really find and develop a consistent theological and ethical trajectory within the New Testament. The solution to that dilemma is found in the ethical frame cast by Jesus himself. That frame is that of a cruciform image, one of sacrificial love to be understood and followed in the light of the new eschatological situation created by Christ (30–32; cf. 492). Witherington in his stylistic manner captures the uniqueness of the "symbolic universe" of Jesus and his impact on the theology and ethics of the New Testament writers:

Jesus sees himself as the straw that stirs the drink. He is the game-changing performer. He is the kingdom-bringer. He is the Son of Man savior figure meant to establish dominion on earth forever. The events that will change the eons and history as well stand before him, whereas for all the New Testament authors these first eschatological events stand behind them, and they have the benefit of hindsight and retrospective analysis.

In this second volume Witherington seems to create three sets of groupings on the issues presented, although he does not subdivide them in that distinct manner. The first section (Chapters 1 to 3) deals with interpretive orientations on the symbolic universe, or thought world of Jesus and the New Testament writers. The second section (Chapters 4 to 7), in contrast to Witherington's insistence that theology and ethics should be held together, is an exploration of what he calls "the census of the consensus" of theological themes in the New Testament. It is fair to recognize

that Witherington does make a conscious effort to blend ethical application into his theological discussions, and ethical explorations are customarily shown to have a theological formation and basis for action. The third section is five chapters (8 to 12) on Christian ethics in which he creates an analysis of a unique grouping of all of the books of the New Testament. These five chapters on ethics analyze groups of books, each of which reflects a unique symbolic world perspective. After a chapter of overview of ethical orientations (chapter 8), the author sets forth a chapter on the ethics of Jesus and his moral influence over his followers. He then groups 10 books (Matthew, John, James, Jude, Hebrews, 1–3 John, 1 Peter, and Revelation) in a study of ethics for Jewish Christians, followed by two chapters on ethics for Gentile Christians, including Paul's writings as well as Mark, Luke and 2 Peter. His final chapter is an effort to demonstrate that there is a "matrix of meaning" or a commonality in all of the theology and ethics of the New Testament, which is that Jesus Christ has a unique role in creating a lasting "indelible image" of God, his kingdom, and his eternal presence in the world.

The thoroughness of this second text and its organization in exploring the theological and ethical themes of the New Testament presents a challenging, and yet fruitful, exercise for any pastor or theology student. There is ample evidence that Witherington has the conviction that the New Testament is a collection of God inspired writings, which have an undeniable and unavoidable importance for those who would be serious followers of Jesus Christ.

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***Sex and the iWorld: Rethinking Relationship beyond an Age of Individualism.* By Dale S. Kuehne. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009. 235 pages. Softcover, \$19.99.**

The author is the professor of politics and executive director of the New Hampshire Institute of Politics at Saint Anselm College and pastor of the Emmanuel Covenant Church in Nashua, New Hampshire. His work serves as an analysis of why our western culture has left its traditional moorings (what he calls the "t world") and sailed boldly and belligerently into the turbulent and destructive seas of individualism ("i world"). His goal is to give guidance for how westerners, including Christians, can reorient themselves so that they can move onto the more solid ground of building and maintaining stable human relationships, as well as one with God (what he calls the "r world"). His effort is to reengineer a worldview that will guide westerners toward a livable and sustainable future.

He does not limit his focus to Christians, but attempts to project the need for and the philosophy to guide a relationship-based lifestyle that encompasses a larger, pluralistic audience. His approach is to invite any who will to enter the conversation on weighing significant values (relying often, but not exclusively on biblical values) and reasonable systems of human, family, and societal engagement. Although he invites all to join the conversation about the way to develop the relational life, he has a decided evangelical presentation in Part 2 of the book, in which he explains the role of having a healthy relationship with God, thus creating a sense of self-identity and worth for having a foundation for all the other relationships in life. His chapter 7, "From Hole Hearted to Whole Hearted: A Love Story," is a winsome and convincing appeal to postmodern thinkers to consider the potential of experiencing a redeeming relationship with God.

Throughout the book Kuehne challenges the postmoderns to reflect seriously on the weaknesses of individualistic freedom in contemporary sexual conduct. Then, in chapter 8, the author moves to the relationship side of the theme that is suggested in the introduction of the book—r sex: a treatment of how post moderns can reorient their private lives toward creating a stable and dynamically functional set of interpersonal skills that endure and endear them with others for all of life.

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Pastoral Ministries

***Gospel-Powered Parenting: How the Gospel Shapes and Transforms Parenting.* By William P. Farley. Phillipsburg: P&R, 2009. 233 pages. Softcover, \$12.99.**

William Farley has written an excellent book about the centrality of the gospel in Christian parenting. The thesis of the book states that, “Effective application of the gospel empowers parents to reach their children’s hearts” (40). With that in mind, Farley believes that the gospel provides everything a parent needs in order to succeed. Three experiences in his own life led him to this conclusion, the reading of the Bible, the influence of other couples in his church, and Reformed Theology, particularly the writings of Jonathan Edwards.

Farley begins the book by establishing five presuppositions the reader must adopt in order to apply his teaching. First, parenting is not easy. Parents need the grace of God during every stage of parenting. Second, parenting requires an understanding of both God’s Sovereignty and the parent’s responsibility to reach the child for Christ. Third, parenting that is effective involves an offensive approach. Fourth, Christian parents must have a clear grasp on the concept of new birth. To be born again is to experience a radical change and a new direction in life (28). Fifth, Christian parents center their lives around God, not their children.

The greatest strength in Farley’s book is its deep theological framework. Throughout the book the author avoids presenting parenting techniques. Instead he asserts that the fear of the Lord is at the heart of gospel-powered parenting. The fear of God, according to the author, unleashes the blessing and favor of God upon the family. He defines the fear of God as the realization that sin “always has consequences” (60). After establishing the fear of God as a firm foundation, Farley presents a theological explanation of the holiness of God, the wrath of God, and the infinitely offensive nature of sin (93). He also explores in detail the gracious gift of God offered through faith in Christ. Farley concludes this section by explaining the costly price God paid to redeem human kind from a helpless state. The remainder of the book addresses principles of leadership, fatherhood, discipline, spiritual training, and love.

The first principle is leading by example. Farley believes that modeling a godly marriage is the most powerful example a parent can offer the child. The greatest obstacle to becoming a godly example, on the other hand, is pride. The second principle highlighted by the author is the prominent role of the father. Throughout the book Farley emphasizes that “Christianity is a patriarchal religion” (125). Therefore the chief parent is the father. The third principle is discipline. The author encourages parents to adopt the following steps, expect obedience on the first command, put

discipline in the context of love, reference scripture, break the child's self-will, hold the child until he stops crying, rehearse the gospel, and invite the child to express repentance. The fourth principle is spiritual training which Farley compares to feeding the child a good spiritual diet. The author believes that teaching must be formal after the age of six. The last principle is love. Farley firmly believes that in order to love children biblically, the parent must always love God more. The love and fear of God compel the parent to love the child selflessly and sacrificially.

Toward the end of the book Farley also addresses the importance of affection in the Christian home. "Unless children feel their parents' love and acceptance, they will probably not internalize the lessons" the parent is trying to teach (205). The hallmarks of affection are focused attention (spending quality time with each child), eye contact, physical contact such as hugs and holding, and words of affirmation and encouragement. Farley concludes the book with a message of hope and comfort for parents. He asserts that the task of raising godly children is impossible without the grace of God. Mistakes and failures according to the author, are unavoidable, therefore the gospel is once again the parent's secure anchor. The guidance and forgiveness every parent needs are available at the cross.

Farley presents a strong argument for gospel-powered parenting. His focus is on a biblical philosophy of parenting, rather than on a series of steps to follow. However, he does offer some practical suggestions. He successfully defends his thesis with a strong theological foundation and a solid biblical understanding. He triumphs at communicating his deep fear of God, his love for his family and his desire to encourage parents to do likewise.

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