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## *Book Reviews*

*Exegetical Gems from Biblical Hebrew: A Refreshing Guide to Grammar and Interpretation.* By H.H. Hardy II. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019. 196 pages. Paperback, \$19.99.

H.H. “Chip” Hardy is Associate Professor of Old Testament and Semitic Languages at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, where he has served for 5 years. He has published several articles and has a forthcoming book: *Grammaticalization of Biblical Hebrew Prepositions*. The present work, *Exegetical Gems from Biblical Hebrew: A Refreshing Guide to Grammar and Interpretation*, is meant to help the reader by illustrating abstract concepts with specific examples from the biblical text. The book is aimed at college and seminary students, former Hebrew students, and Hebrew instructors.

Each chapter follows a pattern of four steps. First, each chapter begins with an introduction that contains a Hebrew text (such as Jeremiah 27:10). He then presents a description of the interpretive issue, such as an infinitive construct phrase, specifically *לְמַעַן הַרְחִיק* (conjunctive adverb + Hifil infinitive construct). Second, Hardy gives an overview of the abstract concept, with examples from other biblical texts. In this example he illustrates several uses: nominal (Num 14:3), purpose or result (Jer 27:6), temporal uses (here he gives several examples including Jer 27:20), explanatory uses (Gen 3:22), and illustrates how infinitive constructs may be negated with the *לֹבְלֵתִי* particle. Third, Hardy describes how the interpretive issue in the main passage should be understood in light of his overview. In this case, Hardy opts for understanding the words *לְמַעַן הַרְחִיק* found within Jeremiah 27:10 as a result use. Hardy’s point is that understanding this infinitive construct to be describing a result means that Jeremiah is telling the people not to listen to other prophets because those other prophets are trying to cause harm. Fourth, each chapter concludes with a section titled “Further Reading.” In this case, Hardy suggests one article written by Douglas Groppe which deals with the infinitive construct.

The book begins with an examination of Hebrew language and literature. Then, Hardy moves to a discussion of textual criticism from Genesis 22:13, and then to word studies. After those abstract principles, he moves on to construct phrases, then definiteness, adjectives and pronouns. The next major section consists of chapters 9–20 and deals with verbs. The chapters dealing with verbs make copious use of charts to illustrate the verbal forms and their possible interpretations. When describing the syntax of verbs, Hardy’s list of resources for further reading increases in number as compared to earlier chapters. Next, he moves to a discussion of negations and prepositions, as well as a directive *וְ* in chapters 21–24. Then Hardy discusses verbless clauses, interrogatives, and particles. This set of chapters feels out of place when compared to Waltke and O’Connor’s *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, which places these matters before their discussion of verbs. Finally, Hardy closes with three chapters that deal with clause level syntax.

Hardy’s work accomplishes its purpose. First, he does a thorough job of illustrating grammatical and syntactical issues with texts from the Hebrew Bible. For example, in chapter 14 dealing with participles, Hardy gives multiple illustrations

(from Biblical Hebrew texts) of attributive, substantive and predicate participles before landing on a particular interpretation for his example in Jeremiah 20:9. Second, the scripture index at the back of the book will be useful for students who wish to quickly find sections dealing with a particular scripture. Third, some of the sections for further reading could work as a beginning bibliography for researching a topic. For instance, Hardy suggests 11 different resources for further reading in his discussion of verbal stems. Fourth, the greatest strength of this work may be that each chapter feels like a contained unit. It seems designed so that a reader could go through one chapter at a sitting, perhaps daily, for successive weeks (so as not to be overwhelmed). Pastors and teachers with only a few minutes of free time can still utilize this book.

Even so, weaknesses do exist in this work. First, its order of presentation would benefit if it followed the order of a standard Hebrew grammar textbook. In this way, the work would be more useful as an auxiliary textbook, and more helpful for students who are seeking further illustration of a concept. Second, many of the resources cited for further reading are more than 20 years old. Third, the chapters feel uneven. It may be understandable that more space is given to illustrating concepts dealing with verbs, but each individual chapter dealing with verbs is more detailed than chapters which deal with other ideas.

Because of the strengths mentioned above, I recommend this book. It is well suited for students who have finished Hebrew 1 and 2 and will have a summer break before Hebrew 3 and 4. The book is also well suited for students who are returning to the study of Biblical Hebrew after some period of time. Hebrew instructors would benefit from this book by way of utilizing the examples from the book in their classroom.

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***War in Chronicles: Temple Faithfulness and Israel's Place in the Land.* By Troy Cudworth. London: Bloomsbury, 2016. xi + 209 pages. Hardcover, \$120.00; Softcover, \$39.95.**

The book of Chronicles consists of retelling parts of Israel's history, especially those events recorded in Samuel-Kings. As Chronicles retells this history, it emphasizes certain themes. One of these themes is the principle of immediate retribution: God punishes a person's or group's disobedience but rewards a person's or group's obedience. In this volume of the Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies, Troy Cudworth addresses an aspect of retribution in the book of Chronicles. He explores how war narratives relate to the principle of retribution in Chronicles. As part of his answer to this question, he looks to the significant role that the Jerusalem temple and its ritual worship play. As he examines the war narratives in Chronicles, he argues that a king's faithfulness to worship Yahweh at the Jerusalem temple secures stability and peace for Israel while a king's unfaithfulness brings about chaos and disaster for Israel.

Cudworth organizes his volume around the accounts of Judah's kings. He points out the significant role that Israel's cultic worship plays in each king's reign and how such worship results in stability and security for Israel. He begins with David. He argues that David's reign sets the pattern for other kings. At the beginning of David's reign, he immediately tries to gather all Israel together in Jerusalem to worship Yahweh. Cudworth argues that this desire accounts for David's military

successes (1 Chronicles 14) even after David attempts to transfer the Ark using improper methods (1 Chronicles 13). Once David has successfully deposited the Ark of the Covenant in Jerusalem, he then looks forward to building the temple, gathering and organizing resources for its construction. Only when David attempts to provide Israel with security militarily (1 Chronicles 21) does the land suffer from disaster. These concerns that Cudworth identifies in David's reign become a pattern that he applies to other kings as well.

He examines the other kings in Chronicles in the following chapters: "Faithful Kings" (e.g. Solomon, Abijah, Hezekiah), "Unfaithful Kings" (e.g. Saul, Ahaz, Zedekiah), "Faithful Kings Who Falter" (e.g. Asa, Amaziah, Uzziah, Josiah), and "Unfaithful Kings Who Repent" (i.e. Rehoboam, Manasseh). As he examines these various kings, he attempts to show that concern for worshiping Yahweh properly at the temple provides peace and stability for all Israel. Any other attempt to secure peace and stability for all Israel fails, whether the attempt involves worshiping other gods (e.g. Amaziah, Ahaz), creating alliances with other nations (e.g. Asa, Jehoshaphat), or bolstering Judah's military strength (Asa, Amaziah, Uzziah). As he looks at these kings, he attempts to show how Chronicles consistently presents the principle of retribution in relation to the themes of war and temple faithfulness.

This volume provides a consistent analysis of three themes significant for understanding the message of Chronicles: retribution, war, and temple. Cudworth provides innovative readings for several passages in Chronicles where interpreters have noticed tensions in the presentation. For instance, he provides a reason for David's victories in 1 Chronicles 14 even though David has failed to transfer the Ark according to the regulations of Mosaic Law. He argues that Yahweh rewards David's desire to unite all Israel in worship at Jerusalem. Conformity to Mosaic Law is a secondary issue; therefore, Yahweh still rewarded David even though his attempt failed.

At the same time, Cudworth's attempt to present the retribution principle consistently leads to some areas where he seems to press the evidence into greater uniformity than is warranted. For instance, Chronicles records two periods of religious reforms during the reign of Asa (2 Chronicles 14–16). Cudworth relativizes Asa's first reform because the second set of reforms are more extensive and involve gathering all the people to the temple. Furthermore, following the first reform Asa also builds a large army and fortifies several cities. As a result, Cudworth argues that the first reform is inadequate because Asa's heart is in the wrong place: Asa first neglected the more extensive reforms "so that he [Asa] could build fortresses and amass a large army" (121). Such a reading expects that each reform corresponds to the pattern he has developed elsewhere; however, it is more likely that Chronicles presents a history with more nuance and complexity.

At a thematic level, this volume is a valuable resource for understanding the message of Chronicles as a whole. At an exegetical level, the volume opens new lines for interpreting several passages that have created tensions for interpreters in the past. Therefore, this volume offers something for readers looking to get a sense of the whole book of Chronicles and those wrestling with specific passages. The volume is a good source for anyone wrestling with the meaning and theology of Chronicles.

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*Archaeology and the Letters of Paul.* By Laura Salah Nasrallah. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019. xviii + 310 pages. Cloth, \$99.00.

New Testament archaeology has primarily been focused on the world of Jesus, so it is refreshing to have a study dealing with the Pauline corpus. Lacking an ability to answer most New Testament critical questions (i.e. questions of source criticism or authorship), NT archaeology historically became geared to locating sites mentioned in the text. Over time, material evidence related to the New Testament accumulated, primarily consisting of relevant inscriptions and what could be labeled as narrative backdrops of physical space. Contemporary NT archaeology has expanded far beyond these boundaries and draws on current archaeological theory and the geometrically expanding data on the first century world.

The book begins with a strong introductory chapter that firmly argues for the importance of current archaeological data for biblical scholarship; “Those interested in the historical context for the production and first reception of biblical text *must* [sic] use archaeology” (14). Nasrallah confines her discussion to the recipient cities of letters included in the higher critical “canon” of Pauline writings (1 Thessalonians, Galatians, the Corinthian correspondence, Philippians and Romans; she also includes Philemon which some critical scholars do not). She then provides a chapter based on each of her accepted letters. By including Philemon, she is able to engage with Ephesus as her starting point from which she focuses on slavery: “being bought with a price” is her theme. In chapter 3 she uses Galatians to discuss travel and hospitality, in particular the effect on the hosting community of various travelers. Philippi becomes the context for a discussion on poverty and abundance. This chapter is her first real engagement with archaeological data beyond inscriptions. Chapter 5 focuses on death and grief against a Corinthian background. In Chapter 6 she uses the Augustan mausoleum in Rome as the launching pad for a discussion of time, race and obelisks and their influence in the letter to the Romans. Chapter 7 discourses on what Nasrallah calls “the afterlife of the Apostle Paul” (224), using Thessalonike as a backdrop. Her concluding chapter again argues for the use of archaeology in NT study, a weakness that she correctly identifies in much contemporary NT scholarship.

However, this book, despite its title, is neither a comprehensive survey of the archaeology of the world of Paul nor a true archaeological study on the letters of Paul like she calls for in her discussion of method (34). As her title indicates, she does not discuss Acts in her presentations. She baldly states that “Acts is a later text ... it is not an objective history against which to plot the life of Paul” (14). Instead, Nasrallah uses archaeological data from the various cities linked to the letters to lay a foundation for a discussion of non-traditional perspectives on various interpretive issues in the letters. Nasrallah writes as a biblical scholar, writing for biblical students and scholars, freely admitting in both the introduction and the conclusion that she is not an archaeologist. For the most part, her archaeological data is inscriptional material and the physical topography of the cities she engages with. This is a classic “biblical backgrounds” approach, of some value, but it is not archaeology. Her strongest chapter is probably the one on Philippi because she understands the site very well. Another limitation is a general failure to use evangelical scholarship even where it could contribute to her narrowly focused discussions.

This study can be frustrating to use. Although she self-identifies as a Christian (2), she does not have an evangelical approach to the Pauline corpus, and this hurts her work. For example, Nasrallah’s failure to accept Ephesians and the Timothy

correspondence as Pauline severely limits her interaction with the archaeology of Ephesus. This site has been intensively excavated for nearly a century and provides a wealth of contextual data on first century life in the first generations after Roman conquest. She does not engage at all with the fluidity of identity in Ephesus or with the overpowering presence of Artemis in the lives of the populace, a major issue in the NT writings. Philemon mentions a house church, but she does not use the results from the extensive domestic excavation which has occurred in Ephesus to comment on this phenomenon. Even on this issue, she could have used the physical layout of the houses to discuss domestic slavery. By not accepting Titus as Pauline, she fails to benefit from new work on Crete which provides archaeological evidence of negotiated identity which is highly relevant to the epistle. In chapter 3, she has a good discussion of travelers, but does not emphasize that ideas spread through trade networks. She could have engaged the wealth of new data on Roman trade networks in Anatolia, primarily derived from ceramic studies and used it as a framework to discuss Paul's travels. The chapter on Rome is frankly bizarre with a five-page section devoted to a discussion of Mussolini's 'archaeology'. She defends this choice, saying "embedding the letter to the Romans within the ancient roman landscape of Augustus' mausoleum complex, even while our awareness hovers over the fact that this complex is an 'authentic ruin' produced by fascist 'archaeology' allows us to hear more clearly the language of time and cosmos in the letter to the Romans" (222). Maybe it does for her, but not for me.

Overall, Nasrallah raises good questions that are rarely asked in the way she does, but when she answers them, she actually employs only a small amount of the archaeological data that could be brought to bear on these issues. If this book encourages NT students and scholars to dip into the burgeoning archaeological literature bearing on the Mediterranean world of Paul, then it will have achieved a positive purpose.

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***Paul: A Biography.* By N.T. Wright. New York: Harper Collins, 2018. 432 Pages. Hardcover, \$29.99.**

N.T. Wright is the chair of New Testament and Early Christianity at the School of Divinity, University of St. Andrews. He has taught New Testament studies for more than twenty years at Cambridge, McGill and Oxford Universities. He has authored several works on Paul including *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (Fortress Press, 2013), *Pauline Perspectives* (Fortress Press, 2013) and *Paul and His Recent Interpreters* (Fortress Press, 2015).

Wright, as a biographer and historian, seeks to answer questions about Paul that lie behind the biblical texts: Who was Paul? What was his work and why did he undertake this work? What was the nature of Paul's transformation on the road to Damascus?

Wright traces Paul's journey from his beginnings as Saul of Tarsus, who strictly adhered to his ancient Jewish traditions (cf. Gal 1:14) and urged radical obedience to them to the point of violence, to Paul, the Apostle. Paul's experience on the road to Damascus marks the transition from one to the other. Wright views this experience, not as a conversion, but Paul's recognition that Jesus of Nazareth is Israel's Messiah, the fulfillment of prophecy. Paul's devotion to the One God changes from

Torah and Temple to Jesus the Messiah. Wright argues that Paul reorients his entire life once Paul acknowledged that heaven and earth came together in Jesus.

Wright also addresses recurring themes of Paul's writings and seeks to understand them within Paul's cultural, historical, and personal experience. For instance, Wright addresses what many regard as Paul's fundamental doctrine: justification. Wright argues that the theological framework is a construct from the Middle Ages. The sixteenth century Reformers may provide important new angles to the first-century perspective, but Wright reasons that Paul's concern is not saving souls to go to heaven, but the coming together of heaven and earth in a great act of cosmic renewal. This heaven-to-earth reality comes in Jesus' birth activated by the Spirit. Paul realizes that God acted "when the fullness of time came" (Gal 4:4 NASB).

Wright also addresses the important theme of resurrection. He sees the resurrection as the underlying connection or glue that holds together Paul's theology and is foundational to everything Paul believes. The resurrection is the reason for Paul being an Apostle. In Jesus victory has already been won over sin, dark powers, and death, but this victory will be completed in the new creation. For Paul learning to be a follower of Jesus the Messiah culminates in the heart and mind being transformed to live in this already/not-yet world (1 Cor 15:25; Ps 110:1). This is a messianic eschatology, the ultimate fulfillment of Israel's hope in the Messiah and resurrection. Wright argues that Paul understood the expected covenant between God and his people does not come through the Torah but through the Messiah.

Wright shows how Paul operates within a worldview different from the view of sin and salvation that Western Christians have normally assumed. He argues that Paul's humanity is the best context for understanding Paul and how God used him to bring a new paradigm for understanding Jesus. His reflection and commentary on the chronological reading of the Pauline epistles and Acts enlightens the development and maturity in Pauline theology. His work provides insight into Paul, the man, and how his theological reflection comes to light through his cultural and historical context.

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***Jesus The Eternal Son: Answering Adoptionist Christology.* By Michael F. Bird. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017. 155 pages. Softcover, \$18.00.**

*Jesus The Eternal Son*, which began in a public dialogue held at a Greer-Heard Point-Counterpoint forum, deals with the divinity of Jesus by focusing on Christological adoptionism. Michael F. Bird, lecturer in theology at Ridley College in Melbourne, Australia, discloses the inaccurate evidence used by scholars (e.g. Bart Ehrman and James Dunn) to argue for adoptionism. Against the incorrect claims, Bird highlights two points from the primary sources: (1) a ripened adoptionism comes as a phenomenon during the second century CE; and (2) the *de facto* promoters are the Theodotians (xi). The rest of the book unfolds these two points.

In chapter one, Bird observes, based on research of early Christologies, that no one can claim "a single monolithic Christology of the early church." Rather, he argues for a process of "early christologizing" (5). While the consensus in beliefs and practices within the early church appeared, a few disparate Christologies remained in their own context, which came to be known as heresies. Adoptionism, one of the heresies of the second and third centuries, is assumed to be the earliest recoverable Christology according to modern scholars. A full incarnational Christology was only

developed afterwards (8). This presents a problem to Bird because he believes “there is no tangible evidence for an adoptionist Christology in the New Testament” (124).

In chapter two, Bird works with two biblical passages: Romans 1:3–4 and Acts 2:36. He refutes the Adoptionist interpretation, which asserts that Romans 1:3–4 reflects the creedal nature grammatically with substantive participles, implying Jesus is invested with divine sonship at his resurrection (11–13). According to Bird, however, Romans 1:3–4 pictures Jesus in transition from one state of divine sonship to another state of divine sonship, and not in transition from the earthly Son of David to a divine state as the Son of God by the resurrection. Namely, “divine sonship is already embedded in the designation of Jesus as the Davidic descendent prior to his resurrection” (16).

Respecting Markan Christological origin and the baptismal incident, chapter three elaborates on two aspects: (1) deification within the Greco-Roman world and (2) Jewish monotheism. Criticizing Greco-Roman notions of deification, Bird points out that they lack an essential distinction between humans and the eternal gods. Therefore, the Gospel of Mark could not correspond with the Greco-Roman idea of deification. Furthermore, deification looked absurd to those holding to Jewish monotheism. Bird brings in Josephus’s and Philo’s critiques of deification to emphasize that “the premise of monotheism, even with subordination and intermediary figures, includes an absolute distinction between God and humanity” (56–57).

In chapter four, Bird argues that Michael Peppard has misread the Gospel of Mark. Peppard projected both the imperial cults and Roman adoption practices onto the incident of baptism (66). To Bird, however, Mark 1:11 appeals to Old Testament allusions: Psalms 2:7 and Isaiah 42:1. The scriptural intertextual contexts exhibit “the call and commission of Jesus as the Son and Servant to complete his messianic task; it marks him out as the *messias designatus*, not as one who becomes the divine Son at this juncture” (72). Then, Bird enumerates four characteristics of the Gospel of Mark and emphasizes Jesus’ eschatological dimension as the Son of God (84–102).

In chapter five, Bird deems adoptionism as a product of the second century CE by examining three suspects of adoptionism: (1) the Shepherd of Hermas, (2) the Ebionites, and (3) the Theodotians. Delving into the first two cases, Bird concludes that both should not be considered adoptionism (107–120). Even in the case of Theodotus, Bird is reluctant to acknowledge that Theodotus is an adoptionist because he believed Jesus is a mere man and did not claim Jesus was divine and became divine. Bird finally claims that the occurrence of adoptionism was through a group of Theodotians in the 190s or early 200s.

This book is worthy of attention because not only does it deal with biblical and historical evidence regarding adoptionism but also implicitly defends the deeper meaning of the relationship between Jesus and God. The affirmation that Jesus is the eternal son is Bird’s real claim. His work shows that incarnational Christology is at the forefront of Trinitarian theology as well as Christology.

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***The Biblical Canon Lists from Early Christianity: Texts and Analysis.* By Edmon L. Gallagher and John D. Meade. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. 337 pages. Hardcover, \$46.95.**

In this volume, Edmon Gallagher and John Meade provide a valuable resource for those studying the formation and reception of the biblical canon by collecting and contextualizing “canon lists” from the first four centuries of early Christianity. They define a canon list as a “list of books that an author or council considers to constitute the biblical canon” (xii). For each major list, Gallagher and Meade include an orientation to the historical occasion of the list, the text of the list in its original language, an English translation of the list, and a series of footnotes where they flag points of interest, outline scholarly discussions, and provide analysis of specific textual details.

After a survey of the field of canon studies, they include Jewish lists (from Josephus and Baba Bathra 14b), Greek Christian lists (like Melito of Sardis, Athanasius, and Gregory of Nazianzus), Latin Christian lists (like the Muratorian Fragment, Codex Claromontanus, and Hilary of Poitiers), and a Syriac Christian List (the St. Catherine’s Monastery Syriac list). They conclude with a selection of lists drawn from Greek, Syriac, Latin, and Hebrew manuscripts that include the full contents of the biblical canon and an appendix that describes significant writings that were disputed in the history of the formation of the canon (like the *Epistle of Barnabas* and the *Shepherd of Hermas*).

When considering the story of canon formation, there are many types of evidence and data that must be considered (e.g., manuscripts, citations, patterns of use). However, Meade and Gallagher argue that canon lists provide a strategic window into the canon formation process because “in most cases,” these lists “unambiguously report what the compilers of the lists considered to belong to the biblical canon” (xiv). Consequently, “they bear an undeniable importance in the history of the canon” for more than other “types of data, the lists directly inform us of the books considered canonical in early Christianity” (xiv).

While they recognize the limits of what canon lists can explain, Gallagher and Meade maintain that neglecting this type of evidence would be a clear mistake. Their volume itself illustrates this dynamic, as it includes a lengthy preliminary section discussing the necessary definitional question of canon and other relevant methodological issues that help clarify the role that canon lists play in the formation of the biblical canon (78 pages). In their original literary setting, several of the lists mentioned are in the form of discussions, homilies, or commentaries (e.g., Josephus’ “list,” the Muratorian Fragment, or Origen’s Homilies on Joshua 7). As this volume showcases both explicitly and implicitly, then, considerable interpretive work is required both to access and assess these writings/documents.

By having these important lists classified, categorized, and contextualized, readers will be able to note both the continuity and discontinuity of their contents but also of their form and literary setting. The inclusion of a chapter on manuscripts also communicates the way the canon lists relate to the broader constellation of physical evidence that helps us tell the story of how the canon came to be. In sum, as a tool for research on the biblical canon, this volume succeeds and will serve students and scholars for many years.

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***Biblical Eschatology*, 2nd ed. By Jonathan Menn. Eugene, OR: Resource, 2018. 595 pages. Softcover, \$48.99.**

In his work *Biblical Eschatology*, Jonathan Menn attempts to present a comprehensive eschatology that “analyzes all of the major eschatological passages, issues, and positions in a fair, clear, but not superficial way” (xvii). He begins with an introduction to eschatological study, briefly describing the major hermeneutical positions, before he describes his own hermeneutic for biblical study. Menn holds to an amillennial hermeneutic, with its familiar two-age model. From this position, he sees God fulfilling most prophecies substantially and not literally. The church and Christ fulfill Old Testament prophecies about Israel, while the prophecies of Revelation are largely symbolic and not literal. He advocates for one *Parousia*, one general resurrection, and one general judgment. Menn provides a brief examination of historical eschatology in order to show that the traditional positions of the church support his hermeneutic. Menn follows by examining four major eschatological themes and their importance to biblical eschatology—the millennium, the Olivet Discourse, the rapture, and the antichrist—before concluding with a lengthy commentary on Revelation. Menn also includes several appendices on additional important eschatological texts.

Menn’s work is a weighty contribution to eschatological study. He accomplishes his task of examining most of the major aspects of biblical eschatology; any comprehensive discussion of eschatology should comment on the subjects he has chosen. The inclusion of the history of eschatological discussion in the church is beneficial to show the reader this conversation is not a new one, born out of the contemporary premillennial discussions of the past century, but rather a conversation that dates back to the church fathers. Menn’s commentary on Revelation demonstrates a steady hermeneutic, as he shows that his interpretations remain consistent from early in Scripture until the final book. Finally, the items in his appendices, such as the important but oft-overlooked Zechariah 14, are also profitable and necessary to any end-time conversation.

While Menn offers much to the eschatological conversation, his work is not without its deficiencies. *Biblical Eschatology* suffers most by not presenting a unified, Biblical eschatology, though Menn states this goal is his intention. Instead of showing how Scripture presents a singular eschatological narrative, his work reads more as a commentary on eschatological subjects. For example, Menn dedicates almost no commentary on the day of the Lord. This oversight is a serious issue when presenting a comprehensive eschatology, as the day of the Lord is a recurring theme throughout both the Old and New Testaments. Furthermore, Menn’s dearth of study on Old Testament prophecy leaves his interpretation of New Testament passages without a foundation. Menn is wise to discuss major themes, such as the rapture and the antichrist, but by dedicating them to their own chapters, the book reads as an amalgamation of subjects instead of building blocks of a cohesive eschatology. The inclusion of so many appendices, while individually valuable to the eschatological conversation, demonstrates this lack of cohesion. Any attempt to present a unified eschatology needs these appendices in the main body of the work.

Additionally, Menn does not argue for the amillennial hermeneutic that guides his interpretations. Instead, he assumes Scripture reflects an amillennial eschatology and structures his interpretations around the position. He uses terms such as “historic Christianity” and “historic exegesis” to justify holding to amillennialism, yet he himself demonstrates that the early church varied greatly in its eschatology.

Menn's work also suffers from assuming all dispensationalists are united in their eschatological systems, ignoring the development of dispensational thought over the past several decades. He thus attacks dispensationalism at its underdeveloped and weakest points while ignoring the more potent dispensational arguments that challenge his own system. Furthermore, his commentary on Revelation is lacking. One could hardly expect Menn to present a fully developed exegesis of Revelation in a singular volume on eschatology, which makes the commentary's inclusion here puzzling. Instead of commenting on Revelation's crucial passages, Menn attempts to speak on every section, which only dilutes the commentary's overall value.

Menn's *Biblical Eschatology* is a valuable overview of eschatology and its most important facets. Menn shows that despite a plethora of scholarly attention throughout church history, eschatology remains a captivating and unsettled area of study.

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***The Beginning of Baptist Ecclesiology: The Foundational Contributions of Thomas Helwys.* By Marvin Jones. Monographs in Baptist History. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2017. 157 pages. Paperback, \$22.00.**

Marvin Jones, Assistant Professor of Church History and Theology at Louisiana College, presents a dual purpose in writing *The Beginning of Baptist Ecclesiology*. The first, given in the preface, is to “give a fresh voice” to Helwys’s Baptist ecclesiology as well as contribute to the ongoing conversation surrounding Baptist origins (xiv). The second, presented in the final chapter, is to analyze Helwys’s belief—and major contribution to Baptist ecclesiology—that only Baptist churches are true churches, as demonstrated in *A Short Declaration of the Mystery of Iniquity* (139). Jones ultimately succeeds in the latter but flounders in his treatment of the former.

In addressing his second purpose, Jones presents an argument that, although not always explicit in his writing, is still discernible to the reader. After providing a brief biography of Helwys and establishing the basic hermeneutical approach to apocalyptic literature in the English Reformation, Jones posits that Helwys uses the same approach to interpret his own context, ultimately leading Helwys to establish a Baptist church since all other ecclesial traditions were apostate (34–37). The third chapter expands upon this point, revealing the reasons why Helwys rejected the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches. A history of religious toleration during the English Reformation is provided in the fourth chapter, giving the reader the historical context that led to Helwys’s ecclesiological formation. The final two chapters trace Helwys’s critiques of Puritanism and Separatism in *Mystery of Iniquity*. Jones argues that by rejecting the ecclesiology of every other group involved in the English Reformation, Helwys establishes a unique ecclesiology: a Baptist ecclesiology.

Jones ultimately achieves this second stated purpose; the reader is able to discern the argument throughout the work. However, this is largely done implicitly rather than explicitly. Jones does not always draw connections together, leaving the reader to do so on his own. For most of the work, the reader can still trace the argument, but there are three specific instances where a more explicit approach would alleviate some confusion. The first is found in the second chapter. The reader shifts from a biography of Helwys to a discussion of the historicist interpretation of apocalyptic literature in the English Reformation. The connection between Helwys and this method of interpretation is not immediately evident, and it is not until

the end of the chapter that the reader discovers that Helwys applied this model to the Church of England to establish their status as an apostate church. Making this connection explicitly at the beginning of the chapter would aid readers in tracking Jones's argument.

The second instance is connected to the theme of the "two churches" in Helwys's *Mystery of Iniquity* and other apocalyptic works in the period. This theme is introduced by Jones on page 23, but is not defined as the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches until page 28. Proper understanding of this theme is needed for the reader to understand why Helwys rejects both churches as apostate, but Jones does not specify that Helwys and others connect the two churches to the beast and the false prophet in Revelation until later in the chapter.

The third instance is of a similar nature in the fourth chapter. Jones demonstrates how Helwys's conception of religious toleration provides a framework for his Baptist ecclesiology. This is demonstrated largely through the tenet of royal supremacy. Royal supremacy is introduced as a concept on page 55 but is not defined until page 75. Royal supremacy does indeed play a role in Helwys's thought, but the reader is left wondering as to its relevance for twenty pages. Forming this connection explicitly earlier in the chapter would aid the reader in understanding Jones's argument. Ultimately, his argument is discernible, and the emphasis on Helwys's historical context does much to inform the reader why Helwys argues in the manner presented in *Mystery of Iniquity*. However, both Jones's and Helwys's arguments would be more easily grasped if Jones argued them more explicitly.

As to Jones's first stated purpose related to Baptist origins, *The Beginning of Baptist Ecclesiology* leaves much to be desired. Jones writes that Helwys formed his ecclesiology in response to, and thus resembles, *both* English Separatism and Anabaptism (xiv). Jones certainly demonstrates the commonality and distinctions between Helwys's ecclesiology and that of the Separatist movement. Especially helpful in this regard is his treatment of the doctrine of covenant in Puritan, Separatist, and Helwys's thought. However, other than an occasional assertion that Helwys did not follow his pastor and friend John Smyth in requesting membership into Mennonite circles, little attention is given to the Anabaptist connection.

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***The Blackwell Companion to Substance Dualism*. Edited by Jonathan J. Loose, Angus J.L. Menuge, and J.P. Moreland. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2018. 528 pages. Hardcover, \$202.75.**

*The Blackwell Companion to Substance Dualism* provides a comprehensive introduction to human nature, focusing especially on the viability of substance dualism. The editors are Philosophy Professors at Heythrop College, University of London (Jonathan J. Loose), Concordia University Wisconsin (Angus J.L. Menuge), and Biola University (J.P. Moreland) respectively. Including the editors, twenty-nine total experts in the Philosophy of Mind author chapters. These authors range from various universities around the world and from various denominational and religious backgrounds.

The book is a *tour de force* in defending and critiquing the feasibility of substance dualism. It is precisely the range of viewpoints presented by the various authors that makes this text so valuable. As topics in human nature continue to rise to

premier importance in contemporary contexts, this volume is a timely text for pastors and scholars alike. But what exactly is substance dualism and why does it need 500+ pages to determine its feasibility? The editors define substance dualism as the view that “(1) there is a substantial self, soul, or ego that is immaterial and (2) that self, soul, or ego is not identical to the body and is the bearer of personal identity” (1). This view, while often considered the consensus of the church for two millennia, is certainly no longer in vogue today (2). Precisely for this reason the editors assembled this wide range of authors to explain its meaning. But, as the layout suggests, they did not decide to explain it by merely offering positive articles but rather summoned numerous counterproposals to best describe the strengths and weaknesses of substance dualism from both devotees and critics. In doing so, the editors confess their hope for the book to “be a valuable resource for scholars in a variety of disciplines... and that it will be a useful reference for those interested in doing further work advancing the case for or against substance dualism” (11).

Now, a full orb ed summary being impossible, the broad sections of the book include defining and debating various versions of substance dualism, the unity of consciousness, near-death experiences, and competitors to substance dualism including animalism, non-reductive physicalism, constitutionalism, and emergent individualism. The book also offers substantive theological engagement, debating the contents of the biblical witness for anthropology, the nature of the incarnation, and resurrection.

Given this very brief summation of the book, I am compelled to mention several overarching potential drawbacks for possible readers. First, the price is likely prohibitive for pastors that lack a sound library nearby to borrow the book. Second, as is often the case in edited books, some chapters are better than others. Some are needlessly idiosyncratic; some are overly verbose; and some lack argumentative rigor. Third, the way the book has been marketed unnecessarily limits its appeal to less academically focused readers who would benefit tremendously. As mentioned, topics in human nature are only becoming more prevalent in society and pastors are being confronted with difficult moral scenarios that require thick theological reasoning. This introduction to substance dualism, given the fact that it allows proponents of alternative viewpoints to argue their own case, is an ideal dialogue partner for thinking critically about human nature and its moral implications. But since it has been marketed primarily to an academic audience, many of these pastors will either be intimidated by it or miss it altogether. Fourth, while it is comprehensive it does lack reference to other narrow and rare defenses and formulations of substance dualism. This may be detrimental to the novice who is attempting to research the material and produce scholarly output but for those simply interested in the topic for practical usage this is no major problem. Finally, some may take issue with the inclusion of overtly theological material in a companion devoted to philosophy. However, substance dualism is often affirmed based on theological issues; therefore, considering such theological issues is part of the philosophical explanation of the position.

Moving from the potential negatives, I want to mention several strengths. First, as noted throughout, it provides proponents and opponents of substance dualism space to make their claims. This debate format provides readers with a thorough understanding of the potential benefits and costs of substance dualism and other competing views. Most books simply argue the case of their preferred position and miss a wealth of perceptive arguments. For example, there is a chapter dedicated to defending substance dualism from the biblical text and the following chapter

defends the very opposite—that there is no soul. Rather than only hearing one side of the debate, the reader can engage competing perspectives. Second, due to its size, it covers a wide range of topics that are both interesting and useful for understanding substance dualism and its claims. It can easily be used as a reference tool with each chapter standing alone without need to read others to understand it. Third, it offers sections on topics not often addressed, like near death experiences, which is likely a common challenging question pastors receive and would benefit from having a deep analysis. Given these positives, I think the book achieves its goal of being a valuable resource and reference work. But I think it is valuable for more than just scholars doing research—it is profoundly beneficial for pastors seeking to shepherd people through the cultural morass regarding human nature.

In sum, I highly recommend *The Blackwell Companion to Substance Dualism*. It offers the most comprehensive introduction to human nature focused on substance dualism to date. Even as I listed several potential drawbacks, I think the positives, alongside the crucial nature of the topic itself, make it a work worth investing in. Pastors and scholars alike should add this to their reading list.

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***Against God and Nature: The Doctrine of Sin.* By Thomas H. McCall. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019. 442 pages. Hardcover, \$40.00.**

In *Against God and Nature*, Trinity Evangelical Divinity professor Thomas H. McCall contributes a systematic overview of the doctrine of sin to Crossway's Foundations of Evangelical Theology series. This volume presents an Evangelical approach to hamartiology that is sensitive to biblical, historical, philosophical, and cultural considerations. Editor John S. Feinberg begins the volume with the reflection that one must reintroduce each generation to Scripture's timeless truths (14). When one considers the biblical truths in need of a faithful contemporary witness and presentation, few truths are as neglected and disdained as the doctrine of sin. McCall defines sin as "whatever is opposed to God's will, as that will reflects God's holy character and as that will is expressed by God's commands" (21). He elaborates, "sin is fundamentally opposed to nature and reason, and it is ultimately opposed to God" (21).

McCall's work is an impressive contribution to the field of hamartiology. McCall demonstrates his competencies as a systematician as he effortlessly weaves between exegeting the semantic nuances of Hebrew and Greek words and reflecting upon the contributions of reformation, modern, and Barthian theologians.

His work begins with a biblical analysis of hamartiology. He analyzes the key original words for a systematic understanding of sin and surveys the canonical witness to the doctrine. One finds his biblical theology of hamartiology particularly helpful. He draws insights from each stage of redemptive history and identifies relevant threads throughout Scripture. Preachers and scholars will benefit from his presentation of three metaphors for sin: the royal-legal metaphor (102–05), the familial metaphor (105–07), and the nuptial metaphor (108–11).

He transitions from biblical analysis to systematic argumentation. He subdivides hamartiology into sections on the origins of sin, original sin, the sin nature, the results of sin, and the relationship between sin and grace. McCall approaches sin

from a classical Arminian perspective. He challenges readers to consider the diversity of approaches to hamartiology within the Reformed tradition. McCall critiques common Reformed positions, such as Jonathan Edward's occasionalism (347–48), Federalist views of original sin (165), and compatibilism (186). He argues that Reformed positions on the relationship between God's sovereignty, sin, and culpability fail to account for God's goodness (128, 142) as well as human free-will (128, 289) and responsibility for original sin (165). Also, he criticizes perspectives on God's sovereignty which insinuate that God is the author and cause of sin (131).

McCall exposes readers to relevant arguments across the theological spectrum. His engagement with various disciplines—from new perspective scholars to Augustine and Barth—demonstrates a healthy interaction with relevant scholarship. Readers will enjoy his section on individual and systemic sins (258–70). He appraises Marxist approaches to social sins while retaining biblical teaching on structural elements of sin's universal impact. This section contributes to current discussions on social justice and systemic sins as theologians debate the utility of assigning corporate guilt to demographics for social injustices.

This volume deserves to receive a wide readership. McCall presents a thorough analysis of the doctrine of sin for a contemporary audience. Scholars will benefit from his careful interactions with primary sources and Scripture's *classicus locus* texts for hamartiology. Students will meet the main contributors to debates and discussions from church history while gaining a foothold for understanding the contours of this doctrine.

McCall's work instructs students on the importance of understanding the nuances of theological positions. While it is tempting to fit ideas and theologians—such as Pelagianism, Arminianism, and Calvinism—within neat taxonomies, closer inspection always reveals subtle differences and unexpected associations between competing views. McCall calls readers to discard conventional sketches of different positions in order to inspect the actual represented positions of leading thinkers. For example, he criticizes attempts to label federalism as “*the* Reformed View, for some Reformed theologians criticize and reject it, while some decidedly non-Reformed theologians accept and defend it” (163). This anecdote reminds educators that theological pedagogy must include the consideration of original sources rather than relying upon secondhand summaries of positions.

At the same time, some readers will challenge McCall with a selective representation of the Reformed position on various doctrines. When he presents and critiques Reformed positions, McCall interacts with esoteric sources. As an example, he neglects the Westminster Confession of Faith as he presents Reformed theological statements that distance God's providential will from sin (131). He is also critical of attempts to locate Reformed thought strictly through Jonathan Edwards as opposed to Wesley (24–27).

As a notoriously difficult doctrine to define and present, Thomas McCall's contribution to hamartiology will aid pastors and theologians as they reflect upon the nature of sin. McCall reminds readers that one does not engage with the doctrine of sin for intellectual purposes alone. The doctrine of sin corresponds with the reality of brokenness within the world. As theologians present this doctrine, they help individuals understand the etiology of the dysphoria they experience as sinners in a fallen creation. Hamartiology points one towards soteriology as the study of sin “awakens ... within us the hope for something better. Things are *not* right, and we will find within us a longing that things *will* be made right” (204). The doctrine of

sin “leaves us longing for something better, and it points us beyond itself to the Holy One who promises and provides salvation” (380).

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***The Atlas of Reality: A Comprehensive Guide to Metaphysics.* By Robert C. Koons and Timothy H. Pickavance. West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2017. 699 pages. Hardcover, \$195.00.**

Following on the heels of their previous slim introduction to contemporary metaphysics (*Metaphysics: the Fundamentals*), Robert Koons and Timothy Pickavance offer *The Atlas of Reality: A Comprehensive Guide to Metaphysics* as an encyclopedic guide to a host of issues in contemporary analytic metaphysics. *The Atlas of Reality* is nothing less than 654 pages of philosophical red meat. The book is exhaustive and encyclopedic in that it aims, to use the author’s own words, “to explore, as completely as possible, the ‘logical space’ of metaphysics: to say at least something about every possible theory on the important questions in metaphysics” (9). The book is divided into twenty-nine chapters that are distributed across the following eight general sections: Foundations, Dispositions, Universals and Particulars, The Nature of Reality, Modality, Space and Time, Unity, and Causation. The topics addressed in the work range from the relationship between truth and reality (truthmaker theory), properties and universals, modality/essence/ and possible worlds, laws of nature, substance, composition, and the nature of time. Koons and Pickavance aim to survey the best arguments for and against each major view on the contemporary scene. While the authors clearly favor a broad Aristotelian position on many of the issues throughout the volume (substance, properties, modality, modal knowledge, time, composition, etc.), they are evenhanded and charitably interact with opposing views.

Let me highlight two particular ways the book stands out from competing titles. First, the authors helpfully weave together four broad packages of views in metaphysics, each consisting of a web of interrelated positions on the topics of truthmaking, substance, properties, time, and modality. The authors identify the following packages of positions in contemporary metaphysics: neo-Humean, neo-Aristotelian, Fortibrachian, and Quietism (624–32). This is extremely helpful to the reader as the individual areas in metaphysics are very often treated in an atomistic fashion, without regard to how they mutually inform and are organically related to one another. Second, the volume includes two Appendices that outline a comprehensive list of metaphysical axioms and principles that are developed and defended throughout the volume.

Koons and Pickavance provide a helpful introduction that addresses the all too pervasive pragmatic challenge to the study of metaphysics: why devote time to studying metaphysics when there are more pressing philosophical areas that demand our attention, such as ethics and political philosophy (questions pertaining to the good, the right, and how to justly order a political community)? Here I’ll unpack the reasons Koons and Pickavance offer in response to the pragmatic challenge, and then go on to offer an additional reason that may be of particular interest to Christian theologians and to the readers of this journal.

First, following Aristotle, Koons and Pickavance argue that metaphysics (as with all philosophical inquiry) begins with a reflective wonder and deep desire to understand reality. This reflective wonder naturally pertains to questions of a distinctive metaphysical variety: what kinds of things exist, and how do these things relate



to one another? As rational animals, human beings alone strive to rightly understand the natures of things, for the purpose of rightly orienting their lives to reality. Second, the authors argue that metaphysics is both foundational and unavoidable; core issues in philosophy of science and moral and political philosophy crucially depend on prior metaphysical assumptions. For example, one's views about human flourishing (both individually and collectively in society) will largely depend on one's views concerning the nature of a human being, *what* a human being is fundamentally. Does human nature have intrinsic and objective ends or *teloi*, the fulfillment of which constitutes human flourishing? Or is human nature merely socially constructed, and thereby susceptible to the collective preferences of each subsequent generation? Are human beings nothing more than immaterial minds or selves, or is the material body a real constituent of human beings and thus an integral part of their moral flourishing? These are distinctively metaphysical issues that inevitably shape (often tacitly) contemporary issues in moral and political philosophy (e.g. sexual ethics, human dignity and natural rights).

Let me add a third reason why Christian theologians and readers of this journal might consider taking up the task of studying metaphysics. Theologians Michael Allen and Scott Swain define "dogmatic theology" as a "conceptual representation of scriptural teaching about God and all things in relation to God" (Series Preface to Zondervan's *New Studies in Dogmatics*). The question here is not *whether* one conceptually represents the biblical teaching concerning the nature and activity of God and his redemptive work in the person of the God-man, Jesus Christ. Rather, the question is *how* one will conceptually represent such teaching; *which* conceptual categories will one put to use in explicating, clarifying, and framing the biblical teaching concerning the nature of God and the person of Christ? Of course, the church fathers at both the council of Nicaea (325 CE) and the council of Chalcedon (451 CE) consciously employed the existing metaphysical categories of *substance* or *essence* (*ousia*; *homoousion*) as well as *person* (*hypostasis*) in their conceptual representation of the biblical teaching of the trinity of divine persons in the Godhead as well as the theanthropic person of Christ. Medieval Christian theologians such as Anselm of Canterbury and Thomas Aquinas also critically employed both neo-Platonic and Aristotelian metaphysical categories to conceptually represent biblical teaching. In a recent article on divine impassibility in *Credo* magazine, theologian Craig Carter summarizes my point here nicely: "I think we have to acknowledge that *everyone* utilizes metaphysical assumptions in exegesis and that the choice is not 'metaphysics or not,' but rather, 'unrevised pagan metaphysics or biblically shaped metaphysics.'" (Craig Carter, "Why I No Longer Believe in a Passible God." *Credo*, March 27, 2019).

For contemporary analytically minded theologians who are in search of a comprehensive reference work that will deepen their grasp of contemporary metaphysics, *The Atlas of Reality* fits the bill. Towards this aim, let me close by offering a brief guide to various chapters in the book that I think helpfully correspond to various loci in systematic theology, with an eye toward constructive analytic theological work in particular: Theology Proper relates to the following: Substance/Nature/Essence (chs. 9; 14–15); The Nature of Time (Chs. 19–21); Properties/Attributes/Universals (chs. 7–8). Creation, Providence, and Miracles relate to the following: Causation (chs. 26–27); The Nature of Time (Chs. 19–21); Laws of Nature (ch. 5). Christology relates to the following: Substance/Nature/Essence (chs. 9; 14–15); Properties/Attributes/Universals (chs. 7–8).

One final warning is in order: the book is not for the faint of heart. I would not recommend the book as an introductory text in metaphysics (a much better place to start would be Koons and Pickavance's much smaller and more introductory volume *Metaphysics: The Fundamentals*).

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***World Mission: Theology, Strategy, & Current Issues.* Edited by Scott N. Callaham and Will Brooks. Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2019. 378 pages. Paperback, \$24.99.**

Scott Callaham and Will Brooks bring together an excellent collection of biblical scholars, theologians, and missiologists with years of cross-cultural missions experience. They aim to place “every aspect of the missional task under the authority ... of biblical teaching” (xi). The book has three sections—Theology and World Mission, World Mission Strategy, and Current Issues in World Mission. The first section has three chapters that focus on biblical theology. The second section has four chapters that focus on aspects of Matthew 28:19–20. The last section has four chapters that focus on language, exegetical method, orality, and missionary practice.

The first chapter sets the tone for what follows. Callaham rightly suggests that the “biblical ethos [for missions] stems from biblical theology, such that the content, themes, and story line of the Bible determine everything else” (3). He presents an Old Testament theology of mission that builds on the themes of creation, election, judgment, and new creation. Callaham helpfully shows how accurate biblical theology can shape mission strategy.

Wendel Sun writes the next two chapters. Sun first presents a New Testament theology of mission and then presents a whole Bible perspective. After addressing how Jesus fulfills many Old Testament ideas, Sun argues that the church's ministry comes through union with Christ. Thus, the church's mission comes through participation in his mission. Sun follows a progressive covenantal framework, showing how Jesus fulfills the covenants. He rightly states that “all missional activity must be understood within the creational framework” (75). This creational framework also offers fertile connections to wisdom literature, which is largely absent in the chapter.

In the fourth chapter, Stephen Wright analyzes the phrase “make disciples.” He first analyzes discipleship in Matthew before considering the other gospels, Acts, and the larger biblical canon. He shows how biblical discipleship entails adherence to a teacher and implies obedience (129). His research shows the necessity of both teaching and modeling in biblical discipleship.

In the following chapter, Jarvis Williams and Trey Moss address the phrase “all nations.” Beginning in the mid-twentieth century, certain missiologists interpreted the phrase anthropologically. In response, it became common to interpret the phrase as a reference to ethno-linguistic people groups. This interpretation had a lasting effect on missions strategy as it shifted its focus to unreached ethno-linguistic people groups. Williams and Moss argue that the phrase simply means “non-Jews in general” (135). They contend that missions should focus on all people in every place.

In the sixth chapter, John Massey and Callaham consider the role of baptism in the missionary task. They maintain that believer's baptism by immersion in the Triune name of God best accords with Matthew 28:19. They also show the importance of baptism to the life of the church and how insider movements distort biblical teaching on baptism. The richness of this chapter highlights what missiologists miss when they ignore baptism's importance in the task.

In the following chapter, Brooks and Sunny Tan claim that theological education remains essential to the missionary task. Missionaries must equip “local leadership to implement biblical forms of preaching, giving, worship, leadership, fellowship, prayer, and of course evangelism and missions” (179). Matthew 28:20 gives purpose to theological education in its result of obedience to Jesus (196–97). The authors persuade that in-depth theological education best trains indigenous leaders to interpret the biblical text on their own and removes a long-term need for missionary guidance.

In chapter eight, Callaham highlights the necessity of knowing biblical and host-nation languages. Callaham suggests that if the “missionary message is the word of God,” then missionaries must strive diligently in linguistic study (212). Callaham offers many practical suggestions in the chapter, emphasizing time and again the role of the Spirit in language acquisition and cross-cultural communication.

In the following chapter, Brooks shows the value of historical-grammatical exegesis in cross-cultural settings. Missiologists have too often encouraged reader-centric models of interpretation, but Brooks convincingly argues that an author-oriented model still provides the best method to validate interpretive accuracy and remove Western bias.

In the tenth chapter, Jackson Wu suggests narrative theology as a means for oral cultures to receive biblical theology. For Wu, the Bible’s narrative framework arises from Israel’s story. Wu goes as far as to state that “Israel’s story . . . is the inherent story of the Bible” (283). According to Wu, missionary materials should be developed within this narrative framework to faithfully reflect the biblical story and offer a format accessible to oral learners.

In the final chapter, Brooks shows the apostolic and pastoral aspects of Paul’s ministry as a model for missionaries today. Paul risked everything to bring the gospel to peoples and places that did not have it. He started churches, but was “concerned, not just for the *existence* of churches, but also for the *health* of those churches” (308). He labored in teaching them, following up with them after he left through repeated visits and letters, and sending other teachers and elders to lead them.

There are few negative things to say about this collection. One critique is the occasional indirect citation. As an example, Brooks references Sydney Greidanus to claim that Chrysostom held to grammatical-historical exegesis (243n12). A second critique arises from an occasional overemphasis on the narrative of Scripture. A common critique against such a framework is that it does not incorporate the frequent non-narrative portions of Scripture well. Alternatively, the work may have profited by using the thematic categories in Callaham’s initial chapter as a framework. These negatives are minimal and should not distract from the importance of this work.

As someone who has served in cross-cultural contexts for several years, I agree that this book addresses actual needs on the field. Pragmatism too often directs missionary practice. Missiologists may reference a biblical foundation, but rarely let the Bible shape their strategy and practice. The authors succeed in their aims. The work is scholarly, yet practical. I expect it to become a standard text for universities, seminaries, and missionary training centers for years to come.

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***Preaching for a Verdict: Recovering the Role of Exhortation.* By J. Josh Smith. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2019. xii + 180 pages. Paperback, \$29.99.**

Josh Smith is uniquely qualified to pen this crucial preaching volume. He is pastor, preacher, and homiletician. He currently serves as Senior Pastor of Prince Avenue Baptist Church in Bogart, GA. This volume draws from his 2013 D.Min. dissertation.

*Preaching for a Verdict* attempts to define and restore an oft ignored and misunderstood ingredient in the preaching endeavor, specifically exhortation. When properly understood, preaching not only informs the mind, it exhorts the will. Smith defines and distinguishes the element of exhortation, providing a historical, theological, and biblical basis for his proposal. His volume is not merely theoretical: he provides ways, means, and examples that allow the faithful preacher to integrate exhortation into his sermon preparation and delivery.

This work presents a veritable treasure-trove of homiletic gold. First, Smith clearly defines exhortation as “persuading the listener to respond to the call of the text through proclaiming the point of the text, in the voice of the text”; it is that persuasive effort that distinguishes preaching from teaching (93). Though important, to merely inform the hearer’s mind from the text is insufficient because true preaching speaks to the entire man. Failure to preach persuasively makes the sermon simply suggestive. Every Scripture demands a response and “a call to respond is embedded somewhere in the text and made clear by the Spirit” (4).

Second, there are some who disparage or even reject exhortation, believing that it is solely the Spirit’s ministry or simply synonymous with application. Smith distinguishes application from exhortation: “[W]hile application might explain what the text demands, exhortation pleads with the hearer to respond to its demands” (5). Both the Old and New Testaments confirm that the essential preaching paradigm is explanation, application, and exhortation, for “faithful biblical preaching must include an exhortation toward response” (76). He further explains the relationship between the two as follows: “Although proper exhortation always includes a form of application, it is possible to have application without exhortation. For that reason, exhortation must stand alone as a distinct and necessary practice in preaching” (9).

Third, in chapter 6, Smith offers practical advice since “like exposition, exhortation is a craft that must be learned” (93). He provides four foundational convictions for the practice of exhortation and steps to identifying and communicating exhortation. Two salient features of these hortatory convictions 1) the text drives the sermon, from structure to tone, and 2) since “God’s Word always demands a response ... the sermon should call for a response” (95). On identifying and communicating the sermon’s exhortation, the exhortation is not a gratuitous postscript, flows from the text itself (106).

Finally, chapter 8 proves personally useful to the preacher. Smith provides three ingredients for effective exhortation. First, diligent study is essential, since “text-driven exhortation takes patient endurance and hard work” (145). Second, Spirit empowerment is crucial for preparation and delivery, since “exhortation void of the power of the Holy Spirit will accomplish nothing, no matter how well crafted it is” (147–48). Exhortation requires authoritative delivery since “faithful exhortation demands a response, because God demands a response” (152).

It is hard to find any “rough spots” in this homiletic diamond. Any questions or shortcomings from the reading, the author anticipated and addressed in the conclusion—concerns about limits and downfalls of *exhortation*; *exhortation* without

manipulation; the tension between sovereignty, free will, and preaching. One would have hoped he would have tackled those issues, but his laser focus was on making *exhortation* a part of the preaching task, a possible subsequent volume would be fitting.

This book is a welcomed edition to the field of homiletics. There are some that would devalue this book believing that preaching speaks exclusively to the mind and not the will. Josh Smith sets the record straight, showing that it is in fact, the preacher's job, even mandate, not only to faithfully preach the text but also to faithfully exhort from the text. *Preaching for a Verdict* will hopefully usher in a new day of preachers calling people to God-honoring decisions, recalling that it is exhortation that "puts the urgency in exposition" (19). This work will prove valuable for 1) those who believe in biblical exhortation, yet need encouraging in their hortatory skills, and 2) those who dismiss biblical exhortation (in theory or practice), who need to be convinced to place this scriptural tool in their preaching repertoire. As they preach and call for a verdict, every preacher ought to understand and feel the gravity that it is "God making his appeal through us" (2 Cor 5:20). Josh Smith convincingly and clearly reminds the preacher of that reality. He has called preachers back to preaching like the prophets and the Apostles, preaching like Jesus, preaching for a verdict. *Preaching for a Verdict* is a "must read"—even a "must read again."

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