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Book Reviews

Dalferth, Ingolf U. *Creatures of Possibility: The Theological Basis of Human Freedom.* Trans. Jo Bennett. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016. pp. xxiii+217. $29.99.

Ingold U. Dalferth is a German theologian whose work is increasingly translated into English, with the result that many more readers benefit from his profound insight into the relationship between theology and philosophy. In this volume, Dalferth offers a deeply thoughtful theological anthropology that is informed by a rich, versatile reading of key sources and figures, especially Martin Luther and (somewhat between the lines) Immanuel Kant. His reflections draw upon an array of insights into particular categories of thought and doctrinal claims. His writing bears witness to a theological reading of human nature for a somewhat diverse readership. Having said this, Dalferth's level of abstraction and his occasional oversights concerning traditions other than his own signal that there are limits to the extent to which his thought will score an impact.

There are several key propositions that Dalferth makes. These seem to be the key ones:

1. Contrary to an Augustinian doctrine of original sin, humans are creatures of possibility, not creatures who possess some deficiency or other.
2. Contrary to certain neo-classical anthropologies of the imago dei, human freedom is a practice given us as a gift, not a function of some measureable capacity. We are therefore more passive than active, ontologically speaking. Our awareness of God is not evidence of a capacity to be aware.
3. Our existence is not of our making, a theological claim with more implications for philosophy than theologians have hitherto demanded of philosophers.
4. God's fundamental gift of grace through Jesus' (self-) sacrifice, being not subject to the reciprocity of exchange, is the totally Other that postmodernists such as Derrida and Marion miss either completely or in its fullness.
5. Against philosopher Hans Blumernberg's relegation of God to the category of the 'remembered subjunctive', Dalferth asserts the solidarity of divine saving action, which means that the Incarnation and the resurrection refer to particular eschatological events in the life of Jesus Christ. They are not free floating concepts into which philosophers may insert their own hermeneutic at will.
6. As self-interpreting animals, human creatures are not made in the imago dei because of a comparison with other animals but because we are to be compared with God. If we take seriously the critiques of Nietzsche and Darwin, we will

> disallow particular capabilities and their origins to define our godlikeness. Instead, our passive orientation to the future will mirror the true image of God, Jesus Christ.

It is challenging to summarize a book which deals with such a variety of claims in a relatively short space. The seven chapters comprising this volume are quite disparate despite the coherence of the first three and the last chapters, and this is the volume's weakness—a lack of cohesion amidst work that emanates from earlier articles. The strength of the book lies in the boldness and comprehensive scope of the individual chapters.

Dalferth has clear ideas that are forcefully made and with few exceptions persuasively expressed. He stands against not only a works-righteousness anthropology, but also a liberal optimism about human self-perfection. For this reason alone, his book is to be welcomed. Especially in the final chapter, Dalferth articulates a definitive response to the now normative belief that humans are no more than animals, yet without hedging the argument on our rationality or a new interpretation of biological capacity that eeks out freedom from the grain of deterministic processes.

In the middle chapters dealing with the postmodernists and with Blumenberg, Dalferth asserts a theological correction to concepts of God that elide grace and salvation. He wants to ontologically bolster latter categories all the while keeping philosophy and theology distinct! This pushes back against an overly philosophical conception of God and human beings generally, by arguing for a delineation of meaning to arise from the biblical text and the doctrinal tradition, independently of human needs. Against a certain tradition within the philosophy of religion, he affirms that "God is not infinitely incomprehensible; rather, he is love in excess" (p. 155).

The book begins with an absolutely critical insight, gained from a consideration of the human species' predicament in the face of the ecological crisis. It is that the implicit narrative of human nature stemming from threats to our existence reveals our creaturely deficiency. The response to a perception of our supposed deficiency is to engage in a steady tempo of activity, which actually worsens the crisis. He returns to the theme of the human predicament on this planet near the end of the book, but does his anthropological reflections supply the *desideratum* he seeks? Partly.

On the one hand, he understands—as too few theologians do—how European thought weighs upon the theological imagination. Figures like Nietzsche, Schoepenhauer and Darwin are deftly handled. Through this philosophical thicket, Dalferth threads a trail of theological markers that could ensure that we not forget our created status: orientation not explanation, human passivity amidst divine activity, faith over knowledge, gift over exchange and the distinction of disciplines over the (Thomist) analogy of being.

On the other hand, for a volume that develops a fresh theological narrative about human nature in the face of our limits, very little is spoken about sin. Ostensibly, this

is because Dalferth sees dangers lurking in a narrative of human deficiency that is traceable to the predominant interpretation of Genesis 3. He is interested in thinking of human creatures as creatures of the future, of possibilities not capabilities that fail. He also doubts the Christian tradition's appropriation of the ancient tradition in regards to body/soul dualism, but only once does he state that this is due to the tradition's association of sin with the body.

As with David Kelsey's *Eccentric Existence*, Dalferth gives the impression on a number of occasions that the one-sidedness of the *imago dei* tradition results from a preoccupation with Genesis 1:26. The hamartiological preoccupations of New Testament writers would seem to indicate some awareness of human deficiency from a created standard below which we are failed images of God. Dalferth prefers thinking of sin as the "ignoring of God." Yet, Paul's recognition of sin as "another law inside me" in Romans 7 suggests something graver.

Grace is the beginning of hope and does not remove deficiency, according to Dalferth (p. 110). But I think we can conceive of grace as both operative (through faith, love and hope) and healing. Dalferth's proposal hinges on a dialectic between the anthropological narratives of deficiency and possibility. Must it be either/or?

With a nod to Luther, Dalferth insists on referring to humans as *pura materia* (p. 79) instead of being substantial forms. But, with Paul, the medieval tradition inherited by Luther largely maintained the material causes of both virtue and vice in the human bodily state of becoming, and while Dalferth acknowledges Luther's dependence upon Aristotle, a fuller retrieval would have put pressure on an anthropology of the future tense.

On every page, Dalferth intrigues the reader and sets for us the serious task of thinking about the question "Who are We?" with verve and boldness. This is the most arresting book in theological anthropology that I have read in years.

Paul L. Allen, PhD
Concordia University, Montreal, Canada

Bloom, John A. *The Natural Sciences: A Student's Guide.* Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015, 127 pages, $11.99, paperback.

John A. Bloom (PhD, Cornell University) is a professor of physics; chair of the chemistry, physics, and engineering department; and academic director for the M.A. in science and religion program at Biola University in California. His educational credentials make him uniquely qualified to address the relationship between science and religion as he holds not only a doctorate in physics and ancient near eastern studies, but also a masters in divinity. Bloom has contributed to several books including *Evidence for Faith: Deciding the God Question* (ed. John Warwick Montgomery), and published multiple articles on early creation myths, intelligent design, and human origins. This book is part of a series entitled "Reclaiming the Christian Intellectual

Tradition," which is dedicated to providing an examination of academic topics from a distinctly Christian perspective.

The purpose of this volume is to introduce students to the natural sciences, and equip the reader with evidence that the Christian worldview provides the best grounds for scientific investigation. Bloom's passion, which sets the tone for the entire book, is best demonstrated by his statement that "reflecting on God's handiwork in the world around us gives a depth and life to science that makes it all the more fascinating and rewarding" (p. 6). He begins the book with an outline of the Christian intellectual tradition within science, and this establishes the philosophical framework for the following exploration of the history of scientific spanning from Aristotle through modern times. Next, he examines the definition of science and how methodological naturalism conflicts with Christian theology. Lastly, he delves further into current obstacles in science and offers suggestions on how the Christian perspective is the most advantageous for future scientific advancement.

This text's greatest strength is the well-constructed foundation Bloom provides on the role of Christianity in science. Having a strong base to call upon is crucial for novice students who wish to start thinking and speaking clearly about the intersection of science and Christianity. It can be difficult in today's world to be a both scientist and a Christian, however modern science is widely accepted as having its roots in a Christian perspective on nature. Bloom acknowledges that many argue that these two states are not only incompatible but almost considered at war with one another. To address this argument, he calls attention to the fact that both Christianity and science hold very similar, overlapping values: they both place a great premium on good work, which by definition includes high ethical standards, collegiality, and hard work. He highlights this intersectionality by emphasizing that "the Bible teaches that *the study of nature is a worthy pursuit to gain wisdom and glorify God*" (p. 25, italics original). He further strengthens this claim by noting "the application of scientific knowledge for practical and beneficial ends has its root in *the Christian call to relieve suffering*" (p. 26, italics original).

In the final two chapters of the book Bloom explores the current obstacles in understanding science from a Christian perspective and suggests possible solutions. It is here that, in this reviewer's opinion, some of Bloom's arguments become a bit weak. For example: when describing the current limits of science in explaining the natural world he states "there is no rational reason why math and logic correspond to the physical world, and our lab measurements can never be precise enough" (p. 76). This position insinuates that precise answers to certain questions will forever be out of humanity's reach. Several chapters earlier Bloom himself contradicts this argument with the statement that "Years of work and study are necessary to develop the equipment and the mathematical tools that allow us to model what exactly is happening in the physical world" (p. 27) implying that though perhaps we do not currently possess the tools to fully comprehend the world, hard work and patience will

yield the necessary equipment for greater understanding. He also points out that the Scriptures portray God as "designer, sustainer, and caregiver of his creation" (p. 30), thus offering the argument that all of the known universe is God's creation. From this perspective, one can extrapolate that all of science, and therefore all scientific results, fall within His kingdom. Consequently, the limits of our knowledge are defined by God, and claiming that our equipment can never be precise enough suggests that humanity has the ability to act independently outside of God's creation to examine creation itself. Fortunately, these faults are minor and detract only slightly from the valuable suggestions Bloom offers; such as recommending tolerance for diversity of theological and scientific view points, and a reminder that displaying Christian character and values in work, scientific or otherwise, is critical for modeling a positive example for others.

For budding scientists or students of biblical and theological studies, I recommend *The Natural Sciences: A Student's Guide* as it combines an easily digestible, historical overview of the Christian intellectual tradition in science that additionally provides a strong conceptual framework for understanding current scientific debates. I would also recommend this book for more advanced scientists who are searching for assistance with reconciling the expectations of being a Christian in science. For further reading into the early history of Christianity's role in in modern science one may also wish to read James Hannam's *The Genesis of Science: How the Christian Middle Ages Launched the Scientific Revolution* (Regnary Publishing, 2011). Alternatively, for further reading into the debate on the role of Christianity and God in more current scientific research John C. Lennox's *God's Undertaker: Has Science Buried God?* (Lion Hudson, 2009) is an excellent resource.

Darien Hall
Grand Canyon University, Phoenix, AZ

Reeves, Josh A. and Steve Donaldson, *A Little Book for New Scientists*. Downers Grove, IVP Academic, 2016, pp. 141, $12.00, paperback.

A book title by an evangelical publisher purporting to provide help for scientists immediately raises questions in today's overheated world of Christianity in relation to science. But this is precisely the purpose of this truly little blue book (7 x 4 x ½ inches). And for such a small work, the authors do a remarkably good job of at least pointing out to us the right questions.

The authors teach that the scientist can expect felicitous surprises (e.g., opportunities for mission and ministry) as well as trials for their Christian faith (e.g., science-religion conflicts). The latter can lead to intellectual crisis for Christians. So the authors state: "The primary purpose of this book, then, is to help Christians studying and practicing in the sciences to connect their vocation with their Christian faith" (p. 13).

The authors, who teach at Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama, are well-qualified to write such a book. Reeves serves as a project administrator in the university's Center for Science and Religion (CSR), managing the New Directions in Science and Religion project. Donaldson, who co-founded the CSR, directs the school's computer science program and co-directs the computational biology program at Samford.

The book packs in much perspective and practical help for Christians working in the sciences. For example, believers need to be involved in science for ethical reasons. Issues such as the ethics of genetic alterations need the input of Christians. They rightly note that science is not a completely dispassionate discipline with no political pressures. Christians may well need courage to address difficult issues. And Christians at times will be forced to address contentious issues such as Darwinism or global warming.

Christians may also face special tests of their faith, such as the temptation to be jealous of unbelievers who feel no time constraints like family and church in the pursuit of their careers. At the same time, believers are not exempt from having to deal with rejection in the form of failed experiments or rejected journal articles. Working in community with other scientists can help promote Christian humility and protect against the intellectual pride of personal achievement.

The authors rightly note that much of western culture labors under a myth of necessary warfare between science and religion. Not only is this incorrect today, but the history of science reveals many important scientists who were devout Christians. Faithful believers working today in the sciences can help counteract the myth that science and religion need be independent or adversarial. And scientists who are Christians can influence a watching world by the way they live.

Reeves and Donaldson address the relationship of God's two books, Scripture and creation. They helpfully note the two books neither have the same message nor speak the same languages. They argue the Bible is more important because it deals with matters of eternal importance. And they recommend the age old foundational assumption: "If we find places where nature and Scripture disagree, then it is a mistake of the readers—we simply have not read one or both of the texts correctly" (p. 24). The chief example of science correcting biblical interpretation was the discovery that the earth does move. Of course, knowing just when apparently conflicting scientific theories have been empirically verified can be difficult. But Christians must wrestle with the details "so that we may resist those who would use the authority of science to support anti-Christian conclusions. In such cases, Christians should not surrender basic beliefs in the name of 'science'" (p. 27). The authors wisely note that if believers seem more defensive than others, "it is not necessarily because they are less astute than others but because they believe they have more to lose" (p. 85). Christians believe in some absolutes that should not be compromised.

The authors devote chapter 7, "Science and Scripture," specifically to these issues. Their general principles for interpreting biblical passages in apparent conflict with science are wise. (1) Christians should realize that "an uncompromising commitment to the inspiration and authority of Scripture does not mean we should have an uncompromising commitment to *our own* interpretation of Scripture" (emphasis theirs, p. 94). Even the Holy Spirit's dwelling in the Christian does not assure infallible biblical interpretations. (2) Believers working in the sciences need community, especially the help of quality teachers who are intellectually rigorous and who exemplify Christian character. (3) Believers need pay careful attention to the important differences between the genres found in the Bible. (4) And if we are to know what Scripture means for us today, we should seek to understand what it meant to its first readers.

The authors concede that a higher percentage of atheists reside in the highest guilds of scientists. The nature of science, however, is the not the reason but rather the sociological impact of the prevailing climate of the discipline. Just because scientists are experts in their specific disciplines does not mean they are experts in opining on ultimate questions about God: "Ultimately, however, the main reasons a scientist might be an atheist come down to too large a view of science, too tired a view of religion and too lofty a view of humans (and their success in science)" (p. 108).

At times this little book might read a bit too philosophical for some readers (e.g., "Our values function as auxiliary hypotheses, indirectly influencing the beliefs formed about our direct experience" [p. 50]). But most readers looking for help relating their faith with their scientific vocation will glean much practical wisdom. Indeed, the greatest strength of the book is its practical, godly advice. And none is more important than the Christian needs to trust that serving God is what counts most in the end.

The book's usefulness may well be limited among conservative evangelicals due to the authors' evolutionary commitments. Though they do not push theistic evolution, they assume it. The recommended reading list at the back of the book presents a variety of important books, but they are largely evolutionary creationist in orientation. With the influential advent of BioLogos, more traditional evangelicals are more informed about controversial theological issues seemingly associated with a commitment to evolution. These issues extend beyond universal common descent and human evolution. Conservative readers of this book, therefore, might be inclined to wonder just where the authors might land on specific issues they raise.

For instance, the authors suggest that those seeking to challenge the myth of necessary warfare between science and religion will sometimes appear to have "abandoned certain cherished positions traditionally held by either community" (p. 13). The reader will assume the authors at the very least refer to abandoning the rejection of human evolution. An ostensible example of a cherished position in the scientific community needing to be abandoned is that science has provided "a good

scientific model" to account for those things "humans find most significant in the world" (p. 41), such as love of parents or children. But do the authors mean to say they really reject an evolutionary account of familial love, or just that such accounts cannot serve as the ultimate explanation. Again, evangelicals wary of the wide reach of evolutionary thinking are particularly uncomfortable when the nature of human beings are at stake. This wariness includes not only evolutionary accounts of human bodies but also of human minds, morals, wills, and religious beliefs. How would the authors recommend Christians respond to these positions in the scientific community?

Apologetics gets rightly scolded for defending beliefs held without good reasons. But what do the authors have in mind? They state that science will undercut only those beliefs that cannot withstand scrutiny and deserve to die. Do they have certain beliefs in mind to help the struggling reader? On the other hand, Reeves and Donaldson write that "Christian scientists can . . . help dispel the myth that Christianity is not based on evidence" (p. 130). What scientific evidence do they have in mind? Evolutionary creationists have typically been committed to methodological naturalism, as are the authors. They admit the doctrine is controversial among Christians, and they only gently defend it (not metaphysical or "scientific" naturalism [p. 41]!). But ever since Darwin, commitment to methodological naturalism has typically served to undercut rather than undergird appeals to science in apologetics. So it would have been helpful for the authors to provide examples of scientific evidence in support of Christianity.

The authors rightly note that Christians working in the sciences can contribute to the education of ministers and congregations. But in this context they state: "A God of infinite attributes cannot be fully described in a finite book, and there is no reason to think that God would limit himself to a single source. . . . The fact is, modern science has provided a different view of the world than was available to the people who wrote and originally read the various parts of the Bible (which were different people at different times)" (p. 123). Again, one could wish for examples from the authors. Indeed, at the end of the book the authors tantalize us with questions for which they provide no answers: "Where is the soul in a physical brain? What does modern neuroscience suggest about free will? What does it mean to be human in an evolutionary context? Will transhumanist endeavors change our understanding of being made in God's image? How does meaning arise from mindless mechanisms? How does the apparent randomness seen in nature relate to God's providence? For each of these questions (and many others) modern science provides insights that can help frame understanding and stimulate thinking" (p. 134). Aside from the aspects of those questions which mention theological concepts (soul, God's image, God's providence), many contemporary scientists provide answers such as the following: there is no non-corporeal soul (physicalism) nor free will; what is most interesting about humans derives strictly from our animal past; and concepts such as meaning and providence are themselves evolutionary byproducts. No doubt our authors would

not answer the questions this way, but one might certainly wish they had provided the "insights" they believe modern science provides.

In the end, the book will be most helpful for Christians who already are committed to evolution and methodological naturalism but not to full biblical inerrancy and traditional evangelical theology. More conservative evangelicals will be nervous about questions raised without answers in the book. And these evangelicals will be disappointed because they were probably looking for more answers.

Theodore J. Cabal
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY

Applegate, Kathryn and J. B. Stump, eds. *How I Changed my Mind about Evolution: Evangelicals Reflect on Faith and Science*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016, pp. 196, $10, paperback.

Kathryn Applegate and J. B. Stump are the Resources Editor and Senior Editor, respectively, at BioLogos—a Christian organization whose mission is to advocate a view of "harmony between science and biblical faith" rooted in "an evolutionary understanding of God's creation" (http://biologos.org/about-us). Applegate holds a PhD in computational cell biology from The Scripps Research Institute. Stump, who recently authored *Science and Christianity: An Introduction to the Issues* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2016), holds a PhD in philosophy from Boston University.

How I Changed my Mind about Evolution is a collection of autobiographical essays from evangelical Christians who believe the theory of evolution is compatible with the truth and authority of the Bible. Among its twenty-five contributing authors are pastors, Bible scholars, theologians, philosophers, and scientists. Some are distinguished scholars with doctoral degrees from Oxford, Yale, Harvard, Berkeley, or MIT. Eight have doctorates in the biological sciences, and two of these biologists—Denis Lamoureux and Jeff Hardin—have additional graduate degrees in theology. Two other contributors hold prestigious positions in the scientific community: Jennifer Wiseman is a Senior Astrophysicist at the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, and Francis Collins (who founded BioLogos in 2007) is director of the National Institutes of Health and former director of the National Human Genome Research Institute.

As the title suggests, most of the contributing authors changed their views about evolution. Some had previously opposed evolutionary science because of its perceived conflict with Scripture; others formerly rejected Christianity for the same reason. The essays in this book are their personal testimonies, explaining why and how they came to see things differently. (An exception is the essay by British scholar N. T. Wright, professor of New Testament at St. Andrews, who offers an outsider's perspective on the evolution "culture war" in America.)

Though their stories differ dramatically, several patterns emerge. One central theme is the intellectual and spiritual struggle many Christians experience as they

wrestle to understand how the teachings of Scripture relate to the scientific evidence for evolution. For each of the contributors to this book, that cognitive dissonance was resolved by accepting what BioLogos calls *evolutionary creationism*—the view that evolution was God's chosen instrument for creating the diversity of life on this planet. Some of the writers describe feeling joy and peace when they came to see Scripture and evolutionary science in harmony. Another common element running throughout their testimonies is a theme of praise to God for what He has done: expressions of awe at God's creative power to establish and uphold the laws of nature, wonder at His ingenuity in ordaining natural processes to fill the earth with endless varieties of life, gratitude for His faithfulness to sustain the universe and protect life's fragile existence over billions of years. Regardless of whether one agrees with these evolutionary creationists' perspective, their testimonies dispel any doubt about the authenticity of their love for God, for His word, and for His creation.

A more troubling theme surfaces when the authors describe their experiences in the evangelical Christian community. Some recount how their church's haughty and dismissive attitude toward science was a stumbling block in their spiritual journey, or worse, a barrier to faith for their scientifically-educated friends and colleagues. Others tell how they faced personal rejection and alienation from their brothers and sisters in Christ, when word got around that they believed in evolution. Pastor John Ortberg relates a conversation he had with believing scientists who expressed their loneliness. "When I'm at work and I'm with a bunch of scientists, they're really skeptical about my faith," they told Ortberg. "When I go to my church, they're really skeptical about me because of my science. I feel like I don't have a place where I really belong" (p. 94).

These stories are unlikely to change anyone's mind about evolution, but they may and should soften our hearts toward Christians who hold differing views on the topic. That is the central aim of this book. In their editorial introduction, Applegate and Stump admit that the book barely discusses the evidence for evolution at all. What it does present is evidence, in the form of twenty-five compelling testimonies, that sincere followers of Christ can come to believe in evolution while remaining convinced of the truth and authority of God's word. James K. A. Smith, a philosophy professor at Calvin College, writes in the first chapter that an important step in his spiritual growth occurred when he recognized that Bible-believing Christians do not all agree on how to interpret the scriptural account of creation, much less on how to interpret the scientific evidence:

> The examples of historic figures like Augustine and Calvin and Warfield had helped me see that orthodox Christians could hold a range of positions on creation, evolution and human origins. And so the tent of the faithful was enlarged beyond the small circle of young-earth creationists. It was less a matter of having changed my position and more a matter of recognizing that a range of positions could be consistent with orthodox Christian confession (p. 27).

Reading testimonies like Smith's probably will not influence your views about evolution, but it might broaden your perspective on the church. The members of Christ's body are not all alike. We do not all have the same function (Rom 12:3-8), and we certainly do not always agree even on issues foundational to our faith. I encourage you, my fellow evangelicals, to read these testimonies and prayerfully consider how we—as diverse members of the body of Christ—can accept one another with open hearts and humble minds (Rom 15:1-7) while remaining steadfast in the truth of God's word.

On the other hand, *caveat lector*: to readers unfamiliar with the tentative nature of science in general and the complexity of evolutionary biology in particular, some of the essays in this volume may give the misleading impression that science has conclusively settled the question of how life arose, and that the theory of evolution fully explains the diversity of life on Earth. In fact, however, the ultimate origin of the first living organism remains a subject of speculation; and the theory of evolution—even as an explanation of the diversity of species—is incomplete. The primary mechanisms of evolution (genetic recombination, mutation, and natural selection) are well-understood, but some other causal factors are mysterious, and interpreting the fossil record is far from straightforward. There is plenty of room for Christians to disagree about the interpretation of scientific evidence, just as we may disagree about the interpretation of Scripture.

The editors and contributing authors of this book obviously want to heal a division in the church, but a careless reading might have the opposite effect. It would be a shame if their testimonies convinced anyone that full acceptance of the prevailing scientific theories is the *only* reasonable position, thereby exacerbating the polarization between Christians who embrace evolutionary science and those who reject it. To their credit, a few of the contributing authors do mention that there are unsolved puzzles in evolutionary science—as there are in any other domain of scientific inquiry. However, it is worth emphasizing that scientists themselves disagree about many aspects of evolution; similar disagreements between Christians are inevitable.

Moreover, readers should bear in mind that the prevailing account of biological origins is not monolithic, but consists of numerous distinct theories pieced together by scientists working in a variety of disciplines. Biochemists, biophysicists, and geneticists together give an account of the processes by which hereditary features may change over time; paleontologists try to map out a coherent history of the evolutionary variations that have occurred in the past; geologists and ecologists try to explain why those variations occurred in terms of environmental changes throughout Earth's history, and so on. Like all scientific theories, the theories that comprise modern evolutionary science are amenable to revision in light of new evidence. Perhaps the current theories are mostly right, or perhaps scientists have gotten some things badly wrong—as has happened innumerable times throughout the history of science.

Regardless of where we stand on these issues, the wise and loving thing to do is to listen respectfully to each other, not write off our brothers and sisters as heretics, piteous victims of deception, or ignoramuses whenever they see things differently. That is the invaluable lesson to be learned from the testimonies in this book.

Joshua Hershey
The King's College

Joshua R. Farris. *The Soul of Theological Anthropology: A Cartesian Exploration*. London, UK: Routledge, 2017. pp. 198. $119.96, hardback. $38.47, ebook.

Joshua R. Farris (Ph.D., University of Bristol) is Assistant Professor of Theology at Houston Baptist University, School of Humanities, The Academy and The Honors College, in Houston, TX. He is also a member of the Department of Theology and is Director over Trinity School of Theology.

Nearly 30 years ago, John W. Cooper wrote and published his widely read theological defense of substance dualism and the doctrine of the intermediate state: *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting*. To this day, when one researches Christian accounts of the afterlife and attendant accounts of the human person, Cooper's work is ubiquitous. Indeed, *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting* has been something of the "gold standard" by which all defenses of the doctrine of the intermediate state and a theological defense of substance dualism have been measured. By my lights, that reign ends with the publication of Joshua Farris's book, *The Soul of Theological Anthropology*. Farris is clear that his theological account of the human person "is motivated and influenced by John Cooper's . . . work" and that he intends to "take some of Cooper's conclusions forward" (p. 6). To my mind, Farris accomplishes what he sets out to do. Indeed, so I say, Farris's monograph should be the text to which one appeals when one wants the most cutting-edge, thorough, and clear theological defense and construction of a substance dualist anthropology and doctrine of the intermediate state.

Setting his book out in four parts, Farris aims to provide a theological defense of and a constructive account for *Cartesian* substance dualism. By 'Cartesian substance dualism,' Farris means a particular class of "person-body substance dualism" that is "a broad category of substance dualism that describes persons as strictly identical to souls (i.e., an immaterial concrete part) or supervening on souls in contrast to bodies" (p. 2). The idea is that specifically *Cartesian* dualism suggests that *persons* are not composite entities. They are (or supervene on) souls. On a Cartesian account, a human person's body is, to use a modal term, *accidental* to her. It is not required for the person's identity or life. In the contemporary literature, this sort of view of human persons is attacked by philosophical, theological, and scientific arguments. In light of this, Section 1 of the book offers a number of preliminary philosophical and natural theological questions to begin countering some of the contemporary arguments. Moreover, in the second chapter

of Part 1, Farris engages with a number of strictly theological and biblical critiques. This part of the book is useful for clearing away some of the conceptual clutter before Farris can begin to build his constructive proposal, which he begins in Part 2.

Part 2 (chapters 3-5) begins his constructive work. Here he provides a model of the soul's creation that he calls "emergent creationism" (p. 76ff). What Farris attempts to do in these chapters is admirable; he interacts with leading philosophy of mind literature *vis-à-vis* the mind/soul's interaction with the body, what that might tell us about from where the soul/mind comes, and also interacts with various streams of thought in Christian tradition (e.g., creationism and traducianism). Farris's emergent creationism (EC), blends William Hasker's emergent substance dualism with traditional notions of creationism (the thesis that God specifically and unilaterally creates a soul for each human body. Traducianism is the thesis that God created one soul, viz., Adam's, from which all other souls descend). In sum, Farris's EC suggests that, at the point at which a particular human body's potentiality for interacting with an immaterial mind emerges, God creates a human soul/mind fit specifically for that body. The body's being ready to receive a soul is thus a *necessary condition* for the soul's being created for it. The necessary condition for the soul's union with the body *emerges* with the body's fitness for being ensouled. Helpfully, EC avoids having to explain how a non-physical entity (e.g., a soul) could emerge as a product of material/physical causes (i.e., material/physical causes are not a sufficient condition for the soul's coming to be on Farris's account as they are, for example, on Hasker's). It also provides a ready-to-hand explanation for why souls and bodies are linked.

Parts 3 and 4 (chapters 6-9) of the work are a more strictly (but not solely) theological analysis of Cartesian dualism and EC. And, aside from the development of EC, I think Part 3, in particular, is the most valuable contribution of Farris's work. For, taking EC in hand, he provides new ways for thinking about the transmission of original sin/guilt from Adam to Adam's progeny (including you and me). Says Farris: "a story could be told that allowed for the direct transmission of original sin . . . because of the intimate relationship of souls to bodies and souls to other souls connected through one long interconnected biological chain" (p. 126). Given EC, there is meant to be a more natural accounting for why a human soul and its human body are linked, and, as such, why there is a certain sort of biological explanation for a soul (and, with the biological explanation, a purported hereditary line to Adam's original guilt).

Chapters 7-9 provide an account for afterlife that attempts to give reasons for a theologian to affirm the intermediate state, the Beatific Vision, and the necessity of the bodily resurrection. Here Farris provides some nuanced and novel Cartesian approaches that help Cartesianism sit more comfortably in Christian theology than some might initially think is possible. One feature of his version of Cartesianism is that souls are specifically *human* souls; they are *meant* to be united to *human* bodies. Because of the EC account, Farris is more able to tie a human soul with a human body, thus giving an account for why a human should be embodied in the

resurrection than other dualist views might. To my mind, any attempt to strengthen the Christian's reliance on the hope of resurrection is a good attempt. Moreover, one of the strengths of this section, and the book writ large, is that Farris is able to interact with contemporary leading biblical scholars (e.g., N. T. Wright). This too helps Farris's book surpass Cooper's, even if this is a matter of historical coincidence (i.e., the research just was not available 30 years ago).

Now, I have published elsewhere a number of reasons for thinking that substance dualism is either false or unmotivated for Christian theology. I will not rehearse all of those reasons here. What I will say, though, is that, even though I think this book is a terrific effort and a contribution to the field that surpasses Cooper's well-attested book, it still does *not* provide clear enough reasons to think that bodily resurrection is not *at all* superfluous for Christian hope. On Farris's account, one can be denuded of one's body and still exist in the Beatific Vision (an incredibly great state of existence). So, the body is superfluous for the Beatific Vision. To be clear, Farris (as well as Cooper and others) suggest that the bodily resurrection is of vital importance. But, it is *not* clear, so I say, why the resurrection *is* of *vital* importance in Christian thinking and hope. For, if there were no bodily resurrection, given Farris's account, one would still be in the Beatific Vision. But this kind of conclusion is not, in my view, fitting with what the Bible suggests is the all or nothing hope the Christian should place on God's bodily resurrecting humans (and redeeming his material creation). To wit: "if there is no resurrection of the dead . . . then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain" (1 Cor 15:13-14). I, for one, *desperately* wish for a dualist to engage specifically with this sort of critique. I desire a clear explanation for why someone in the Beatific Vision that is missing an accidental feature of herself (e.g., her body) would so much as care that she is missing it, let alone be in such a state that Paul suggests, were she left there, she would be "of all people most to be pitied" (1 Cor 15:18). Though Farris examines 1 Corinthians 15 (pp. 139-140), I think it is entirely too cursory and simply does not deal with the logic of the argument.

My own position on the matter notwithstanding, and a few other reservations I haven't the space to address, *this* book is the new leader in the field for a theological defense and construction of a substance dualist anthropology and a doctrine of the intermediate state. For upper level undergraduate students and graduate students interested in theological anthropology and life after death, this is now a "go-to" resource. Though it is technical in places, the patient student should be able to navigate its arguments. Moreover, I think that the book's attention to theological, philosophical, biblical, and scientific detail is a model for how up-and-coming theologians and Christian students should approach their work. This book is an object lesson in doing good theology. So, in the same way that Cooper's work peppers the discussion to date, I hope that Farris's work will do likewise. It should.

James T. Turner, Jr.
Fuller Theological Seminary

Craig, William Lane. *God Over All: Divine Aseity and the Challenge of Platonism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016, pp. 242, $80.00, hardback.

God Over All is an expansion of William Lane Craig's 2015 Cadbury lectures. A more in depth volume on God and abstract objects is forthcoming with Springer Publishing. This work then can be considered as a succinct summary of Craig's research on the topic. Given that this is the case, we should judge this work in light of the aforementioned context.

Craig begins the volume by defining the problem of God and abstract objects. The idea is something like this: Classical theism sees God as *a se*, that is, God does not exist through another or from another; instead it is he who is responsible for all of reality (p. 1). And yet, if Platonism – the thesis that there are abstract objects which are eternal and immaterial – is true, God would not be *a se*. Craig gives the following as an example of why this would be the case:

> Consider the cluster of divine attributes which go to make up God's nature. Call that nature deity. On Platonism, deity is an abstract object existing independently of God, to which God stands in the relation of exemplification or instantiation. Moreover, it is in virtue of standing in relation to this object that God is divine. He is God because He exemplifies deity. Thus, on Platonism, God does not really exist *a se* at all. For God depends upon this abstract object for His existence (p. 43).

The first part of Craig's work is a biblical and a historical defense of the traditional Christian view that God is *a se*. In reference to the biblical defense, some of the texts which Craig thinks are incompatible with Platonism include John 1, Colossians 1:15-16, and Romans 11:36 (pp. 22-27). As it pertains to church history, Craig references Harry Austryn Wolfson in pointing out that the Church Fathers affirmed the following three points which are all incompatible with Platonism: (1) God alone is uncreated, (2) nothing is co-eternal with God, and (3) eternality implies deity (p. 34).

Following his biblical and historical case against the compatibility of classic Platonism and Christian belief, Craig examines what he sees as the most serious argument for Platonism: the Indispensability Argument. This argument does not necessarily prove Platonism but rather the existence of abstract objects. Thus, the Indispensability Argument is really an argument for realism. Referencing M. Balaguer, Craig gives the following version of the Indispensability Argument:

I. If a simple sentence (i.e., a sentence of the form 'a is F', or 'a is R-related to b', or …) is literally true, then the objects that its singular terms denote exist. Likewise, if an existential sentence is literally true, then there exist objects of the relevant kinds; e.g., if 'There is an F' is true, then there exist some Fs.

I. There are literally true simple sentences containing singular terms that refer to things that could only be abstract objects. Likewise, there are literally true existential statements whose existential quantifiers range over things that could be abstract objects.

I. Therefore, abstract objects exist (pp. 45-46).

In seeking two alternative realist views (views which although affirm that abstract objects exist, deny that such objects eternally exist in the way the Platonist advocates) to classic Platonism that the Christian can endorse, Craig examines Absolute Creationism (the view that God creates abstract objects and thus abstract objects are not eternal) and Divine Conceptualism (the view that God's thoughts functionally play the role of abstract objects). Craig ends up rejecting these views and relies heavily on arguments found in Paul Gould's *Beyond the Control of God?: Six Views on the Problem of God and Abstract Objects* in doing so.

Given that classic Platonism is not compatible with Christian belief and given that, according to Craig, Absolute Creationism and Divine Conceptualism have major issues, in order to undermine the Indispensability Argument, Craig encourages his reader to look more seriously at anti-realist views. The views that are engaged include fictionalism (abstract objects are merely useful fictions) and figuralism (abstract objects exist but only in a figurative sense), and neutralism (first-order logic is not ontologically committing). After Craig attempts to make plausible such views from objections, Craig thinks that he has established several alternatives to Platonism that Christians can utilize in response to the problem of God and abstract objects. Craig himself does not advocate for just one of these anti-realist views but is convinced that a combinational approach is most plausible (p. 207).

But is Craig right? Moreover, should Craig's work be seen as adding something unique to the literature on God and abstract objects? While the reader will have to make up her own mind as it pertains to the former of these questions, I think the answer to the second question is yes. However, it is not obvious to what extent it contributes to the literature. While Craig's biblical and historical analysis is extremely helpful, his work has some weaknesses. For example, in his chapters on anti-realist approaches to abstract objects, his engagement with objections to such anti-realist views is often very brief. This is unfortunate because, as one can see in Gould's volume, there is indeed a lot the realist can say in response to Craig's arguments. This is not to say that Craig has not offered short and successful arguments for his position, but there is much more to be said.

On a similar note, outside of the Indispensability Argument, Craig does not pay attention to other arguments for realism. As Gould and Davis make clear, there are other reasons for considering realism (Paul Gould's *Beyond the Control of God?: Six Views on the Problem of God and Abstract Objects* [New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2004], 129-130). In fact, it is not even clear from reading Gould and Davis

that they think that the Indispensability Argument is the best argument for realism. These issues, however, do not seem very damaging if one remembers that this work is only a condensed work of a more robust work that is forthcoming. If one reads this book as something more like an extended primer or an introductory defense of anti-realism, then it is clear that this book makes an important contribution. I am confident that evangelicals who are unfamiliar with this debate or who have never seriously considered anti-realism, will be deeply challenged by Craig's arguments and will see anti-realism as a serious and plausible option.

Tyler Dalton McNabb
Houston Baptist University

Gould, Paul M. and Richard Brian Davis, eds. *Four Views on Christianity and Philosophy.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016, pp. 240, $19.99, paperback.

Perhaps reflecting the influence of his colleague, Rudolf Bultmann, Martin Heidegger makes what at first seems a curious statement in a 1927-28 lecture entitled "Phenomenology and Theology": "there is no such thing as a Christian philosophy" (in *The Piety of Thinking*, James G. Hart and John C. Maraldo, eds. [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976], 21). For Heidegger, philosophy examines the most basic of human pursuits (the question of Being) while all other disciplines (including theology) examine various aspects of Being. Some in the Society of Christian Philosophers may disagree, but Heidegger is basically correct—if by *Christian* philosophy one means a philosophy that differs in *kind* from other alleged types of philosophy.

Philosophy, though, properly understood, is not a set of beliefs or method of analysis that is susceptible to qualifying titles such as "Christian," or "atheistic," or Buddhist." This is not to say that one who is a Christian may not philosophize differently from one who is an atheist, or a Muslim, or a Buddhist. The practitioner changes while the *practice* does not—or, at least, it should not. The tension evident here is brought into relief by the contributions to *Four Views on Christianity and Philosophy*, edited by Paul M. Gould, associate professor of philosophy and Christian apologetics at Southwest Baptist Theological Seminary (Fort Worth, TX) and Richard Brian Davis, professor of philosophy at Tyndale University (Toronto, Canada). The following review will highlight elements of each contribution and conclude with a comment about the book's format.

Each of the four views offers definitions of Christianity and philosophy so that each contributor can agree upon what it is that they discuss. Though this does not always happen, the definitions are reasonably similar for a conversation to commence. Graham Oppy's view, called the "conflict model," is presented first and he does an admirable though incomplete job of defining philosophy as a "domain of

inquiry" (p. 23). His understanding of Christian faith at first appears too generic to be useful (pp. 21-22), but he adds necessary specificity when he gets to his focused critique showing why there is conflict with philosophy (pp. 32-40). Oppy's way of defining philosophy neutralizes it from the start; as a domain of inquiry philosophy does not require a presuppositional commitment to a system of belief, but merely a commitment to answering questions for which there are not agreed upon answers using agreed upon methods of inquiry. Such consensus—agreeing upon answers and methods—is something philosophy has never enjoyed and is unlikely ever to enjoy. Thus, Oppy's definitions are insufficient to establish a conflict; Oppy certainly thinks there is conflict—but it is more apparent than real. The conflict, for Oppy, comes not in his definitions but in his assumption that naturalism is true. He had defined philosophy in such a way that it does not *require* a presuppositional commitment, but he has such a commitment—to naturalism—which makes his philosophizing antithetical to Christianity (pp. 41-47). So, Oppy shows us not that philosophy and Christianity are at odds, but that *naturalistic* philosophy and Christianity are at odds. (A similar case is made in the relationship between religion and science by Alvin Plantinga, *Where the Conflict Really Lies* [Oxford University Press, 2011].)

Scott Oliphint's view, called the "covenantal model," is like Oppy's in that it, too, sees philosophy and Christianity as opponents—but for very different reasons. Oliphint's Christianity is rather narrowly defined and requires assent to natural and special revelation as foundational for all human endeavors (pp. 72-81). Though this poses few problems for Christians, saying that the foundation for human inquiry rests in *revelation* poses serious problems for those uncommitted to Christian faith. And this is why Oliphint's and Oppy's views are opposite sides of the same coin: Oppy's presuppositions involve the unquestioned truth of naturalism, whereas Oliphint's presuppositions entail the unquestioned truth of divine revelation (both natural and special). With such presuppositions in place, there is little wonder why each views philosophy and Christianity as adversaries. Only on the basis of adopting Christian *principia* (or foundations) can faith and philosophy be something other than conflictory (pp. 87-94). Like Oppy, Oliphint has not shown that philosophy and Christianity are inimical to each other, only that without a precommitment to Christian faith, philosophy is at odds with that faith.

The third option, the "convergence model" presented by Timothy McGrew, helpfully recognizes that philosophy "is not a set of substantive beliefs . . . it is a discipline" (p. 124). With this more neutral understanding of philosophy, McGrew argues that philosophy confirms Christian faith. McGrew qualifies this neutrality suggesting that some presuppositions are necessary, such as the laws of logic (p. 125) and natural theology (pp. 128-30). McGrew's method may be called a two-step approach. With certain non-theological precommitments in place (i.e., the laws of logic) one is able to present "evidence" for God's existence through arguments or proofs such as the Kalam cosmological argument (pp. 131-34). This first step

demonstrates the plausibility of generic theism. Only with a second step—the presentation of scriptural data—can one draw a sharper image of *Christian* faith (pp. 141-50). Since McGrew begins with a neutral dialogical space, his convergence model can be only persuasive, not compelling (p. 150). His model fits well with what is called classical apologetics.

In the final option, the "conformation model," Paul Moser recognizes the superiority of Christian faith (like Oliphint's covenantal approach) and claims that philosophy conforms to that faith. Because God's wisdom is prior to and superior, all other forms of human wisdom must (eventually) conform to divine wisdom (pp. 177-78). Moser defines philosophy closely to its etymological form (i.e., "love of wisdom"); though he sees elements of praxis, he views philosophy chiefly in terms of content (pp. 178-80). The content of philosophy serves Christian faith through a "kingdom-enhancement requirement" (p. 196). This requirement helps avoid undue speculative pursuits that do not promote Christ's wisdom. Given these features of Moser's view, philosophy—as traditionally understood—is not separable from Christian theology at all, but is simply another means of advancing divine wisdom for the sake of the kingdom.

The format of the book is excellent. After each view is presented the other three interlocutors are provided space to respond followed by a rejoinder. It is this dialogical feature that is so helpful. Indeed, one learns as much—or more—from the back-and-forth responses and rejoinders as one does from the original expositions. And this feature also accents what is becoming a standard philosophical observation: that all philosophy is hermeneutical, perspectival, and its future must be dialogical if its significance is to survive. As long as there is dialog, there is philosophy, and thus philosophy is not merely a domain of inquiry (Oppy) but a province of discursive negotiation. As such, philosophy is hardly antagonistic to Christian faith but is a welcome dialog partner in the human—that is, common—quest for truth and understanding.

Chris Emerick
Grand Canyon University

Buckareff, Andrei A. and Yujin Nagasawa, eds. *Alternative Concepts of God: Essays on the Metaphysics of the Divine*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016, pp 299, $51.80.

The renaissance of philosophy of religion in the 20th Century brought with it an in-depth exploration of the metaphysics of theism. Other alternatives to theism have been explored such as pantheism and panentheism. Yet, these alternative models of God have not been given the same level of attention as theism in contemporary philosophy of religion. The collection of essays in *Alternative Concepts of God* seeks to provide readers with non-theistic explorations of the metaphysics of God. Each essay is well

written, and the scholarship is fairly solid. However, most of the essays do not offer alternative conceptions to a theistic understanding of God in any significant depth.

For example, Karl Pfeifer's paper, "Pantheism as Panpsychism," spends more time developing panpsychism than it does articulating pantheism. The connection to pantheism is not altogether clear as it seems that a theist could easily adopt panpsychism without endorsing pantheism. Andrei A. Buckareff develops a powerful argument for thinking that God must have spatial location; however, he does not develop this model of God in any depth. He spends the majority of the essay arguing for the conclusion, and no time articulating what that conclusion looks like. The only indication of what this alternative model of God might look like comes in a footnote where Buckareff says that a spatial God could fit either pantheism or panentheism (p. 214). It is not clear to me why a theist cannot say that God is spatially located. In fact, scholars like Robert Pasnau, Ross Inman, and others have argued that no classical theist wished to deny spatiality of God until after the scholastic era. So it is not altogether clear that Buckareff's spatial God is an alternative to theism.

Another set of examples come from Willem B. Drees and Eric Steinhart's contributions to *Alternative Concepts of God.* In Drees' paper, he never fully develops an alternative to theism. In his paper he discusses several issues in science, then gestures towards the view that maybe we do not need a personal God. Instead, Drees thinks we should say that the divine is the ground of existence (pp. 208-210). Drees does not even hint at what this could possibly mean. Theists often say that the personal God is the ground of existence, so the reader is left wondering what alternative concept of God Drees has given us. In Steinhart's paper, he offers an account of religious naturalism. Naturalism is typically taken to be a rival to theism in contemporary philosophical literature. However, Steinhart does not offer definitions of his terms, this includes a definition of "naturalism." So it was not obvious to me how this is an alternative to the concept of God that we find in theism.

To be clear, I am not saying that these are bad essays. I am simply pointing out that they do not give the reader a clear, developed, alternative conception of God to the well-developed versions of theism on offer elsewhere. In fact, in several cases, the essays offer alternatives *to* the concept of God. For instance, J. L. Schellenberg develops an interesting proposal for thinking about the ultimate nature of reality that does not automatically lead to any personal God at all (p. 166). I must emphasize the "automatically" because nothing in Schellenberg's proposal leads us away from the personal God of theism either.

In several of the essays, I struggled to understand the desirability of the alternative conceptions that were proposed. Emily Thomas' essay articulates Samuel Alexander's space-time God. On this proposal, God will eventually emerge from the universe. However, God does not yet exist. God has not yet emerged from the universe (pp. 256-264). Thomas attempts to argue that this conception of God is better than other versions of panentheism on offer by theologians like Philip

Clayton (pp. 264-271). Yet, I failed to see how this was the case. This emergent account of God cannot explain the existence of the universe, nor why we should think that the universe will give rise to a God. On current scientific projections, the universe is headed towards heat death, which makes life in the universe impossible. The needed level of complexity for a God to emerge from the universe will not last for long, assuming the universe ever reaches that level of complexity before heat death obtains. It is not clear to me why this is more desirable than Clayton's personal panentheistic God.

Another example comes from John Bishop and Ken Perszyk's non-personal conception of God. They claim that God is the love between human persons, and try to argue that this conception of God is better than a personal God with attributes like omnipotence and omniscience. In particular, they argue that a personal God makes the problem of evil intractable, whereas their non-personal conception of God can provide a clear account of human salvation from evil. In reply, Marilyn McCord Adams offers a critique of this non-personal conception of God. She argues that she cannot understand what Bishop and Perszyk's proposal really amounts to. She explores several possible interpretations of Bishop and Perszyk's non-personal God, and explains why each interpretation fails. Further, she argues that 'love between human persons' cannot solve any problem of evil, nor save anyone from horrors. I found Adams' argument to be spot on which leaves the reader doubting the desirability of Bishop and Perszyk's alternative concept of God.

For as critical as I am being, I should point out that several essays are worthy of note. Brian Leftow offers an interesting critique of naturalistic versions of pantheism. In one of the arguments he develops he argues that we tend to think that any being that befits the title 'God' is worthy of worship. Part of being worthy of worship is being the kind of object that can be aware of worship directed towards it. Yet, it seems like there is no way that a naturalistic universe could be an object of worship because it lacks awareness of anything (pp. 71-73). Yujin Nagasawa develops an account of panentheism modeled on David Lewis' modal realism. After articulating and motivating the model of God, Nagasawa argues that this model of God makes the problem of evil intractable. Robin Le Poidevin's essay on religious language offers an excellent critique of religious fictionalism arguing that one cannot coherently conceive of God as a fictional object.

To sum up, several of the essays in this volume are well written, and will be important for theologians and philosophers of religion to consider. Students who are thinking about pantheism will greatly benefit from Leftow's essay. Students working on religious language will want to read Le Poidevin's criticism of religious ficitionalism. However, if students are looking for well-developed alternatives to theism, they should look elsewhere.

R.T. Mullins
Indianapolis, IN

Bryson, James, ed. *The Religious Philosophy of Roger Scruton.* New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016, pp. 273, $114.00, hardback.

In 2016 Roger Scruton, eminent British philosopher and writer, was knighted by Queen Elizabeth on her birthday. Sir Roger, recognized for his accomplishments in philosophy, teaching, and public education, was at the apotheosis of career spanning decades where he wrote and lectured on topics ranging from aesthetics, art, politics, and natural conservation. Surprisingly, there has been very little academic literature about Sir Roger's writings, even less about his religious views. Given that he has written works on both religion and church life, this absence is glaring. It was to a great surprise that I noticed *The Religious Philosophy of Roger Scruton*. Originally conceived as a conference on Scruton's writings, the work is a collection of papers presented on Sir Roger's religious philosophy. The collection is well-thought out and organized clearly.

The book itself is divided into four parts, each with essays devoting their time to exploring various areas of Scruton's work. Part I is an exploration of Scruton's writing on religion, Part II attempts to dive into the influences that shaped Scruton and his writing. Part III explores Scruton's defense of art, beauty, and aesthetic endeavors. Finally, Part IV is a collection of essays analyzing Scruton's conservatism. The work concludes with a final essay from Scruton, responding to several essays from the work.

Each essay analyzes, in varying degree, a key aspect of Scruton's work. One idea that gets a lot of attention in this work is Scruton's concept of *the sacred.* An admittedly vague concept, various authors attempt to demonstrate that this concept is the interpretive center of Scruton's work on religion, aesthetics, and political philosophy. John Cottingham, for example, shows that Scruton wants this concept to have a metaphysical foundation. But, he says, Scruton does not go far enough (41). While it's clear that Scruton has a Judeo-Christian orientation, he will often elide the ethical demands of this framework in favor of an "over-aestheticized, or perhaps over-romanticized analogue for religious awe" (42).

This criticism becomes a key theme throughout the essays contained in this excellent work. The impression left after finishing the work is that many of the scholars are in agreement with the path that Scruton is blazing; they only wished he was clearer about the directions. That is, they wanted *more.* For some, a warmed-over Anglican Protestantism that serves as mere housing of the best of English religion and culture is not enough. As Brian Hebblethwaite comments in his essay, "Metaphysical and Doctrinal Implications," that while Scruton clearly understands the power of Christianity's ideas, his "reluctance to pursue the path of metaphysics makes me wonder how far his commitment to the truth of Christianity goes" (71).

The location of this skepticism is undoubtedly Scruton's clear affinity for Kantian metaphysics. This shows itself throughout his various works. In *Beauty*, for example,

Scruton lands in Kantian disinterestedness as an essential feature of the apprehension of beauty. This avenue is the way in which we can experience the transcendental (or sacred) without knowing *where* it comes from. It is beyond the rational experience, but it comes to us in our aesthetic experience. Aesthetics is the pathway toward the transcendent, and in this he follows the post-Kantian idealists.

Readers of this work will find it to be challenging but rewarding. It is unique in the field as it is—at least in the reviewer's awareness—the first sustained academic exploration of Roger Scruton's thoughts on religion. The book itself does not have to be taken in chronologically. Rather, the four parts are nicely divided such that one can dive into the area they feel most comfortable or curious to explore. If you are looking for a place to begin with Roger Scruton, this work would likely not serve you well. Instead, Mark Dooley's *The Philosopher on Dover Beach* can serve as an excellent appetizer to this work. Dooley presents Scruton's overall project and ideas. If you are looking to start with Scruton on religion, the reviewer suggests *The Face of God* or *The Soul of the World.* Regardless, gathering a sense of what Scruton means by *the sacred* will be an essential hermeneutical key to unlock the riches the British philosopher has to offer.

In sum, this work is highly recommended for those students that may be interested in Roger Scruton, an example of what it may look like to ride the fence of the proverbial "analytic" and "continental" divide, or for purveyors of philosophy of religion. Further, it would serve evangelical Christians in academics to read this work. A weakness of the work is that it did not advance conversations theologically. Perhaps this is a misplaced grievance. If so, then it presents an opportunity for evangelicals to engage with Scruton's work in order to see what we may learn from him. While, as a friend once said, Scruton is not regarded among evangelicals as a "brother", he is a fellow-traveler. A cobelligerence between evangelicals and Scruton could prove a boon to the former. We have common enemies, and he can provide helpful ammunition.

Bryan Baise
Boyce College, Louisville, KY

Taliaferro, Charles and Chad Meister. *Contemporary Philosophical Theology*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2016, pp. 242, $44.95, paperback.

The authors are both well-established experts in the fields of philosophy and philosophical theology. Charles Taliaferro, Professor of Philosophy at St. Olaf College, is the author, co-author or editor of over twenty books. Recent books include *The Golden Cord: A Short Book on the Sacred and the Secular* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2012) and *The Image in Mind* (Bloomsbury, 2013, co-authored with Jil Evans). He is the co-editor of *The Routledge Companion to Theism* (Routledge, 2012, with Victoria S. Harrison and Stewart Goetz) and *The Ashgate Companion*

to Theological Anthropology (Ashgate, 2016, with Joshua R. Farris). Chad Meister is Professor of Philosophy and Theology at Bethel College. He, too, is the author, co-author or editor of over twenty books. Recent books include *Christian Thought: A Historical Introduction, second edition* (Routledge, 2016, with J. B. Stump) and *Introducing Philosophy of Religion* (Routledge, 2019). He is co-editor of *The Cambridge Companion to the Problem of Evil* (Cambridge University Press, 2017, with Paul Moser) and *God and the Problem of Evil: Five Views* (IVP Academic, 2017, with James K. Dew, Jr.). Together, in *Contemporary Philosophical Theology*, they offer a solid introduction to and defense of philosophical theology.

One valuable feature of the text is the authors' careful analysis of the discipline of philosophical theology. They maintain that "*philosophical theology* involves critical, disciplined reflection on the concept of God or the divine" (p. 2). They note that one may do philosophical theology from the inside, as a member of a religious-philosophical tradition, or from the outside, with a sympathetic understanding of a tradition of which one is not a member. The authors contend that to engage in such reflection, either from the inside or the outside, requires an appreciation for and a sympathetic understanding of various philosophical and theological methodologies. This makes it possible, for instance, for a Christian or Hindu to make valuable contributions to Islamic philosophical theology.

The first few chapters respond to critics who object that science has somehow demonstrated the impossibility of philosophical theology. These chapters alone are worth the price of the book. For instance, chapter one considers the objection that because the methods of philosophical theology cannot be empirically or scientifically tested, discourse on or about God is ungrounded. Critics go on to conclude that only explanations rooted in physics, chemistry, and biology, and the like, are rationally acceptable. But this link of thinking fails, our authors argue, because it assumes the primacy of the methods and practice of science. In short, these critics make a substantive philosophical assumption that begs the question against philosophical theology. Moreover, these 'scientific' critics of philosophical theology tend to overlook the fact that we are much more deeply acquainted with mental realities than we are extra-mental physical realties. A careful study of these chapters shows that the methods and practices of philosophical theology are not necessarily incompatible with the methods of science.

Chapter three covers the topics of pluralism and religious diversity. The authors defend the view that pluralism and religious diversity provide us with an opportunity to encounter and to consider the divine from multiple vantage points. One highlight of this chapter is a discussion of how some critics of reasonable religious belief display unwarranted bias towards miracles and religious belief. Kitcher's case against religious belief, for instance, depends on drawing a stark contrast between religious claims about a transcendent reality and scientific claims about the physical world. He assumes that concepts of physical reality, including the nature of causation,

matter, and physical reality, are philosophically stable and conceptually clear. But, as contemporary physics goes to show, these concepts are rather murky and philosophically problematic.

Chapter four covers reasons and revelations. Here the authors propose that "there are cases when the appearance of divine disclosure counts as evidence that there is disclosure of the divine" (p. 79). In the light of the possibility of divine disclosure, they argue that Hume's case against rational belief in miracles, when shorn of its loaded language and once we take note of his prejudice against and his misguided assumptions about religion, is rather weak. They go on to propose that theistic arguments have more force once religious experience is considered.

Chapter five is a standard account of divine attributes and chapter six and seven cover the notions of good and bad and the problem of evil as it pertains to philosophical theology. Those new to these issues will find this material helpful. Chapter eight is a philosophical exploration of important theological and religious themes in Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism. This chapter covers a lot of ground but does not skimp on details. Highlights include discussions of Hindu notions of karma and reincarnation and Buddhist teachings of no-self (briefly, the view that there is no substantial self) and Nirvana. Chapter nine considers the sort of cultural and educational role that philosophical theology may play in a democratic society.

This book is an excellent introduction to philosophical theology. While tightly argued and sophisticated, it is not overly technical. Those well versed in theology but new to philosophy should not have trouble digesting the main ideas but those doing it for years or decades will find valuable insights. The book is broad in scope and inclusive. It not only covers the Christian tradition, but also considers topics and issues that are unique to Jewish, Islamic, Buddhist, and Hindu traditions. All students of philosophy and theology will benefit from reading this book. Professors will appreciate its pedagogical features. In addition to extensive references, at the end of each chapter are 'further reflections' sections designed to stimulate scholarship and discussion. There are plenty of ideas in these pages for paper topics, for students as well as scholars.

Erik Baldwin
University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana

Schellenberg, John. *The Hiddenness Argument: Philosophy's New Challenge to Belief in God*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, pp.xii+142, £25.00, hardback.

John Schellenberg, Professor of Philosophy at Mount Saint Vincent University (Canada), brought "The Argument from Divine Hiddenness" (*ADH*) into the purview of academic scholarship. This (quite easy) argument goes like this: the Christian tradition depicts the ultimate well-being of human creatures as being dependent on

a loving relationship with God. However, if God exists and is perfectly loving, why does not God make sure that all come to believe in Him? God's hiddenness and the phenomenon of nonbelief seem to count against the very existence of a perfectly loving God. The *hiddenness argument* takes the form of a philosophical argument against theism, and much of this short book is dedicated to strengthening and defending the premises that when joined together entail the conclusion, "God does not exist".

Chapters 1 and 2 establish the philosophical groundwork for Schellenberg's project. He provides the reader with the basic tools, explains the nature and purpose of making an argument, and what "philosophers are up to when they produce what looks like technobable" (p. 14). He further explains the key term of "hiddenness" and what it means to have a worldview that makes reference to an ultimate reality (ultimism). Chapter 3 seeks to identify the precursors to the hiddenness argument and identify when the "'germ' of the idea of hiddenness did make an appearance" (p. 24). Schellenberg argues that the "most conspicuous examples appear from the seventeenth century on" (p. 24). One historical source is Blaise Pascal who recognized that Gods existence is not evident to all. A more recent inspiration for Schellenberg's argument comes from John Hick who argued that reality is religiously ambiguous and open to both theistic and non-theistic interpretations.

Chapter 4 establishes the main premise: "If a perfectly loving God exists, then there exists a God who is always open to a personal relationship with any finite person" (p. 38). Moreover, given God's omnipotence, the universe would be designed in such a way that nothing "puts relationship with God out of reach for finite persons" (p. 41). The sceptic could retort and say that nonbelief is a result of some people resisting God. Chapters 5 and 6 address the issue of non-resistant nonbelief, and they make the argument that "we find plenty of clear examples of *non-resistant nonbelief*" in prehistoric hunter-gatherer societies (p. 77). That is, people who through no fault of their own did not believe in God. Nowadays, due to increasing secularity, there are people who go about their lives without entertaining the existence of God because of particular cultural and social circumstances. This is another case of non-resistant nonbelief, according to Schellenberg.

Chapter 7 addresses another possible objection that would counter the first premise, namely that God is *not* all-loving. I agree with Schellenberg that a "God that's less than ultimate would not be" worthy of worship (p. 91). Moreover, we assume that it is intrinsically valuable for a parent to love a child, and it seems as if a similar "parent-child relation exists between God and finite persons" (p. 99). Chapter 8 rounds off the book with Schellenberg answering some more possible objections.

There are at least two possible approaches to respond to *ADH*. One could question the logical validity of the argument, by arguing that the conclusion, "God does not exist," does not follow from the premises. Or, one could theologically attempt to identify some greater good that would be secured if God remained hidden. It is interesting, and problematic, that Schellenberg quickly rules out this second

approach. A common thread throughout the book is Schellenberg's resistance to allow theological explanations for God being hidden to enter into the picture. As he writes, "you are required to take all such preaching with a grain of salt and keep our eye on the evidence" (p. 81). To do this, he notes, might "be difficult for someone who believes in God . . . but it's exactly what's required to assess the hiddenness argument *philosophically*" (p. 64). I think that this attempt at closing off theology from offering solutions to the problem of hiddenness is unsuccessful and question begging. Schellenberg asks us to privilege philosophy, but I see no *philosophical reasons* for excluding theological explanations for God's perceived hiddenness. This is not to say that theological reasons always trump philosophical ones, but that they should be brought into engagement with each other.

One core idea within Schellenberg's argument is that the relationship between God and human persons is similar to that of a parent and his/her child. To some extent this is true, and Christian Scripture contains passages that affirm such a view. The idea is that God, like an idealized parent, would always want to be in a loving relationship with his children. More so according to Schellenberg, God being all-powerful and omniscient would be able to accomplish this. Yet, appealing to God's supreme nature has a flipside. It could be argued that God has reasons, which exceed human understanding, for refraining from obtaining divine-human relationships in order to secure something intrinsically good. This greater good, however, might not be *our* greater good. It could further be argued that divine silence, manifested in perceived hiddenness, might be an expression of God' preferred mode of interaction with human beings. This view has been explored by Michael Rea.[1] One could also seek to justify the existence of some forms of non-resistant nonbelief by appealing to divine humility. This has been suggested by Travis Dumsday.[2] Needless to say, there are multiple theological avenues available for approaching *ADH*. My main point is that it should be permissible to appeal to theological solutions within this discussion, and that philosophical methodology should not come at the expense constructive theology.

The Hiddenness Argument is written in a way that makes it accessible to the general public. Schellenberg equips the reader with the necessary philosophical tools, and he puts forward the argument in a systematic and pedagogical manner. He wants to avoid philosophical "technobable" and he achieves this task. This is an important and foundational contribution to current research on God's hiddenness, and it will continue to provoke reactions among theologians and philosophers.

Mikael Leidenhag
University of Edinburgh

1. See Michael C. Rea, "Divine Hiddenness, Divine Silence," in *Philosophy of Religion: An Anthology*, ed. Louis P. Pojman and Michael C. Rea, 6th edition (Wadsworth: Cenage Leaning, 2011), 266-75.

2. Travis Dumsday, "Divine Hiddenness and Divine Humility, "*Sophia: Journal of Philosophy and Traditions*, vol.53 (2014):51-65.

Jaworski, William. ***Structure and the Metaphysics of Mind: How Hylomorphism Solves the Mind-Body Problem.*** **New York: Oxford University Press, 2016, pp. 362, $85.00, hardcover.**

William Jaworski advances a unique take on an ancient metaphysical notion to solve the most confounding problems in the Philosophy of Mind. In *Structure and the Metaphysics of Mind: How Hylomorphism Solves the Mind-Body Problem,* Jaworski's modest aim is to "…show that hylomorphism deserves a place at the table alongside more familiar theories such as nonreductive physicalism, emergentism, and Russellian monism" (p. 314). This goal is achieved.

The first five chapters of the text may be taxing for the beginner scholar, as they focus on metaphysically abstract questions like the problem of universals, the nature of structure, powers, and puzzling questions in mereology. Nonetheless, the payoff in the subsequent chapters is a lucid and original hylomorphic theory of mind which can provide compelling responses to a wide variety of problems physicalist theories of mind face.

Hylomorphism, for the uninitiated, is the position that among the basic constituents of reality are matter (ὕλη) and form (μορφή), or as Jaworski prefers, structure. Jaworski argues that, "A worldview that rejects hylomorphic structure… is a worldview that lacks a basic principle which distinguishes the parts of the physical universe that can think, feel, and perceive from those that can't…" (p. 2). His mantra throughout the book is that *structure matters*, i.e. it is an irreducible ontological principle that, at least in part, accounts for what things essentially are; *structure makes a difference*, i.e. it operates as an explanatory principle that accounts, at least in part, for the powers things have; and *structure counts*, i.e. it explains the unity and persistence of composite individuals in a dynamic world (p. 3).

Among the important feature of Jaworski's metaphysical framework for his hylomorphism is a substance-attribute ontology combined with a view of properties as sparse, rather than abundant, where properties would be co-extensive with predicate or class terms. That is, substances and the properties they have are individual and properties are "…what explain the objective similarities and differences among individuals and the causal powers they have" (p. 30). He affirms the "Eleatic Principle", in which one is only ontologically committed to that which plays a causal role (p. 30). Jaworski defends properties as tropes, e.g. a shade of red in one apple may exactly resemble a shade of red in another apple, but there is not some universal property which is the same across these two different individual apples. Jaworski's trope theory is pertinent to his brand of hylomorphism, e.g. his account of identity conditions for powers and activity-making structures utilizes the exact similarity among individuals (see p. 60 and p. 158). It is worth noting that while Jaworski rejects properties as universals, he says that his theory is compatible

with those who accept universals, commending E. J. Lowe's realism of universals as an example (p. 52).

Structure is what brings unity to parts and so is pertinent to the metaphysics of mereology. Jaworski utilizes Peter van Inwagen's views on composition, in which there are only physically simple things and biological or living composites, as a foil to compare and contrast his hylomorphic views on mereology. Several well-known metaphysical problems in mereology, some of which arise for van Inwagen, are disarmed by Jaworski's hylomorphism. Such problems include the body-minus problem, the problem of too many thinkers, the atomless gunk objection, and the supposed absurdity of van Inwagen's denial of composite objects common to our experience, e.g. tables and mountains.

Part of Jaworski's account includes activity making-structures, noting that the hylomorphist is not merely committed to there being individual-making structures but also those which matter, count, and make a difference. Activity-making structures are significant in understanding how hylomorphism applies to the philosophy of mind, as mental activities are paradigmatic examples, e.g. thinking, feeling, and perceiving. Notably, Jaworski argues in favor of an embodiment thesis, i.e. that "…all of the powers of structured individuals are essentially embodied…" (p. 162). To make his case, Jaworski notes that the burden is on his detractors to establish that there are any unembodied aspects to structured individuals. He considers some of Aristotle's arguments for the immateriality of mind (νοῦς) found in De Anima 3.4, delving into an analysis of Aristotle's analogy between perception and intellection. However, having embraced the embodiment thesis, Jaworski infers that the hylomorphist is committed to structo-physical necessitation and supervenience, which support the worry once raised by Bernard Williams that hylomorphism is just a polite form of physicalism.

To understand this worry, it is necessary to define "Physicalism", but this is notoriously difficult. Jaworski cites Carl Hempel's famous dilemma that if we are to define physicalism as the theory that everything can be exhaustively explained by physics, then either we are referring to contemporary physics, or some future ideal physics. If it is the former, physicalism is almost certainly false, since our current physics will undoubtedly be revised, and if it is the latter, than physicalism is contentless, as we don't know what this ideal physics will be. Nonetheless, Jaworski opts for a definition in which physicalism is supposed to exhaustively describe and explain everything, "…by the most empirically adequate theories in current or future physics," a definition that would include nonreductive physicalists who implicitly are committed to property dualism (p. 224). Interpreting Williams' worry nine different ways, Jaworski carefully positions his brand of hylomorphism as a non-physicalist theory that takes structure as fundamental, and in so doing, he resists the notion that everything, and in particular mind, could be exhaustively explained by physics. While

every argument cannot be rehashed in this review, a couple of critical comments are worth mentioning.

Jaworski raises the concern that hylomorphists believe thought, feeling, and perceptions, "…are composed of the structured manifestations of the powers of lower-level things, their powers and manifestations, are typically revealed through functional analysis" (p. 254). This suggests that the hylomorphist expects a material solution to what David Chalmers describes as the hard problem of consciousness. This worry hinges on the premise that reductive explanations imply that higher-level phenomena logically supervene on lower-level phenomena, and logical supervenience implies 'materialism', i.e. "physicalism". Jaworski cites Chalmers' definition of "materialism", which Chalmers takes to be synonymous with "physicalism"; the notion that there is nothing over and above the physical, and that materialism means that all the positive facts about the world are globally logically supervenient on the physical facts" (pp. 255-6). Jaworski rejects the supervenience-based definition of physicalism as not capturing the core physical thesis that everything can be exhaustively explained via physics (see §11.5-11.6). Jaworski may be quibbling with Chalmers over how "physicalism" is to be defined. However, a deeper issue is whether a reductive explanation like a functional analysis can provide an exhaustive explanation. Chalmers thinks that reductive explanations should remove mystery, while Jaworski argues that the hylomorphist need not think that lower level mechanistic explanations remove all mystery, but need only answer how-questions. Moreover, the hylomorphist may escape the charge of physicalism in that she can accommodate causal-explanatory pluralism, in which some explanations are not reducible to the level of physics. Still, citing what a hylomorphist can accommodate or her lack of commitments, seems, at best, to show that hylmorphism can be a form of non-physicalism, but may incidentally be a form of physicalsim, if it turns out that functional-analysis is mystery removing. Jaworski points out that a hylomorphists will view a mechanistic explanation as "…postulat[ing] components that contribute teleologically to an activity as a whole", which suggests a stronger stance on causal and explanatory pluralism (p. 256). Still this point is a bit soft-pedaled. The hylomorphist must not merely accommodate explanations and causes that go beyond the "how-questions", the hylomorphist must insist that such explanations or causes exist.

As thorough as the book is with respect to physicalism, little space is dedicated to responding to those who would reject the embodiment thesis. While Aristotle's arguments are addressed, his account of νοῦς is famously abstruse and his theory of perception is antiquated. There are, however, contemporary hylomorphists who reject the embodiment thesis, e.g. James F. Ross and David Oderberg. I would have been interested to see how Jaworski would parry James F. Ross' argument that determinate thought processes require an immaterial aspect to the mind (J. F. Ross. "Immaterial Aspects of Thought." *The Journal of Philosophy* Vol. 89 No. 3 [1992]: pp. 136-155)

or Oderberg's argument from the problem of storing concepts (D. S. Oderberg. *Real Essentialism*. New York: Routledge, 2007, p. 252.).

One can only surmise how, given Jaworski's metaphysics, he would respond to contemporary detractors of the embodiment thesis. Nonetheless, this does not diminish a successful undertaking. He dedicates his book proportionately to the trends one finds within contemporary philosophy of mind, a task that is necessary if he is to make the case that hylomorphism deserves a place at the table. Lastly, I should say the book is well-produced, lucid, organized with a clear structure, and free of typographical errors. *Structure and the Metaphysics of Mind* deserves a place on the desk of any philosopher of mind.

Daniel J. Vecchio
Victor Valley College

***The Ashgate Research Companion to Theological Anthropology.* Edited by Joshua R. Farris and Charles Taliaferro. Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate Publishing, 2015. xx + 404 pp. $149.95.**

Anthropology is among the more complex disciplines in Christian theology. Part of what makes this discipline so complex has more to do with how one conceives of the questions—both in terms of starting points and assumptions—than it does with where one finds the answers to them. Remarkably serviceable to advanced graduate students and scholars alike, *The Ashgate Research Companion to Theological Anthropology* is certainly the place to start for those who want to come to terms with both the questions and answers that concern human constitution, evolutionary biology, the image of God, cognitive neuroscience, human freedom (and much more) as it relates to Christian theology.

Boasting a total of twenty-seven chapters, plus the introduction, the *Companion* is divided up into seven main sections: 1) Methodology in Theological Anthropology; 2) Theological Anthropology, The Brain, The Body, and the Sciences; 3) Models for Theological Anthropology; 4) Theological Models of the Imago Dei; 5) Human Nature, Freedom and Salvation; 6) Human Beings in Sin and Salvation; 7) Christological Theological Anthropology. A fairly balanced ratio of chapters to sections displays the thoughtful labor of two discerning editors, who from all appearances have rightly anticipated the broader scope of their reader's interests. This is particularly true for those interested in more commonly controversial subject areas in the Christian tradition. The contributors too are as diverse as is the content of their essays; a good mix of theologians and philosophers, both junior and senior scholars, and Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Eastern Orthodox thinkers. The introduction is a relatively brief and yet, quite useful state of the art, reading more like an invitation to keep reading than anything else. In short, *The Ashgate Research Companion to Theological Anthropology* bears all the marks that a good research companion should. In order

to make this assertion more measurable, let us consider a sampling of three of its chapters in some more detail.

Consider first, Marc Cortez's thought-provoking chapter, 'The Madness in Our Method: Christology as a Necessary Starting Point for Theological Anthropology' (pp. 15-26). As the inaugural chapter of the *Companion*, Cortez's well-researched, carefully-crafted argument in some ways set the tempo, so to speak, for what readers ought to expect from the remaining essays. In short, Cortez argues that our understanding of Christ's humanity as 'true humanity' ought to be archetypical for our understanding the nature of the remainder of humanity. Cortez's Barthian-inspired case is complimented by John Cooper's essay, 'Scripture and Philosophy on the Unity of the Body and Soul: An Integrative Method for Theological Anthropology' (pp. 27-44), which offers an alternative thesis to that of Cortez. Cooper argues, roughly, that Christians ought to weigh contemporary (and historic) models of anthropology against "what the Scripture teaches about the unity of the body and the soul" in order to achieve what he calls "a comprehensive theological anthropology" (p. 27). Orbiting mainly around a discussion of the soul-body relationship in the afterlife, and offering what ends up being a (helpful) macro picture of the status of the debate in contemporary theology about which comes first, Scripture, philosophy, or science in determining our theological anthropology, the take away from Cooper's essay is mostly a subjective assertion that while debate continues, our litmus test for determining the best model of anthropology ought to be the Christian Scriptures. Cortez's approach is by no means different than Cooper's on this point. Cortez simply takes Cooper's assertion a step further, namely, by grounding a scripturally faithful anthropology in our Christology. Cortez goes on to defend this thesis by an appeal to Barth, whom he quotes as saying, "'The nature of the man Jesus alone is the key to the problem of human nature'" (p. 19). This is certainly controversial (particularly in light of Cooper's argument). I am admittedly a bit suspicious of mounting an argument for this or that account of human nature purely from the Scriptures, which as far I see things at this point, does not offer much of detailed prescription for (so much as a description of) how we ought to account for the nature of humanity. That said, Cortez's treatment of Barth is more than fair and for this reason, persuasive, at one point drawing attention to the care that ought to be taken in not mistaking Barth's method as anything more than a "scientific study of the 'phenomena of the human'" (p. 24). Invoking these Barthian concerns almost as a subtle warning to contemporary theologians who run considerable risks of reading far too much onto the humanity of Christ by beginning with "non-theological interpretations" of humanity at large, Cortez's final challenge to readers comes down to this: 'how self-consciously and honestly systematic is your theology?' In other words—taking a cue from Barth—developing a coherent theological anthropology cannot ignore other theological loci.

Next, consider, Ben Blackwell and Kris Miller's chapter, 'Theosis and Theological Anthropology' (pp. 303-317). This essay covers an enormous amount of

ground—biblical data (i.e., 2 Peter 1.4; Colossians 2.9-10), Patristic theology (i.e., Maximus the Confessor), and Modern theology (i.e., Tom Torrance)—in short but careful order. More than a helpful lesson in how one might 'bring the ancient and modern' (p. 303) discussions of human participation together, Blackwell and Miller make a convincing case for "the priority of a relational ontology for understanding theological anthropology" (p. 315). And playing off of his recent and insightful work (*Christosis: Pauline Soteriology in Light of Deification in Irenaeus and Cyril of Alexandria* [WUNT 2/314; Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011]), Blackwell and Miller paint a helpful picture of the development of soter-theotic thinking in their treatment of Maximus. Here, they deploy Blackwell's distinction between what he (in his monograph) calls "attributive deification" ("[becoming] God by grace") and "essential deification" ("[becoming] God by essence"), arguing both for Maximus' commitment to the former and as a result of his Christological conviction that in the incarnation Christ assumed all (elect) humanity to himself, Maximus' commitment to some sort of eschatological and "unconfused union" of God and "restored" humanity (pp. 307-8). With this, Blackwell and Miller jump ahead from the seventh to the twentieth century and Torrance's doctrine of "participation" (p. 309). The author's take care to faithfully represent Torrance as they did Maximus, coming largely to the same conclusion that for Torrance "human participation is not by nature but by grace" (p. 310). They argue that, "Torrance's notion of participation is thoroughly Trinitarian. For Torrance, humans are adapted for union, communion, and participation in God through and by the Spirit without losing our humanity" (p. 313). While Maximus provides the basis for their initial conclusions, namely, that Christian soteriology amounts to some sort of theosis, it is upon Torrance's Trinitarian conclusions that Blackwell and Miller ultimate make much of their case for "the priority of relational ontological for understanding theological anthropology" (p. 315). In the end, their account of relational ontology is more roughed out than finished, going something like this: humanity is designed for (because we reflect) Trinitarian union; humanity is then created for union; the fall corrupts this union; Christ's redemption re-inaugurates this union; both the divine impulse for union and the nature of divine union itself ought to inform how we understand soul-body relations. Their conclusion, that "the doctrine of theosis draws anthropological discussions back to the theocentric intention for humanity, redemption as union and participation, and a relationship ontology", is reflective of both Cooper and Cortez's sentiment that our exploration of such highly nuanced issues in theological anthropology will necessarily be ongoing (p. 317).

Finally, let us consider John Chan's 'A Cartesian Approach to the Incarnation' (pp. 355-67), and what he says is his "modest" attempt to "consider the possibility of an orthodox doctrine of the incarnation with the presupposition of Cartesian dualism" (p. 355). Chan's piece exemplifies what I think is some of the best of what this Companion offers—rigor, careful research, and good ol' constructive philosophical-theology. Certainly less methodological in his approach than Cortez

and less historical-theological than Blackwell and Miller, Chan's piece is equal parts theology and metaphysics; or, better still, a piece of Analytic Theology. Chan's project involves a few important moves, the first of which is a helpful disambiguation of what a Cartesian account of substance dualism looks like in comparison to other accounts of substance dualism that have dominated the bulk of the Christian tradition. On a Cartesian model of substance dualism, Chan carefully argues that personhood is identical to the soul—the body thus being purely contingent. He says that, "according to Cartesian Dualism (CD), embodiment is a contingent state of affairs—the minimum requirement for personhood is being identical to a soul; being 'attached' to a particular hunk of matter is not necessary" (p. 356). For those familiar with the constituents of Chalcedonian orthodoxy, Chan's next move is not hard to anticipate as he traces out some of what is at stake for the worries that lie between the Docetic and Nestorian heresies. Interacting with Oliver Crisp's account of the virgin conception of the God-man, Chan exposes some of the liabilities of relational views of the soul, particularly as it pertains to the causal origins of the human body and soul of the humanity of Jesus. Upon this foundation, Chan makes his final move, namely, a defense for the so-called "abstract nature model" (that the Son assumes a set of properties, necessary and sufficient for human nature) of the incarnation, which he says is a way to elide problems that necessarily stem from "concrete nature models" (that the Son unites himself to a concrete particular, yielding what is sometimes called a three-part compositional Christology); the worry, of course, being that "a Cartesian soul is a person simplicity and in a concrete nature incarnation, the Word assumes a human nature in virtue of Cartesian soul. In so doing, he takes on a distinct person on both simpliciter and relational versions of Cartesian dualism" (p. 367). Chan, like the other contributors that we've considered to this point leaves the reader thinking about the potentials for further research, by pointing to several hurdles that his abstract nature Cartesianism has yet to overcome.

From a low and slow flyover, as it were, there is little to criticize about this volume—its contributors represent some of the brightest minds in the field and their contributions cover some serious ground in four-hundred pages. From thirty-five thousand feet, however, this Companion lacks one signal, though, less-than-obvious feature. Not one chapter deals exclusively with how an idealist metaphysic makes sense of human nature. While idealism is certainly mentioned in several chapters as a still viable, though significantly under-appreciated account of human nature (most of which feature in Cortez's other chapter in the *Companion* 'The Human Person as a Communicative Event: Jonathan Edwards on the Mind/Body Relationship'), it otherwise makes little sustained appearance in the volume. Farris, of course, is not unconscious of this fact, having both edited and contributed to the first volume in the Bloomsbury series, *Idealism and Christianity*. That so little attention is paid to idealism is at best, a minor flaw, especially given the current state of interest in the subject.

Finally, as has become my habit, let me say a few words about the physical appearance of the volume itself. Ashgate (recently absorbed by Taylor and Francis) has had a reputation for producing high quality volumes—hat's off to the printers! This volume is a prime example. There is something to be said for durability in the world of $100+ books these days, and this volume has it. No doubt, what Ashgate had in mind in terms our how useful this volume will henceforth be is anticipated by how well it has been constructed; tightly bound, glossy finish, quality paper, clear and readable fonts, and ample margins for note-taking. Certainly its most striking feature of my hardback copy is its wonderfully eye-catching cover art (John Climacus', The Ladder of Divine Ascent)—a think-piece in and of itself. Finally, let me say that publishing often moves at near glacial speeds. But for all who anticipated Farris and Taliferro's *The Ashgate Research Companion to Theological Anthropology*, it was well worth the wait.

S. Mark Hamilton
Free University of Amsterdam
JESociety Press, Research Associate

Joshua R. Farris and S. Mark Hamilton (eds.). *Idealism and Christian Theology*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016, pp. 256, $100, hardback.

Steven Cowan and James Spiegel (eds.). *Idealism and Christian Philosophy*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016, pp. 224, $100, hardback.

What does idealism have to do with Christianity? In Bloomsbury's two-volume series, editors Joshua Farris, Mark Hamilton, Steven Cowan, and James Spiegel set out to answer this question. Reflection upon Edwardsean and Berkeleyan idealism has lead them to advocate for a reevaluation of idealism's compatibility with Christian theology. Together they have assembled a wide array of scholars whose personal commitment to idealism varies, but nevertheless each endorses a particular virtue of idealism.

Since space forbids a detailed interaction with each chapter of this series, I have instead opted for a thematic summary and a meta-criticism concerning the enterprise of Christian idealism. The summary might also serve as a recommended reading plan of the two volumes, reorganized according to what I take to be the major contribution from each author. Many of these chapters do a refreshingly excellent job of writing historically informed analytic theology or philosophy, which was a chief aim of the editors of volume one. Consequently, my classification of *prolegomena*, historical theology, systematic theology, and philosophy does not always reflect the genre intention of the authors. My hope is that this review will serve potential readers by

helping them enter into Christian idealism by connecting the unique insights from 'Idealism and Christianity' with the potential interests of future readers.

Prolegomena: For those who are novices with the subject of idealism in general, I recommend beginning with Cowan and Spiegel's introduction. Here the editors lucidly and succinctly lay out the essential thesis of Berkeleyan idealism: *esse est percipi aut percipere* or "to be is to be perceived or to be a perceiver" (II.intro). On the other hand, Farris and Hamilton's introduction adds the exotic thinking of Edwardsean idealism alongside a series of questions that commends the relevance of these two modern minds, Berkeley and Edwards, for knotty theological issues today (I.intro). Both introductions have exhaustive chapter previews that should be reviewed by those who wish to have a more detailed summary than what can be provided here. Finally, Spiegel's chapter (II.1) on the idealism and reasonableness of theistic belief shows how the former enhances the latter by looking at some of Berkeley's apologetic contributions. Unlike much of the analytic philosophy genre today, these *prolegomena* essays are accessible and assume no prior knowledge on the part of the reader.

Historical theology: Because contemporary monism often comes packaged in a materialistic box rather than an idealist box, Christians have rightly been wary of considering idealism as a plausible metaphysic scheme. Many of the historical chapters in this series argue that while this concern might be legitimate for non-theistic philosophers, the commitments of George Berkeley and Jonathan Edwards are much more complex and faithful to Christian theology. Some of these chapters defend the orthodoxy of Berkeley's doctrine of creation (Spiegel, I.1) and Edwards's Christology (Crisp, I.8 and Tan, I.9). Crisp and Tan's essays represent the only competing perspectives in this series, and their differences could be made more explicit. However, if readers want more from that discussion, they should consult Crisp's *Jonathan Edwards on God and Creation* and Tan's *Fullness Received and Returned: Trinity and Participation in Jonathan Edwards* with an eye towards the importance that dispositional ontology plays in the interpretation of Edwards's idealism. William Wainwright shows readers that Christian idealism lends itself to many creative variations by comparing the account of knowledge of God in Berkeley and Edwards and putting forward philosophical nuances that might otherwise be missed. (I.2) While Keith Yandell's chapter also defends a Berkeleyan account of creation (I.4), his primary contribution to the volume is historical; he places the Anglican divine in the context of the atheistic thinkers of the 17th century, which sheds light on why Berkeley made the philosophical moves he did. The same virtue is present in Timo Airaksinen's chapter on Berkeley's ethics (I.11), whose moral philosophy was meant to curb the spread of unbelief while also providing a path to godly happiness.

Systematic theology: Most of the chapters between these two volumes offer immediate resources to contemporary systematic theology, albeit remaining

heavily indebted to both Edwards and Berkeley. Benjamin Arbour's chapter, "God, Idealism, and Time," is one of the most demanding arguments to follow, but it rewards the reader by bringing idealism right into present-day debates in analytic theology regarding God's relationship to time (II.7). In keeping with the significant consequences that idealism has for the Creator-creature distinction, two essays reevaluate popular suspicions surrounding idealistic panentheism. Jordan Wessling provides an Edwards-styled defense (I.3) and Adam Groza adds a Berkeleyan defense (II.6) in which a "weak" mode of panentheism is rendered consistent with Christian orthodoxy. Several other essays address or construct what might be called "idealist anthropology" by replacing substance-dualism with theological monism (Farris I.5) or by replacing the primacy of the material world with that of the mind (Taliaferro II.5). Mark Hamilton pushes some of these conclusions further up field by showing how the simplicity of metaphysical idealism can better account for sin's corrupting effects upon the body than the traditional Reformed approach (I.6). Although Marc Cortez's chapter is primarily dedicated to spelling out the implications of Edwards's immaterialism for the resurrection, it overlaps with these anthropological discussions quite a bit as well (I.7).

There are also a number of worthwhile integrations of idealism into other doctrines. James Arcadi makes a creative and novel case for an idealist account of the Eucharist (I.10). Mark Hight writes what, for many, will be a controversial take on miracles within idealistic parameters, warranting consideration even if it does not represent Berkeley's own opinions (II.9). Lastly, Keith Ward contends that idealism's priority of the mind helps ground the moral life (II.10) Each of these articles is uniquely creative and offers a fresh look at old issues.

Philosophy: While every chapter is philosophically informed, there are three essays in particular that are noteworthy for their interaction with non-theistic philosophy. Gregory Trickett, for example, deals with Bertrand Russell's rejection of Berkeleyan idealism by showing how theism can uphold a realist (and correspondence) theory of truth (II.2). His essay might serve future discussions about how Christian idealism can ward off charges of anti-realism. At the end of Howard Robinson's "Idealism and Perception: Why Berkeleyan Idealism is Not as Counterintuitive as it Seems," idealism is provocatively suggested to provide a better ontological fit with current quantum theory than the supposed "common sense" of scientific realism (II.4). Douglas Blount's use of Thomas Kuhn in his chapter on science is also an ambitious employment of idealism (II.8), which I will say more about below, along with Steven Cowan's excellent explanation of idealism and particulars (II.3).

Before moving on to constructive criticism, the contributors are to be commended for the corrective they offer to many mistaken notions about idealism, which is a great service to Berkeley's legacy. Additionally, a great deal of complexity is showcased regarding the types of idealism that are viable for Christians. Since no monolithic scheme dominates the book (e.g. Edwards's occasionalism and theological

determinism are not shared by Berkeley), it should encourage further creativity. Moreover, there is a rhythmic unity to many of these arguments that proceeds from (1) the exposition of a dilemma that realism or "matterism" fails to solve to (2) an elaboration of how idealism relates to the aforementioned dilemma more cogently to finally, (3) the exchange of matter or substance with the divine or human mind as a theoretical explanation. Obviously this type of argument prizes parsimony or simplicity since almost every case involves a removal of some middle substance between God and creation. Furthermore, the immediacy with which idealists place agents (both God and humans) in proximity to their causes appears to require a high view of Providence, which will lead to correlated concerns about the problem of evil or the authorship of sin. Many authors acknowledge this point, rebutting potential concerns with a "no-worse-off" defense, which involves a demonstration of how objections to panentheism from the problem of evil are "no-worse-off" than traditional theistic defenses. Whether or not parsimony and the "no-worse-off" defense are theological virtues will depend upon the convictions of the reader, but since they appear to be inherent within Christian idealism, it would be prudent to explore their value in greater detail.

My meta-criticism for the project of Christian idealism is twofold – part metaphysics and part historiography. The first part is that the editors and some of the contributors undersell their claims, likely out of respect for the reader and a desire to avoid a dogmatic tone. Nevertheless, ontology (defined as the study of reality) is a comprehensive field with major implications for every theological and philosophical issue addressed in these volumes. Consequently, the "mere suggesting," "worth considering," the "elasticity and adaptability… [and] the appeal" of idealism (I.intro), and other similar idioms understate the commitment the reader must make when switching their understanding of ontology from, say, Common Sense Realism to Berkeleyan idealism. If one pictures theology as a web of interrelated beliefs, ontology is a strand that upholds the center spiral and every successive thread. One cannot, for example, be a *consistent* idealist with regards to the Eucharist and a substance realist with regards to creation. So while the tone of each contributor is appreciated, the stakes of their recommendations are often much higher than they set.

The second criticism is primarily a question of historiography: why did Berkeley – and to a lesser extent, Edwards – fade from the consciousness of Western philosophy? Why did their influence not persist? Unfortunately, despite the frequent laments by authors in these volumes, this important background question is not explored in any great detail. One would think that if an apparently worthwhile philosophical system ceased to be considered, it would be important to locate the cause of its extinction. Now, I am not suggesting that the meager legacy of modern Anglophone idealism *ipso facto* demonstrates its falsity; rather I am requesting that some explanation be given for this lamentable phenomenon in order to ensure that better ontologies did not come along and replace Berkeley. Fredrick Copleston's story – representing perhaps the

majority report – is relatively straightforward: Berkeley's metaphysical philosophy was neglected while his empirical elements, especially his phenomenalistic analysis, were picked up and taken in a more skeptical direction by Hume. Hume in turn connects us to the second, more famous half of the story in which he interrupts Kant's dogmatic slumber, sending Kant in a completely different direction in speculative philosophy – namely into *transcendental* idealism. This Kantian variation of idealism became immensely popular and produced scores of Continental offspring that have come back around to deeply influence the commitments of Anglophone theologians. Readers who wish to look into this more would do well to consult Garry Dorrien's magnificent work, *Kantian Reason and Hegelian Spirit: The Idealistic Logic of Modern Theology*, which is now the authoritative treatment of the legacy Kantian transcendental idealism. German idealism has so overshadowed its English counterpart that only in 2011 was the first historical survey on the subject ever written (by W. J. Meander: *British Idealism: A History*.) In short, in terms of legacy, Kant dwarfs Berkeley and Christian idealists ought to ask why this is so.

But, one might object, why should a group of Christian analytic theologians and philosophers be concerned with the waxing and waning of historical preferences when the good bishop himself reminds us that "[t]ruth is the cry of all, but the game of a few" (*Siris* 368)? The short answer: some arguments made by Kant and other moderns need to be answered by Christian idealists, and this is especially relevant to Cowan and Blount's essays. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant writes that Berkeley's "dogmatic idealism… declares space, together with all the things to which it is attached as an inseparable condition, to be something that is impossible in itself, and… therefore declares things in space to be merely imaginary" (*KrV* B274). Kant says that Berkeley's unintended conclusion is unavoidable because he "regards space as a property that is to pertain to the things in themselves; for then it, along with everything for which it serves as a condition, is a non-entity" before going on to state that he has already undermined this type of idealism in the Transcendental Aesthetic (Ibid.). Cowan touches upon the role that space plays in distinguishing objects only tangentially when he considers the problem of bundle theory, but he gives no constructive account of space from the Berkeleyan perspective. Kant might press Cowan (and Berkeley) on this point, by asking whether or not space (and time) was a property bundled to sensible objects that we perceive rather than an *a priori* form of intuition. If the bundle theory of sensible objects is true, must a Berkeleyan regard space and time as properties of that object, empirically derived? If so, what does this account look like? The issue here is over how the mind determines the character of experience and whether the mind brings space and time, so to speak, to the discernment of objects or if those are attributes derived empirically. For those who wish to pursue this further, I recommend Ralph C. S. Walker's chapter, 'Idealism: Kant and Berkeley' in *Essays on Berkeley*.

Elsewhere in the *Prolegomena to any future metaphysics that will be able to come forward as science*, Kant again objects to Berkeley's supposition that the *noumenal* – things-in-themselves – realm can be knowable from the divine Mind to the human mind through a type of intuitive notion. Berkeley's notional knowledge was not empirical, and therefore it transgressed the categories necessary for the type of science that Kant wanted to uphold. Blount's chapter does not relate as directly on Kant's objections as Cowan's does, but it is the place where the most extrapolation needs to happen. If Berkeley's phenomenalist account of the sciences is right and (especially if occasionalism is true) scientists are actually studying patterns of God's action rather than "so-called natural laws," then both science and theology must undergo major revisions in light of this ontology. Science will have to pull up its realist foundations and scale back its sphere of claims while theology begins to move in and renovate science. Kant would vehemently object to this for a number of reasons, and Christian idealists should think about what they are committing to if such relationship between science and idealism goes forward. Nonetheless I am anxious to see more interaction between the philosophy of science and Christian idealism in the future.

The 'Idealism and Christianity' series is the first of its kind, an inauguration of a rich conversation in metaphysics that manages to be coherent, insightful, and accessible to students and professors alike. At the present moment, accessibility seems to be the most pressing attribute. Many of the questions and conversations at the *Idealism and Christian Philosophy* book panel of the 2016 ETS annual meeting revealed that the primary obstacle to a renaissance of Christian idealism were caricatures or truncated versions of Berkeleyanism. A step towards correcting this situation would be to encourage interested metaphysicians, students, and theologians to obtain these volumes by Bloomsbury while also procuring the works of Berkeley and Edwards. Reading the primary sources of these modern idealists will circumvent many of the problems that appear in secondary literature or in the writings of poor historians of philosophy who act as *de facto* gatekeepers. In the meantime, readers should also be on the lookout for similar volumes on idealism from these authors in the future.

So what does idealism have to do with Christianity? Currently among the evangelical academy, the answer is very little. These volumes take a step in the right direction towards rectifying this problem.

C. Layne Hancock
Yale Divinity School

Wiseman, Harris. *The Myth of the Moral Brain: The Limits of Moral Enhancement*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2016, pp. 337, $38, hardback.

Are the choices that human beings make and the lives they live determined merely by the chemistry of their brains? For the modern man, has "the Devil made me do

it" given way to "my brain made me do it"? Is the solution for the problem of evil found in neuroscience, in the anatomy and chemistry of "the Moral Brain" (p. 4)? In responding to these kinds of questions, Harris Wiseman, PhD from the Faculty of Divinity at the University of Cambridge and Honorary Senior Research Associate at the Institute of Education in the University College London, seeks to balance legitimate biological accounts of moral functioning with considerations gleaned from philosophy, science, theology, and the field of mental health (pp. 16-19). Wiseman contends for a "practical-realities first approach" (p. 13). The target of his measured criticism is neither technology itself nor the contention that human biochemistry and neuroanatomy profoundly influence moral judgment and behavior (p. 110). The problems are found in the dehumanizing and deterministic claims being made about biomedical moral enhancement, the radical ambiguity of current empirical studies, and the reductive and excessive simplification of moral reality.

The underlying thesis of the book, according to Wiseman, is "that in the vast majority of cases, the biological aspects of moral functioning have been massively over exaggerated in their potential significance. The biological approach to moral functioning, while certainly valuable and enlightening when viewed cautiously, is not the most appropriate lens through which moral functioning should be looked" (p. 26). In short, biology is only one, and not even the most significant, factor in moral development. Consequently, we must reject "the grounding assumption of reductionist discourse that 'we are our brains,' that 'my neurons made me do it'" (p. 267). If biological moral enhancement is to have any practical purchase, it must incorporate the whole of reality, including particular cultures, religious faith, and economic and political reality.

The tone of the book is captured by the following: "We must manage our expectations about what can plausibly be realized through biological moral enhancement" (p. 53). Expectations, for Wiseman, should be managed regarding the philosophy (Ch. 2-3) and science (Ch. 4-5) of moral enhancement. He rejects any philosophical or scientific underpinnings that narrate a fictional view of reality or reduce moral development to the biological. The use of pharmacology, genetics, neurostimulation, or any other biotechnology cannot eliminate personal responsibility, diminish communal investment in the development of virtuous characters, or ignore dimensions of living found in relationships, practices, and institutions (pp. 66-83). Granted, humans are embodied biological creatures and there are certain chemicals, hormones, and neurotransmitters the presence or absence of which set a biological context for certain kinds of behaviors and judgments (Ch. 4). The biology of the human being, however, does not eclipse the complex, nuanced, multifaceted, and inherently contextual nature of morality (p. 14) and neither can the practice of science quantify the qualitative nature of morality (pp. 134-36).

In the end, Wiseman is no thoroughgoing biological skeptic. If done properly, remedial moral enhancement is worth exploring and, in fact, is already being practiced

successfully in the treatment of some addictions, such as alcoholism (Ch. 9). In order to avoid clear dangers (Ch. 8), Wiseman proposes, "that if such intervention takes place in a mental health context, in a person-centered and fully bio-psycho-social fashion, one which respects the value and influence of personal agency, cultural scaffolding, and quality relationships, then we have begun to outline a context in which moral enhancement might be put to work in a positive and desirable way" (p. 220).

Overall, Wiseman offers a robust but fair criticism of reductive moral enhancement theory and science. Additionally, he proposes a convincing and appropriately cautious approach for integrating biotechnology with remedial therapy in mental health contexts. Those rooted in Christianity should appreciate Wiseman's extended argument that religious faith and practice is significant for developing moral persons, although Evangelicals might find Wiseman's sociology of or comparison of religions approach off-putting. His promise to be secular and agnostic regarding questions of superiority (p. 141) is understandable given the audience he seeks to reach, but the Christian faith is not simply context, and neither is Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, atheism, scientism, or any other worldview claim. The Christian faith is a lived story or depiction of reality, the way things are and ought to be in light of the revelation of God. That a religious tradition is true or false can have direct bearing on the legitimacy of its moral claims. In other words, the theological and moral claims of Christianity, granting various traditions, compete, sometimes tacitly and sometimes explicitly, with the claims of other worldviews regarding the good life.

Wiseman is not immune to the influences of popular cultural and political fictions, which he rightly criticizes regarding the myth of the moral brain (pp. 18-20). For example, without definition or substantiation and without reference to any particular, historical religious tradition, Wiseman identifies the rehabilitation of homosexual preferences and sexual reorientation therapies with "homophobic cultures, fundamentalist groups, and Putin's Russia" (p. 74). Such guilt by association loses to solipsistic political rhetoric individuals who are struggling within faith communities to understand how sexual desires and practices relate to authoritative religious and rational beliefs. Some readers may wonder why Wiseman essentially brackets sexual desire and practices out of moral discourse. Historically and consistently Christ followers have been invited to live sexually pure lives consistent with the teaching of Scripture and distinct from surrounding cultures. Christian philosophers, theologians, counselors, and pastors would do well to consider the whole body in relationship to sinful practices and character development. The whole body includes sex, sexuality, and marriage. Moral application should, therefore, include reflection on sexual immorality in all its iterations.

Perhaps the most serious concern is that Wiseman's apparent postliberal theological orientation does not allow him to answer the question, "Can we know objective moral truth"? In other words, what sets the target for moral enhancement

and development? He offers no real basis for moral truth beyond "a person's powers of moral reasoning, self-criticism, and independent thought" (p. 185), yet he can rightly warn that some moral scaffolding can be abominable (pp. 184-88). The question remains, how do we judge right and wrong, good and bad, just and unjust? Can we legitimately speak of objective moral truths that are discoverable and knowable? Wiseman appears to accept a cultural-linguistic approach that locates moral development within particular communities, which, for Wiseman, "transcends consequentialist, deontological, and virtue accounts" of ethics (p. 241). In this ethical approach, however, no attempt is made to know or verify moral truth. In the end, each community will live only *as if* its confessions and practices are true. A more robust account of theological ethics is possible, however, because we live in a world in which God speaks and acts. Consequently, human beings can understand with confidence what is objectively right and wrong.

Despite the questions raised above, Wiseman provides a valid response to the biological reductionism current in the sciences and popular culture, as well as a helpful though truncated description of moral and character development in the Christian faith (Ch. 6). The book is not overly technical, but will require careful attention to terms and concepts unique to biotechnology, ethics, and to Wiseman's own arguments. Ethicists, mental health practitioners, and theologians interested in the doctrine of humanity should read this book, which can also serve as a useful graduate level text in universities or seminaries. The pastor interested in how culture and science shape our popular understanding of and response to human ills will find this a stimulating yet sobering read.

Jeffrey B. Riley
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

Keller, Tim. *Making Sense of God: An Invitation to the Skeptical.* New York: Viking, 2016. 254 pages. $17.70.

Tim Keller has served as the founding pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Manhattan for nearly thirty years and has spent much of his ministry engaging skeptics of Christianity with both winsome humility and intellectual dexterity. *Making Sense of God*, which serves as an apologetic prequel to his previous book, *The Reason for God*, exudes the same charitable tone and rhetorical skill that those familiar with Keller's work and ministry have come to expect. The book is a prequel in that Keller aims to present Christianity as desirable first, whereas in *The Reason for God*, he aims to present Christianity as rational. His basic supposition is that before a person will consider seriously *whether* Christianity is true, she must first *want* it to be true.

Keller essentially argues for two broad theses. He argues in the first section of the book that "every person embraces his or her worldview for a variety of rational, emotional, cultural, and social factors" (pp. 4-5). And, he argues in the final two

sections of the book that Christianity makes the most emotional, cultural, and rational sense while also supplying the resources for meeting life's needs in a way far superior to secularism.

Setting out to sustain his first thesis, Keller cites a major study conducted by the Pew Research Center that concluded that religion is on the rise whereas secularism is on a steady decline. The reason for this, he argues, is two-fold. First, secularism leaves out some crucial things necessary to living well. Second, many people sense intuitively that something exists that is beyond the natural world. He defends these claims well and with an impressive breadth of research. Though one might raise the question of how much of naturalism—embedded tacitly and so firmly in the modern conscious and reflected in the patterns, rhythms, and forms of culture—is unknowingly lapped up by these growing religions such that while much of their verbal content is "religious," much of their formal content is thoroughly naturalistic.

He further sustains his first thesis by demonstrating that both belief in God and non-belief are based on a combination of faith and reason. He leans heavily on Michael Polanyi's as well as Friedrich Nietzsche's work for support. Polanyi argued that all knowledge is subjective in that it is known by subjects who all hold certain beliefs based on tacit knowledge, that is, knowledge that has not been rationally evaluated. Nietzsche argued that once God is taken out of the picture, all objective truth, values, and meaning go with Him. The secularist has claimed often that his beliefs are based on reason whereas the religious person's beliefs are based on faith. It is this claim that Keller masterfully takes apart in the first section.

In the second and third sections, Keller moves to argue that Christianity delivers stable meaning that can endure suffering, deep satisfaction that is independent of life's circumstances, freedom that avoids the naively thin modern conception of only freedom from constraints, a sense of self/identity that at the same time produces joyful self-affirmation and humble self-denial for the good of others, hope that can stare death in the face through the promise that paradise lost will one day become paradise restored, a grounded morality that can make sense of the moral feelings that all people experience, and justified support for human rights and compassion toward the oppressed. Keller evaluates all of these goods that most people in the modern Western culture would affirm as good, and shows how Christianity makes by far the most sense of human experience and lends the best tools for dealing with the unavoidable problems of life. Major influences on his work in these sections are Robert Bellah and Charles Taylor.

He concludes his book with two short chapters on some familiar rational arguments for Christianity. He briefly presents the cosmological argument, the teleological argument, the moral argument, the argument from consciousness, the argument from the trustworthiness of one's rational faculties, and the argument from beauty. C. S. Lewis formerly argued that materialism cannot account for one trusting one's rational faculties, and Alvin Plantinga expanded on this argument giving it

a more philosophically robust treatment in more recent days. This argument has generated a great deal of discussion recently, so Keller's inclusion of it is pertinent. His final arguments make a case for Jesus being who He claimed to be. He defends the credibility of the Scriptures, Jesus' character and wisdom, His claims of divinity, and the evidence for His resurrection.

Significant weaknesses are hard to find given that Keller sets his arguments up with great care as he avoids claiming more than he can demonstrate reasonably. The intuitive force of his arguments is also hard to ignore. One minor pushback would be that he writes throughout of "values" rather than of "virtue." This change in language over history is not insignificant given that the move to speak of "values" conveys a move away from universals and toward particulars. To be fair, he does write of "universal values," so the idea of universals might be present, but in a post-Enlightenment age that brought on its heels the loss of the universal, and consequently the turn from virtue to values, it would have been a welcome lingual corrective to write of virtue. Virtue will be virtue whether people value it or not.

The strengths of Keller's book are several. He presents a breadth and depth of quality sociological and philosophical research, making his arguments clear, well-supported, and fairly easily accessible to the thinking person. The inquisitive skeptic will find Keller's tone charitable and his approach inviting. It is as if Keller is saying to the skeptic, "Let's consider our common experiences of life and the things we most value. Now, would not this story, if it were true, explain these experiences and values very well? Would it not seem to grant you the things you most desire in life in a logically consistent and emotionally and culturally relevant way?" Keller's strategy is brilliantly perceptive of the modern secular mindset, in that he is not arguing for the truth of Christianity up front, but rather the beauty of it. His aim is to present Christianity in a desirable light so that the secular person will *want* to explore the rationality and truth claims of Christianity. Keller has produced an excellent resource that skeptics would benefit from greatly, whether they agree with the ultimate conclusions or not.

Brian Williams
Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary

McKim, Donald K. *The Church: Presbyterian Perspectives*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2017, pp. 108, $15.43, softcover.

Donald K. McKim (PhD, University of Pittsburgh) is a retired minister in the Presbyterian Church (USA). He served for some years as Academic Dean and Professor of Theology at Memphis Theological Seminary, and in recent years has devoted much of his time to writing. Dr. McKim has written many books relating to Reformed theology and Presbyterian ecclesiology, including books on Martin Luther

and John Calvin, and the well-received *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*, now in its second edition.

This current short volume, *The Church*, is a collection of six messages (thus six chapters) given to various assemblies of clergy and laity. As stated in the preface, these comprise a "theological reflection on the nature of the church" (p. ix). Though this is admittedly an introduction on such matters, Dr. McKim covers some of the more fundamental topics with reflections that span from devotional to theological. His writing style is very lucid. Immediately noticeable is his extensive use of quotes from some of the great theologians of the past, including Barth, Bonhoeffer, and well over 50 quotes from Calvin. Such weaving of words from these great theological minds into a more modern understanding of the nature of the church is very helpful, and keeps the discussion well-grounded.

The first of the six chapters is an effective devotional on the Call to Follow Jesus in the Church. Using the common acronym JOY, McKim states that following Jesus involves Joining ourselves to him by faith, Obedience to Jesus, and then Yielding to Jesus by denying ourselves (Mark 8:34). By way of application McKim asks, "What does our discipleship (our following Jesus) look like?" (p. 8). "We are connected" he says, "with someone who is going somewhere." When Jesus bids us to follow him he invites us "to be a part of his work in history" (p. 8). Following Jesus involves "activity, movement, and growth," without which "we are not truly followers" (p. 9). We are then enjoined to leave the past behind and look toward the future, to Jesus as our standard. "What matters most, and always, is whether what we are and what we do can be understood as following Christ" (p. 13).

Chapter two tackles the Latin phrase common in Presbyterian and other Reformed churches, *ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda secundum verbi dei*, which is translated "the church reformed and always being reformed according to the Word of God." McKim provides good insight and a great overview of some of the scholarly analyses of this phrase, and leans toward a more liberal understanding. "This is why as Reformed people we are open both to new expressions of our faith, as in new declarations or confessions of faith as well as to the "revisability" of our confessional understandings based on insights from Scripture and the work of the Holy Spirit" (p. 22).

So does this mean the Christian faith must be open to endless revisions, or that the more a church changes its confession of faith the more reformed it is? I'm sure McKim would agree not, but where does one draw the line? Many conservative Presbyterian scholars would argue that to be Reformed (capital R) is to be as close to the biblical teachings of Christ and the Apostles as possible, which was what Luther and Calvin were aiming for in their striving to reform the church from its medieval distortions. So the "always reforming" would refer to the course adjustments needed from time to time to keep churches on the narrow way toward *ecclesia reformata*, the Reformed (truly biblical) Church.

McKim goes on to emphasize “openness” in a brief discussion of *adiaphora*, saying, “surely we should sit loose with a number of things.” *Adiaphora* (indifferent), refers to matters that are “neither commanded nor forbidden in the Word of God” according to the Formula of Concord of 1577. The author does not provide any specific examples, but of course such openness has a lot of wiggle room depending on how one interprets “commanded” and “forbidden.” With regard to controversies such as worship styles, gender roles, definition of marriage, and sexual identity, not only are there differences in how one does hermeneutics, but there is also the question of how much the world should be allowed to influence the church versus how effectively the church should be salt and light to the world, a question all churches struggle with.

The next three chapters are taken from the last section of the Apostle’s Creed with its focus on the Holy Spirt, the holy catholic Church, and the communion of saints. McKim draws deeply from Calvin and Barth here as he reflects on the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church. He distinguishes well between the invisible true Church of God’s elect and the visible church, while cautioning strongly against leaving her.

The last chapter “Imagine the Church!” is motivational. Here McKim does a particularly good job of addressing the Presbyterian emphasis on the providence of God who preserves all of creation, accompanies his people through relationships, and governs or directs all things according to his purpose.

In addition to this book, a student interested in studying the nature of the church from a Reformed perspective would do well to read two recent books co-authored by Michael Allen and Scott R. Swain: *Reformed Catholicity: The Promise of Retrieval for Theology and Biblical Interpretation* (Baker, 2015) and *Christian Dogmatics: Reformed Theology for the Church Catholic* (Baker, 2016).

David Farbishel
Grand Canyon University, Phoenix, AZ

Wright, Christopher J. H. *How to Preach and Teach the Old Testament for All Its Worth*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016, pp. 288, $18.99, softcover.

Christopher J. H. Wright serves as the International Ministries Director of the Langham Partnership, an organization dedicated to the international advancement of the Gospel. He has also taught the Old Testament in various countries and has authored several books dealing with the Old Testament, ethics, and mission.

The structure of the table of contents for *How to Preach and Teach the Old Testament for All Its Worth* shows that it deals with points of theory and practice. The first five chapters answer the question, “Why should we preach and teach from the Old Testament?” (p. 9). Here Wright connects the major contours of the Old Testament to the theme of redemption revealed throughout Scripture. Thus, the author begins his

work with a focus on theory. The final ten chapters respond to the question, “How can we preach and teach from the Old Testament?” (p. 9). Wright here covers practical concerns when preaching from the different genres in the Old Testament. The book then concludes with two appendices and a bibliography which supply summary details for readers who wish to engage in further learning and practice.

For those acquainted with introductory resources on hermeneutics and biblical studies, the title for Wright’s volume should sound familiar. It is a recent installment in a series which began with Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart’s *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* (Zondervan, 1981). This series provides an overview for interpreting Scripture well, and Wright’s contribution to this series accomplishes this goal in at least three key ways.

First, the author writes like an effective communicator. He provides excellent illustrations and practical examples throughout the book for rather complex hermeneutical concepts. Second, Wright demonstrates how to preach from the Mosaic Law in a multifaceted manner. For instance, when discussing various reasons why God gave His Law to Israel (pp. 138-158), the writer notes that the Law should be understood from positive perspectives in light of God’s overall plan of redemption and not only in reference to Paul’s discussion of the Law as he contended with first-century Judaizers (pp. 138-141). Third, the author interacts with each major section of the Old Testament, that is, its narratives, the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings (pp. 85-283).

While this resource should prove helpful to students in light of the above points, there are still aspects of the book which could use additional clarification. To begin, since the title of the book mentions the words “preach and teach,” it would seem readers who are interested in hermeneutics and homiletics could expect clarity on both of these fronts. However, the structure of some of the sample sermons may be confusing to readers focused on homiletics in particular.

For example, Wright’s first sample outline focuses on Genesis 22:1-19, and his sermon unpacks this text with a brief discussion of verses 1, 2, 5-8, 9-10, 11-14, and 15-18 (pp. 134-136). So the flow of thought in his sermon aligns with the flow of thought in the focal passage. However, the next sermon outline is taken from Genesis 18:19-21. Yet, Wright’s text selection only deals with a portion of its larger context and covers verse 21 first, verse 18 second, and verse 19 third (pp. 159). While only three of Wright’s nine outlines show a lack of alignment in this way, this nevertheless accounts for a third of the outlines in the book, and since the book’s title mentions preaching, additional clarity on this point would be helpful.

Lastly, Wright appears to take a special interest in Old Testament narratives, and he makes great points in this section of his work (pp. 87-133). Among the various nuances related to this topic, he emphasizes how biblical narratives should not be severed from the overall biblical story line of redemption in order to be presented as isolated stories about moral principles or deeper spiritual insights. Rather, the

connection of Old Testament stories to their larger contexts should remain in clear view (pp. 119-133). Yet, the proverbial baby may get thrown out with the bath water because one has to wonder if this point is over emphasized at times, especially when Wright and the biblical text seem to demonstrate how Old Testament narratives teach various principles in addition to their main theological thrusts.

For instance, Wright explains, "Many of the single stories and longer narratives in the Old Testament show what it means to hear God's promise and respond to it...So, at one level, they point to the trust and obedience of human characters. But more importantly, they point to the faithfulness of God. God can work through even the most difficult or dangerous circumstances (think of Joseph)" (p. 113). While the author provides an excellent emphasis on God's faithfulness in the biblical narratives, he nevertheless appears to acknowledge that these stories also provide illustrations of principles for obedience and faithfulness and how they can apply today.

Also, it seems the biblical text recognizes how scriptural narratives teach God's truth in a variety of ways. For instance, in Joshua 22:13-20 some Israelites conclude their thoughts in this passage with an articulation of a theological principle they learned from a previous narrative event in the nation's recent history, specifically, the sin of Achan (Joshua 6-7). Obviously, the Israelites learned from this narrative that when one person in the covenant community sins, there is collateral damage. Additionally, in 1 Corinthians 10:6-13 Paul refers to several Old Testament events to challenge the Corinthians to avoid various types of sin and temptation. Twice in this passage Paul teaches that these Old Testament stories are examples for New Testament Christians to take to heart in their sanctification process. Thus, the Old Testament narratives supply teaching about God's overall story of redemption as well as valid principles and application points for contemporary Christians.

In fact, Keller emphasizes a related point in his *Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism* (Viking, 2015). He contends, "In some Bible passages it is not easy to discern one clear central idea. This is especially true in narratives" (p. 43). While Keller does not completely dismiss the idea of a central theme for biblical texts, he nevertheless urges expositors to consider how "Not only the [biblical] author's major points but also his minor points should be attended to, since they are also from God" (p. 250). It would be helpful for Wright to include more clarity on this type of balanced view for preaching Old Testament stories as well.

Wright's work is an excellent hermeneutical resource for those who are beginning a serious study of the Old Testament, especially with a view to teaching it well in the church. He presents solid material in an accessible manner, and he provides direction to readers who wish to engage this information in a more technical fashion. However, readers who are primarily interested in the homiletics side of the title may not find as much help in Wright's book. For these students, a standard introduction to expository preaching should provide assistance such as Haddon Robinson's *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (Baker Academic, 2001) or

Tony Merida's *Faithful Preaching: Declaring Scripture with Responsibility, Passion, and Authenticity* (B&H Academic, 2009). A combination of Wright's hermeneutical insights coupled with Robinson's or Merida's homiletical insights should furnish learners with a great introduction to the areas of interpreting and communicating the Old Testament effectively.

Pete Charpentier
Grand Canyon University
Grand Canyon Theological Seminary, Phoenix, AZ

Anderson, Jonathan A., and William A. Dyrness. *Modern Art and the Life of a Culture: The Religious Impulses of Modernism*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2016, pp. 374, $24, paperback.

An Associate Professor of Art at Biola University, Jonathan A. Anderson is himself an artist and art critic. He has also afforded his artistic sensibilities to theological conversations, having coauthored the book *Renewing Christian Theology: Systematics for a Global Christianity* (Baylor University Press, 2014). William A. Dyrness is a respected scholar in the field of theology and the arts and has authored several books, including *Visual Faith: Art, Theology, and Worship in Dialogue* (Baker Academic, 2001), *Reformed Theology and Visual Culture: The Protestant Imagination from Calvin to Edwards* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), and *Poetic Theology: God and the Poetics of Everyday Life* (Eerdmans, 2011). Additionally, he is Fuller Theological Seminary's Professor of Theology and Culture. In *Modern Art and the Life of a Culture*, Anderson and Dyrness have combined their expertise to provide a treatment of modern art that is historically accurate, aesthetically conscientious, and theologically grounded.

Anderson and Dyrness wrote *Modern Art and the Life of a Culture* as a response to Hans Rookmaaker's influential book *Modern Art and the Death of a Culture* (InterVarsity Press, 1970), which has long served as a guide to culture and the arts for many evangelical Christians (pp. 9, 44). While the authors respected Rookmaaker's influence and insight (p. 69), they ultimately rejected Rookmaaker's suggestion that modern art predominantly sought to subvert religious belief; they argued instead that Christianity "continued to influence and constructively shape the development of the modernist avant-garde" and that "modernist artists were attempting to come to terms with (the meanings of) life in the age of modernity" (p. 10; see also p. 29). Thus, the authors contended that modern art—even that which is hostile toward organized religion—is profoundly spiritual and theological (pp. 41, 47). However, while Anderson and Dyrness sought to substantiate the important role of theology in modernism, they also avoided "Christianizing" art history to fit their narrative (p. 46), making clear that "to claim that religious traditions are alive and well in modern art would be claiming too much" (p. 41). Moreover, they acknowledged that

"antagonism toward Christianity certainly had its influence on the rise of modern art" (p. 90). Even still, Anderson and Dyrness dismissed the widely accepted narrative that "religion played almost no constructive role at all in the development of modern art" (p. 18), and they meticulously chronicled the interplay of religion and modern art within European and North American contexts.

The high value of *Modern Art and the Life of a Culture* should be apparent. While commentators such as Rookmaaker and Francis Schaeffer have tended to view modern art as being hostile toward religion (and in some cases, rightfully so), Anderson and Dyrness have successfully shown the prominent role that Christian theology played in the development, subject matter, and style of modern art. For instance, the authors convincingly demonstrated that Catholic revivals in France in the nineteenth century had a major impact on modern artists, suggesting that modernism and religion are not necessarily mutually exclusive and that the "language of [modern] art [could] express Christian themes" (p. 136; see also pp. 90, 101). The authors also defended abstract art, viewing it not necessarily as a rejection of the created order (as is often charged in evangelical circles) but rather as a recognition of divine transcendence that surpasses reason and representation (p. 196; see also p. 182); indeed, the authors espoused that American Protestantism's emphasis on personal experience and general revelation in nature "influenced the rise of abstract expressionism in North America" (p. 277).

Anderson and Dyrness brought credibility to their argument that theological questions played an important role in modern art by pointing to major figures within modernism, including Paul Gauguin, Vincent van Gogh, and Paul Cézanne (p. 44). Perhaps most interesting was the authors' treatment of Andy Warhol, who is probably best known for his depictions of Campbell's soup cans and of cultural icon Marilyn Monroe (pp. 314-15). While some critics have seen Warhol's work as a sign of art's demise, Anderson and Dyrness framed Warhol's work within the context of his Byzantine Catholic faith (though, to say the least, elements of Warhol's life and work would certainly seem to contradict that faith) (pp. 311, 314). As such, they interpreted Warhol's paintings as modern day *vanitas* still-life works, which "emphasize the fragility and delicacy of the world" (p. 319). They further asserted that Warhol's religious works (such as his *Last Suppers*), which on the surface may appear to be disrespectful to Christ/Christianity, are not "attacking religious belief but [are instead] 'labeling' one of the major modern obstacles to it [i.e., commercialism and consumerism]" (p. 324).

The breadth of scholarship in *Modern Art and the Life of a Culture* is tremendous. However, the book could have been further enriched by some reference to non-Western art. But because the book is largely a response to Rookmaaker, who dealt mostly with European and American art, this omission is forgivable to an extent. The authors themselves acknowledged this intentional limitation for the purposes of this book (pp. 12-13, 45), and they did include in their discussion some important and notable minority artists, such as Henry Ossawa Tanner (pp. 258-61). Still, their

exclusion of non-Western voices unnecessarily opens the authors up to criticism from the very artistic and academic circles with whom they are seeking to engage with this book. Moreover, if, as the authors admitted, "a variety of non-Western modernisms . . . have even stronger threads of religious and theological content [than those in the West]" (p. 45), the inclusion of non-European and non-American artists would have greatly bolstered the authors' arguments and further substantiated their critique of Rookmaaker.

Rookmaaker's book was important for its time, and Rookmaaker has greatly impacted a generation of evangelicals in regard to engagement with the arts. Anderson and Dyrness respected this contribution while also providing necessary rectification. They asserted that while evangelicals have tended to highlight the negative aspects of modern art (such as perceived hostility toward Christianity), believers have often ignored the positive components of Christian influence within modern art and the profoundly spiritual questions that arise within modernism. Therefore, this volume by Anderson and Dyrness is a crucial contribution to the field of theology and the arts and is highly recommended for students of this discipline. Students would also do well to read Peter Gay's *Modernism: The Lure of Heresy from Baudelaire to Beckett and Beyond* (W. W. Norton & Company, 2008) and James Elkins's *On the Strange Place of Religion in Contemporary Art* (Routledge, 2004) to round out their understanding of religion in relation to modern art.

Richard H. Stark, III
Berea First Baptist Church, Greenville, SC

Martens, Paul. *Reading Kierkegaard I: Fear and Trembling.* Cascade Companions. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2017, pp. 103, $18, paperback.

Paul Martens is associate professor in the department of religion at Baylor University, which, along with Martens, also employs C. Stephen Evans (department of philosophy) and Jan Evans (department of Spanish), making Baylor home to Kierkegaard scholars in three different departments and a recent hub of Kierkegaard scholarship, especially as Kierkegaards pertains to Christian Ethics. Martens has two other introductory books on Kierkegaard forthcoming, one on *Works of Love* in the same Cascade Companions series as *Reading Kierkegaard I* (hereafter, *RKI*), and another, presumably more general introduction to Kierkegaard in Eerdmans' Intervention series.

RKI, as its subtitle suggests, and as per the mission statement of the Cascade Companions series within which it is found, is an introduction to the writing of Kierkegaard for the non-specialist. It differs from other books in the series, however, by working as an introduction to one non-biblical book as opposed to the corpus of a Christian thinker. As such, it works like a short commentary on *Fear and Trembling* (hereafter *F/T*) with a brief introduction and conclusion that offer some ideas as to

how understanding *F/T* might aid one in his or her reading of Kierkegaard's other early pseudonymous works.

After a brief introduction to Kierkegaard's life and works in general and how *F/T* fits within his oeuvre, Martens organizes the rest of his book to follow *F/T*. Each chapter after the introduction of *RKI* bears the name of the corresponding chapter in *F/T* as translated by Sylvia Walsh in the 2006 Cambridge University Press edition. That is, *RKI*'s second chapter is titled "Tuning Up," Walsh's English translation of the original Latin title "Exordium." Quotations of *F/T* are also taken from the Walsh translation, but Martens cites page numbers for both the Walsh translation and the more familiar Hong/Hong translation from Princeton University Press.

Each chapter is not merely a summation of the corresponding chapter from *F/T* but offers a strategy for understanding that section of Kierkegaard's notoriously difficult text. In order to make for the simplest of readings, Martens relies entirely on his own interpretation of Kierkegaard/de Silentio, foregoing any other scholars' receptions of the text. The footnotes refer, with only a very few exceptions, to Kierkegaard's corpus, the Bible, and Hegel.

The end product of *RKI* is a distillation of *F/T* through the eyes of Martens, who views *F/T* as fitting within Kierkegaard's larger program *vis-a-vis* the Danish Church in the mid-19th century and the paradoxical nature of true faith. The faith journey, through which Kierkegaard tried to lead people ironically, requires a sensitive commentator, aware of the importance of each step in *F/T*'s analysis of the testing of Abraham's faith. Thus, Martens, despite showing a developed thesis of the meaning of *F/T*, attempts to stay somewhat out of the way, answering the reader's inevitable questions of the source material mainly as it unfolds in the given chapter of *F/T*. I should reiterate this last point: *RKI* is most certainly not meant to be read in place of *F/T* but in conjunction with it.

Such a conflict in purpose and actual practice is a likely inevitable problem, especially for such a mysterious book as *F/T*. It is hardly Martens' fault if readers neglect the source material for his more easily digestible commentary. Nevertheless, it is a shame. As I was reading through *RKI* I reread *F/T* and would find myself spellbound again by di Silentio's juxtaposed retellings of Abraham's journey to Mount Moriah. Are they troublingly opaque? Yes, of course they are. But so is the biblical source material. Kierkegaard understood the moral challenge of the *Akadah* and so did not attempt to make it less so in his interpretation. Rather, *F/T* is a kerygmatic application for the present age that updates Abraham without making him too palatable. An easy application that explained everything would fall into the trap of the dominant Christendom of the era. And yet, no one can really blame Martens for attempting to "explain" Kierkegaard. *RKI* is not to *F/T* as *F/T* is to Abraham and Martens' explains as much, admitting that "in no way do [his] comments capture the depth of *de silentio*'s poetic genius on display" (12). Attempting to match the poetry of *F/T* would, in fact, be counterproductive for a book in the Cascade Companion

series, which intends to introduce non-specialist readers to important subjects in the Christian tradition. As such, *RKI* succeeds, as disappointing as it may seem at first to read next to the opaque (in style) and dark (in subject matter) but beautiful *F/T*.

Clarity, not opacity, should be the goal of a commentary or introduction such as *RKI*, and one way to aid in clarifying the source material is to include well organized appendices, which *RKI* has. Along with a general index and bibliography, Martens includes a brief bibliography of suggested reading for those interested in further engagement with *F/T*, along with a timeline of Kierkegaard's authorship from 1841-46 as a helpful reference. Also helpful is a 10-page glossary (which makes up about 10% of the book as a whole). Included in the glossary are people such as Kant, Regine Olsen, and Aristotle, movements like Stoicism and Pietism, concepts such as absurd and eternity, and biblical and classical characters such as Jephthah and Agamemnon. Strangely absent, however, are other worthy concepts relative to Kierkegaard's writing such as Socrates, one of the models for Kierkegaard's ironic rhetoric, and subjectivity, a right tricky subject highly relevant to Kierkegaard's first authorship.

Nevertheless, *RKI* is a worthy introduction to the difficult *Fear and Trembling* and Kierkegaard's pseudonymous authorship as a whole. Its brevity (and price) will likely persuade the curious but unitiated to dig into *F/T* in a way that is accessible and not obtrusive so that the reader can enjoy the source material for itself without being scared away by the meandering and often confusing *Fear and Trembling*.

Andrew Zack Lewis
Regent College

Seitz, Christopher R. *Joel.* The International Theological Commentary. New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016, xii + 239 pp., $94.00, hardback.

Joel is the third publication in T&T Clark's new International Theological Commentary series. The series evidences the concerns and hermeneutical methods of the Theological Interpretation of Scripture "movement" (pp. ix–x). Christopher Seitz has written extensively on the topic of theological hermeneutics and the Old Testament prophets, most relatedly, his *Prophecy and Hermeneutics*. This commentary on Joel affords him the opportunity to apply his methodology to an entire biblical book. Seitz is a senior research professor at Wycliffe College, Toronto and currently serves as the editor of *Studies in Theological Interpretation*, Baker Academic.

Joel is comprised of two equal-length parts. The first contains several chapters discussing introductory issues. With newer redaction theories of the minor prophets in view, Seitz argues for the literary integrity of the final form of Joel (p. 6, see p. 62 for arguments against the older redaction theories of Duhm). He favors a canonical reading of Joel which spots intertextuality throughout the book of the Twelve, that is, how Joel has been influenced and how Joel influences a reading of the other minor prophets (p. 23). Seitz, however, does not overlook diachronic issues, and understands

Joel to be a late work drawing upon earlier prophetic themes (p. 28). Thus, the post-exilic composition of Joel not only re-signifies earlier Scripture but, by virtue of the canonical order, it becomes the lens through which the following (historically earlier) books of the Twelve are to be read (p. 21). Specifically, Joel "has been composed to respond to the scenario set out at Hosea's conclusion" (p. 55). Additionally, it is also an *historical* phenomenon that the final literary product of Joel is intentionally de-historicized and anonymous. Seitz argues that this is intentional so that Joel's message can move "through time" (pp. 51, 114) with ongoing significance.

The second section of the book is the commentary proper. It begins with providing the New Revised Standard Version translation of Joel for reference. Seitz divides up his commentary into (i) Solemn Opening: 1.1–4, (ii) Part One- The Day of the LORD Upon Israel: 1.5–20, (iii) Part Two- The Unfolding Day of the LORD: 2.1–27, (iv) Part Three- Finale: 2:28–3:21.

By inductive study of Joel, Seitz redefines prophecy in a way that might not at first be expected. He argues that the author of Joel is a literary artist drawing upon earlier Scripture more than a prophetic preacher like, say, Amos might have been. This is a one of the highlights of the commentary, namely the intertextual connections made by Joel noted by Seitz. These include the reference to the Exodus through a locust plague (p. 125), the description of the day of the Lord is viewed as "un-creation" (p. 151), the evocation of Deuteronomy in the call to return to the Lord with all your heart (p. 162), the pouring out of the Spirit hearkening back to Numbers 11 (p. 197) and the fountains flowing out of the restored Zion suggest the rivers flowing from Eden (p. 221). Seitz, therefore, understands Joel the "prophet" as an interpreter of Israel's Scripture rather than one receiving direct revelation from God.

It is important for Seitz to view Joel as a post-exilic book to establish authorial intentionality in Joel's allusions to earlier Scripture. For example, in 2:32, Joel is understood to be citing Obadiah 17 (p. 192). However, when Seitz discusses the relationship between Jonah—understood also to be a late post-exilic work—and Joel he concludes that determining the "absolute sequence of dependence" has "limited value" (p. 175). Seitz throughout seems to advocate a canonical intertextual reading based on authorial intention. Thus, it is unclear why he states establishing the direction of dependence between Jonah and Joel, albeit difficult, has limited value given two almost certain instances of literary dependence (2:13 and 2:14 with Jonah 4:2 and 3:9).

While Seitz does not overlook the effect of the canonical position of Joel on reading the minor prophets, he prefers to understand Joel as an "organic conception" without secondary editors (p. 185). Thus, in his view, there would be no place for a canonical redactor or final editor of a "Book of the Twelve" who, for example, might have used *Stichwort* to link the books together. And so, for example he disagrees with Nolgaski who reads "this" in Joel 1:2 an anaphoric, referring to the end of Hosea (pp. 46, 116). Moreover, he argues that the "individuality" of the books of the Twelve

should be maintained, and so Amos 9:13 and Joel 3:18 should not be read together within the Twelve, but within their respective books (p. 213, fn. 40). This outlook is refreshing in the current milieu of scholarship which largely view the minor prophets to have been redacted as one book—The Book of the Twelve. Interpreters, naturally thus, look for "redactorial" intention across the *one* Book of the Twelve which results in flattening out the unique contribution of each minor prophet—something Seitz avoided in this commentary.

Sadly, the book seems poorly edited with several errors. For example, "2011" should read 2009 (p. 5, fn. 4), "Joel" should read Amos (p. 10), "Micah" should read Jonah (p. 15), and "Zephaniah" should read Joel (p. 201). The Hebrew font used appears to be SBL, but on occasion an irregular font is used (pp. 164, 166 etc.) and at times the spacing between Hebrew words is not kept (pp. 148, 226). Moreover, English versification of Joel is used, but at times, without explanation or any self-evident reason, the Hebrew versification is used, and at times both are used confusingly on the same page (pp. 130, 201).

The best example of theological interpretation comes at the close of the book. Throughout, Seitz does not understand the presence of "eschatology" to be a late addition, but rather it is the theological accomplishment of Joel to display eschatology at work in the present time. This phenomenon could be described as "already-not-yet" within the Old Testament itself. Though he does not use this term, Seitz notes the similarity between Joel and the Gospel's presentation of eschatology:

> In something of the same manner, the synoptic Gospels all describe the final day of the LORD, not as the last word of their respective literary witnesses, but prior to the passion narratives which take up where they leave off (Matt. 24; Mk. 13; Lk. 21). Abandonment, betrayal, tribulation, the wracking of creation, national enmity – all these mark the end times. But, equally, they constitute the conditions that One Cross and One Lord embody at the middle of time. Inside an act in the middle of time, the end times are played out in judgement by the Lord of time and life upon the Lord of life and time. (p. 226)

Joel is a welcomed addition to the commentaries on Joel. It is unique in that, though a commentary proper, it is also integrated with extensive engagement with modern scholarship of the minor prophets. Given the importance and debate over of the book of Joel in modern redaction theories, it would have appeared a grand omission had Seitz not engaged in the discussion in this commentary. However, given the preface to the series that the commentaries will glean from "classical and modern commentary" showing "doctrinal development", will be "(a)lert to tendencies toward atomism, historicism and scepticism" and will also address "contemporary questions" (pp. ix–x), the commentary falls short. There is not the level of engagement with classical commentaries, ecclesial tradition, doctrinal developments and contemporary applicability one would expect from a title in this series. This is not a critique of

the content of the commentary, but rather a misleading title. That minor critique notwithstanding, serious students of Joel cannot afford to overlook this valuable new resource.

Jonathan Atkinson
Union School of Theology, Wales

Strauss, Mark L. *The Biblical Greek Companion for Bible Software Users*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016, pp. 112, $18.99, paperback.

Mark Strauss (PhD, Aberdeen) is professor of New Testament at Bethel Seminary (San Diego). He has written extensively in New Testament studies, translation, hermeneutics, and application. His books include *The Davidic Messiah in Luke-Acts*; *Four Portraits, One Jesus: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels*; *How to Read the Bible in Changing Times*: *Understanding and Applying God's Word Today*, and *Mark* in the Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. His *Biblical Greek Companion for Bible Software Users* is a useful resource created to help pastors, teachers, and students engage the original languages.

Bible software programs have revolutionized the way students of the Bible access, study, and engage the Scriptures. They have also revolutionized the way schools are teaching the biblical languages. Many schools have modified language tracks, teaching the biblical languages while assuming the assistance of such programs. These courses or tracks do not expect memorization and mastery of forms and vocabulary because the information is readily available with a click through programs such as *Logos*, *BibleWorks*, and *Accordance*. It is for this new context that Strauss makes this contribution.

This *companion* is a tool for students and pastors providing quick-reference and user-friendly explanations of the grammatical information encountered when using Bible software programs. The book arranges its topics alphabetically and provides concise explanations of grammatical terms. Each entry covers the grammatical information provided by the Bible software programs in a concise two-page explanation of forms, primary functions, and exegetical insights. The exegetical insights provide an example of how the grammar is relevant to interpretation.

The book targets a few different categories of pastors, teachers, and students. These include those who have learned the languages in the past but struggle to use them consistently because of the demands of ministry. The book also targets students who are currently engaged in language courses, students who are in a program that does not require them to master the languages, and students who have not had the opportunity to learn the languages formally but want to gain deeper insight for their own studies.

As described above, the book treats grammatical terms alphabetically like a lexicon or dictionary (from Accusative to Vocative). Three additional appendices

address less interpretively significant matters such as accents, breathing marks, pronunciation, and punctuation. In terms of strengths, Strauss has produced a very useful tool. Its simplicity and concise explanations provide for Greek readers what Strunk and White's *Elements of Style* provides for English writers. Pastors and Bible students would do well to have it within arm's reach. Bible Software users and students should use it as a go-to-resource for quick answers to grammatical questions they encounter in the work of translation and interpretation.

The exegetical insights provide helpful examples to highlight interpretive significance and model exegetical decision-making. For example, Strauss' exegetical insight for the neuter gender clarifies the relationship between the masculine pronoun, *ekeinos,* and the neuter noun, *pneuma* (Spirit) in John 16:13. He provides a reasonable pause for the interpreter who sees grammatical evidence of Trinitarian personhood by pointing to the masculine antecedent, *paraklētos*, in 16:7 (p. 51). Another example is his insight for Ephesians 2:8 under the entry for the feminine gender. He helps the interpreter reason through the interpretive options and illustrates how gender is key to its interpretation (p. 31). One of my favorite exegetical insights came unexpectedly in his explanation of interjections. Here he offers examples of the challenges faced by translators and reason students must slow down when translating even seemingly insignificant parts of speech (p. 45).

Most of what I offer as critique is admittedly nit picking. However, the book's primary advantage (i.e., its conciseness) also gives occasion to its primary challenge. For example, in his exegetical insight for the future tense, he gives an example of the imperatival future. In it, he claims this use of the future "provides a more solemn tone than a simple imperative" (p. 33). However, there is not sufficient explanation why this is so. Additionally, the book's conciseness hurts the explanations of grammatical functions and certain structural indicators at times. For example, when explaining the three different uses of the adjective (i.e., attributive, substantive, and predicative), there is no explanation of the structural clues one may use to determine which to use in translation (pp. 14-15). The same is true for his explanation of infinitives and their use with articles and prepositions. Space does not allow an explanation for how articles and prepositions work with the infinitive (pp. 42-43).

Overall, Strauss has produced a very useful tool, and it expands Zondervan's many excellent resources for students of biblical language. This tool is worth having within arm's reach for pastors, teachers, and students learning Greek, coming back to Greek, or still working to towards fluency. For those schools and seminaries offering language courses or tracks that lean heavily on any of the Bible software programs, this book should be considered as part of the required or recommended resources. However, Strauss' book will not be as helpful for the student without history with Greek or without a more complete grammar also on her or his shelf. This tool serves well to jog one's memory but not to instruct the completely uninitiated; there is simply not enough detail and context to be useful for one untrained in Greek or biblical

interpretation. Of course, this should not be taken as a critique since Strauss did not intend to provide a comprehensive grammar. Overall, I applaud and thank Professor Strauss and Zondervan for providing another great language tool.

Brett A. Berger
Grand Canyon University

Van Pelt, Miles V., ed. *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the Old Testament: The Gospel Promised*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016, pp. 601, $50.00, hardback.

A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the Old Testament and its New Testament counterpart are projects undertaken by the faculty, both current and past, of Reformed Theological Seminary (RTS). The project was dedicated in honor of the seminary's fiftieth anniversary. Miles Van Pelt edited the Old Testament volume and wrote both the introduction and the chapter on the Song of Songs.

Whereas most introductions to the Old Testament discuss the historical-critical issues of each book, these issues have only a minor role in *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the Old Testament*. Instead, the book offers an introduction to the theological themes contained within each book of the Old Testament. After an initial section discussion on the structure and message of the Old Testament, the book dedicates a chapter to each of the books in the Old Testament as they appear in the Hebrew Bible. Each chapter is divided into sections labeled "Background Issues," "Structure and Outline," "Message and Theology," and "Approaching the New Testament." The "Message and Theology" sections make up the bulk of each chapter.

The book's main strength is the greater emphasis placed upon the theological message of each book compared to most other Old Testament introductions. The authors never diminish the importance of the historical-critical issues contained in most introductions, yet *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the Old Testament* contains more extensive discussions of the theological message of each biblical book. The decision to focus on the theological message of each book will provide a helpful framework to guide students and pastors studying any Old Testament book.

In addition to a helpful emphasis on theology, each author brings their own specialties to their contribution. For example, some contributors develop their discussions against the backdrop of other ANE cultures, while others focus upon the literary features of the biblical text. Since this is the case, however, readers will likely find some chapters more helpful than others, depending upon their own preferences.

Although the theological focus of this book will provide readers with a unique volume of Old Testament introduction, some elements of the book hinder it from being as helpful as it could be. First, the books are mainly approached as isolated units rather than as parts of an integrated whole. In the Introduction, Van Pelt attempts to demonstrate how each Old Testament book fits together, but this emphasis is

absent in many of the chapters featuring the individual books of the Old Testament. Furthermore, there is no attempt to trace specific themes, such as God's presence, covenant, or sacrifice as they are developed throughout the Old Testament. Each book is essentially treated in isolation from the other books.

Second, the authors approach their tasks with a variety of methodologies, which are sometimes incompatible. For example, Van Pelt's introduction highlights the importance of the Hebrew arrangement of the Old Testament canon (p. 25). In this arrangement, the twelve Minor Prophets are typically regarded as a single work called The Book of the Twelve. Yet Timmer, in his chapter on The Twelve, asserts that this approach neglects the individual nature of each book and that the books should be studied separately (p. 326). He discusses theological themes which appear within The Twelve, but he clearly thinks this practice contains several pitfalls and the manner in which he discusses the themes could be used to discuss the connections these books have in common within any biblical book, not just among The Twelve. The Hebrew arrangement also places Ruth after Proverbs, but Yeo's chapter on Ruth only passingly refers to this arrangement and discredits its helpfulness (p. 404). Yeo is much more concerned with reading Ruth within the context of Judges and 1 Samuel (pp. 401–403), the arrangement found in modern Bibles, than he is the Hebrew arrangement which Van Pelt develops within the introduction.

Third, in addition to methodological variety, each author seems to have a unique conception of their assignment, and they approach their task in a wide variety of ways. Currid, the author of the chapters on Genesis and Exodus, frequently discusses the theology of these books against a historical reconstruction of the beliefs of other ANE cultures. Yet, McKelvey, the author of the Leviticus chapter, makes no use of ANE material and attempts to describe the major theological themes appearing within the text of Leviticus. Glodo, the author of the Numbers chapter, differs from Currid and McKelvey by attempting to give a theological summary of each section of Numbers. Redd, the author of the Deuteronomy chapter, understood the "Approaching the New Testament" section very differently from each of the previous authors. He discusses the importance of Deuteronomy within the Pentateuch, the Former Prophets, the Latter Prophets, and finally the New Testament (pp. 152–157). Thus, even among the four authors who wrote chapters on the Pentateuch, their approaches to biblical theology differ widely, and they understood the goals of each section within their chapters very differently. This wide variety of approaches is typical for the rest of the book and does not allow for a unified product to emerge.

These difficulties perhaps stem from the absence of a definition of "biblical theology" at the outset of the book. Although a definition of biblical theology may seem obvious to some, when examining various works claiming to discuss biblical (or New or Old Testament) theology, it is apparent that biblical theology is understood in a wide variety of ways. Sometimes these differences in how biblical theology is conceived stem from significant hermeneutical differences among authors. At this

point, one cannot simply label a work as "biblical theology" and assume that this will mean the same thing to every reader or even to every contributor even if they all have connections to an institution such as RTS. Since this is the case, a book that attempts to outline the theology of each Old Testament book without a definition of biblical theology will suffer from multiple approaches and lack the uniformity a reader may expect when first encountering the book. Perhaps if a definition of biblical theology had been proposed and the authors had attempted to integrate their contributions more, the difficulties noted in this review could have been resolved.

As noted above, these deficiencies limit the usefulness of *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the Old Testament*. The book does not provide the reader with an integrated theology of the entire Old Testament but instead a medium-length introduction to the theological contents of each book of the Old Testament. The chapters are more extensive than entries typically found in Bible dictionaries and under the "theology" section of most commentary introductions yet briefer than monographs discussing theological issues of a specific book. This allows the book to fill a gap between these two types of resources, which should be beneficial to many seminary students and pastors. Unfortunately, since there is little to tie the chapters together other than a very general structural outline, it is difficult to recommend this book over other similar works such as *Theological Interpretation of the Old Testament* edited by Vanhoozer. Only the student's preference for a particular author will help him or her determine which book to consult.

Casey K. Croy
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY

Geiger, Eric and Kevin Peck; *Designed to Lead: The Church and Leadership Development*. Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2016, pp. 234, $22.99, hardback.

Eric Geiger is a vice president of the Resources Division at LifeWay and a pastor of a local church in Tennessee. He has a doctorate in leadership from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and has authored or coauthored several books including the best-selling church leadership book, *Simple Church*. Kevin Peck, also with a doctorate in leadership from Southern Seminary, is the lead pastor at The Austin Stone Community Church in Texas. Peck also serves as the Director for Emerging Regions for the Acts 29 Network.

The authors open *Designed to Lead* by engaging this question: "Where is the leadership locus in your community?" and they seek to show that the local church ought to be a primary leadership locus in every community (p. 1). Their conviction is that the church is particularly commissioned and equipped to call and develop leaders in all spheres of life. The way that churches can systematically see that leaders are developed is by establishing constructs in the context of a leadership culture that

grows out of a strong conviction that all people are called to leadership. It is along those lines that the book is divided into three sections: conviction, culture, and constructs.

Part one lays the foundation for a biblical and theological conviction for leadership development in the context of the local church. They ground their convictions in frequent exegeses of Scripture, affirmations of the priesthood of all believers and the *imago Dei*, and the counter-cultural nature of the Kingdom of God. They insist that apart from a robust biblical and theological conviction for leadership development, the congregation will not sense the urgency and empowerment that the Bible describes.

The second section defines church culture and describes how it is formed and changed. Geiger and Peck define culture, not as the "vibe" of a church, but as "what we truly believe and value over a sustained period of time" (p. 129). They show that the stated beliefs of a church do not necessarily find expression in behavior, and that managing the culture of a church is a function of the pastors (p. 130). Therefore, one of the roles of pastors in the church is to guide the "whole church to purity in doctrine and in deed" (p. 131). To do this, leaders must influence the foundational beliefs of a church and create avenues for their expression (p. 141).

The final section on constructs is likely what most readers are seeking when they pick up the book. The authors realize this and offer a thoughtful encouragement not to implement leadership constructs without first laying the groundwork of biblical convictions and establishing a culture that is prepared to embrace the construct. They advocate two constructs: the leadership pipeline and the leadership pathway (p. 186). The leadership pipeline is a big-picture layout of leadership roles focusing on the congregation as a whole, and a leadership pathway is a description of role-specific competencies for each individual to pursue.

The book has much to commend. The authors consistently call the readers back to the centrality of the gospel for the life and ministry of the church and take frequent stops to remind the reader that leadership development is not the primary function of the church—worshiping the Triune God is primary. Another strength of the book is how the authors envision that the leaders developed by the church are called to bless and serve and influence spheres of life beyond the church's doors. They speak often of this calling, stating that "up to 70 percent of leadership is completely transferable to any domain" (p. 177).

I believe the authors achieve their purposes for the book in chapter 8 entitled "Pipelines and Pathways." This single chapter contains the practical implementation of their argument. They explain that the church must do more than envision leadership and discipleship; the church "must also provide steps or opportunities for people to mature and develop as leaders" (p. 181). The authors are effective in clearly presenting a baseline plan for the implementation of leadership constructs. One principle that is emphasized is the necessity of written competencies that pastors

desire to see developed in individuals in ministry positions. It is important that each level of leadership has competencies that are specific to that role (p. 195). This principle alone could impact the leadership culture of a church because each person has clarity regarding responsibilities and has a defined path for growth.

However, the book is not without its weaknesses, perhaps the chief being the confusing distinction between how the authors use the terms *leadership* and *discipleship*. Early in the book they state, "If you are His, you are designed to lead" (p. 4), but it is not until chapter seven that they describe the difference between general discipleship and leadership development. To be fair, their distinction is legitimate, for they write that leadership development is a subset of discipleship, or "advanced discipleship" (p. 153). This lack of clarity on the front end leaves the reader confused throughout most of the book as to what kind of leadership is being advocated and for which members of the congregation.

The authors spend the first three-quarters of the book laying the theological and ecclesiological foundations for implementing leadership development constructs; however, when the reader finally gets to the constructs section, there is a desire for more—more application, more troubleshooting, more examples. Beyond that, the reader wonders how these forms of constructs avoid painting the picture of the church as a corporation rather than the church as a body (1 Corinthians 12:27). The authors recognize this tension: "You don't want to send the signal that success is progression through the pipeline. The goal of the pipeline is development, not progression" (p. 197). Nevertheless, church leaders seeking to implement Geiger and Peck's model will have to wrestle with this "climbing the corporate ladder" mentality.

From start to finish, the book is a practical and accessible tool for helping men and women grow in leadership ability both inside and outside the church. This book is a welcome contribution to the field of church leadership because it advocates a theologically grounded construct for leadership development. There is a fear that leadership books simply offer another gimmicky framework that can work for a short time, only to be replaced by the next trend in leadership education—everybody becomes confused, and perhaps cynical. This is not that sort of book. This book is written by pastors with significant influence and experience in the development of leaders, and it is intended to serve as a guide for other pastors to incorporate the constructs in their own churches. Geiger and Peck succeed in creating an accessible entry point into the area of leadership and coaching which I expect pastors and church leaders will read and discuss together. Church leaders and students from all denominations ought to read and engage with this book because of its high esteem of the local church for developing leaders who will serve both within the church and without.

Garrett Walden
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY

Anderson, Garwood P. *Paul's New Perspective: Charting a Soteriological Journey.* Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Academic, 2016, pp. 439, $45, hardback.

Garwood Anderson, professor of New Testament and Greek at Nashotah House Theological Seminary, makes a strong case for what other scholars have suspected—namely, that Paul's own perspective on salvation expanded as evidenced by differences between his earlier and later letters. This is why the so-called "new perspective on Paul," championed by E. P. Sanders, James D. G. Dunn, and N. T. Wright, makes good sense of Galatians, but the old Lutheran reading still has explanatory power for Romans and Philippians (pp. 12-13). "The argument of this book insists that both 'camps' are right, but not all the time" (p. 5). The clever title, *Paul's New Perspective,* refers to the so-called old perspective on Paul that comes late in his writing. But Anderson suggests that the motif and mystery of union with Christ is large enough to encompass the development.

The argument moves in three stages. Chapters 1—3 contextualize the debate for the reader. Anderson acknowledges not being a "Pauline specialist," (VIV), but he engages a large swath of the secondary literature. He also focuses on three passages that do not fit entirely into either view: Philippians 3:1—22, Romans 3:21—4:8, and Ephesians 2:1-22. (Unlike some studies, he includes the whole Pauline corpus. Even if Ephesians, Colossians, and the Pastorals were not written by the apostle, they reflect the trajectory of his thought.)

Chapters four and five place Paul's letters in chronological order. Anderson opts for the early dating and southern hypothesis for Galatians. Then follow the letters to the Thessalonians, Corinthians, Romans, and Philippians. He accepts Philemon, Ephesians, Colossians, and the Pastorals as Pauline, although they are more difficult to place in Paul's ministry (especially as related in Acts). The thirteen letters of the Pauline corpus were dispatched over a fifteen year (or so) process. This would allow space for Paul to develop (refine, unpack) his understanding of the gospel.

Chapters six through eight are exegetical. The New Perspective on Paul helpfully contextualized Paul's language "works of the law" in Galatians (2:16; 3:2, 5, 10) to refer to boundary markers separating Jews and Gentiles like circumcision and the festal (Sabbath) calendar. The Galatians were not trying to earn their way to heaven, but to be found acceptable by influential, Jewish teachers. However, this background is too narrow for "works" at Ephesians 2:9. Already in the expansive argument of Romans we see a universalizing of the problem of approaching salvation as a wage (4:4-5). Participation in Christ is a "red thread," but we see a developing interest for even cosmic reconciliation (Rom 8:18-30; Col 1:15-20).

I recommend the same chronological order to my students and am sympathetic to his conclusions, especially his emphasis on union with Christ and the need for interpersonal and cosmic reconciliation, which the church and the rest of creation are

groaning after. Justification is part of Paul's toolkit for constructing his soteriological vision, but it is not the center. My esteemed professor Ralph P. Martin (1925 – 2013) insisted reconciliation was a better core.

For those who hold a high view of Scripture, there may be value in considering development in Paul's thought. In his earlier letters, the apostle focuses on the imminent return of Christ: "*we* who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together" with those who died but Jesus resurrected (1 Thess 4:17 ESV, emphasis added). But in his later correspondences, Paul looks forward to departing, a euphemism for death, and being with Christ (Phil 1:23). Presumably, in light of his imminent martyrdom, the apostle was resolved that Christ might come after his generation. In 1 Corinthians, Paul counsels against remarriage for the widowed (7:26-27). However, in 1 Timothy he recommends the opposite: "I would have younger widows marry . . ." (5:14 ESV). Apparently, there were too many widows being financially supported by the church in Ephesus, and so the list had to be shortened. These, I suggest, are not contradictions, but reflect the shifting circumstances of Paul's life and ministry.

Anderson, I believe, is partially correct when he insists that Paul's letters are "contextually determined" (p. 6). But we should note a Protestant bias here. The Christian tradition has viewed God as the ultimate author of Scripture. There is value in attempting to retrieve the intent of the human author, but we should recognize the challenge. Did Paul's thought develop, or did the rhetorical situation shift from having to defend himself against Pharisees in his earlier letters (see Acts 15:5), who were preoccupied with boundary markers, to the more universal problem of hubris in his Greco-Roman social world? Is human reasoning the primary variable, or is Paul's spirit ultimately sounding off the mind of Christ?

The idea of development in Paul's letters is a very old debate. I doubt *Paul's New Perspective* will settle the matter, but I hope it becomes a significant conversation partner. It would serve well in a master's level course on Pauline soteriology.

John DelHousaye
Phoenix Seminary, Phoenix, AZ

Gilmour, Rachelle. *Juxtaposition and the Elisha Cycle*. LBHOTS 594. New York/London: Bloomsbury, 2015, pp. 250, $110, cloth ($26, e-book).

Rachelle Gilmour is Lecturer in Biblical Studies at the Broken Bay Institute in Sydney. She earned her Ph.D. in Hebrew Bible from the University of Sydney and spent time at both the Hebrew University and University of Edinburgh as a postdoctoral fellow. During her time at the Hebrew University, she wrote the monograph *Juxtaposition and the Elisha Cycle*. Gilmour has written broadly regarding literary analysis in the Former Prophets, with most of her work focused specifically in Samuel and Kings.

Gilmour contends that a gaping hole exists in Old Testament literary critical studies around what she considers to be an essential tool of the writers of the Hebrew

Bible, namely, juxtaposition. Juxtaposition is the deliberate, redactional selection and arrangement of scenes, episodes, and even whole narratives, next to other units with the intent to guide the reader to a different interpretation than one would discover if a unit was read independently. To correct this problem, Gilmour provides in this monograph a theoretical framework for interpreters of the Hebrew Bible to understand juxtaposition of narratives as a critical part of the hermeneutical task.

She arranges the book into three parts: methodology, application, and concluding remarks. In part A, Gilmour critiques both diachronic criticism's pragmatic explanation of juxtaposition as well as literary criticism's insufficient utilization of juxtaposition as a tool to explain the text only when contradictions of chronology or ideology exist in the text. Instead, she points to clear inner-biblical allusions, as well as 2nd Temple rabbinical hermeneutical practice, to show that juxtaposition is a legitimate and important hermeneutical lens for the writers of the Hebrew Bible. Thus, arrangement of the juxtaposed elements is itself a hermeneutical process that can change the interpretation of whole narratives. She maintains, "Attention to juxtaposition is not merely a method for explaining particular discontinuities in biblical narrative but is a principle of interpretation for all narrative" (p. 18).

After establishing her argument for the need of a proper framework for understanding and analyzing this phenomenon, Gilmour (following rabbinic tradition) suggests analyzing the two ways the writers of the Hebrew Bible utilized juxtaposition: chronological and non-chronological interpretation. Literary units that are primarily juxtaposed together based on chronological sequence build a plot that points the reader to interpret a cause-effect relationship, but they can also be juxtaposed for background information.

Gilmour applies Bakhtin's literary approach of Dialogism to non-chronological juxtaposition. Dialogism is truth expressed via multiple voices through interaction and discussion rather than by one person. Non-chronological units can be juxtaposed to create a dialogue between units of contradiction, corroboration, or question and answer. Since non-chronological units do not have a cause-effect relationship, the dialoguing connections between units must be found in repeated words or phrases, parallel plots and narrative analogy, or Mise-en-Abyme (a story embedded in the narrative that contains the plot of the larger narrative in microcosm). Finally, Gilmour clarifies how to discern continuity (chronological sequence) and discontinuity (non-chronological sequence) in the narrative.

After laying the foundations of her methodological framework, she applies this approach to the Elisha cycle in Part B. Gilmour assumes a putative redaction history, with two separate collections of Elisha stories with other smaller stories added after being brought together with the Elijah cycle, which "…will demonstrate how the interpretation of episodes can be transformed when placed in a new context, even if we are not able to describe with complete accuracy the process behind the formation of the Elisha cycle" (p. 73). Gilmour then proceeds episode by episode in the Elisha

cycle, starting in 1 King's 19:19-21, and compares the interpretation of each episode by itself, then when juxtaposed with the preceding passage, subsequent passage, and putative original position in pre-existing collections to demonstrate the significance of the author's choice in juxtaposing units.

In the final section, Part C, Gilmour concludes her monograph by applying the Bakhtinian criteria for dialoguing voices (corroboration, contradiction, and question and answer) to the task of the interpreter rather than the original author(s). Paying attention to juxtaposition as a hermeneutical lens helps explain the function of strange stories and details that, when read independently, seem irrelevant or inexplicably inappropriate (such as the episode of Elisha, the 42 boys and the mauling by bears). Additionally, an awareness of the intentionality of juxtaposition aids in identifying the focus of an episode and in clarifying ambiguous situations. With the Elisha cycle particularly, Gilmour demonstrates how utilizing this approach presents a fresh analysis of these narratives leading to a more complex and nuanced appreciation of Elisha, the Elijah cycle and Jehu narratives, as well as their placement and function in the book of Kings.

Juxtaposition and the Elisha Cycle is a helpful and badly needed resource for Old Testament literary criticism; yet more work remains to be done as Gilmour's work is only applied to the Elisha cycle. For those who have a working knowledge of Hebrew as well as an introductory level understanding of Old Testament literary criticism, Rachelle Gilmour's sections on a methodological framework for juxtaposition (Part A) and concluding remarks on its usefulness to biblical narrative (Part C) are critical and her argument needs to be considered. Many pastors and most lay leaders, however, will not find this book accessible, as its cost and subject matter might prove too esoteric to be immediately beneficial. This monograph is not a commentary-type resource on 2 Kings which most preachers or Sunday School leaders could reference in weekly preparation. Nevertheless, I recommend this resource to any biblical studies student who desires to either study the Elisha cycle specifically or the literary phenomena and hermeneutical strategy of juxtaposition generally.

Michael Prevett
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary

Schaeffer, Francis. *Joshua and the Flow of Biblical History.* Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2004, pp. 223, $19.99, paperback.

Francis Schaeffer was the founder and director of the L'Abri community in Switzerland. He became famous for his hospitality and intellectual discussions centering on the place of the historic truths of the Christian faith in the midst of a changing European worldview. He authored more than 20 books before his passing in 1984, including *Joshua and the Art of Biblical History,* reprinted in 2004.

Schaeffer's work is an attempt to discuss the major events and characters in the book of Joshua within the context of the larger biblical narrative. As a result, he begins his study with Joshua's place within the Pentateuch and the lessons he received at the feet of Moses (pp. 15-36). Then, he discusses some "changeless" factors of leadership that influenced Joshua's life (pp. 40-48). This pattern, consisting of highlighting passages from Joshua, making connections from Joshua into other biblical narratives (including, especially, New Testament ones) and discussion ethical or moral lessons learned from the story of Joshua continues, whether it be the idea of eating before the divine and its relationship to Communion (p. 10), the circumcision of the Israelites prior to the Jordan crossing and Paul's teaching on circumcised hearts (pp. 104-7), a comparison between Achan and Sapphira (pp. 123-4), a discussion on Caleb and his relevance to the fruit of the Spirit (pp. 168-170), or an analysis on how the division of the land points to the supremacy of Christ (pp. 173-8). Schaeffer focuses on the moral implications of Joshua's era and its biblical-theological consistency with the rest of the Scriptures. As a result, the book, while rigorous and filled with clear and precise thought, is not necessarily scholarly or heavily researched. This is not a fault with the book; Schaeffer's work deserves to be judged on how it met its intended aim, not on whether or not it meets its readers expectations of what that aim should be. Readers, however, should be aware that there is a minimum of reference to outside scholarship or engagement with the larger critical discussion surrounding ideas like biblical history or biblical theology.

When Schaeffer does discuss biblical history in an academic sense, it is often against an implied "liberal" opponent. As such, Schaeffer reasserts the foundational importance of propositional truths as a bedrock of faith (p. 82) and of salvation as an act of the will in the cognitive region of the mind (p. 86). He continually emphasizes the existence of a written, normative, canonical Pentateuch in Joshua's day (pp. 35, 172), going so far as to compare the Israelites in Joshua's time to "Bible-Believing Christians" (p. 38) since both groups are receivers of inspired books. Schaeffer expects his readers to share these presuppositions, only offering a few reasons why his conservative positions are the best conclusion, such as the "we" passages in Joshua 5 (p. 42).

Taken as an introduction to the biblical account of Joshua and its impact on the Christian life, this book is incredibly useful. When read as an Old Testament scholar would read a text on "biblical history," this volume seems to fall short in its use of precise terms and engagement with the wider scholarly conversation. Two examples of this practice should suffice.

The titular "Flow of History" in Schaeffer's meaning seems to be that "biblical events actually happened in space time." As Schaeffer discusses the events on Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim, he states that "space-time history had already begun to weave a web around this place" (p. 128). He reminds readers that Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Jesus, and even Justin Martyr encountered that place and brought various

revelations to God's people there. Similarly, Schaeffer posits that history is heading towards an end-point rather than engaged in a cyclical drift. (p. 174)

This approach seems very similar to the salvation-historical readings of the Old Testament (*heilsgeschichtliche).* Given such broad areas of agreement, one wonders why Schaeffer doesn't explicitly engage this school of thought, or even opposing schools of thought, such as a more Bultmannian approach to the text. For better or worse, Schaeffer is committed to building a literal, biblical case for his ethical and moral conclusions rather than in contributing to biblical scholarship in these areas.

Another important aspect of Schaeffer's conception of the biblical "flow" of history is that of continued disobedience to moral law. Schaeffer compares the condition of the ancient Israelites to that of rubbing one's hand against a rough, wooden board and coming away with splinters. In the same way, when either the ancient Israelites or modern persons act against the grain of how God set up the universe, there are consequences to those actions. (pp. 140-3) As result, Schaeffer is not clear whether history is primarily meant in the sense of "these things happened" or "these things continue to matter." Instead, there is some conflation between issues of biblical history and biblical theology. His interest is not primarily in determining how events happened (what some would call biblical history). Nor is it in determining the full scope of what the biblical literature teaches on a subject (what some would call biblical theology). Nor, even, is it solely on determining what lessons the book of Joshua has for modern readers (what some might call a devotional approach). Rather than proceeding from confusion or imprecision, however, this conflation is a result of his worldview: the acts recorded in the Scripture actually happened (history) and therefore have incredible importance for people today (theology). It is not inconsistence as much as it is insistence. One suspects that if Schaeffer's categories and methods departed from those of the academy, he would find that a mark in his favor and not a problem to be corrected!

If a student is interested in a model for how to work from text to concept while keeping the broader biblical text in mind, Schaeffer's work is an excellent starting point. If, on the other hand, a student is interested in a technical introduction to issues of biblical history, biblical theology, or the text of the book of Joshua, then he or she should consult another resource. *Theological Interpretation of the Old Testament*, edited by Vanhoozer, is a valued resource for biblical theology, while *Joshua: An Introduction and Commentary* by Richard Hess serves as a source for textual commentary and technical issues. All readers, though, will find Schaeffer's passion for the text and affirmation that the biblical text still speaks today inspiring and invigorating, whether as an encouragement to their own beliefs or as a sparring partner against which to set their own worldview.

Richard Hannon
Oral Roberts University, Tulsa OK

Robertson, O. Palmer, *The Flow of the Psalms: Discovering Their Structure and Theology*, P&R Publishing: Phillipsburg, NJ, 2015.

O. Palmer Robertson is the director and principal of African Bible University in Uganda. He previously taught at Reformed, Westminster, Knox, and Covenant seminaries. He has authored such works as *The Christ of the Covenants* and *The Christ of the Prophets*.

The Psalms appear to be a haphazard collection of prayers and praises. Robertson argues, however, that the Psalms showcase a deliberate structure at the hands of their final redactor. Because the Psalms developed over a long period of time, the final redactor selected certain psalms for certain locations (p. 7). By discerning this structure, one may see how the Psalms connect with each other and gain insight into each Psalm (p. 3).

He notes the Psalter divides into five books, each of which ends with a doxology (p. 8). He identifies already extant Psalm collections (p. 10). Next, he observes how the redactor distributed different authors throughout the Psalter. For example, Davidic Psalms dominate Books I and II, but their number diminishes in Books III–V. The redactor also positioned significant Psalms at the literary seams: Psalm 72 by Solomon concludes Book II, and Psalm 90 by Moses begins Book IV. These placements suggest deliberate choice rather than haphazard assembly.

Robertson then identifies the two "poetic pillars" which introduce the Psalms: Psalms 1 and 2. These two Psalms—a Torah Psalm and a Messianic Psalm respectively—summarize the main themes of the Psalter: God's law and God's king/Messiah. According to Robertson, a Torah Psalm appears with a Messianic Psalm three times in the Psalter; each time at a pivotal point (p. 16).

Next, he discusses minor structural markers: the placement of the acrostic Psalms (p. 16), the groupings celebrating the kingship of Yahweh and His Messiah (pp. 16–17), the Psalms of Ascents (p. 17), Psalms of Historical Recollection (p. 18), Focal Messianic Psalms (pp. 18–19), Psalms Confessing Sin (p. 19), "Poetic Pyramid" Psalms (p. 19), and the Hallelu-YAH Psalms (p. 20). He devotes less space to these markers in the beginning of the book, although he handles them in more detail during his exegesis. Robertson concludes this overview, stating, "Taken together, these various groupings just listed account for a large segment of the Psalter. Other groupings or interconnections bind the entire book of Psalms into a well-organized composition (p. 21)."

In the following chapter, Robertson considers the redemptive historical framework of the Psalms. He applies his work from *The Christ of the Covenants* to the structure of the Psalms. He emphasizes the role of the Davidic covenant in the Psalms, although themes from prior covenants appear as well. He presents the macro-structure of the Psalms in chapter 4. In the remainder of the work he explains the structure of the Psalter Psalm by Psalm.

Robertson argues convincingly for a deliberate structure and flow for the Psalms. Through his exegesis, he delineates how the Psalms connect on a macro and micro level and how these connections communicate the Psalter's message.

One connection comes in Book I. Robertson observes that Psalms 3–17 show the Messiah's (David's) struggle to overcome his enemies and establish his throne. Psalm 18 is a turning point. The superscription indicates that David wrote this Psalm after he had been delivered from the hand of Saul. However, previous Psalms (e.g., Psa 3) depict events after Saul's death. Robertson thus observes the redactor's hand. The redactor considered thematic and theological factors above temporal or historical factors when he arranged these Psalms, showing the establishment of Messiah's throne through mortal combat with his enemies. Although conflict continues to reign, the tone of Book I changes after Psalm 18. The king must still fight, but he now enjoys a modicum of stability (p. 78). Significantly, this change in tone occurs at the second Torah/Messiah Psalm pairs.

Also, Robertson demonstrates a connection between the themes of Books I and II. The focus changes from the king's conflict with God's enemies to his communication with them. Robertson shows that the Psalmist, though still engaged in conflict, now addresses the nations. For example, Psalm 67 uses Elohim when it cites the Aaronic benediction (p. 113). Such an address does not appear in Book I. Since the Psalmist now addresses the nations, he uses Elohim instead of YHWH. Robertson shows that Book I consistently uses YHWH while Book II uses Elohim. Old Testament scholars have noted that the biblical authors frequently use Elohim when they intend their message for non-Israelites. These lines of evidence strengthen Robertson's overall argument.

Robertson makes a strong connection between Books III and IV. At the end of Book III, the Davidic covenant and monarchy have apparently failed. Since the Davidic covenant plays such an important role in the Psalms, the Davidic failure casts a pall over YHWH's promises. In this context, Robertson observes that Book IV begins with the only Psalm of Moses. This Psalm returns to the beginning of Israel's history and YHWH's rule then, before a king ruled in Israel. This Psalm proceeds to the "YHWH Reigns" collection. Robertson again sees the redactor's hand. The redactor placed these Psalms in this order to show that YHWH has always been Israel's king, whether the Davidic king proved faithful or not (p. 147). Through this placement, the redactor shows that Israel's faith has matured. Robertson's observation illuminates both the location of Moses's Psalm and the purpose of the "YHWH Reigns" collection.

Robertson bolsters his case by appealing to the New Testament's use of the Psalter. The New Testament authors quote certain Psalms more than others, and Robertson observes that the most popular Psalms appear at key junctures within the Psalter. For example, Psalm 110 and Psalm 118 bring the Messianic focus to a climax in the Psalter, and New Testament authors quote these Psalms, along with

Psalm 2, more than any other Psalm (p. 195). Psalm 118 also appears in the final Torah/Messiah Psalm pair. While not all will accept Robertson's appeal to the New Testament for verification, he has illumined the surrounding context of every Psalm quotation in the New Testament through his study of the structure. Those who study the use of the Psalms in the New Testament should find a reliable foundation for their work in Robertson's study.

Although Robertson interacts with different Psalms scholars, he maintains a theological and pastoral focus throughout the book. He argues that one can memorize a large portion of the Psalter by understanding the overall structure and flow (pp. 81–82). Throughout the book, he derives various lessons about prayer from the Psalms. These pastoral insights make this study useful beyond the academy.

The Flow of the Psalms will serve well as an overview of the Psalter. Its contents will initiate Old Testament students into the interpretation of the Psalter. Its pastoral insights will help pastors preaching through or counseling from the Psalms. Educated laypeople will find this book helpful and edifying.

Matthew R. Miller
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, MO

Lau, Peter H. W. and Gregory Goswell. *Unceasing Kindness: A Biblical Theology of Ruth*. New Studies in Biblical Theolgoy 41. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016, pp. 212, $24.00 paperback.

Peter H. W. Lau and Gregory Goswell collaborate in a recent addition to the series New Studies in Biblical Theology, *Unceasing Kindness: A Biblical Theology of Ruth*. Peter H. W. Lau is Lecturer in Old Testament at Seminari Theoloji Malaysia and is an honorary research associate at the University of Sydney. Gregory Goswell is the Academic Dean and Lecturer in Biblical Studies at Christ College, Sydney.

In writing *Unceasing Kindness* Lau and Goswell do not intend to compete with commentaries, nor to "render them superfluous" (p. 157). Rather, the authors seek to build on "close studies of the text" provided by commentaries in order to explore "its biblical-theological parameters" in the context of the whole of Scripture (p. 157). Lau and Goswell begin by reading Ruth alongside various texts in the Old Testament, drawing out themes found when Ruth is read in conjunction with other books of the Old Testament. The authors first read Ruth alongside Ezra-Nehemiah, seeking to understand how Ruth informed the readers of the "early restoration period" of Israel's return from exile. Lau and Goswell then read Ruth in light of the various canonical positions Ruth is found: Ruth's position between Judges and 1 Samuel (as in the LXX); Ruth's position after Proverbs (as in the Masoretic Text); Ruth's position before Psalms (as found in a canonical list in the Babylonian Talmud tractate *Baba Bathra*). In the last four chapters, the authors flesh out four themes found in

Ruth and in the whole of Scripture: famine, God's sovereignty and human agency, redemption, and mission.

Overall, Lau's and Goswell's work is an excellent resource for understanding the book of Ruth. The authors masterfully cover a wealth of information without overwhelming the reader. For example, Lau and Goswell skillfully critique Roger Beckwith's arguments concerning the order of the Old Testament canon. The authors provide the reader with the essence of Beckwith's dense argumentation without sacrificing his meaning (pp. 55-58). Throughout the book, Lau and Goswell clearly argue their positions and plainly elucidate the themes of Ruth.

Particularly illuminating are Lau's and Goswell's contention that Ruth should be read in the contexts of its various canonical positions. The authors maintain that the placement of Ruth in different positions in the canon "reflect the varying perceptions and evaluations of later generations of readers . . . and no one canonical position need be privileged above the others" (p. 22). Lau and Goswell emphasize that reading Ruth in different canonical places will not necessarily produce "wildly different" or contradictory readings, but will lead to "fresh interpretative insights" into Ruth (p. 38). The authors appeal to a phenomenon called 'paratext'—coined by Gérard Genette—by which a text is "in large measure dependent on its context" (p. 37). A biblical book, therefore, is dependent on the context of the other books surrounding it (p. 37). Because in the history of interpretation, Ruth has been placed in differing canonical positions, Ruth "has been read in more than one context" (p. 37).

Whether or not one agrees with Lau's and Goswell's understanding of paratext, the themes the authors flesh out when Ruth is read in its different canonical contexts are very insightful. When Ruth is positioned between Judges and 1 Samuel, the events in Ruth are best understood as preparation for the Davidic dynasty. Furthermore, God's care and provision of David's family in Ruth anticipates the same care in the lives of David and his house (p. 35). When Ruth is read after Proverbs, Ruth is seen as a model of "key aspects of the wisdom ethic of Proverbs" (p. 52). Lastly, when Ruth is read before Psalms, Ruth is viewed as a "model of piety in the same variety" as her descendant David, who composed many of the psalms (p.70).

Readers may not agree with all of Lau's and Goswell's conclusions on some matters; for example, the authors' view of God's seeming absence in the book of Esther (pp. 97-102), and the authors' explanation of Boaz marrying a Moabite woman in light of the prohibition in Deuteronomy 23:3 (pp. 146-49). However, these matters do not detract from the themes Lau and Goswell flesh out in the book of Ruth.

Series editor D. A. Carson notes in his series preface that the contributions to New Studies in Biblical Theology series are "creative attempts to help thinking Christians understand their Bibles better" (p. ix). To this end Lau and Goswell have succeeded. The authors write with clarity and their arguments are easy to follow. The book could serve as a required text in a seminary class or as a study book for a church group. While the book could serve the needs of a church study group, some level of

biblical literacy is helpful in moving through *Unceasing Kindness*. In one's personal study, Lau's and Goswell's book could also be used in conjunction with a verse-by-verse commentary, with *Unceasing Kindness* providing the reader with the bigger picture of how Ruth fits in the scheme of the Old Testament and the whole Bible. Overall, Lau's and Goswell's work is strong with much to commend it.

Richard C. McDonald
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY

Whitney, Donald S. *Family Worship*. Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2016, pp. 80, $7.99, paperback.

Recent publications indicate a growing interest in the spiritual discipline of family worship. Families and Christian leaders are realizing that outsourcing the Christian discipleship of their children is neither effective nor a fulfillment of God's plan. Don Whitney (DMin, Trinity; PhD, University of the Free State) is well qualified to contribute his voice to this important topic. He serves as associate dean and professor of biblical spirituality at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He also founded and currently serves as the president of The Center for Biblical Spirituality. He served in pastoral ministry for twenty-four years and has written numerous books on spirituality and spiritual disciplines.

Family Worship provides a brief introduction to the practice of family worship. With the first two chapters, the author builds the case for why families should regularly practice family worship. Chapter one surveys the Biblical record for examples of and instruction in family worship from Abraham to Peter. Chapter two calls on the saints throughout church history to give their teachings and testimonies concerning family worship.

The next two chapters provide practical instruction on how to implement family worship. Chapter three covers the elements of family worship. Family worship includes three simple steps: read, pray, and sing. Additional elements such as catechism, memorization of scripture, and reading other books can be included for families who want to spend more time in family worship, but these additional elements are not vital. Chapter four guides families whose circumstances may raise questions on how to practice family worship (e.g. "what if the father is not a Christian?" or "what if the children are very young?").

The final chapter, "Isn't This What You Really *Want* to Do?" is motivational. It begins by stating many of the benefits of regular family worship. It includes further motivational examples of faithful family worship leaders, one each from three sources: scripture, church history, and contemporary illustration. It concludes with two final admonitions. First, families must be resolved. They must rely on the power of the Holy Spirit to give strength for the task no matter the situation. Second, they must remember the gospel. Family worship does not make one right with God. Family

leaders must apply the gospel to their own hearts before they can hope to apply it to the hearts of their families.

Don Whitney has written an excellent introduction of the vital practice of family worship. Multiple factors make this an excellent introduction. First, the book is also exegetically sound. Dr. Whitney searches the Scriptures for the principle of family worship. He is careful not to force more out of a text than what is in it. Nor does he put into a text what is not there. He simply highlights characters and teachings throughout the Scriptures that model or teach the principle of family worship.

Second, the book is short. Some may want more exegesis of Scripture or more explanation of methods, but the primary benefit of this book is that it is accessible to a wide range of people. Busy pastors, seminary students, and Christian lay people will all find it useful as an introduction to family worship.

Third, Dr. Whitney provides the proper motivations to begin or to continue practicing family worship. Whitney presents dual motivations for family worship. The first benefit is the worthiness of God for worship. This is obvious and cannot be overlooked. The second benefit is the blessings to the family. This motivation may be overlooked because family worship is often seen as an inconvenience rather than a benefit. But Whitney uses testimonies throughout the book of families who have been drawn closer together because they worshipped together in their homes.

Another strong point of the book is its survey of what church leaders throughout history have said about family worship. This survey, while necessarily brief, adds to the weight of the argument for family worship. Christians should be encouraged and challenged to practice family worship when they see that it has been a regular part of the practice of the Church from the beginning.

Finally, the book excels as a manual of practice for pastors who want to teach family worship and for families who want to learn family worship. The method of family worship that is presented is simple. Almost any family can find a few minutes every day to read the Bible, pray together, and sing. No one needs to prepare a lesson. The family just needs to gather together to read, pray, and sing. Family worship is simple and accessible. Even the additional components of family worship that Dr. Whitney introduces, such as catechism, scripture memory, and reading other books can be done without demanding inordinate amounts of time from families.

Pastors and families who want to teach or learn family worship are reminded of three pieces of advice. First, be brief. This is wise especially for families with younger children. Second, be regular. False starts and inconsistency in family worship can frustrate a family. Regularity will form habit and appreciation. Third, be flexible. Families can and should work together to find what works for them.

Many pastors and families will also find the chapter on unusual situations to be very helpful. Dr. Whitney has recognized the reality that many families will find family worship difficult or even awkward based on their unique situations. He has

provided an excellent resource in this chapter for pastors who need to counsel families through these situations or for families who face them.

Family Worship is an excellent introduction to the practice of family worship. As a brief introduction, it does not answer every question on the topic. But it does give the student a good start in learning the importance and practice of family worship. It could easily be used as a textbook for a class on the Christian home or as a resource for lectures on the family life of a minister. The book is not aimed at the academy, yet biblical-theological students would do themselves a great disservice to ignore this book. It will equip them to lead worship for their own families and to model and teach family worship to those whom they will serve in the ministry.

Bradley Sinclair
The Baptist Church at Andover, Lexington, KY
Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

J. Gordon McConville. *Grace in the End: A Study in Deuteronomic Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1993, pp. 176, $18.99, paperback.

J. Gordon McConville serves as Professor of Old Testament Theology at the University of Gloucestershire and as external examiner for Queen's University, Belfast, where he earned his PhD.

In *Grace in the End*, McConville seeks to "characterize Deuteronomic theology on the basis of secure literary, historical and theological criteria" (p. 11) by closely examining the limitations of recent historical-critical approaches to the message of Deuteronomy and its relationship to the rest of the OT canon, especially the Deuteronomistic History (DtH). He contends, specifically, that these scholars failed to capture the nuance of Deuteronomic thought because they polarized aspects of its message, such as separating law and grace, into "rival views vying to be heard" (p. 123) without accommodating its desire to unite them into its "distinctive concept" (p. 123). This concept becomes, for McConville, the OT's "true formative influence" (p. 11). because it holds together "a theology of God and Israel on the plan of the nation's entire history" (p. 123). In this work, McConville provides a thorough testing of his historical-critical predecessors and their various models and conclusions by examining the implications of their historical and literary assumptions on a subject that defies simple descriptions of its setting, origin and theological message. These scholars, in general, have sought to hold together Deuteronomic thought's "theological elusiveness" (p. 15) by dividing its aspects into competing and conflicting sides that develop diachronically. McConville, however, proposes expressing Deuteronomic theology's concept in five categories by defining God as King (pp. 124–5), the words of Horeb as present and needed in every generation (pp. 125–8), the real intervention of God into history that commands a choice from men (pp. 128–32), the good election of Israel into the promise

despite their sin (pp. 132–4), and the triumph of God's grace in the end when Israel's pending failure will become an eventual return to Him (pp. 134–7). While his thesis was ably proven, the brevity of the work left key unanswered questions about his own methodology.

In chapter 1, McConville lays out his problem of how to describe the fullness of Deuteronomic theology, which extends beyond the pages of Deuteronomy itself, as an examination of both its "root and branches together" (p. 10). He sets the initial "lines of the debate" (p. 10) via the paradigms of Wellhausen and Noth, who find a Deuteronomic root that presents a pre-exilic perspective and a branch that reprocesses the same events via the exile. This chapter sets the tone for his other analysis because he cautions that these models might "unduly dominate" (p. 11). Deuteronomy. The conclusions may be more about the models than the actual biblical evidence.

McConville, then, in chapter 2 undertakes a descriptive exploration of the methods employed in Deuteronomic scholarship that exposes the various attempts to hold together Deuteronomy's ideas through source, literary and transmission-history criticism. His even handed and insightful categorization shows the variety of polarities that different approaches take, such as 1) geographical, dividing northern interests from southern; 2) theological, separating law and gospel and 3) political, distinguishing pro-monarchy parts from anti-institutional pieces. His argument proves effective here because with each scholar's preferred polarization to explain multiple ideas within the text, McConville offers its weakness that sets the stage for the next approach.

In chapter 3, McConville dismantles the various formal criteria that modern scholarship uses to date Deuteronomy to show that such analysis must be tested and "accompanied by arguments about content" (p. 60). That is, an exilic date and setting need not be the only condition to explain, among other features, the text's perspective on the land, Israelite brotherhood, opposition to Canaanite worship, and the development of the altar law (pp. 45–55). Multiple moments of Israel's history can reflect such concerns, and the biblical text itself does not clearly set that timeframe. His argumentation excels because his critiques of dating criteria renders mute critical scholarships conclusions of meaning.

In chapter 4, McConville zeroes in on the Deuteronomic idea in the Deuteronomistic History (DtH). It serves as the workhorse of his analysis because in it he reinforces the weaknesses of polarized approaches across an even larger corpus. Specifically, McConville considers the problems of DtH's origin and the relationship of its parts to the whole (pp. 66–78) because these two concepts undergird much of the polarized methods. It is hard to overstate the power that this section holds for his argument because he demonstrates that polarized approaches miss the "subtle ironies of the literature" (84). They misread the text's intuitive features. In so doing, he effectively sets his thesis as a plausible solution to its problem.

In chapter 5, McConville finally provides his own Deuteronomic theology by synthesizing its many ideas into five foundational concepts: God as Israel's only worthy

King, whose relationship with Israel from the words of Horeb to the very end reveals God in all generations, making all of man's choices before God real and consequential. This surprising election of sinful Israel encompasses not only their pending failure and exile but also the eventual return to Him when God will circumcise their hearts because "the answer to Israel's infidelity lies in God himself" (p. 137), in the grace that prevails in the end (pp. 134–7). Despite this chapter's clarity, its brevity leaves the reader with many questions about his method and its implications. While the following chapters provide implications for the NT, McConville does not provide an effective link for his Deuteronomic concept to the texts before Israel's arrival at Sinai, especially lacking theological reflection on Gen 1–11. His excurses on Holy War (pp. 139–44) and the brief mention of the deliverance out of Egypt (p. 124) prove the closest he comes to these issues. His detailed examination of other scholars' methods invites a similar examination of his own. This almost anti-climactic shortcoming does not render his thesis as implausible, but it leaves the reader with a desire for more reflection.

In chapter 6, McConville extends the branches of Deuteronomic theology into the New Testament. His approach emphasizes the NT's common themes and ethical pleas from Deuteronomy.

Finally, in chapter 7, McConville concludes his work by framing its analysis as a response to "a basic question about the development of religious thought in Israel" (p. 158). While this ending underscores the power of his Deuteronomic concept, marking it applicable to all generations and a continuing discussion of God's relationship to Israel, it also returns to reader to questions over his methodology. Specifically, is his Deuteronomic concept a theology of the text or a theology of Israel's religion?

Nonetheless, *Grace in the End* provides a survey of modern scholarship that models charity, critical thinking and insight. He proves his thesis by showing the limitations of other approaches and offers his own solution in an effective manner. In particular, he captures the most significant aspects of Deuteronomy and holds them into a Deuteronomic theology that provides the basis for much of biblical theology. This book serves, therefore, as an effective introduction into modern scholarship on Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History. It is an essential part of any scholar's attempt to do biblical theology rightly.

Peter Link, Jr.
Charleston Southern University, Charleston SC

Hess, Richard S., *The Old Testament: A Historical, Theological, and Critical Introduction*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, Jan. 2017, pp. 816, $49.99, hardback.

Richard S. Hess (PhD, Hebrew Union College, MDiv and ThM, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, and a BA from Wheaton College.) is Earl S. Kalland Professor of Old Testament and Semitic Languages at Denver Seminary in Littleton, Colorado,

and editor of the *Denver Journal.* Dr. Hess has authored 9 books, edited or co-edited 33 books, and published more than 100 scholarly articles in collected essays and journals.

The title of the book *"The Old Testament: A Historical, Theological and Critical Introduction"* is a precise summarization of the contents. In the preface, Hess writes that "This book is designed to meet the needs of the broad variety of students who come to study the Old Testament at a seminary or at a graduate level. It does not presume a deep knowledge of the Scriptures, although I wrote it with the intent to inform any serious reader." (viii). Hess brings together an articulate synthesis of the Old Testament based on his years of academic research and publications about manuscripts, translations, textual criticism, archaeology, theology and exegesis.

He states in the introduction that there is a threefold purpose: "(1) to explain the definition and structure of the Old Testament, (2) to provide essential guidance regarding the composition and manuscript evidence of the Old Testament, and (3) to orient readers to the study of the Old Testament, surveying the interpretive methods explored in the following chapters of this work." (p. 1)

The book divides the Old Testament into the standard divisions of: 1) Pentateuch, 2) Historical Books, 3) Poetic Books, and 4) Prophetic Books. Each chapter is devoted to a single Old Testament book (except 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings and 1-2 Chronicles in which each are treated as a single volume). Each discussion of a biblical book is organized into five major components: 1) Name; Text; and Outline, 2) Overview, 3) Reading, 4) Theological Perspectives, and 5) Key Commentaries and Studies.

The first major component is divided into three subheadings. The first subheading (Name) provides an explanation of the origin and meaning of the name of the book. The second subheading (Text) provides a summarization and comparison of manuscripts (e.g. Masoretic, Septuagint, Dead Sea Scrolls, Latin Vulgate). The third subheading (Outline) provides a succinct, concise and descriptive outline of the literary segments of the book.

The second major component (Overview) provides a summarization of the book based on the author's outline. The overview is primarily an encapsulation of the contents with few interpretive comments. The reader may find minimal help in regards to an explanation of meaning of the text.

The third major component (Reading) has seven subsections: 1) Premodern Readings, 2) Source Criticism, 3) Tradition History, 4) Literary Readings, 5) Gender and Ideological Criticism, 6) Ancient Near Eastern Context, and 7) Canonical Context.

Premodern Readings provides a survey of major expository commentaries from various periods prior to the 20th century. The focus is on primarily Jewish and Christian authors (e.g. Mishnah, Talmud, Patristic, Rabbinic, Reformation).

Source Criticism (labeled Higher Criticism after the Pentateuch) offers and excellent discussion of the major authors and views that have contributed to this field of study, which examines the authorship, sources and development of a book.

Tradition History reviews the theories of oral and/or written compositions that may have contributed to the composition of a book. Other Ancient Near Eastern sources are compared, contrasted and paralleled to biblical passages and cultural practices for insights to the formation and interpretation of the biblical text.

Literary Readings examines the history of approaches that focus on genres, literary features such as repetition of words and phrases, development of literary devices such as plot and characters, as well as interconnection and intertextuality.

Gender and Ideological Criticism, which is a unique contribution, evaluates the portrayal of females and occasionally males, in each book. The criticism provides commentary on the role, characterization and resulting theologies of the portrayal of women. Hess states that his position on gender roles is that of an equalitarian (p. 711).

Ancient Near Eastern Context addresses the historical and cultural milieu of evidence for determining the date, authorship and composition of the book. Archaeological excavations, artifacts and reports are synthesized to help illuminate and/or validate the historical setting of each book. Hess documents many times that some archaeologists claim evidence or conclusions for a biblical context that are based on the absence of evidence in archaeological sites. He incorporates pertinent archaeological discoveries via sidebar sectors that provide significant insights and apologetic comments to the Ancient Near Eastern context. These sidebar sectors are incorporated throughout the book to provide an excellent overview of the contribution of archaeological discoveries. There are over 100 sidebars with commentary, over 50 sidebars with archaeological pictures and images, and a six-page center section of sixteen color pictures of noteworthy sites and artifacts.

The last subsection, Canonical Context, is a blend of Biblical Theology, intertextuality, and citations of the book in the New Testament. This segment provides historical connections throughout the Old Testament and then recognizes the integration of these connections within the New Testament. As with many Old Testament introductions, the theological intertextuality and connections could have been enhanced if the chapters/books were arranged chronologically rather than canonically.

The fourth major component (Theological Perspectives) identifies major biblical and theological themes that are developed throughout the book. These themes provide a foundation for the understanding of the major message or argument of the author(s).

The last major component (Key Commentaries and Studies) offers a list of about six to ten bibliographic references. Hess' annotated comments are succinct and helpful.

The reader will primarily benefit from Hess' integration of various disciplines that provide a foundation for the understanding of canonical formation, historical backgrounds and theological development. The reader should not expect extensive exegetical comments or solutions to theological debates.

This book may be of most value to the student/reader who is preparing for a career in academics such as teaching, research and/or writing (MA, ThM, PhD). The sections on Gender and Ideological Criticism provide the student/reader with unique contributions that are not typical in other Old Testament introductions. The student/reader who is preparing for pastoral, counseling, chaplain or other parachurch careers (MACE, MDiv, DMin) would probably benefit more from other introductions that are comprised of more exegetical and theological commentary. This volume may not provide extensive material that would be of substantive engagement in the church pulpit or classroom.

Hess concludes by writing: "This is not an attempt to provide a comprehensive assessment of every view (or even every major view), but it is an argument that an introduction to the Old Testament must embrace an awareness of the many methods that now flourish." (pp. 712-13).

John A. McLean
Liberty University Rawlings School of Divinity, Lynchburg, VA

Volf, Miroslav and Ryan McAnnally-Linz. *Public Faith in Action: How to Think Carefully, Engage Wisely, and Vote with Integrity*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2016, pp. 256, $21.99, hardcover.

Due to the presidential election of 2016, Christian publishers offered numerous resources which focused on pertinent issues related to faith and culture. Among the vast array of books published on public theology in 2016, this book was regarded to be one of the best. In fact, *Publishers Weekly*, the international trade journal of book publishing, selected *Public Faith in Action* as one of the "Best Books of 2016." After reading this book, I agree that such praise is warranted. Interestingly, this book arose out of Facebook posts the authors used in an effort to help Christians through the issues surrounding the 2012 US presidential election. Regardless of which election year is in view, Christians must contend with the cultural responsibilities and applications of being a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Miroslav Volf (Dr. Theol., University of Tübingen) is the Henry B. Wright Professor of Systematic Theology at Yale Divinity School and founding director of the Yale Center for Faith and Culture in New Haven, Connecticut. He has written more than fifteen books, including *A Public Faith*, *Exclusion and Embrace* (winner of the Grawemeyer Award in Religion and selected among the one hundred best religious books of the twentieth century by *Christianity Today*), *and many other books*. Ryan McAnnally-Linz (Ph.D., Yale University) is an associate research scholar at the Yale Center for Faith and Culture. In addition to his scholarly writings, he has coauthored articles with Miroslav Volf for *Sojourners*, *The Christian Century*, and *The Huffington Post*. Readers unaware of Volf's contributions over the years will find this book to be a helpful introduction to his thought and theological nuance. In fact, I suspect this

work will cause further investigation, and that is just what the authors desire. Volf and McAnally-Linz clearly identify why this book is necessary: "Public life isn't just for politicians or celebrities. Each and every one of us lives a public life because every life has a public dimension running through it" (p. x). The author's premise is clear: one's faith commitments must not be sequestered away from their cultural implications because Christianity is a public faith. In fact, the authors maintain that one's Christian faith *must* be an *active* faith which includes everything from "our attitudes, our purchases, and our conversations" (p. xi).

The book is structured into three parts. In part 1, the authors provide the basic Christian commitments that inform public life. In this section, readers are helped by introductory comments regarding Christ as the center of the Christian faith, the commitment his followers make to him and the Scriptures, the Spirit's work in human flourishing, and the importance of reading the Bible contextually. Jesus and the Scriptures are the core commitments of a public faith, and a "commitment to public engagement as Christ's disciples draws us to the Scriptures as the touchstone for discerning Christ at work. Christ in the world cannot be different from Christ in the Scriptures" (p. 7). Part 2 is entitled, "Convictions," and this section contains the bulk of the book. The authors maintain that some of the chapters in part 2 "contain fairly definite recommendations about public policy, but their overall purpose is not to lay out a policy platform; rather, it is to sketch out how life together and its institutional implementations might look today if they reflected, however brokenly, the coming kingdom of God" (pp. xi-xii). Readers will no doubt sense a theology of the kingdom of God, with Christ as the center, to be the overall framework for their call to action. In part 3, the authors suggest five character traits that must fuel and guard the Christian's convictional engagement. These five traits include courage, humility, justice, respect, and compassion. Readers will find part 3 to be refreshing at times, while also sensing the underlying challenge the authors bring to readers. For example, in chapter 21, which is entitled Courage, the authors address the tension between legitimate concerns for a nation's security and the real need of Syrian refugees. They argue that it "takes courage to stand up for our moral obligation to care for the refugees" (p. 180). They follow this statement up with a helpful, if not underdeveloped, section on the relationship between courage and risk.

There are numerous strengths to this book, and there are a few weaknesses. For brevity, I will describe the strengths and weaknesses together. First, the authors helpfully instruct readers that Christianity informs every aspect of one's life. One cannot bifurcate Christianity into public and private compartments. Christians must mount a worthy effort to remain engaged in culture and resist the temptation to be satisfied with a lifestyle of a disgruntled cultural commentator. For this reason alone, Christian students (and especially those seeking to pursue ministry) should read this book. The Christian faith is, in fact, an *active* faith, and Volf and McAnnally-Linz articulate this belief clearly and winsomely. Secondly, the authors realize that we

need less polarization and more conversation. While the authors do take positions in this volume I find problematic, I appreciate their obvious goal of promoting meaningful conversations around these issues. At the end of each chapter, the authors include a "room for debate" section, which includes helpful questions for readers to consider when formulating a position consistent with the Christian faith. Students and ministry leaders can learn from this practice and implement similar invitations in their discussions with others.

Third, the authors treat marriage and family by maintaining that one must distinguish between the ecclesial question (how should churches respond to same-sex unions), the legal question (should same-sex unions receive the same treatment under the law as traditional marriages), and finally, the moral question (what kind of sex is permissible). Their argument is that Christians should agree on the legal question (we should support the appropriation of benefits to same-sex unions) even if Christians disagree regarding the ecclesial and moral questions. The ecclesial and moral questions should be addressed within one's church with "minimum possible rending of the body of Christ" (p. 88). While Christians may not prefer the nuance in this argument, it is a helpful approach for dialogue purposes. One criticism of this particular chapter is the lack of conservative voices in their "Resources for Further Reflection" section. Issues such as the environment, poverty, torture, policing, and many others are areas where more Christian reflection is needed. While the authors only provide limited analysis on these subjects, readers will be assisted in their search for dialogue. Throughout the book, readers will detect that the authors argue for more government intervention as part of the solution to so many of these issues, while so many other thoughtful Christian observers argue for less government intervention. Thus, thoughtful engagement must persist among Christians in our public theology.

In summary, students and ministry leaders will find this book to be an overall help even if there are a few areas of concern. The authors should be commended for their approach to these issues.

Justin L. McLendon
Grand Canyon University, Phoenix, AZ

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