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**Book Reviews**

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## ***Book Reviews***

**Hays, Richard B. *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*. Waco: Baylor University Press, 2016, xix + 504 pp., \$49.95.**

Richard Hays, George Washington Ivey Professor of New Testament at Duke Divinity School, is well known to scholars and students alike as one of the world's foremost experts on the use of the Old Testament in the New (as well as on Paul, NT ethics, and hermeneutics more generally). This book was completed after Hays received a diagnosis of pancreatic cancer, with special research assistance and with Baylor's fast-tracking publication of the manuscript. Mercifully, as of this writing, that cancer is still in remission.

*Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels* mirrors the name of the author's classic *Echoes of Scripture in Paul*, published in 1989. Then Hays was eager to go beyond the obvious quotations and even allusions to the OT in Paul's letters to the significant clauses, phrases, and even key words that seemed likely to show Paul's deliberate use of OT phraseology. In this work on the Gospels, Hays still identifies some echoes not regularly discussed elsewhere but is keener to survey the major quotations and allusions as well, especially when attention to their larger OT contexts discloses additional potential insights for the Evangelists' deployment of them. The overall thesis disclosed is that each of the four Gospels testifies "that Jesus was not only the Son of God but actually the embodiment of the divine presence in the world" (p. 9). In each Gospel, the author makes his claim by "reading backwards" (the title of an earlier, shorter book that Hays penned to preview many of the ideas he would flesh out here). By interpreting the Hebrew Scriptures figurally, the Evangelists create "a retrospective hermeneutical transformation of Israel's sacred texts" (p. 14).

Even a detailed review could scarcely do justice to Hays' treatment of even one of the four canonical Gospels. His first example in his chapter on Mark demonstrates the rich fruit to be gleaned from his exegesis. Most commentators note that the heavenly voice at Jesus' baptism combines snippets of quotations from Psalm 2:7 and Isaiah 42:1 when it declares, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased" (Mark 1:11 NRSV). Fewer highlight that Mark's distinctive language in the previous verse about "the heavens" being "torn apart" (v. 10) echoes Isaiah 64:1 where the prophet implores God to "tear open the heavens and come down" to bring deliverance to his people. Fewer still observe that in the larger context of Isaiah 64:1, the prophet has just asked the Lord why he hardens his people's hearts so that they do not fear him (63:17). Yet Mark would have been aware of all these associations and most likely drew on them as he composed a narrative of Jesus' ministry that stresses secrecy, disobedience, and the people's and even the disciples' hardened hearts, even as God is fulfilling his promises to deliver his people in Jesus.

Mark's is thus a Gospel that contains both the harbinger of judgment and the new exodus. Both of these themes come to a climax in the temple incident with its combined allusions to Isaiah 56:7 and Jeremiah 7:11. God intended for his temple to be a house of prayer for all nations but the Jewish leaders have turned it into a den of robbers. Less obvious but no doubt relevant is the conceptual allusion to Zechariah 14:21 in which in the eschatological restoration "there shall no longer be traders in the house of the Lord of hosts on that day."

Proceeding through Mark in this fashion fits a Gospel that repeatedly depicts hidden things that are being revealed (4:22). That Mark highlights a Jesus who calls himself Son of man and whom others envision as Messiah and Son of God is well known but it is only rarely observed that "Mark actually depicts the man Jesus as *the embodied presence of the God of Israel*" (p. 46; italics his). But the Lord of Mark 1:2–3 whose coming Jesus enacts is Yahweh, God of Israel. He is the one who alone forgive sins (2:1–12), who makes wind and waves obey him (4:35–41), who is Israel's shepherd (6:34), who walks on the sea (vv. 45–52), who makes the deaf hear and the mute speak (7:31–37). Every one of these roles is a role of the Lord God in Scripture, not of a separate, albeit messianic individual. The Passion Narrative draws repeatedly on Psalm 22 so that even in his cry of dereliction (Mark 15:34; Psa. 22:1), the context of the entire Psalm with its triumphal second half (vv. 19–31) must also be in view. God will deliver his people, with their messiah, even if the original ending of Mark only reiterates that promise without explicitly narrating its fulfillment.

Matthew's Gospel makes plain what often remains obscure in Mark. Jesus' entire ministry fulfills Torah (Matt. 5:17). Both typologically and predictively, passage after passage of the Hebrew Scriptures finds its fullest meaning in details from Christ's life. Where Israel had failed, Jesus succeeds, nowhere more dramatically than in the temptations in the wilderness (4:1–11). But he is not concerned "with literal performance of all of the law's commandments" but with "a particular *hermeneutical construal* of Torah" (p. 122; italics his). The Prophets take privilege over the legal material. Jesus as "Emmanuel" (God with us) creates an inclusio around the Gospel (1:23; 28:20) and occupies a central role as well (18:20). Jesus is a new Moses but he is greater than Moses. He is a new Wisdom but he is greater than Wisdom. More so than in the other Gospels, in Matthew people worship Jesus precisely because he is the embodiment of Israel's God. What begins with Jesus acting like a conventionally nationalistic Messiah (10:5–6; 15:24) culminates with him as the Messiah for all people groups (28:19), precisely because that is the eschatological vision of the Writing Prophets, especially in Isaiah 40–66.

The Gospel of Luke characterizes its contents in its opening verse as "the things that have been *brought to fulfillment* (πεπληροφορημένων) among us" (p. 192, italics his). The entire Gospel unfolds as the completion of the story the OT left incomplete. Older Lukan redaction criticism often missed the liberationist strands of this work, largely because they failed to see the programmatic significance of the birth narratives

(Luke 1–2) for Luke’s theology. The end of the Gospel signals the reader that the story has just begun as repentance and forgiveness must be proclaimed in Jesus’ name to all the nations starting in Jerusalem (24:46–47). Then, what Anna foresaw about the redemption of Jerusalem (2:36–38), itself based on Isaiah 52:9, will incorporate what the next verse of Isaiah likewise foretold: “and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God” (v. 10). One is not surprised, then, to go back and read Luke 4:16–30 and see Jesus simultaneously announcing the “fulfillment of the Isaianic hope of national restoration” and a challenge to the “conventional conceptions of national privilege” (p. 230). Many of the categories of Jesus that permeate the other Gospels reappear in Luke—Jesus as Messiah, Son of David, Son of God, Lord, prophet like Moses—but a distinctive emphasis on the prophet both like and unlike Elijah and Elisha gets added to the mix. Less often observed is how Jesus’ divine identity is likewise highlighted in Luke. For example in 13:34a, he depicts Jesus as wanting to shelter Jerusalem under his wings like a mother hen does her chicks (cf. God’s care for Israel in Deut. 32:10–12 likened to a mother eagle caring for her young and covering them with her wings). In each case, too, only rebellion ensued (Deut. 32:15–18; Luke 13:34b–35).

As Luke progresses into Acts, the theme of God’s people confronting empire comes more to the fore, though there are hints already in Luke. Indeed, Acts needs to be taken into account for all of Luke’s themes but that goes beyond Hays’ purview, except for glimpses here and there. Overall, Hays discerns seven themes of the intertextual narratives in Luke’s two volumes: continuity with the story of Israel, God’s faithfulness to his covenant promises and his grace in his liberating power, the realistic recognition of the need for suffering for God’s people, God’s concern for the helpless and poor, his extension of the good news to all the peoples of the earth, and the countercultural position God’s people find themselves in with respect to earthly powers. Finally, Luke’s readers gradually but increasingly perceive “the unity of identity” between “the Lord” as Yahweh, God of Israel and “the Lord” as Jesus.

John’s is the Gospel that most directly confronts readers with Jesus’ divine claims. It also does not have direct quotations of Scripture quite as frequently as the other Gospels do. As a result, readers do not always realize how permeated it is by the OT. John 5:39–40 and 45–47 nevertheless call to mind Luke 24:27 with its Christological hermeneutic for interpreting the sacred texts. Mark has his mysteries, Matthew his explicit fulfillments, and Luke his more subtle allusions, but John is the master of the luminous image. Nowhere is this clearer than in his portrayal of Jesus as the fulfillment of each of the major festivals of Judaism. His comments to the woman at the well in Samaria prefigure this emphasis (John 4:21). Soon it will not matter *where* one worship because Jesus is the locus of God’s revelation and the object of one’s worship. At the same time, John is no supersessionist. Even his sweeping statements about “the Jews” should each be understood contextually. Never does he indict the entire nation because all of Jesus’ first followers were also Jews. Many

times *hoi Ioudaioi* is shorthand for the Judean religious leaders who represented Israel and most opposed Jesus. The story of Jesus' crucifixion is simultaneously "a glorious exaltation to power (Dan 7) and a painful vicarious suffering for the sins of others (Num 21:4–9 + Isa 52:13—53:12)" (p. 335).

In his conclusion Hays' summarizes the approach of each Gospel. Mark figures the mystery of God's kingdom, Matthew presents Torah transfigured, Luke offers Israel's redemption story and John refigures Israel's worship and temple. But how is this legitimate? Only if "the God to whom the Gospels bear witness, the God incarnate in Jesus, is the same as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." If that is true, "then the figural literary unity of Scripture, Old Testament and New Testament together, is nothing other than the climactic fruition of that one God's self-revelation" (p. 365).

With so many alleged echoes of OT texts, every reader is bound to demur at some point. Is Jesus calling his first disciples to be fishers of people a deliberate reversal of God's judgment of the wealthy women in Amos 4:2 being carried off with fishhooks? Do the Synoptics really not allude to the Suffering Servant text of Isaiah 52:13–53:12 to add that portrait to their mosaic of Christological images? Isn't the primary point of Matthew's inclusion of five women in his genealogy their suspicion of sexual impropriety rather than the (probable) Gentile background of only four of them? No matter how distinctive, can the attitude of Matthew's Jesus to Torah really be referred to just as *halakah*? Did Matthew really have fewer OT allusions in his passion narrative simply because he wants readers to figure out connections for themselves? For that matter, does he really have that many fewer allusions? Is Luke quite so anti-empire as Hays thinks, when it is Rome who consistently rescues the first Christians when various Jewish leaders would destroy them throughout the book of Acts? Must John 19:36 "certainly" (p. 317) allude to not breaking the bones of the Passover lamb when it is already adequately accounted for by the more obvious quotation of Psalm 34:19–20? Don't weak arguments "strain" credibility rather than "credulity" (p. 299), since credulity means gullibility?

These questions, however, arise only rarely, compared with page after page of treasures of exegetical insight into the use of the OT in the NT. Hays promises the reader an examination of the Evangelists' hermeneutics and delivers so much more—the veritable foundation, outline and central details for a biblical theology of the Gospels. We are so grateful that Hays lived to complete this project, and we pray that he may still have many years for fruitful scholarship and ministry.

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**Oliver D. Crisp, *Saving Calvinism: Expanding the Reformed Tradition*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2016. pp. 167. \$18.00, paperback.**

As someone who has written a couple of books critiquing Calvinism, I must say I was intrigued, and somewhat amused by the title of this book. Why, I wondered, would a leading Reformed theologian think Calvinism needed to be saved, and from what? The answer, it turns out, is that Calvinism may need to be saved from some of its most zealous proponents. These zealous proponents, who have led a remarkable resurgence of Calvinism during the past few decades, have claimed the mantle of the great Reformer for those who subscribe to the clearly defined set of doctrines famously summarized in the Tulip acronym. This is particularly true of those devotees of Calvin that have been dubbed “the young, the restless, the Reformed,” who, enthusiastic though they are, may suffer from “a kind of theological amnesia” (p. 12).

Reflecting on the future of the movement, Crisp even goes so far as to say: “In one respect, if the name *Calvinism* were dropped tomorrow, and no one spoke of Calvinism again, it would be a blessing. Calvin would be turning in his grave to think that his name was used in the way it is!” (p. 42). But of course the name “Calvinism” is not going to be dropped anytime in the foreseeable future, so the only question is how the term is going to be understood and who will rightly claim it. If Crisp has his way, Calvinism will come to be understood in significantly broader terms than it currently is by many of its most partisan proponents. Indeed, his strategy for “saving Calvinism” is clearly signaled in his subtitle that calls for “expanding the Reformed tradition,” which is his prescription for curing those afflicted with theological amnesia.

Crisp advances his case with two fundamental claims. First, he insists that Calvinism is not synonymous with the five points of the Tulip, and that the Reformed tradition is in fact broader than Calvinism. The Reformed tradition is identified by three characteristics that do not necessarily apply to all those who claim the Calvinist label. First, the Reformed tradition traces its heritage back to the magisterial Reformation of the sixteenth century. Second, the Reformed tradition embraces either an Episcopal or a Presbyterian form of church polity. And third, the Reformed tradition places an emphasis on the sacramental life of the church.

The second large claim that Crisp argues for in this book is that there is considerable variety in the Reformed tradition with respect to those matters of soteriology that are the focus of the five points of Calvinism. After his first chapter, the rest of the book is devoted to demonstrating and documenting this sort of diversity within the ranks of Reformed theology. In his second chapter, he takes on the Calvinist doctrine that God elects some to salvation, and passes over the rest, which he admits is a “difficult pill to swallow” (p. 59). Given God’s sovereign power, it is only natural to wonder why he does not save more than he does, or even why he does not save all. One classic Reformed answer is that God must display his wrath on those destined

for destruction in order to be fully glorified. But here a number of Reformed thinkers have objected. While all might agree that he *can* display his wrath, it is another thing altogether to say he *must*. Surely God could choose to forgive all if he so chose, and not ordain any to destruction. Karl Barth famously reframed the doctrine of election in light of this consideration.

The next chapter takes up the vexed issue of free will and salvation, a major point of contention between Calvinists and their critics. Given their view of sovereignty, irresistible grace and unconditional election, it is usually thought that Calvinists must embrace some version of compatibilism. Crisp shows that some Reformed thinkers dissent from this, citing the example of John Girardeau, who contended that human beings sometimes have the “power of contrary choice” with respect to some significant decisions. These choices, however, do not pertain to salvation, but only to more mundane matters. While Crisp thinks Girardeau’s position is confused or not fully developed, “it does show that not all Reformed thinkers have been of one mind on the matter of theological determinism” (p. 79). The following two chapters take up the issues of universalism and the nature of atonement. While Calvinists have typically rejected universalism, Crisp contends that Calvinists may at least hope for the salvation of all. He also points out that some classic Reformed thinkers like Warfield and Shedd held that the majority of humanity will actually be saved, in contrast to the popular notion that Calvinism teaches that the elect will comprise only a small remnant of fallen humanity. In his discussion of the cross, he challenges the notion that the penal substitution theory of the atonement is *the* Reformed view. While that theory has undeniably been enormously popular among Calvinists, it is hardly the only view espoused by Reformed theologians, and Crisp demonstrates that a number of other theories have been defended within the tradition.

On all these points, Crisp successfully shows that the Reformed tradition is more diverse, or in some cases nuanced, than the popular Calvinism zealously promoted by its young and restless proponents. Scored on these terms, this book is completely successful, and represents a valuable contribution that should be enthusiastically recommended to all those Calvinists who suffer from the kind of “theological amnesia” Crisp diagnosed. The question remains, however, whether recognizing and embracing the diversity in the Reformed tradition can save Calvinism.

This brings us to Crisp’s final chapter, which I want to look at a bit more closely. Here he deals with the contentious issue of the extent of the atonement. The “L” in the famous Tulip, of course, stands for “limited atonement,” which is the doctrine that Christ died only for the elect, so that they, and they alone, are the only ones who can possibly be saved. Over against this, Crisp shows that a number of Reformed thinkers espouse what he calls “hypothetical universalism,” which rejects the claim that Christ atoned only for the elect. The crucial claim here is “that the atonement has the power to save all, and all who have faith will be saved as a consequence” (p. 135). Or to put

it in more traditional language, the atonement is sufficient for all, but efficient only for those who have faith.

Now this raises a crucial question: who is able to exercise faith? Are all those for whom Christ died given grace that makes it possible for them to do so, and whether or not they do so is up to them? Or is the gift of faith given only to those who are the unconditionally elect, and they, and they alone, are able to have faith? On this point, Crisp seems to equivocate.

Consider the example he uses to illustrate the difference between sufficiency and efficiency. A medical team arrives on an island with enough, indeed more than enough, of a vaccine to protect them from a deadly disease. All are invited to receive it as a free gift, but they must “choose to be vaccinated, coming to submit themselves for vaccination...It is efficient or efficacious only for those who make this choice” (p. 136). Now this example seems amenable to both understandings of who can exercise faith mentioned in the previous paragraph.

Compare what Crisp says in his earlier chapter on free will and salvation when he is explaining Girardeau’s view of decisions in which we do not have the “power of contrary choice”: “There are those brought about by divine grace, enabling us to do them—supremely, in the case of salvation. These spiritual choices, as he calls them, are not actions that are free in the relevant sense because we cannot choose to do them without God’s enabling” (pp. 77–78). Notice particularly here that Crisp speaks of these choices as being “brought about by God,” and also as being made possible by “God’s enabling.” Now the idea that a choice is brought about by God suggests that that choice is caused or determined by God. However, the idea of God’s enabling a choice suggests that God empowers the choice, and makes it possible, but does not determine it. The fact that one is able to do something does not entail that he will in fact do it.

When read in terms of enablement, Crisp’s example resonates deeply with an Arminian rather than a Calvinist view of soteriology. Crisp insists, however, that hypothetical universalism is truly a Reformed view, and he distinguishes it from Arminianism (p. 148).

He shores this claim up by pointing out that hypothetical universalism holds that “only the elect are given the gift of faith in order to obtain the benefits of Christ’s saving work” (p. 139). If faith is “given,” this suggests that God causes it or brings it about in the elect in a more determinate fashion than merely by “enabling” it. But if this is true, it raises an obvious question: What is the point of insisting that the atonement is sufficient for all if the non-elect are utterly powerless to avail themselves of its benefits? If only the elect are given the gift of faith, those who are not elect are no better off than they would be if Christ had not died for them at all. So if this is true, the glaring question that remains unanswered is, why does not God give everyone the gift of faith if he can bring it about in anyone he chooses?

Crisp is very much aware of the problems for Calvinism posed by this question, but he points out that it is true for any version of Calvinism, not just hypothetical universalism. As he does elsewhere in the book, Crisp appeals to mystery and the “secret will of God.” He also reminds us that we can hope for universal salvation, or at least for the salvation of the large majority of humanity so that “the sufficiency of the work of Christ matches (or almost matches) its efficiency” (p. 141).

Still, the possibility, if not the actuality, of any gap between the sufficiency of the work of Christ and its efficiency requires a satisfactory explanation if we are to maintain a substantive account of the perfect goodness and love of God. There is such an explanation if any who fail to have faith do so because they freely refuse to submit to the vaccination that will save them even though they truly could submit because of God’s enabling grace. This, of course, is the Arminian reading of Crisp’s example, cited above.

In short, if Calvinism holds that God could give all persons saving faith, but may choose not to do so, Calvinism represents a view of God that is not worth saving. But if Calvinists want to maintain a view of God’s love and goodness that is worth saving, perhaps the most straightforward way to save Calvinism is simply by embracing Arminianism. Arminius, after all, was a part of the Reformed tradition, too.

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**Gentry, Peter. *How to Read & Understand the Biblical Prophets*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017, 141 pp., \$17.99, paperback.**

The prophetic books of the Old Testament are often neglected or misinterpreted by the typical Christian due to the difficulty to understand them. Peter Gentry has written this short primer—*How to Read & Understand the Biblical Prophets*—to equip the average Christian with a better understanding of how Hebrew prophetic literature works and, thus, how the biblical prophets ought to be read and interpreted. Gentry is professor of Old Testament at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, the coauthor of *Kingdom through Covenant*, author of many articles, and the director of the Hexapla Institute.

Through seven chapters, Gentry explains various aspects of the prophetic genre illustrated throughout with examples from the biblical prophets. In the first chapter, Gentry argues that the bulk of the content of the prophets has little to do with predicting the future but, rather, is concerned with calling the people of God back to the covenant of God—primarily using the language of the book of Deuteronomy (p. 30). Chapter two, then, surveys the genuine predictive statements of the prophets. Gentry shows that even these predictions of coming judgement and future restoration are still based on the Sinai covenant, for covenant violation leads to judgment (p. 40). He also explains that an important purpose of the prophetic predictions is that

they allow for God himself to interpret the coming exile (p. 37) and restoration. For example, the restoration will involve a physical return *and* a spiritual return from exile (p. 39).

Chapter three surveys the form of the prophetic message, in which Gentry describes the literary function of repetition in Hebrew literature (p. 44), word pairs (e.g. *hesed* and *’emet*, 46), and chiasms (p. 47). He then illustrates how this recursive nature of Hebrew literature functions also at the macro level by showing that the literary structure of the book of Isaiah reveals that Isaiah tells the same message—the transformation of Zion—seven times from different angles (pp. 51–55). Gentry, in chapter four, argues that the Oracles against the Nations, have their genesis in the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32 (p. 60) and that hope is extended to these nations to find their salvation within Zion (p. 65).

The final three chapters each look at different ways the prophets describe the future. Chapter five examines the prophetic use of typology to depict a New Exodus. Gentry defines typology as that which meets four criteria: (i) correspondence between people, places, etc., (ii) escalation from type to antitype, (iii) biblical warrant, and (iv) development of type coinciding with the progression of the biblical covenants (pp. 90–91). Chapter six tackles the apocalyptic, understanding it as both a genre and a literary type found within other genres (p. 101). Chapter seven describes the so-called “already-not-yet” as unveiled by the New Testament authors’ use of the Old Testament. The book then concludes with a brief appendix on the book of Revelation. It appears to be a central concern of Gentry to disprove the wide-spread purported “literal” reading of the prophets and to provide an alternative reading method. In the chapter on typology he “bluntly” addresses the issue of alleged literal interpretation (p. 85) and in the conclusion to the book writes:

The debate between literal interpretation and spiritual interpretation is entirely bogus. When the Reformers talked about the “literal sense” of the text, they meant the meaning intended by the author *according to the rules of the genre of literature* being used to communicate the message. (p. 124, italics original)

Gentry’s aim, therefore, is to begin to explain these “rules” of Hebrew literature. Relatedly, Gentry also argues against a strict chronological reading of the prophets. He supports this argument by showing how the New Testament authors use the same text (Zech 12:10) to refer to different periods of time (p. 122). Additionally, it appears that the chief purpose of the appendix on Revelation is also to show how John employs the recursive nature of Hebrew literature which thus precludes a strict chronological reading (p. 128). Those raised within the tradition which puts forward this so-called “literal” reading as the touchstone of orthodoxy will certainly be challenged as they interact with Gentry’s level-headed and exegetically sound alternative reading method.

Many significant insights from Gentry's years of studying the Hebrew literature and the prophets are peppered throughout the book. Some such insights significantly impact other critical issues on the prophets but were not further developed in the book. For example, Gentry argues that repetition is "how a *single author* communicates" in Hebrew (p. 44), thus critiquing those who would argue repetitions evidence different sources. Similarly, Gentry argues that prophets predicted the near future and the distant future so that when their near-future prophecies came true the prophet would be validated (Deut 18) regarding his distant-future prophecies (pp. 34, 74). This understanding of Hebrew literature implicitly challenges those who would argue that distant prophecies were in fact later additions, *vaticinium ex eventu*. Granted, it was not the intent of the book to address critical issues, but the aware reader will benefit from these perceptive statements recognizing their larger implications than those explicitly mentioned in the book.

The average Christian may at times find themselves struggling with the amount of technical terms within the book. When Gentry introduces a term, like hendiadys, he does provide a definition (e.g. p. 22) but, since the book is short and contains a number of potentially new concepts, the uninitiated may feel disoriented. This is not so much a critique of the book, but a disclaimer for the novice interpreter combined with a call to press on, labor hard, and develop the important skill of interpreting God's Word by learning from a master builder like Gentry.

One sad omission, however, is any extensive explanation from Gentry on how to discern the literary structure of a passage or a book. It is not as if literary structures are not important to Gentry, quite the opposite. He claims the "literary structure is the key to correct interpretation" (28) and "teaching must be more than communicating the content of the text; we must *explain the form* and show how this carries the meaning" (p. 106), and he provides numerous literary structures of texts throughout the book (e.g. pp. 20, 52, 56, 61, 66–69, 72–74, 79–80, 86, 95, 106). Yet the closest the book comes to a detailed explanation on *how* to derive the literary structure of a text is the mention of the methodology of M. P. O'Connor for Hebrew poetry and also discourse grammar, methods not for the beginner (p. 60). Yet, the ardent reader may be able to pick up clues from the literary structures provided by Gentry to begin determining literary structures on their own.

*How to Read & Understand the Biblical Prophets* is essentially a book on the nature of Hebrew literature and the appropriate hermeneutical tools required for accurately interpreting the prophets. It is written at a popular level to instruct the beginner while also offering correction for the seasoned interpreter. It fills an important gap in the literature since most hermeneutical or Hebrew literature textbooks are too complex for the common reader, and most books on the prophets cover only the content of the prophets rather than *how* to read them (though see Chalmers recent work *Interpreting the Prophets* which has a similar goal to Gentry, yet both have different emphases and complement each other). This book is recommended as an

excellent, thoroughly biblical, erudite, yet down-to-earth and practical handbook for all those wanting to learn how to properly read the biblical prophets.

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**Senn, Frank C. *Introduction to Christian Liturgy*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2012, pp. 244, \$29, paperback.**

One of the foremost contemporary liturgical theologians, Frank Senn is a retired Lutheran pastor, who continues his vocation as a scholar and author. A past president of both the Liturgical Conference and the North American Academy of Liturgy, Senn earned a PhD in Liturgical Studies from the University of Notre Dame and has taught in various capacities at the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago, the University of Chicago, and Trinity Theological College in Singapore, among others. His works include *Christian Liturgy: Catholic and Evangelical* (1997), a comparative and ecumenical study of Christian liturgy with a special focus on the Reformation; *Christian Worship and Its Cultural Setting* (2004), an anthropological analysis of Christian worship; and *The People's Work: A Social History of the Liturgy* (2006).

The title of the current work, *Introduction to Christian Liturgy*, is perhaps too basic to reveal its true contents. For a book intended as an introduction, Senn manages to be remarkably comprehensive in a few pages, covering the historical development of Christian liturgy—its pastoral aspects, history, and culture; the order of worship, calendrical cycle, lectionary use, and sacramental practice; as well as arts and architecture in worship—across time and traditions. Each of the eleven chapters addresses five questions ranging from the basic (“why do we worship?” in chapter 1) to the structural (“what are the parts of a eucharistic prayer?” in chapter 3) to the practical (“how is the body used in worship?” in chapter 11). The book’s consistent arrangement makes for a manageable reading and discussion schedule for both teacher and student.

A highlight of Senn’s book are his copious examples from pre- and post-Reformation worshipping traditions. The Byzantine liturgy and Roman mass; Reformational, Rationalist, and Revivalist influences; Pentecostal and Emerging worship; and more are all woven into Senn’s historical and developmental narrative in a succinct but substantive way. Readers who are not already steeped in the history of Christian worship may find the wide range of traditions and examples, along with the frequent references to dates and changes of dating for Christian celebrations and commemorations, bewildering at first, but Senn’s helpful categorization by chronology in chapter 2, “History and Culture,” serves as a frame of reference for the rest of the book (and should, perhaps, be read first). A helpful glossary at the end clarifies the vocabulary used in liturgical studies.

One chapter in particular serves as an example of Senn's format throughout. Chapter 7 on "The Church Year: Holy Week," covers not only the historical development of Easter and the days leading up to it, but also church customs closely connected to each day of Holy Week, including their rise and, in some cases, restoration in Christian worship. Senn uses a primary source, the travel diary of Egeria, a Spanish nun from the fourth century, to give the reader a glimpse into the rites and observances of Holy Week as celebrated in Jerusalem at the time. From there, and moving forward in time, he summarizes the origin and development of practices such as the washing of feet and stripping of the altar during Maundy Thursday, the Stations of the Cross on Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday (strangely absent, however, is any discussion of the role of Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday in Holy Week). Concluding the chapter, Senn recognizes that fourth-century Jerusalem and the twenty-first century reader are far removed in time and experience from each other, and that ancient rites may require adaptation to contemporary styles of celebration.

Adaptation, or what to do with twenty centuries of Christian worship, is a lingering question in Senn's book. In the Afterword, Senn notes his original intent to conclude with a bibliography of current denominational worship books, but he abandoned the idea after questioning which traditions, languages, and specific books to include. Some traditions do not provide books for worshipers, while "those who offer contemporary services buy music for the worship team but words are projected on screens for the worshipers" (p. 211). Moreover, the rapid changes in communication over the last hundred years, from the invention of the mimeograph to the incorporation of high tech graphics, have exerted a profound influence on how churches worship; while an awareness of the global nature of the church means that congregations are acquiring a more cross-cultural character (pp. 37–38). The intersection of modernity, technology, and culture in the landscape of Christian worship will require a sequel to Senn's introductory volume.

Like Karl Barth discovering "the strange new world of the Bible," readers from less liturgical or non-liturgical churches encountering the vast and rich history of Christian worship for the first time through *Introduction to Christian Liturgy*, may find themselves in a strange new world of worship, but one worth discovering, engaging, and retrieving. Even though Senn confesses his experience with non-liturgical worshiping traditions is limited (as is his coverage of them), readers and leaders from more contemporary music-driven worship settings may still find in his work a resource for the renewal of both the theology and praxis of worship within their congregations. For students and readers already familiar with liturgical worship, who want to go deeper into the origins of their own and other worshiping traditions, Senn's work will whet their appetites for more; his suggestions for further reading at the end of each chapter provide options for going even deeper into the history and development of specific worship practices.

Intended as a “pastoral liturgical handbook,” Senn defines pastoral liturgy as “the study and application of liturgy in the actual life of the church” (p. 1). In other words, *Introduction to Christian Liturgy* is not only a textbook, but also a resource for pastoral leadership and for discerning readers seeking to broaden their grasp of the history of Christian worship. Outside formal academic courses, pastors might consider using the book in a lay study group over the course of several weeks to strengthen the foundations of worship in their congregations.

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**Snearly, Michael K. *The Return of the King: Messianic Expectation in Book V of the Psalter*. London: T&T Clark, 2016, pp. 236, \$112, hardback.**

Michael K. Snearly’s revised doctoral dissertation, *The Return of the King: Messianic Expectation in Book V of the Psalter*, is one of the most recent and substantive contributions to the “canonical” or editorial-critical study of the Psalter. Snearly’s work focuses particularly on Book V (Pss 107–150) and argues the following thesis: “I contend that there is a purposeful arrangement of psalm groups in Book V and that this arrangement should be interpreted as signaling a renewed hope in the royal/Davidic promises” (p. 3).

Snearly begins with methodological issues. His thorough interaction with and rebuttal to the method’s skeptics (pp. 10–17) provides a great service to its practitioners, as the method currently faces a “crisis of credibility.” Also noteworthy are the pitfalls he highlights that must be avoided if the method is to remain credible (pp. 18–19). The greatest contribution of these chapters, however, is Snearly’s own development of the method. He provides it with a more solid linguistic foundation by finding in text-linguistics and poetics support for the oft contended notion that the Psalter can be read as unified text (pp. 39–50). Further, his study seeks to consistently apply a criterion that gives more objective footing to the method’s results: moving “beyond demonstrating similarities among proximate psalms to showing that those similarities do not occur with the same frequency in other parts of the Psalter” (p. 19).

An important aspect of Snearly’s study is the idea that Book V is part of a storyline discernible in the Psalter. Though many will remain unconvinced of this claim, Snearly does make it more tenable than previous studies by grounding it in narrative theory, arguing that the Psalter is a “multiple focus narrative” (p. 84). Snearly considers Pss 1–2 (which together depict an exemplary Torah-meditating king) and 89 to be the most significant psalms in the storyline prior to Book V (p. 79). In light of previous studies that make the opposite claim (à la Gerald Wilson), noteworthy is his contention that Ps 89 functions *positively* in this storyline. Support for this claim is the final supplication for Yahweh to “remember” (זכר) his anointed in vv. 47–52. This supplication indicates that the psalm ends on a hopeful note about the promises made to David (p. 98). Thus,

prior to Book V Yahweh appears to have forgotten his covenant with David, “but his covenant loyalty (חסד) is eternal (עולם), so there is reason for hope” (p. 98).

Turning to Book V, Snearly argues that it is divided into four psalm groupings. He

contends that each grouping is arranged around a key-word that plays an important role in Pss 1–2 and 89, each of which is related to the royal Davidic hope: חסד and עולם (Pss 107–118/ Ps 89); תורה (Ps 119/ Pss 1–2); ציון (Pss 120–137/ Pss 1–2); מלך (Pss 138–145/ Pss 1–2). According to Snearly, the significance of this arrangement is that “Book V reaffirms the importance of the Davidic figure in the Psalter” (p. 100), which signals a renewed hope in the royal/ Davidic promises.

The dominant theme of Pss 107–118 is Yahweh’s eternal covenant loyalty. Either חסד or עולם occurs in “every psalm of this corpus, and, moreover, they are integral to the interpretation of each psalm” (p. 120). An *inclusion* that includes this dominant theme even brackets the unit (Pss 107:1; 118:29) (p. 110). The importance of חסד and עולם in Pss 107–118 suggests that this group functions as a response to Ps 89, affirming the Davidic hope that concludes that psalm. The Davidic cluster in this section, Pss 108–110, sends the message that “David is back!” (p. 127).

Snearly notes that Pss 119 is “a *crux criticorum* within macrostructure of Book V”

(p. 133). Given that the psalm’s dominant theme (i.e., Torah) is unique to Pss 119 in Book V, he contends that Ps 119 acts “as its own macrostructural unit within Book V” (p. 137). This “psalm group” contributes to the Psalter’s storyline, argues Snearly, by recalling and bearing witness to the reemergence of the exemplary Torah-meditating ruler of Pss 1–2 (pp. 137, 139).

The next psalm group consists of the Songs of Ascents (Pss 120–134) and Pss 135–137. The group’s cohesiveness is demonstrated especially by five key-word links that bind it together (שיר, ציון, ירושלם, ישראל, and מעלה), features that occur far less frequently elsewhere in Book V (pp. 145–147). Further evidence that Pss 135–137 should be incorporated in this group is that, when included, the group is “bookended by similar psalms...written from the perspective of exile” (Pss 120 and 137) (p. 147). The significance of this group lies particularly in its emphasis on Zion (pp. 150–151). Observing the connection between David and Zion in the important Ps 132, Snearly argues that the message arising from this third group is that Yahweh has “not abandoned Zion or his king,” the program outlined in Pss 1–2 (p. 153).

The primary link binding Pss 138–145 together is the shared author designation לדוד. There are also a number of parallels with Book III and Pss 1–2 (particularly in Pss 144 and 145) that create cohesion within this group (pp. 160–167). The latter parallels are particularly significant since they show that “the end of the Psalter mirrors the beginning” (p. 168). The Psalter begins and ends with a focus upon Yahweh’s establishment of his anointed over his earthly kingdom (p. 169).

Psalms 144–145 serve as a conclusion to Book V, while Pss 146–150 function as a conclusion to the Psalter as a whole (p. 184). Snearly argues that the latter group fittingly concludes the Psalter because of verbal and thematic correspondences with its

introduction (Pss 1–2) (pp. 178–181). The purpose of this “final hallel” is to conclude the Psalter in a climax of praise grounded in the storyline of the Psalter, with its focus on Yahweh and his anointed “who form a people in the midst of a hostile world and extend their kingdom over unruly nations” (p. 181).

*The Return of the King* provides a great service to the disciple of editorial criticism as it pertains to the Psalter. Perhaps its greatest contribution lies in the area of methodology. Snearly’s rigorous defense, development, and application of the method is sorely needed given the skepticism that still surrounds it in Psalms studies. I suspect that Snearly will make not a few new converts to the method with this offering. While certainly a scholarly work, this book would serve as an excellent introduction for any student or pastor who is new to the method and looking for an exemplary model of how it should be properly applied. If the book has a weakness, it is (at least from the present reviewer’s perspective) the argument that the Psalter exhibits an *intentionally crafted* “storyline.” A whole host of questions related to the Psalter’s “shaping” would need to be addressed before such a claim could be convincingly made. Further, the claim would need to be based upon more than three, albeit significant, “seam” psalms (1–2 and 89). However, overall, Snearly’s impressive work is an important and welcome contribution to Psalms studies.

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**Lee, Sang Hoon. *Trinitarian Ontology and Israel in Robert W. Jenson’s Theology*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2016, pp. 196, \$25, paperback.**

With articles forthcoming in a number of respected journals, Sang Hoon Lee is currently one of the pastors at Raynes Park Korean Church in London, England. The present monograph is a revised version of his doctoral thesis at the University of Aberdeen. In it, Lee clarifies a commonly misunderstood, if not neglected, aspect of Robert Jenson’s (1930–2017) later thought. Namely, the (often implicit) way in which the later Jenson holds onto his “trinitarian (onto-)theology” while developing, *as a result of the former*, a post-supersessionistic account of Judaism—two inextricable emphases that interpreters of Jenson have found difficulty in properly acknowledging and/or holding together (p. 1; whereas supersessionism is the long-held notion that God’s mosaic covenant with Israel has been superseded by the new covenant associated with the coming of Christ, so that the Christian church effectively supersedes Israel as the people of God, post-supersessionism—synonymous with non-supersessionism—is the belief that God’s original covenant with Israel continues on even in the church age for it was irrevocable). Lee thus writes to “make explicit the crucial links” (p. 1) within the corpus of one of the most influential Protestant theologians of our time. In addition, Lee’s examination of Jenson’s post-supersessionism brings fresh insight into

the ongoing debates concerning the relationship between Israel and the church, which have continual importance both theologically and politically.

What is most distinctive about Lee's study is the way in which he explores the influence of Jewish theologian, Michael Wyschogrod, on the development of Jenson's post-supersessionism (p. 9). Along such lines, in chapter one, Lee recounts the early Jenson's temporalistic revising of Barth's actualistic ontology as being the basis upon which Jenson's later post-supersessionism finds its *ontological* motivation (pp. 13–32). Because election for Jenson is dependent upon the "horizon of time" (e.g., Jenson saw the event of Christ's resurrection as *electively* being constitutive of God's trinitarian being), the election of Israel was determinative of God's eternal being as well (p. 32). Such a move by Jenson placed a *temporal* spin upon Barth's actualistic ontology, which Lee describes in this manner: "God is the event of (the enactment of) his decision. . . . God's triune being is his *action*." (p. 18). Following from this, chapter two describes Jenson's understanding of Christ's body as having been "placed in the eternal being of God," thus leading to an eternal "bodily" understanding of God that is eucharistically, ecclesially, and soteriologically accommodative (pp. 10, 33–58, 174). These emphases find consonance with Wyschogrod's proposals, as outlined in chapter three (pp. 59–88). A sympathetic reader of Barth, Wyschogrod's emphasis upon God's irrevocable "covenant relationship to the *bodily* existence of the people of Israel" results from his engagement with Christian perspectives on the incarnation and the Torah, and leads Wyschogrod to see Jewish identity as being a "'diluted incarnation' of God's presence by election" (pp. 61–62, 79). Amidst this, Lee highlights Wyschogrod's "mutual acknowledgment of the other community's distinctive role in God's one redemptive history" (p. 62). Jenson's affirming appropriation of Wyschogrod then forms the content of chapter four, which concludes that it is only in the church's anticipated union with Israel in the eschaton that the two, together, can be considered the people of God and body of Christ (pp. 89–118). Chapter five continues upon this post-supersessionist theme with respect to Jenson's hermeneutical ontology and its parallel stress upon Torah as both narrative and law (pp. 119–145). Finally, in chapter six, Lee surveys Jenson's eschatological ontology and its associated pneumatology, for it is the Spirit who is at work to eschatologically bring together Jews and gentiles under their one rightful head, Jesus Christ (p. 175, 146–172).

Lee's argument, structured chiasmically in a way that lays stress upon middle chapters three and four (on Wyschogrod and Jenson's response to Wyschogrod, respectively), is on point and, as such, is enthusiastically endorsed by Jenson himself, who writes that Lee "succeeds handsomely" (back cover). In this regard, Lee's demystifying work on the question of how Jenson's trinitarian ontology is related to his post-supersessionism can rightly be considered an original as well as much needed contribution to the field of Jenson studies. That said, because Lee explicitly seeks to read Jenson more charitably than earlier commentators (p. 9), critical engagement within Lee's work has more to do with ensuring that Jenson is properly interpreted than it does with offering Lee's own critical evaluation of Jenson's thought (e.g., p. 176).

Lee effectively demonstrates that Jenson's post-supersessionist proposal finds its roots not only in the early Jenson's temporal actualistic ontology and corporeal theology, but most especially in his later engagement with Jewish thinkers like Wyshogrod (p. 61). That is, a "transposing [of] Wyshogrod's thought into Christian ecumenical rubrics" takes place in a way that "Jenson maintains that the church is the people of God, the body of Christ, and the temple of the Holy Spirit, *only* in its anticipated union with the Jewish people which will occur beyond this age" (p. 89). The implication of all of this is that the church cannot in actuality be the church without Israel, even if its union with Israel is more of an eschatological rather than a present reality. Supersessionism for Jenson is thus wholly at odds with the very essence of the Christian faith.

On this point, Lee's compelling description of Jenson is worthy of constructive consideration if one grants, as I do, that Jenson's post-supersessionist account of Judaism can in fact be seen as being more consonant with the overall New Testament witness regarding its prescribed relationship between Jews and gentiles in Christ than its supersessionist alternatives (e.g., it would not be difficult to coherently tease out a Jensonian post-supersessionistic reading of Rom. 9–11, Eph. 2:11–3:13; cf. pp. 95–99). If so, then Lee is right to suggest that "Jenson's theology of Judaism offers a non-supersessionistic understanding of [the] God of Israel in trinitarian terms and of Christian self-identity, without compromising the Christian faith about the messiahship and deity of Jesus" (p. 90). Even so, a stumbling block for many will continue to be the untraditional Jenson's seemingly panentheistic temporal actualistic ontology through which God, by the event of the incarnate Christ's resurrection, is said to not only have a body, but to also *ontologically* embody Israel and the church by way of their bodily *theosis* in the risen Christ's body (pp. 90–93). Questions also will arise as to whether the implications of Jenson's specific understanding of Israel's irrevocable election, which features his view that Judaism and the church are seen as "two paralleling detours to the Kingdom of God," with Israel as being the original route around which the church can only eschatologically find its place, is too idealistic to be truly applicable in the real world (pp. 102–104, 117–118). On a different note, Lee's study warrants comparative studies between Jenson's post-supersessionist view of Judaism and dispensationalist views of the same.

Jenson's recent passing in September 2017 should bring about a welcome renewed interest in his life and thought. In this regard, advanced students of biblical and theological studies will find Lee's book to be an accessible introduction to Jenson and to certain themes and aspects of modern Protestant theology. More than that, Lee's explicit reconstruction of Jenson's post-supersessionist argument provides a formidable foray into an important and consequential question that, if Jenson is correct, lies at the very heart of the gospel.

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**Meister, Chad and James K. Dew Jr, eds. *God and the Problem of Evil: Five Views*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2017, pp. 196, \$25.00.**

The Spectrum Multiview book series by InterVarsity Press considers a topic, and allows experts on the topic to present their views and interact with one another. In this volume, the question of the nature and existence of God is debated in light of the existence and nature of evil. Each author is given the chance to set out their own view. Then at the end of the book, each author has an opportunity to engage, criticize, and develop their thoughts on the views of the other authors. Personally, I find this format very useful for going deeper into theological and philosophical issues. Chad Meister and James Dew have done an excellent job at finding authors that have well-developed views that are quite distinct from one another. Further, they have selected authors who have made interesting, and significant contributions to this issue. Readers who are fairly new to the problem of evil will be well-served by starting with this volume, and then following up by reading other works by each contributor.

The experts in this volume are as follows: Phillip Cary, William Lane Craig, William Hasker, Thomas Jay Oord, and Stephen Wykstra. Other than Phillip Cary, I am quite familiar with the works of the contributors on the problem of evil. Given my familiarity with the contributors' previous work, I can offer a particular praiseworthy feature of this volume. One impressive feature of this volume is that each contributor has done an excellent job of summarizing their work into a single essay. For example, William Hasker and Thomas Jay Oord each have previous book-length treatments of the problem of evil. Yet each author gives a clear and concise statement of their views. Readers will get an excellent introduction to the thought of each author, and have a serious launching pad for going deeper into their work.

Before delving deeper into the book, I wish discuss one important caveat. The title of the book might suggest that there is *one* problem of evil, but the book makes it very clear that there is no such thing as *the* problem of evil. Instead, there are many different issues related to the nature of God and evil that every Christian must consider. This is made clear in the introduction of the book as well as in each contributor's chapter. Each author clearly lays out what the particular problem of evil that he wishes to focus on, and then articulates his response accordingly. With that caveat out of the way, allow me to discuss each contributor's essay.

Phillip Cary offers what he calls the "Classic View," which is represented by such historical figures as Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, and C. S. Lewis. Cary notes that classical Christian theists have not, historically, asked questions like, 'If evil exists, how can God exist?' Instead, classical Christian thinkers were troubled by a different question: 'Since God is perfectly good, how is evil possible?' According to Cary, evil exists because God has a good reason for permitting it to exist. This 'good reason' is intrinsically connected to a greater good that God will bring out of the occurrence of that evil. Throughout Cary's essay, readers will encounter a careful

and nuanced articulation of Augustinian and Thomistic ideas such as that evil is the privation of the good, and that it is impossible for God to create creatures who are incorruptible. One interesting feature of Cary's view is that God is never "off the hook" for the existence of evil in the world. For Cary, God can be held responsible for the existence of evil since God permits every instance of evil. However, Cary maintains that God cannot be held culpable for evil since God has a good reason for permitting it.

William Lane Craig presents a "Molinist View," whereby God possesses exhaustive foreknowledge of what creatures would do in any possible circumstance that they might be placed in. Craig makes careful distinctions between different kinds of intellectual and pastoral problems that a Christian apologist should consider. Some versions of the problem of evil focus on the alleged internal incoherence of Christian belief, whilst others present evil as external evidence that the Christian God does not exist. Craig presents each argument, and explains how Molinism can, or cannot, help rebut each objection.

William Hasker offers an "Open Theist View." On open theism, God does not have exhaustive foreknowledge of the future because the future is open. God does possess an exhaustive knowledge of what creatures might do, and probably will do, in the future, and He uses this knowledge to providentially guide creation towards His intended purposes. Hasker offers an important contribution to this discussion by making a distinction between two kinds of theodicies: a general-policy theodicy and a specific-benefit theodicy. On a general-policy theodicy, God's permission of certain evils is justified on the basis of God adopting a good general policy for creation. For example, God might desire to create a universe that is life-sustaining, and that requires that God create a universe with regular laws of nature. A universe with orderly laws of nature is a great good, but it does entail the possibility of natural disasters like hurricanes. In contrast, a specific-benefit theodicy focuses on the justification for God permitting a particular instance of evil—i.e., whatever specific greater good that arises from that particular instance of evil. In Hasker's essay, he develops a robust general-policy theodicy that is well-worth considering.

Thomas Jay Oord offers what he calls the "Essential Kenosis View." Oord does not find most attempts at theodicy satisfying in the least. Theodicies always leave him thinking, 'God, you could have prevented this evil from happening.' In light of this, Oord develops a theodicy on which God could not have prevented evil from happening, thus getting God 'off the hook' for the existence of evil. On Oord's understanding of God, love is God's primary attribute. God's love is necessarily self-giving and uncontrolling. What this means is that God necessarily gives life and freedom to others, and this is not something that God can revoke. God essentially and eternally gives freedom, agency, self-organization, and law-like regularity to creation. It is not possible for God to ever override or revoke these gifts. What this

means is that God cannot intervene to prevent evil. Instead, God can only call all of creation to a life of righteousness.

In the final essay, Stephen Wykstra presents a “Skeptical Theist View.” Wykstra is personally responsible for starting this particular response to the evidential problem of evil in the 1980s. The evidential problem of evil tries to say that certain instances of evil give us good evidence for thinking that God does not exist. The Skeptical Theist response argues that we are not warranted in making an inference from some particular instance of evil to the conclusion that God does not exist. This essay shows a great deal of nuance, and would serve as an excellent source in any philosophy of religion syllabus.

When it is all said and done, *God and the Problem of Evil* offers a lucid, emotionally sensitive, and diverse set of essays on the problem of evil. It would serve well for pastors, students, and small groups who are looking for a place to start their journey into this issue, or for people who are wishing to go a bit deeper in their reflection on God and evil.

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**Vance, Donald R., George Athas, Yael Avrahami, and Jonathan G. Kline. *Biblical Aramaic: A Reader & Handbook*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2016, pp. 233, \$29.95, hardcover.**

*Biblical Aramaic: A Reader & Handbook* is an excellent addition to the academic resources on Biblical Aramaic. As the authors relay, Biblical Aramaic is often neglected in seminary language studies due to the small percentage of the Old Testament written in Aramaic (ix). However, to fully understand and apply “the biblical languages,” one must surely include Aramaic in his/her studies. The authors include Donald Vance, Associate Professor of Biblical Languages and Literature at Oral Roberts University. Vance studied Northwest Semitic Philology at The Oriental Institute, and received his Ph.D. from the University of Denver and Iliff School of Theology. Second, George Athas is a lecturer in Old Testament Studies, Hebrew, and Church History at Moore College in Sydney, Australia. Third, Yael Avrahami received his Ph.D. from the University of Haifa and is the chair of the Department of Biblical Studies at Oranim Academic College in Haifa, Israel. Finally, Jonathan Kline received his Ph.D. from Harvard University and currently serves as the academic editor at Hendrickson Publishers. Kline’s contribution to the work includes the helpful vocabulary and morphology lists.

*Biblical Aramaic* begins with an Introduction to the Aramaic language (pp. ix–xix). This introduction includes a brief, but helpful, introduction to the history of Aramaic. The authors discuss the language branch of Aramaic as well as the various dialects that developed in the ancient world (Old Aramaic, Imperial Aramaic, Syriac,

and Late Aramaic) (pp. ix–x). In a more elaborate discussion of the Aramaic language, these broad designations could be further delineated into additional sub-categories. Following their discussion of the history of the Aramaic language, the authors discuss the Aramaic of the Bible. Since Biblical Aramaic is not a true dialect of Aramaic, but only designates the portions of the Bible written in Aramaic, the authors conclude that it is difficult to assign a stage of Aramaic history to each section of Biblical Aramaic. The authors conclude that all of the sections of Biblical Aramaic seem to be a mixture of ancient dialects (p. xii).

The next section of the Introduction provides the reader with a pathway from Hebrew to Aramaic morphologically. Many readers will be familiar with Biblical Hebrew, and so these general differences between Hebrew and Aramaic will allow the student or pastor to move rather easily from their knowledge of Biblical Hebrew to Biblical Aramaic. After rehearsing some differences (distinct vocabularies, pronunciation and spelling differences, and the Canaanite shift), the authors move to the similarities between the languages. On page xiv, the authors provide a helpful chart listing consonantal equivalents between the two languages. For example, a  $\tau$  in Hebrew can often be a  $\daleth$  in Aramaic. Likewise, the  $\zeta$  in Hebrew may sometimes be an  $\varepsilon$  in Aramaic. Knowing these consonantal equivalents can help the Hebrew student move from the Hebrew  $\text{זָהָב}$  ('gold') to the Aramaic  $\text{זְהָב}$  ('gold'). Similarly, Hebrew  $\text{אֶרֶץ}$  ('land') is equivalent to Aramaic  $\text{אַרְעָ}$  ('land'). These consonantal equivalents are indispensable for obtaining a quick, but elementary, Aramaic vocabulary.

After the discussion of consonantal equivalents, the authors provide differences in the nominal system for Aramaic. The authors highlight differences in the determined (definite) state as well as differences to the distinguishing marks of masculine and feminine nouns.

Next, the authors discuss the Aramaic verbal system, particularly the different nomenclature for Aramaic *binyanim* versus Hebrew *binyanim* (pp. xv–xvi). This discussion will be required in order for one to make his/her way through this work. While Aramaic stems have similar nuances to Hebrew verbal stems, the nomenclature for these stems is rather different. To further the difficulty, various authors use different nomenclature depending on their system of learning Aramaic. Russell Fuller uses a shorthand numerical system with 1 being the base stems (active and passive/reflexive), 2 being the intensive stems, and 3 being the causative stems. Miles VanPelt (*Basics of Biblical Aramaic*, 2011), Alger Johns (*A Short Grammar of Biblical Aramaic*, 1972), and Franz Rosenthal (*A Grammar of Biblical Aramaic*, 2006) follow the standard naming of the stems (Peal, Peil, Hithpeel, Pael, Hithpaal, Haphel, and Hophal), while the authors of *Biblical Aramaic* follow the linguistics designation of the *Grundstamm*, or the language's base stem, the "G stem." Other linguistic designations in this volume are "D" for "doubling" (intensive dagesh forte in second radical), "H" for causative stems, and various other designations to highlight passive, middle, or reflexive voice nuances. While these designations are

at home in linguistics discussions, they may be foreign to some Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic students, and so the chart on page xv will be valuable for understanding the handbook/reader portion of the volume.

The final section of the book's Introduction provides helpful ways to use this volume. The discussion here primarily includes how to use the book's extensive vocabulary and morphology lists.

Being an Aramaic "Reader," the next fifty-six pages include the Aramaic portions of the Bible along with a detailed apparatus providing verb parsing, vocabulary helps and some minor grammatical comments to aid with translation. The Aramaic text is fully pointed, and the apparatus is keyed using superscripted letters tied to footnotes below the text. The reader will need to refer to the abbreviations list on pp. xxi–xxii to fully comprehend the apparatus. However, after using the "Reader" portion of the volume for a few minutes, the abbreviations will become normal and natural. Regarding vocabulary in the "Reader," words that occur twenty-five times or more are not analyzed below the Aramaic text. Rather, these frequent words are listed in a glossary in the back of the book. This feature allows for efficient translation while also removing the "crutch" of extensive vocabulary help.

To say that the "crutch" or vocabulary help has been removed refers only to the Aramaic textual apparatus in the "Reader" portion of the work. The remainder of the book, nearly 75% of the volume, contains an array of vocabulary and morphology lists. List 1 (pp. 61–78) provides all words that occur two times or more in Biblical Aramaic. The list contains not only vocabulary and definitions, but also the part of speech and the frequency of each word. List 2 (pp. 78–87) address all *hapax legomena* in Biblical Aramaic including a staggering (and depressing) 266 words. This list includes lexical forms, definitions, attested forms as they occur in the text, parsing, and the verse in which the word occurs. List 3 (pp. 88–94) begins the section of lists for parts of speech, beginning with verbs. List 3 provides all verbal roots with gloss definitions and the frequency that these verbs occur. Lists 4–15 (pp. 94–117) cover common nouns, proper nouns, adjectives, pronouns, prepositions, numbers, adverbs, conjunctions, disjunctives, interjections, particles, and collocations respectively. Lists 16–25 (pp. 118–147) cover all verbs by stem, and Lists 26–45 (pp. 148–198) includes all verbs by root type ('strong', I-ʿ, I-ʿ, II-ʿ, etc.). The lists of verbs by root type provide a remarkable benefit to observing morphological trends within Biblical Aramaic as well as confirming morphological trends among the "weak" verbs of Biblical Hebrew. Lists 46 and 47 (pp. 199–210) provide verbs by frequency of attested form and number of stems in which the verb occurs. Lists 48–55 (pp. 211–223) provide words with various pronominal suffixes. Lists 56–57 (pp. 224–228) address words that are easily confused, particularly homonyms and consonantal homonyms respectively. The final lists, Lists 58–63 (pp. 229–231), include various loanwords from Persia, Sumer, Akkad, Greek, and Hebrew.

The value of this volume can be summarized in two categories. First, this volume provides an easy-to-read reproduction of the Aramaic portions of the Bible. Not only is the text itself visually appealing, but the apparatus provides helpful information for efficient translation and grammatical discussion of the Aramaic text. Secondly, the vocabulary and morphology lists in this volume provide a single location for lexical analysis of Biblical Aramaic. Rather than working with various Bible software searches, these lists provide a multi-faceted look at the vocabulary and morphology of Biblical Aramaic in one place.

With multiple resources in this single volume, this work will be most helpful to the seminary student or pastor who is seeking to read (with efficiency) the Aramaic portions of the Bible. While the introduction provides some (very) basic introductions to the Aramaic language, those without any knowledge of Biblical Aramaic may find it difficult to use this volume with ease. However, those with some background in Biblical Aramaic will find a great resource here. Those who have a background in Biblical Hebrew will also find an excellent resource here, but some additional study may be required in order to fully understand the differences between Hebrew and Aramaic. This volume accompanied by VanPelt's *Basics of Biblical Aramaic* would provide a strong baseline for any second semester seminary student who desires to study Biblical Aramaic.

Adam J. Howell

Boyce: The College at Southern

**Poythress, Vern S. *The Miracles of Jesus: How the Savior's Mighty Acts Serve as Signs of Redemption*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016, pp. 271, \$19.99, paperback.**

In *The Miracles of Jesus*, Vern S. Poythress, a long-tenured professor of New Testament interpretation at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, provides an interpretive grid that sees Jesus' miracles as "signs of redemption."

*The Miracles of Jesus* is structured in four parts: Part 1 introduces the topic of Jesus' miracles; Part 2 analyzes and illustrates some of Jesus' miracles in the Gospel of John; Part 3 provides a comprehensive examination of Jesus' miracles in the Gospel of Matthew; and Part 4 concludes with an examination of the miracle of Jesus' resurrection and its application to individuals. Parts 2 and 3 comprise the main section of the book, as the division of chapters attests (3–8 and 9–36, respectively). The focus on the Gospels of John and Matthew is intended to complement the work of Richard Phillips (*Mighty to Save: Discovering God's Grace in the Miracles of Jesus*), who in a 2001 volume published by P&R similarly analyzed Jesus' miracles in the Gospel of Luke (p. 30).

Even though the analysis of Jesus' miracles in Matthew comprises the longest section of the book, arguably the central section is located in Part 2, where the

thesis and hermeneutical method are developed. The thesis of *The Miracles of Jesus*, which is clear enough from the subtitle, is that Jesus' miracles are signs of redemption. As "redemptive analogies" (p. 30), they point beyond themselves to a greater act of redemption, namely, the death and resurrection of Jesus. Jesus' miracles are not random acts of kindness and compassion but are "organically related" (p. 64) to Jesus' accomplishment of redemption and his application of redemption's benefits to us. Hence, the reason why Jesus' miracles are linked to the kingdom of God is because the gospel of the kingdom concerns a doing away with sin: "Salvation, comprehensively viewed, includes more than healing diseases. At its heart, it is healing from sin. And so the miracles are signs of the kingdom" (p. 162). Specifically, Jesus' resurrection effected the dawn of the promised new creation; his miracles, therefore, testify to this greater reality of a new heaven and new earth in which righteousness dwells (pp. 232–35).

The method used to support this thesis follows Edmund Clowney's approach to typology (see Chapter 6). Especially where there is no explicit biblical teaching on the meaning of Jesus' miracles—as often is the case in the Synoptic Gospels—Poythress argues we should utilize a typological approach, which seeks to discern the original referent of any given symbol in Scripture, and then to discern how that referent is fulfilled in Jesus' death and resurrection. For example, the Old Testament sacrificial system symbolized or referred to Israel's need for forgiveness of sins through a substitute, a referent that found its final fulfillment in the substitutionary, sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross (pp. 66–67). Similarly, Jesus' own miracles are typological, for they each symbolize a specific truth of what Jesus has come to accomplish, which is ultimately grounded in his death and resurrection. For instance, Jesus' feeding of the 5,000 symbolizes his ability to provide spiritual food, which was accomplished definitively and finally on the cross. Hence, the feeding of the 5,000 is typological of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross by which he provides himself as our spiritual food (pp. 68–70). Indeed, all the miracles in the Bible—not only those found in the Gospels—point beyond themselves to Jesus' greater work of redemption through the cross and resurrection (pp. 247–51).

Poythress has provided the church with a much-needed guide to interpret the meaning and significance of Jesus' miracles, for they can be too easily divorced from his death and resurrection. The approaches to miracles by liberation theologians, "social gospel" adherents, and those associated with the "prosperity gospel" typically fail—in their own way—to see this organic connection, which leads to a misunderstanding and misapplication of the mission Jesus came to accomplish and the nature of the already-but-not-yet-consummated kingdom of God. Poythress rightly shows that the miracles must be interpreted in light of Jesus' climactic death and resurrection.

At the same time, I wonder if Poythress subtly undermines some of what Jesus accomplished through his death and resurrection when he suggests that

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Jesus' physical healing was never the greater good but only pointed to a greater spiritual reality. Concerning Matthew 8:16–17, which affirms that Jesus' healing and exorcisms fulfilled Isaiah 53:4, Poythress says, "The full passage in Isaiah 53 uses the language of disease metaphorically to indicate how the coming servant will suffer as a substitute for sin...Deliverance on the physical level symbolizes deliverance on the spiritual level" (p. 114). I don't disagree that Isaiah 53 emphasizes how the servant will be a substitute for his people so as to deal with their sin. However, Isaiah 53 says more than this, for it speaks holistically of what the servant will accomplish: his death for sin will bring us "peace" and "healing" (Isa 53:5). These terms describe *both* physical *and* spiritual realities, for they depict a world where all things have been made new. Jesus' healings and exorcisms in Matthew 8:16–17, therefore, do not merely point beyond themselves to the fact that Jesus has come to deal with our sin—though this is certainly included—but they suggest that Jesus is the servant of Isaiah 53 who has come to make all things new by means of his death and resurrection. Since his mission was to deal fundamentally with the root problem, namely, our sin, it is not surprising that at times the Scriptures indicate Jesus' mission *also* included the eradication of the results of sin, such as sickness, demon oppression, and death. To be clear, I am not saying that Poythress disagrees *in toto* with my concerns—rather, he notes his agreement with these points in various places (e.g., pp. 40–41, 115, 172). Nor do I disagree with Poythress' main point: that Jesus' miracles function typologically as signs of redemption. Rather, my concern is that we ascertain precisely the nature of that which the miracles typify. If we interpret Jesus' healings and exorcisms *merely* as metaphors or symbols for spiritual realities, we run the risk of minimizing the Gospel writers' holistic witness concerning the nature of the redemption Jesus accomplished through his death and resurrection.

*The Miracles of Jesus* is a valuable and much-needed contribution for the study of Jesus' miracles. It would prove useful for pastors, particularly when they are preparing to preach through one of the Gospels. Educated laity would also find this book useful for personal study, especially in Chapters 8 and 38 where Poythress provides specific examples for application in daily life. Finally, this book could be considered for use in an undergraduate class on the Gospels, for it introduces the hermeneutically-valuable notion of typology and seeks to apply it to Jesus' miracles.

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**Thomas Schärfl, Christian Tapp, and Veronika Wegener, eds. *Rethinking the Concept of a Personal God: Classical Theism, Personal Theism, and Alternative Concepts of God*. Münster: Aschendorff Verlag, 2016, pp. 249, \$76.00.**

In this collection of essays, a set of German and English speaking theologians and philosophers come together to discuss competing conceptions of God. To be honest, this collection of essays was a bit of a struggle for me. There are several reasons for this that are worth noting.

In several of the essays, it was not clear that the authors were using demarcations that I would use to distinguish between competing conceptions of God. To be sure, this is not necessarily a strike against the book. It just shows a particular disconnect that I felt with the authors. For example, in Oliver Wiertz's essay, "Classical Theism," Wiertz takes the reader through a carefully nuanced account of perfect being theology for the purposes of defending classical theism. This is a well-written and rigorously argued paper. However, Wiertz makes it clear that the classical theism that he is defending is the God of open theism. On open theism, God is temporal, passible, mutable in certain respects, and lacks exhaustive foreknowledge of the future. This is quite different from classical theism. On most standard accounts of classical theism, God is taken to be timeless, impassible, immutable in all respects, and possesses exhaustive foreknowledge of the future. So although I found Wiertz's essay to be a compelling defense of open theism, I did not find it to be a defense of *classical* theism. One might think that I am being nit-picky about terminology here, but there is a fairly widespread consensus that classical theism and open theism are distinct conceptions of God. (E.g., see the essays in Jeanine Diller and Asa Kasher, eds., *Models of God and Alternative Ultimate Realities*, 2013.)

Another problem that I discovered with encountering this book is a lack of clear definitions in terminology. Several of the essays in this collection do not offer definitions of key terms, nor present easily identifiable arguments for their position. In Gunnar Hindrichs' "Proofs of God's Existence as Self-Determination of Thinking" I am told that God is the uprooting of thought. After reading the essay, I am still not certain what this means. Though this essay is written in English, it contains quite a bit of untranslated German and Latin. So it might be the case that Hindrichs offered definitions for his terms, and that I missed them due to my ignorance of the German language. In Hans-Joachim Höhn's "Divine Action in the World," a substance ontology is rejected, and a relational ontology is put in its place. Höhn's claims that relations and constellations are the fundamental categories in this ontology. However, there is no definition of 'constellations' to be found in the essay leaving me lost as to how to put the pieces of this ontology together.

Despite the theme of the book being about alternative concepts of God, several of the essays do not clearly present an alternative concept of God. Thomas Marschler's,

“Substantiality and Personality in the Scholastic Doctrine of God,” offers a useful history of the concept of substantiality and personality. However, it does not develop a robust concept of God. Hans Kraml’s, “The God of Philosophy—The God of the Qur’an: A Problem for Medieval Islamic Philosophy,” gives a bit of an overview of certain Islamic thinkers, but never goes into detail about what those thinkers believed about God. Howard Robinson’s, “Idealism and Orthodox Christian Theism,” offers a lucid articulation of idealism, but says very little about the nature of God.

That being said, there were several essays in this volume that stood out to me as developing clear and distinct conceptions of God that are worth considering. As I noted before, Wiertz’s essay offers a rigorous account of perfect being theology. I have already made it clear that I do not think that he has presented a defense of classical theism. However, it seems to me that he has offered a clear case for open theism on the basis of perfect being theology. Anyone who is interested in examining competing conceptions of God will want to consider this.

Peter Forrest’s, “God as a Person: A Defense of Anthropomorphic Theism,” develops his ideas on God as an embodied agent. I have been following Forrest’s work for several years. He is an entertaining thinker to read, and he always offers careful arguments for his views. In this essay, Forrest offers several arguments against Aristotelian and Thomistic conceptions of God, and then mounts a defense of his own version of personal pantheism. He considers issues related to religious language as well as the mind-body problem, and their relevance to the God-world relationship.

My main interest in this book is Benedikt Paul Göcke’s essay, “The Paraconsistent God.” In the introduction to this book, Göcke is referred to as “one of the most outspoken defenders of analytic panentheism in Germany” (p. 1). Over the years, Göcke has written several important essays articulating and defending panentheism as the most theologically adequate conception of God. In “The Paraconsistent God,” he develops his understanding of divine infinity in order to further develop his account of panentheism. Göcke distinguishes several different understandings of infinity before landing on the sense of infinity that he claims applies to God. God is infinite in that God possesses every property and its denial. As such, the law of non-contradiction does not apply to God. This is what Göcke means by God being paraconsistent—God possesses every property and its denial. Of course, this has a rather odd entailment that Göcke does not consider. If the paraconsistent God has every property and its denial, that means that the following statements are both true of God. It is true that <God is paraconsistent>. It is also true that <God is not paraconsistent>. Since the law of non-contradiction does not apply to the paraconsistent God, this may not be a problem for the view, but it certainly sounds odd to the say the least.

For readers of this journal, *Rethinking the Concept of a Personal God* may not be the most useful for delving deeper into competing conceptions of God. For some seminary students, a few of these essays may prove useful for your studies.

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**Morales, L. Michael. *Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord? A Biblical Theology of the Book of Leviticus*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 37 (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic 2015). \$27.00.**

Dr. L. Michael Morales is professor of biblical studies at Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary and a teaching elder in the PCA. He is also the author of a new book in the NSBT series edited by D.A. Carson, *Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord? A Biblical Theology of the Book of Leviticus*. The book of Leviticus is often referred to as the place where Bible reading plans go to die. That is because the content of the book is so unfamiliar that most Bible readers are stumped when they begin working through its content. Even biblical scholars find themselves in unfamiliar territory, looking instead to the NT interpretation of the Levitical legislation and sacrifices rather than working through the material in its original context.

But Morales intends to bring clarity to the confusion by offering a new biblical theology of the book of Leviticus. His main task is to answer the question posed in Psalm 24:3: “Who may ascend the mountain of YHWH?” Morales calls this question the “gate liturgy,” something the Israelites recite as they approach the tabernacle/temple, and which is an undercurrent running through the Pentateuch. In this new study, he provides the framework for answering this question chiefly from the book of Leviticus. The dominant concern of Leviticus, as well as the rest of the Bible, “is the way in which humanity may come to dwell in the house of God” (p. 20). Indeed, Morales states that the *primary theme* and theology of Leviticus (and the Pentateuch as a whole) is “YHWH’s opening a way for humanity to dwell in the divine presence” (p. 23). A biblical theology of Leviticus, then, is “the theme of dwelling with God in the house of God, and how that reality is finally made possible” (p. 20). This theme arises naturally in the creation narrative and subsequent fall of humanity in Genesis 1–3, reaching its apex in the book of Leviticus, and is clearly discerned in the rest of the Hebrew canon and later New Testament.

In terms of the structure of Leviticus, Morales posits that Leviticus is the center of a Pentateuchal chiasm (p. 29). Thus, the fivefold structure of the Pentateuch emphasizes its significance. Following the work of other Leviticus scholars such as R. Davidson, E. Zenger, and D. Luciani, Morales argues that chapter 16 (on the Day of Atonement) is the high point of the concentric structure of Leviticus, the “capstone of the sacrificial rituals,” which flows into the subject of holy living (p. 29).

Chapters 2–3 place Leviticus in the context of the Pentateuch as the third and central book, following on the heels of the Genesis account of human/Israelite origins and especially of Exodus and the filling of the tabernacle with God’s presence. In chapter 4, Morales argues convincingly that the tabernacle of Exodus has a twofold theological meaning. It is both the dwelling of God (God’s “house,” as it were), and second as “the way to God’s house, that is, the way to God himself, to engage with him in fellowship” (p. 109). The tabernacle, thus, is a microcosm of the cosmos, mirroring Eden-like characteristics in design and function. Moreover, there is correspondence between Genesis and Leviticus with the introduction of the High Priest in the Leviticus account, which Morales says is an Adam-like person (p. 118). Thus, the book of Leviticus shows how the inability for man to enter into God’s presence and live—all due to Adam’s sin in Genesis 3—is gradually abolished in Leviticus 1–10. Like Adam, the Levitical provisions allow for a High Priest realistically to enter God’s presence, even if only once per year. Indeed, the central thesis of the book is eventually stated along these same lines in chapter 5. Who shall ascend the mountain of YHWH? “The one able to ascend is the Adam-like priest, with blood, on the Day of Atonement. This is the way YHWH has opened for humanity to dwell in his presence” (p. 177). In a biblical theological study as this one, the final answer to this question is explained later with the obvious typological connections in the book of Hebrews and the presentation of Jesus as High Priest.

Chapter 5 begins with the defilement of the house of God (Nadab and Abihu, Lev 10:1–3), the need to emphasize the cleansing of the house via laws of the clean and unclean (Lev 11–15), followed by the Day of Atonement ceremony (Lev 16). To be clean means to be fit for the presence of God, while to be holy means that one belongs to God (p. 155). Atonement and holiness are typical summary words in Levitical theology, and Morales agrees insofar as we see that atonement and holiness are the means to an end, that is, the means to Israel’s fellowship and communion with YHWH (p. 125). Life in the presence of God is the key to unraveling the theology of Leviticus, not the themes of atonement and holiness per se. The house of God must be cleansed in order for the people to dwell in its vicinity and live. Thus, the Day of Atonement legislation is paramount since it “narrates the cleansing of God’s house from the inside out” (p. 170). In other words, the Day of Atonement “reverses the presumed steady movement of uncleanness to the tabernacle throughout the year” (p. 171).

Chapter 6 is about Leviticus 17–27 and to a large extent has to do with life in God’s presence. The people are being cleansed and consecrated through YHWH’s presence in their midst, and thus there are implications for daily living (p. 185), the main subject of the latter section of Leviticus. Chapter 7 explores the relationship of the cultic legislation and theology of Leviticus in the rest of the Old Testament, especially the relationship of Sinai with Zion and the development of “mountain theology.” The final chapter moves on to the NT, explaining how the Son of God, the

greater High Priest, makes possible the final entrance into the heavenly abode of God for all eternity (p. 259).

Before getting to the positive impact of *Who Shall Ascend to the Mountain of the Lord*, I will state here a few brief points of criticism. Morales has the tendency to overstate certain texts and themes within Leviticus, or simply the contribution of Leviticus within the Pentateuch. He stresses, for example, that the histories of Genesis and Exodus serve as something of an *introduction* to the book of Leviticus (pp. 112–13). This comment forces Leviticus up against the importance of other books in the Pentateuch. We might note that the use and reuse of the book of Deuteronomy in the prophets serves a dominant role in the rest of the Hebrew canon (and by NT authors) without diminishing the importance of Leviticus. Morales does not say that Leviticus is the most important book in the Pentateuch, but he comes close. I would rather emphasize the theology of the Pentateuch as programmatic for the theology of the rest of the Bible, not solely the book of Leviticus.

Morales also overemphasizes the Sabbath principle in biblical theology (p. 198), and later, that *every movement or prophetic expectation* in the Hebrew Bible is defined by the movement to or away from the divine presence (p. 238). On these two points, I find the arguments by Stephen Dempster in another book in the NSBT series more compelling (*Dominion and Dynasty: A Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, 2003).

These criticisms are minor, however. Many of the books in the NSBT series are robust studies in biblical theology by seasoned scholars. Having read most of these works, I can vouch for the credibility of the series as a whole, and *Who Shall Ascend to the Mountain of the Lord* is a solid addition. As I stated above, Leviticus is not a favorite among theologians, it seems. And even larger OT theological works (and especially systematic theologies) often neglect the book, opting to summarize it as mere “holiness legislation,” or a work of outdated laws about the clean and unclean that are no longer normative. But I suspect this kind of thinking is the result, at least in part, of widespread adherence in Reformed circles to the tripartite division of the law into moral, civil, and ceremonial. This division, while commendable, places greater weight on the moral aspects of the law but deemphasizes the civil and ceremonial since that is what has been fulfilled in Christ (even though there are moral dimensions to the civil and ceremonial laws, too). Morales, a professor at Presbyterian seminary, no doubt adheres to the tripartite division as stated in the Westminster Confession. But Morales also unlocks a theological golden treasure in the book of Leviticus that cannot be reduced to these three headings. In doing so, a grander and richer theology of the Pentateuch emerges, one that has long been neglected.

Morales frames his study around the quest for the presence of God, and perhaps that is why it is such an attractive way forward in approaching the book of Leviticus. Laws and legislation in the OT are so far removed from Christians today in a completely different cultural situation and under a different covenant administration. Morales makes clear what is obscure to most of us. What he provides is a biblical theology of

Leviticus in the fullest sense: within the narrative context of the Pentateuch, God has opened a Levitical way for humanity to dwell in his presence. Morales says that this theme is *the drama of the Bible* (p. 304). And even if one disagrees, we must accept that he has made a compelling case and brilliantly argued his point.

This book is an excellent contribution to biblical studies. Scholars and seminary students should plumb the depths of Leviticus with this book in hand. My main concern is that this book will go unnoticed or simply left unread by many pastors in evangelical circles since it is long (300 pages), in an academic series (NSBT), and published by an academic press (Apollos/IVP). More likely, if this book is neglected it will be because the word “Leviticus” is in the title, and that would be unfortunate. In his commentary on Leviticus in the *Continental Commentary* (Fortress, 2004), Jacob Milgrom lamented a similar trend outside of evangelicalism: “In Israel today, Leviticus is not in the school curriculum. Even in advanced schools of Torah studies, the *yeshivot*, Leviticus is not studied in its entirety, but only a verse here, a verse there” (p. xii).

We should be chided for our neglect of mastering a Pentateuchal book like Leviticus, not least of all reading it. Overstatements aside, one would be wrong to *understate* the potential of Morales’ book in reinvigorating scholars and pastors to examine its content closely. Morales’ fresh approach to Leviticus is welcome, and I cannot think of a better book on the theology of Leviticus than this one. I highly recommend it.

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**Bartholomew, Craig G. *Contours of the Kuyperian Tradition: A Systematic Introduction*. Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2017, pp. 363, \$40.00, hardback.**

In the United States, theologically conservative Christianity seems to stand at the edge of a major shift in political theology. The so-called Judeo-Christian consensus for public theology and ethics have eroded. Around the world, the epistemological foundations that have generally been assumed are frequently challenged. Especially in the United States, the culture is rebalancing toward a totalizing view of economics and politics. Since the vast majority of the Christian tradition of writing on cultural engagement occurred in situations of relative dominance of Christian consensus, there are too few examples of effective engagement in a pluralistic context. Among the limited list of positive examples Lesslie Newbigin, Francis Schaeffer, and Abraham Kuyper are near the top. Unfortunately, until recently, only a limited amount of material in the early Kuyperian tradition has been available in English. That is quickly changing, which makes Craig Bartholomew’s recent book, *Contours of the Kuyperian Tradition*, a timely and valuable volume.

Bartholomew sets the table for the book in his introduction, where he outlines the basic Kuyperian program, which entails seeking the welfare of the city. The Kuyperian tradition is one that is primarily outward looking. Chapter One details Kuyper's conversion from liberal, cultural Christian to Reformed orthodoxy. In the second chapter, Bartholomew summarizes the ideas of creation and redemption in the Kuyperian tradition. These concepts are central in understanding that tradition's vision for the scope of what should be, what is, and what one day will be. Similarly foundational, Chapter Three surveys the high view of the authority and veracity of Scripture in the Kuyperian tradition. Bartholomew is careful to indicate that Kuyper rejected notions such as mechanical dictation, but held the Bible as received in high esteem and ascribed ultimate authority to it. The fourth chapter reflects upon the centrality of the idea of worldview among those that follow Kuyper. This chapter alone is worth the price of the book as Bartholomew deftly undermines the popular critiques of worldview as a tool for cultural understanding.

Chapter Five marks a shift in the discussion, as the chapter topics become less foundational and more topical. This chapter explains and critiques the idea of sphere sovereignty, which is the most often recognized but often least understood aspect of the Kuyperian tradition. In the sixth chapter, Bartholomew explains the importance of the concept of the universal and local church for Kuyper and his disciples. Chapter Seven engages with the robust and often ignored emphasis within the Kuyperian tradition on political engagement, concern for the poor, and efforts to live in a pluralistic society. The reader cannot help but wonder if much of the cultural warfare of the past half century might have been minimized if Kuyper's work had been more readily available. The eighth chapter touches on the center of Kuyperianism, which is an emphasis on holistic mission.

Chapter Nine surveys the significant contributions of Kuyperian philosophers ranging from Kuyper himself to contemporary giants like Alvin Plantinga. In the tenth chapter Bartholomew provides an overview of the major theological themes in the Kuyperian tradition, as well as the significant theological emphasis that undergirds the writing of those in the tradition. It is impossible to understand Kuyperianism without understanding the theology from which the practical applications sprang. Chapter Eleven summarizes a Kuyperian vision for education. This chapter is helpful and offers a strong apologetic for the value of the unified worldview of a truly Christian university. Some of Bartholomew's recommendations in this chapter, however, tend toward the speculative and Eurocentric, such as his plea for a three-year university track based on Jesus' three year equipping of his disciples. In the final chapter, Bartholomew notes the impossibility of fulfilling the Kuyperian social program without individual spiritual formation, which is sometimes a less developed element in contemporary expression of Kuyperian themes. The book closes with a postscript outlining resources available for studying the Kuyperian tradition.

This volume is billed as a systematic introduction. It satisfies the claim of systematization quite well. The structure is logical and helpful for those reading through the volume for the first time and also for those seeking a focused explanation of the trajectory of the Kuyperian tradition on a particular topic. However, the volume will most significantly benefit those who have already have a moderate awareness of the major figures in the Kuyperian tradition. To be truly introductory, the volume would have needed an early chapter surveying the timeline of the whole tradition, especially those figures that are frequently mentioned in this text. This is an invaluable resource for understanding the Kuyperian tradition, but it does not serve as a primer for the field.

*Contours of the Kuyperian Tradition* is a very well-written and timely book that should be read widely. There is a major project afoot to get Kuyper's works translated into English and widely available. These efforts, facilitated by Lexham Press, Acton Institute, and the Abraham Kuyper Translation Society, are broadcasting a vision that promises to be helpful to Christians navigating sometimes hostile but indubitably broadly pluralistic cultural channels. Bartholomew's volume is indispensable as a chart for the Kuyperian tradition and should be read alongside the recent and forthcoming translations.

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**G. Firth, David and Wilson, Lindsay. *Interpreting Old Testament Wisdom Literature*. IVP: Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2017, pp. 232, \$30, Paperback.**

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*Interpreting Old Testament Wisdom Literature* presents a collection of essays on wisdom books and wisdom ideas. The essays interact with Old Testament wisdom literature and offer up-to-date evaluations on the current issues. Craig Bartholomew provides an introduction with a survey of the landscape of Old Testament wisdom literature. Section two covers the issues within the wisdom books of Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes. The inclusion of Song of Songs and some Psalms as wisdom texts are considered. Section three subsequently covers major ideas within Old Testament wisdom literature.

These essays present a concise introduction to the field of Old Testament wisdom literature, which suits an introduction. The essays work harmoniously to present a wide range of materials. The contributors disagree at minor points, but the theological preferences do not take away from the harmony. For example, Ernest views Wisdom in Proverbs 8 as a literary figure (p. 48) while Christopher views Wisdom as the lexicon for Paul describing Jesus in Colossians 1 (p. 192). The reader gleans choice fruit from the contributors since they consist of scholars in wisdom literature across various disciplines. However, they do not present a unified perspective on wisdom literature and the solution of unity within the canon.

The focus of the book centers upon the individual books of wisdom literature and wisdom's theme. Ernest C. Lucas focuses primarily upon the issue of hermeneutics and textual difficulties within the unity of Proverbs (p. 39). Lucas shines light upon the supposed disunity within Proverbs and proposes a textual unity through word clusters (p. 41). He provides a way forward to the unity of Proverbs. Although scholars disagree about the units of clusters Lucas rightly indicates their existence (p. 39).

Ecclesiastes poses unique problems in the discussion within wisdom literature. Katharine J. Dell focuses upon several issues that have impacted the interpretation of Ecclesiastes and its place within wisdom literature. Dell focuses upon form-critical issues more than theological understanding (p. 80). Her essay would benefit more if in her essay she covered issues related to the place of Ecclesiastes within the canon, instead of showing the historical issues of Ecclesiastes. She provides a succinct summary of Ecclesiastes' place among scholars, but Walter Kaiser and Craig Bartholomew have already written on the interpretation of Ecclesiastes in 1986 and 1999. Her summary does not advance the discussion since others have covered the history of interpretation.

Rosalind Clarke demonstrates Song of Songs' place among the wisdom literature, even though modern scholars detached it from the wisdom corpus (p. 101). Clarke links Lady Wisdom and the Shulamite through the theme of pursuit of a woman and attaining wisdom (p. 112). She demonstrates the link between Proverbs and Song of Songs so that the reader sees the intentional link between the two women. Clarke briefly addresses the intertextuality between the books and provides a well-balanced addition to the field of Old Testament studies.

The third section focuses upon ideas within the Old Testament. The ideas cover a hermeneutical and theological discussion so that each chapter poises itself to contribute to the unity of wisdom literature within the canon. Gregory Goswell discusses whether Ruth belongs in the wisdom literature through post-compositional framing from the Hebrew tradition. The LXX and Leningrad Codex place different emphases through the ordering of the canonical books (p. 117). Goswell argues that the Hebrew tradition creates a post-compositional framework (p. 132). In this essay, Goswell presents a well-grounded argument for interpreting Ruth in a wisdom

framework considering the book's placement after Proverbs. Ruth models a wisdom ethic of Proverbs when positioned after Proverbs (132).

Scholars seek to find wisdom's place within biblical theology and wisdom's influence on the canon of scripture. The third section places wisdom's relation to biblical theology and the Psalms under the third section. Christopher Ansberry does not solve all issues within his chapter on biblical theology but gives insight to the pressing questions. Simon P. Stocks argues in his essay that the wisdom forms are divinely mandated expressions of reality (p. 203). Stocks cuts through form-critical appropriation of wisdom's influence into the Psalter. He resolves wisdom's influence from a macro level of God's mandated expression of reality (p. 203).

The final idea discusses God's absence in wisdom literature. Brittany N. Melton suggests that wisdom is the way to God but wisdom is not always attainable (p. 216). Wisdom literature presents a tension between divine presence and absence. Melton suggests that God is hidden behind wisdom and we cannot fully know God but only in part (p. 216). I would suggest that God is not hiding behind wisdom but in wisdom since wisdom is a revelation of God. Lady Wisdom calls out to all in the city but the foolish do not heed her call.

The students of biblical theology will benefit from these essays as they introduce the pressing topics within wisdom literature. The essays serve to orient the biblical theologian to the wide range of materials within the wisdom corpus. They serve to survey the issues and point to further study so that the student can navigate the literature. The essays provide a balanced approach to understanding wisdom literature in the modern world. The reader will benefit greatly from these essays.

*Interpreting Old Testament Wisdom Literature* provides a great introduction to the breadth of wisdom literature. The essays clarify the field of wisdom literature and give a tangible introduction. The essays present the unity of the wisdom corpus among diversity of the Old Testament literature. The scholars make genuine efforts to show uniting and disjunctive forces within the wisdom corpus. These essays benefit pastors and scholars. The pastor will benefit from the lucid brevity of the articles and scholars will benefit from the suggested topics of further study. *Interpreting Old Testament Wisdom Literature* suggests areas of study and dissertations awaiting to be written. The Ph.D. student should read with intrigue as considering his topic and thesis.

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**Greenway, William. *Agape Ethics: Moral Realism and Love for All Life*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2016, pp. 147, \$21, paperback.**

William Greenway is Professor of Philosophical Theology at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary and author of *The Challenge of Evil: Grace and the Problem*

*of Suffering* (Westminster John Knox, 2016), *For the Love of All Creatures: The Story of Grace in Genesis* (Eerdmans, 2015) and *A Reasonable Belief: Why God and Faith Make Sense* (Westminster John Knox, 2015).

Summary: William Greenway's *Agape Ethics: Moral Realism and Love for All Life* sets out to convince readers of an internal, primordial, universal morality, based primarily on the thought of philosopher Emmanuel Levinas concerning the concepts of "awakening" and being seized by the faces of others. The book contains an Introduction and 11 chapters organized into four Parts: (1) Awakening and Agape; (2) Science, Scientism, Morality; (3) Beyond Objectivity, Relativism, and Extremism: Moral Realism, Ethical Surety, and the Sanctity of Life; and (4) Perfect Love in an Imperfect World: Agape Ethics. A bibliography is included, but no Index.

Greenway's main concern is inspiring a "spiritual awakening to agape," longing to "reawaken a lost sense of spiritual belonging in this world, to retrieve a lost sense of communion with all creatures and all creation, and to return us to a morally realistic, ethically responsible, and truly spiritual living of life" (p. 142). The author contends for moral realism, eschewing moral relativism and moral absolutism (or even objectivism), affirming "a multitude of ethical convictions" that entails no basis for real doubt about them (e.g., the wrongness of torturing toddlers for fun) (p. 95).

Central features of Greenway's neo-Levinasian agape ethics may be summed as follows: First and foremost, "rehabilitation of the moral self." Second, "the inclusion of all life within the scope of moral concern." Third, treasuring all life as valuable. Fourth, affirmation of ethical judgments based on "distinctions among the faces of Faces" as part of every ethical conviction and when circumstance forces ethical comparison of moral incomparables. Fifth, variations of distinctions and stakes can appear in forms that contravene ethical surety making ethical reflection and analysis absolutely critical for wisdom and discernment. Sixth, all ethical conviction is "a product of both having been seized (the moral) and ethical judgment" (pp. 133–34).

The final chapter presents five different scenarios, each judged ethically, which leads to the following six-fold conclusion: (1) the reality of the moral can be affirmed *publicly*; (2) amoral or immoral persons can be judged publicly to be insensitive to a profound reality (agape); (3) only those awakened to agape are morally qualified to engage in ethical debate; (4) moral persons will remain fully faithful to every Face; (5) moral persons will sense the tragedy and awfulness of injuring any Face; and (6) no moral persons will decide to act violently against any Face unless they are compelled by force to compare incomparables (p. 141).

Evaluation: The book begins with controversial narratives and illustrations involves animals (e.g., deer, cats, crickets), including claims such as killing a cricket equals committing "murder" (5) and "reflexively killing crickets" alienates us from "moral reality and the meaningfulness of life" (p. 3). Assuming readers continue after the Introduction, there is much to glean from this thoughtful, creative work, and some aspects to question or perhaps purge.

Greenway demonstrates solid grasp concerning the importance of science, while rightly rejecting scientism. He asserts the “modern disenchantment of the world was neither enlightened nor enlightening” (p. 49). Furthermore, “Scientism itself is not a scientific conclusion. It is a philosophical contention” (p. 54) and cannot explain all reality, including “free will, moral realism, qualia, and consciousness” (p. 60).

Valuing both human and nonhuman sensitivities and feelings justifiably concerns Greenway, as does our (human) moral responsibility to treat nonhuman animals lovingly (p. 29). He boldly claims all life is sacred (p. 33), rightly naming wrongs that diminish the value of human and non-human life (e.g., abusive experimentation on orphans and horrendous factory farm practices (pp. 33–34). Nonetheless, the author bases his rationale not on biblical or theological bases (for instance, the *imago Dei* or the fair treatment of animals described in Proverbs), but rather on “having been seized by the love for every Face” (i.e., seized with concern for the other) moral grounding (p. 108), which makes a moral claim upon one seized (agape)—spiritual truth seizing us primordially that we subsequently reflect upon (pp. 42–43).

While most Christians may agree we humans must treat (other) animals respectfully, Greenway likely loses readers unwilling to grant his view of virtual *moral* equality of animals and human beings. For instance, his viewing crickets or cats or cows as equal partners with humans may strike a tone closer to pantheistic valuations; possibly envisioning instances of unnecessarily starving human beings owing to similar religious beliefs (e.g., sacredness of cows). Nonetheless, Greenway’s stories powerfully engage minds and heartstrings, perhaps none more than “First Deer” (pp. 34–35). Furthermore, he does suggest an *ethical* “gradation in our valuing” (life). For instance, while all life is to be valued, valuing a little boy, then a cat, then a sapling, then a stick is hierarchically in the right order; to do otherwise would be “ethical confusion” (p. 44). This is an important distinction drawn—without which it would be difficult to imagine his view being Christian. So, while Greenway’s distinction between pre-reflective morality (agape) and its relationship to ethical judgment and ethical convictions might seem reasonable (p. 91), it lacks any sense of imperfect or distorted morality, which is attributed *solely* to the ethical. Important theological insights and interpretations, though, would suggest imperfections and instabilities in such alleged universal “subjective indubitableness” (p. 93); it also could challenge Greenway’s neo-Levinasian model and his opposition to any alternative primordial “given” (which he claims is more certain than any other epistemological foundation “from which a moral argument could be constructed”) (p. 40). Apparently, then, divine revelation authority or plausibility is ruled out—particularly involving ethics and moral claims based in Christian Scripture.

Consequently, Greenway’s approach appears to represent “wishful morality”: hopeful-yet-implausible within fallen creation. “Awakening” for Greenway appears to be becoming aware of and embracing universal, subjective morality concerning other faces, serving as the “passion that fires commitment to goodness, justice,

and the struggle against injustice and evil” (p. 46). However, I would argue that more profoundly necessary is supremely dramatic awakening—transitioning from spiritual death to life, being rescued from the dominion of darkness and transferred into the kingdom of Christ, actively living out moral qualities given by divine power, participating in the divine nature, and escaping (natural) evil desires for a better way, including knowing Christ and remembering the gift of spiritual sight and cleansing (Eph. 2:1–10, Col. 1:13, 1 Pet. 1:3–9). Only then will human heart darkness be illumined to true spirituality—new beings renewed in knowledge in the imago *Dei*, adding to faith goodness and other moral qualities—flowing from the Creator-Redeemer of all life (Col. 3:9–10, 1 Pet. 1:5–7).

Greenway strongly asserts there is “no dispassionate, objective, certain basis for ethics” and “no logical path leading to sure resolution of every ethical issue” (p. 108). Yet, he returns to the claim that “having been seized by the love for the Faces of all creatures” is the “most powerful brake against the historic and enduring dangers of ethical and religious prejudice and extremism” and “our most powerful stimulus toward the good and the just” (pp. 108–09). Such a move raises the question of why call this “agape” (or Christian) rather than simply internal or universal subjectivity? Even more radically he declares, “Awakening to having been seized by love for all Faces is the ultimate and authentic source of all love, goodness, and justice” (p. 109). One might better imagine Christian commitment to Godself being that ultimate and authentic source (1 John 4:16, 1 Tim. 4:4, 2 Thess. 1:5–7).

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**Kaiser, Walter C., *Tough Questions about God and His Actions in the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2015, pp.176, \$16.99, paperback.**

Walter C., Kaiser Jr. (PhD, MA Brandeis University, BD Wheaton Graduate School of Theology, AB. Wheaton College) is Coleman M. Mockler Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Old Testament and President Emeritus of Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary. He is author of numerous books and scholarly articles.

The title of the book, “*Tough Questions about God and His Actions in the Old Testament*,” is an accurate summarization of the contents. The book contains ten chapters that deal with ten problems that some people have with the Old Testament. In the introduction, Kaiser provides a brief history of issues regarding the Old Testament. He states that the rise of New Atheism and attacks by Richard Dawkins (*The God Delusion*) and Christopher Hitchens (*God is not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything*) demand an apologetic response which is based on an exegetical explanation of Old Testament Theology (pp. 9–16). This book appears to be a summarization and update of similar issues that he discussed in previous

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publications (*Hard Sayings of the Old Testament*, 1986 and *More Hard Sayings of the Old Testament* 1992, Intervarsity Press).

The chapters address ten juxtaposed questions:

1. The God of Mercy or the God of Wrath?
2. The God of Peace or the God of Ethnic Cleansing?
3. The God of Truth or the God of Deception?
4. The God of Evolution or the God of Creation?
5. The God of Grace or the God of Law?
6. The God of Monogamy or the God of Polygamy?
7. The God Who Rules Satan or the God Who Battles Satan?
8. The God Who is Omniscient or the God Who Doesn't Know the Future?
9. The God Who Elevates Women or the God Who Devalues Women?
10. The God of Freedom with Food or the God of Forbidden Food?

The target audience is primarily high school, college, and graduate school students. Kaiser states that this group comprises “the largest segment of a new group of ‘Nons’—the non-attenders at church and the non-religious” in our society (p.10). In light of the misunderstanding and attacks on the Old Testament, Kaiser states that: “this book proposes to openly and honestly face these charges and to answer them with valid responses from the same biblical texts that are the basis of these challenges” (p.11).

A typical chapter is developed with six components. Each chapter begins with a question that juxtaposes a theological dilemma by which an attack has been charged against the God of the Old Testament. Secondly, a brief history of the attack is reviewed. The third component is a survey of current theological approaches to the issue based on ecclesiastical traditions. The fourth component, which is the largest, provides an evaluation of the misappropriation of Old Testament passages, and then an exegetical explanation by which Kaiser seeks to provide an apologetic in response to the attack on the God of the Old Testament. This component comprises three to five Scripture passages that require a proper understanding to answer the initial question of the chapter. In this section, Kaiser draws on his years of exegetical, cultural and historical studies. At times, the explanations are so technical, exegetical and/or linguistic that the “Nons” will probably not be able to critically evaluate the material because it will be beyond their ability. The fifth component is a conclusion that provides a summarization of the apologetic argument. The concluding section provides a series of questions that can be discussed by readers in a small group setting. Many of the expected responses are based on Kaiser’s interpretation of the

Old Testament passages. Most of the discussion questions do not require critical thinking but rather a restatement of Kaiser's explanation contained in the chapter.

Of the ten chapter questions, evangelicals will probably have broad acceptance of seven of Kaiser's apologetic answers. There are three chapters (4, 5, and 9) that will probably be debated by evangelicals as to the acceptance of Kaiser's explanation.

In chapter 4, (*The God of Evolution or the God of Creation?*), Kaiser interprets the first clause of Genesis 1:1 as an independent clause ('In the beginning God created the heavens and earth') rather than a dependent clause ('When God began to create') so as to support a Big Bang Theory (p.59) and not a "Gap Theory" (p.63).

Kaiser argues for a Day-Age theory of creation rather than seven days that are based on twenty-four hour periods. He refers to St. Augustine for support as well as the classical argument of Psalm 90:4 that "A thousand years in your sight are like a day that has gone by." He argues that "evening and morning" are to be understood as night time rather than a solar-lunar day of twenty-four hours (pp. 64–65). Although he has widely opened the door for others to support a view of evolution based on the long Day-Age periods, he seeks to close the door in stating "The text does not allow for change to come about in other ways, such as evolutionary theories argue" (p. 70).

In chapter 5, (*The God of Grace or the God of Law?*), Kaiser provides a summary of three different methods of handling Old Testament laws. According to Kaiser, the first approach of Christian Reconstructionism takes a very literal interpretation and application of the Mosaic Code resulting in the enforcement of Old Testament penalties in our current society (pp. 74–75).

The second group is described as: "At the other end of the spectrum are those schools of thought called 'Dispensationalists,' that we are, for all intents and purposes, finished with the Law" (p. 76). As a dispensationalist, I am disappointed at his characterization. Dispensationalist generally agree that a New Covenant believer is not under obligation to the Mosaic Law, but affirm Romans 15:4, "For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope" (NASB). A dispensationalist affirms that the Mosaic Law leads the non-believer to Christ and is a basis for instruction through principled adaption to Christian living.

The third approach is Covenant Theology which creates a threefold division of the law into categories of moral, civil and ceremonial laws (p. 77–80). Covenant Theology believes that only the moral and civil laws are still relevant since the ceremonial law was fulfilled by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Kaiser embraces a "Paradigmatic Approach" as defined by Chris Wright (*Living as the People of God: The Relevance of Old Testament Ethics*). This approach seeks to understand the "principle" behind the scripture passage. The principle remains to be applied today rather than to be interpreted literally (pp. 82–83).

The difficulty for the reader is that there is no clear method provided to help the reader know how to discover the authorial principles and then apply it personally to today.

In chapter 9, (The God Who Elevates Women or the God Who Devalues Women?) Kaiser engages the longstanding debate of the equality of males and females. Kaiser's question is not representative of the historical debate or the contents of the chapter (Traditional versus Egalitarian). It is widely agreed that a view of distinct roles in life, family or church does not conclude that a woman is devalued (Complementarian: *Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*).

Kaiser begins with a discussion of "pre-understandings" that all readers bring to a text (pp.137–38). He provides a complex proposal for the translation/interpretation of Genesis 2:18 (The 'Nons' as well as most others will probably be lost in this discussion). The acceptance of his translation is dependent on a previous misunderstanding of the Hebrew/Canaanite root and the resulting meaning of "ezer" based on this correction (pp. 139–140). Kaiser concludes his egalitarian view by stating: "So rather than saying a woman is to be a 'helper corresponding to the man;' instead, the text teaches that the woman has been given 'authority, strength, or power' that is 'equal to [man's]'" (p. 140). He then argues from examples in the Old Testament of women in various circumstances of leadership and service. Kaiser argues that the exceptions should be viewed as the rule, rather than the exceptions confirming the rule.

Kaiser concludes by providing an egalitarian interpretation to seminal New Testament passages that comment on the role of women in the church (1 Tim. 2:8–15; 1 Cor. 14:34–38; 1 Cor. 11:2–16). He seems to conclude that women are repressed or demeaned if males and females have distinct roles in creative order.

I am not convinced that all the chapters of this book will benefit the "Nons": the non-attenders at church and the non-religious in our society. At times, the technical (and necessary) discussion of interpretations could be beyond their comprehension. An informed Christian or Bible student will probably benefit the most if they engage Kaiser's book with critical thinking. Those who already have his previous books about similar issues may not benefit significantly from this addition.

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**Bird, Michael F. *An Anomalous Jew: Paul among Jews, Greeks, and Romans*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2016, pp. 322, \$28.00, paperback.**

Contemporary Pauline studies generally heeds the adage that Paul was Jewish, although much argument remains about exactly what this statement means. Such declarations follow Paul himself, who identifies as an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, and a Benjaminite (Rom 11:1). Michael Bird, Lecturer in Theology at

Ridley College, attempts to specify some of the ways that Paul must be viewed within Judaism as well as how Paul became such a controversial figure within first-century Judaism.

The introduction maps how others have identified Paul's relationship to Judaism around the coordinates of "former," "transformed," "faithful," "radical," and "anomalous" Jew. Bird sees the last qualifier as most apt but notes that much of what was unusual about Paul's thought did not necessitate the particularly unaccommodating relationship between Paul and Jewish authorities. He understands Paul's anomaly to be the revelation of Jesus Christ, "which discloses how faith in Christ without Torah was the instrument that brings Jews and Gentiles into reconciliation with God and into the renewal of all things" (p. 28). Other chapters test this hypothesis with regard to particular issues.

Chapter 1 summarizes perspectives regarding Paul's view of Jewish soteriology and explores degrees of continuity between Paul's soteriology and Second Temple Jewish texts. Bird views the chief difference in the two soteriological approaches as stemming from Paul's emphasis on Christ's revelation rather than Torah. Chapter 2 examines Paul's mission to Jews in his Asian and Aegean travels and proposes that, although there may have been differences in how Paul related to his Jewish counterparts over time, Paul was an apostle to both Jews and Gentiles. Chapters 3 and 4 take up issues in Galatians. Chapter 3 defends elements of apocalyptic readings of Galatians but insists that Paul's apocalyptic tendencies cannot be separated from salvation-history. Chapter 4 looks at the issue of table fellowship in Gal 2:11–14 where Bird sees a qualified Christ-Torah antithesis in Paul's letter. Finally, chapter 5 studies Paul's understanding of the Roman Empire with reference to the letter to Rome and finds challenges to Roman self-perceptions but neither unabating resistance nor passive quietism.

Bird's writing is engaging, his positions represent genuine attempts to move scholarly dialogue forward, and his footnotes appropriately reflect the scholarship with which he interacts. By way of illustration, Bird takes up apocalyptic interpretations of Paul in chapter 3. His choice to read Galatians alongside apocalyptic interpreters is salient, since Galatians is the Pauline letter that is used most often for such a reading. Galatians contains several Second Temple apocalyptic motifs, but Bird also notes an underlying Barthian presence in apocalyptic studies of Paul for which Second Temple apocalyptic language can serve as a veil. Bird highlights Second Temple apocalyptic themes and finds that Paul's apocalypticism is expressed most clearly in his interpretation of Jesus's death and resurrection. Where some divorce Paul's understanding of Jesus from Israel's history, Bird rightly reads Galatians as a fresh configuration of scriptural themes and stories in light of Jesus. Apocalypticism and salvation history must not be divided from one another in Pauline thinking. In Galatians, Gentiles are included as part of Abraham's family in Christ, but this does not nullify Torah. Rather, Torah also finds its climax in Christ.

One should hope that by following the lines of thought in this book, they may come to a better understanding of Paul's letters and be provoked to think further about how best to interpret them. For example, Bird seems to be on the right path regarding Paul's view of the Roman Empire. It is clear that there are significant consequences for following Jesus in Paul's understanding. It is likewise reasonable to expect that the cult of Caesar could be included in Paul's discussions of idolatry, although, as Bird's examples show, clearer evidence for clashes between Jesus-followers and Rome may be found in second-century texts. Moreover, it must be the case that by calling Jesus "Lord" the implication, from both the Christian and Roman perspective, is that Caesar is finally not Lord. By taking Romans as an example, Bird allows readers to glimpse how Paul's view of Rome may be understood in one letter. A fuller consideration of Paul's thought on this issue would need to take into account other letters. In addition, given Paul's immersion in Israel's scriptures, one might wonder what relationship obtains between scriptural and imperial language. By considering these matters more fully, one might take Bird's insightful remarks in further enlightening directions.

In light of Paul's popularity, or infamy, in the early Christian movement, one might also think alongside Bird in order to further his work beyond strictly Pauline studies. This may be done particularly well with regard to the partings of the ways. Such terminology has become a standard way of describing the process of separation between Judaism and Christianity in the first few centuries. When *parting* is used in the singular, it may imply a simple, one-track separation that struggles to make sense of the tangle of positions on early Christian and early Jewish relations which are reflected in the early centuries of the Jesus movement. Bird employs *parting* in the singular in chapter 4 while studying a single event, namely, the conflict with Peter in Gal 2:11–14. Since only one event is in view, *parting* is entirely appropriate. However, there is a more noteworthy observation to be made about Bird's terminology. He speaks not of a parting *of* the ways but rather a parting *in* the ways. The preposition is aptly chosen when describing the in-house conflict portrayed in Gal 2, but such terminology should give pause to those studying other early Christian documents. Should other texts that are employed in discussions of the partings of the ways be used instead to describe partings in the ways? If so, at what point, and on what basis, can a parting in the ways be differentiated from a parting of the ways? While studying an event in the middle of the first century, the language of chapter 4 may help readers to think further about the anomalous relationship of other Christians and Jews (to use potentially anachronistic terminology) throughout the first and second centuries.

*An Anomalous Jew* is not an introduction to Paul but provides a useful map of contemporary Pauline studies along with insightful explorations of issues relating to Paul and his social world. Along the way, Bird does not lose sight of the importance of Paul's theological, and particularly christological, convictions for framing Paul's

interaction with the surrounding world. Advanced undergraduate and postgraduate students, scholars, and interested pastors and lay readers with some background knowledge will find this volume exciting, enlightening, and edifying.

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**Westfall, Cynthia Long. *Paul and Gender: Reclaiming the Apostle's Vision for Men and Women in Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016, pp. 348, paperback, \$32.99.**

Of all authors who write books and articles on the topic of Paul and gender, Cynthia Long Westfall is well-qualified to do so. She has published on this topic before in her article e.g., “The Meaning of ἀθεντέω in 1 Timothy 2.12,” *Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism*, 10 (2014): 138–73. She has taught courses within Pauline studies at McMaster Divinity College since 2005. She has also served in the context of the local church; this matters especially as she comments on this part of Paul’s discussion of ministry in the local church as it pertains to gender roles in the church.

In this book, Westfall seeks to “explain the Pauline passages that concern gender and to move toward a canon-based Pauline theology of gender” (p. ix). Several scholars have published books on this topic, especially as it concerns gender roles in the church (e.g., Piper and Grudem, eds., *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*; Pierce and Groothuis, *Discovering Biblical Equality*). Her primary contribution is her methodology. The method of her study, as she claims, comes partly from modern linguistics. She explains: “I had acquired a new set of perspectives and methodological lenses with which to study the issues, not the least of which was modern linguistics” (p. x). Her audience for this work is primarily the next generation of students, pastors, and scholars (p. xi). She hopes to make what has been and still is a controversial topic easier to navigate. The scope of the contents of her study covers all the Pauline corpus; she accepts all the traditional letters as part of his corpus. She begins by considering the culture within which Paul wrote. She addresses male and female stereotypes as Paul explains them in a way that is counter-cultural. Given that Paul roots his discussions of gender in creation, Westfall considers that topic further also. Her interpretations of the creation account and Paul’s comments on them follow a traditional egalitarian approach. She continues her discussion by reflecting on Pauline eschatology; she feels that this topic is often overlooked in discussions on gender, primarily because she believes that Paul’s conclusions about how gender roles function in the church should mirror their roles in the *eschaton*. She explains Paul’s conception of the human body as it relates to gender. She discusses authority in Paul’s theology. She includes one chapter providing her exegesis of 1 Timothy 2:11–15, a text that many consider ground-zero in the discussion of gender roles in the

church. To conclude her study, she writes: “The conclusion of this study is to call for a thorough rereading of the Pauline passages on gender” (p. 313).

This book has several strengths, two of which will be considered here. First, it seeks to understand Paul’s writings using modern linguistic theory. Although James Barr encouraged scholars within theology to do so in 1961 with the publication of *The Semantics of Biblical Language*, few have followed in his footsteps. Westfall, however, attempts to do just that. Second, Westfall has highlighted several points throughout her book that both egalitarians and complementarians can agree with. Both sides can agree that Paul’s literature should be interpreted in accordance with its cultural context. Both sides agree that all Paul’s writings should be brought to bear on how his conception of gender is understood. Both sides hopefully agree that this discussion requires the application of newer methods from fields like modern linguistic theory that help interpreters study language in a way that accords with the current scientific standards of today. Writing a book on this topic that helps find any common ground is an achievement.

Nevertheless, this book has several weaknesses; this review will highlight only two. First, although she claims to employ modern linguistics as part of her approach, the results of her analysis seem to include very little of modern linguistic theory. She has a handful of discussions that concern the semantic range of certain key terms, but beyond that, there is precious little that helps the reader understand how modern linguistics is actually relevant to her study. She explains: “There has been a major problem with a lack of consistent methodology in the interpretation of the texts” (p. 3). She explains further: “Within the tradition of interpretation, the passages that concern gender have not been understood in the contexts of the discourses in which they occur, the biblical theology of the Pauline corpus as a whole, the narrative of Paul’s life, a linguistic understanding/analysis of the Greek language, or an understanding of the culture that is sociologically informed” (p. 3). Yet, her book does little in the way of explaining precisely what she means by fleshing out and applying her methods. What one might have expected is a chapter on methodology that elucidated all the elements more clearly. Similarly, I had expected her to use more linguistic terminology as she explains how texts mean and draws her theological conclusions. To make progress in this area, one would think that clearer methodology would be of prime of importance given that methods often determine results.

Second, some of her argumentation seems problematic. She writes: “In the Ephesians household code, Paul briefly indicates that wives should submit (in the context of mutual submission), and then, in great detail, he tells men to act just like women or slaves in their marital relationship” (p. 166). Further, she writes, “both wives and husbands are servants of each other, with only one Lord and master, who has full authority and power over them” (p. 166). This explanation seems unconvincing because it seems to struggle with Paul telling wives to submit to their husbands (Eph 5:22), and not just in the context of mutual submission (Eph 5:21). It is hard to

understand how any discourse analysis does not see some kind of break in Paul's discussion of 5:21 to the entire church to the more specific household codes in 5:22 and following. If one takes Westfall's same logic, then she would be telling parents and child to submit to one another; yet, Paul tells children to obey their parents (6:1).

In full disclosure, I read and reviewed this book as a complementarian; my prediction is that although most complementarians can respect this book as a clear and thoughtful explanation of the egalitarian position, complementarians will likely continue to hold their current position after reading this book. I had personally hoped that she would engage the complementarian arguments at a deeper-level, but her book seems to repeat the standard egalitarian arguments with only brief mention of more recent methods. Nevertheless, this book will be important for students and scholars to interact with because it is now one of the key sources for the egalitarian position on Paul and gender. Anyone wanting to study this larger debate will likely need to look to Westfall's book to understand the egalitarian position. But, it is hoped that future contributions to this larger discussion will learn from the shortcomings of this book to chart a better way forward.

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**Bates, Matthew W. *Salvation by Allegiance Alone*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017, 234 pages, \$24.99, paper.**

The author of what the back cover proclaims is a “bold, provocative book” has the Ph.D. from the University of Notre Dame and is an assistant professor of theology at Quincy University, a Catholic institution. Bates is a Protestant who studied at Whitworth University and Regent College, Vancouver. He claims a broad denominational background and believes that this enables him to approach the issues in a fair way, going so far as to hope his work contributes to greater rapprochement between Catholics and Protestants. Scot McKnight writes the Forward to the book.

Of course, what has traditionally separated Protestants and Catholics on the issue of “salvation by grace through faith” centers on what happens when someone *believes* or has *faith*. Simplistically, is that one “declared” righteous, or “made” righteous? What role do “works” have in this transaction—for one side or the other? But especially crucial for Bates' concern, what is the nature of the “faith” that saves? And that question brings up Bates' provocative assertion: “... ‘faith’ and ‘belief,’ insofar as they serve as overarching terms to describe what brings about eternal salvation, should be excised from Christian discourse. That is, English-speaking leaders should entirely cease to speak of ‘salvation by faith’ or of ‘faith in Jesus’ or ‘believing in Christ’ when summarizing Christian salvation” (p. 3). Provocative indeed!

That raises crucial questions: how does the Bible define πίστις (*pistis*; usually translated “faith” or “belief”) and its related terms; and what is the nature of the

“gospel” (good news) that one must “believe” to secure salvation? Since, according to Bates, “belief” or “faith,” or even “trust” are capable of such a bewildering (and fuzzy) array of definitions and uses among would-be evangelists, he argues it’s far better to employ a term that more adequately conveys what it really takes for a person to enter the Kingdom of God. The bulk of the book then proceeds to defend the view that “allegiance” far better expresses the New Testament view of what enables a person to apprehend salvation. In short, nothing less than allegiance or loyalty to Christ as King will secure salvation.

After showing what faith is *not* (an extremely important chapter), the author engages in several chapters to elaborate what constitutes the “gospel” that one must embrace to be saved—employing both Jesus and the Evangelists in the four Gospels, as well as the writings of Acts and Paul. The “gospel” must not be equated simply with “justification” but is much broader. As Bates sees things, the “gospel” as outlined in the New Testament includes *all* the following elements and no explanation of the gospel is complete without all of these: Jesus the King (1) preexisted with the Father; (2) took on human flesh, fulfilling God’s promises to David; (3) died for sins in accordance with the Scriptures; (4) was buried; (5) was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures; (6) appeared to many; (7) is seated at the right hand of God as Lord; and (8) will come again as judge.

Then Bates shows that *pistis* (when used as the requirement for salvation) means allegiance, drawing upon the evidence in the New Testament as well as contemporary extra-biblical sources. He concludes that “the gospel is purposed toward bringing about *the practical obedience characteristic of allegiance to a king*—what I have termed *enacted allegiance*” (86; his italics). It’s important to add here that he does not argue that “allegiance” best captures the sense of *pistis* in all its uses—only when the acquisition of salvation is at stake. When Bates synthesizes the biblical data, he arrives at this definition: “saving allegiance includes three basic dimensions: *mental affirmation* that the gospel [the eight points in the prior paragraph] is true, *professed fealty* to Jesus alone as the cosmic Lord, and *enacted loyalty* through obedience to Jesus as the king” (p. 92). No kind of disembodied “faith” will save a person (e.g., only mental assent or a vague trust in Jesus who died for our sins), one must “do” or “act” for faith to be genuine and truly salvific. The Bible emphasizes a believer’s obedience, not merely one’s intellectual or psychological state of “believing.” In support Bates points to the need for the “obedience of πίστις” (Rom 1:5; 16:26; cf. 15:18–19), and Jesus’ words that “only the one who *does* the will of my Father” will enter the kingdom of heaven (Matt 7:21–23). Don’t mistake what Bates says here to mean that our works or our righteousness is what saves. As will be clear below, he asserts that believers are saved by virtue of Christ’s righteousness which becomes our through our union or incorporation with him.

I think Bates might be hard-pressed to demonstrate that *all* uses of *pistis* when employed as the requirement for salvation mean allegiance. For example, when asked

by the Philippian jailor, “What must I do to be saved?” Paul’s and Silas’ answer was, “Believe [a form of the cognate verb *pisteuō*] on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved” (Acts 16:31; NRSV). From this short narrative it would be difficult to prove that the apostles then explained to the jailor (and his household) all eight components of the gospel and then summoned them to allegiance. More likely in that context the jailor was urged to place his “trust” in Jesus. Nevertheless, Bates’ extended analyses convincingly show that in those places where one may tease out the implications of the uses of *pistis* and *pisteuō*, allegiance seems to be the likely meaning.

Bates anticipates that his proposal that salvation is by allegiance alone will engender a variety of objections, so he seeks to respond to various questions. For example, “If salvation is by grace (a gift), then how can it depend on allegiance to Jesus?” (p. 102). [As an aside, on the question of the nature of “grace,” Bates cites affirmingly John Barclay’s recent book, *Paul and the Gift* (Eerdmans, 2015). Barclay overturns some of the standard and simplistic understandings of the nature of grace. I highly recommend a careful reading of this book.] And Bates asks another controversial question: Can salvation be “lost”? Well, if allegiance is required for salvation, then, Bates concludes, one’s failure to continue to demonstrate loyalty to Jesus will result in the forfeiture of salvation. One can’t “lose” salvation, but one may jettison it.

Since allegiance to the King’s agenda is what salvation entails, then, Bates argues, embodied loyalty leads to the vocation that each believer embraces: the transformation of this world. The hope of the Christian is not to go to heaven when one dies (note echoes of N.T. Wright here), but to join in God’s grand narrative of salvation (my language) culminating in the resurrection and the renewal of all things in the new creation. Allegiance gives meaning to one’s life now as well as a glorious hope in the future.

As to the nature of “justification,” Bates addresses the issue that has historically divided Protestants and Catholics since the Reformation. Many Protestants espouse a kind of “imputed” righteousness while Catholics favor an “imparted” or “infused” righteousness. Seeking a better way, Bates locates an individual’s justification in his or her participation with or incorporation into Christ in the church. God vindicated (justified) Christ by raising him from the dead. Christians are then justified when they are incorporated into him. He questions whether the New Testament ever teaches that Christ’s righteousness is imputed to individuals. Works are the necessary component of saving faith, not merely the inevitable *results* of justification, which Protestants often relegate to sanctification as a separate and subsequent step in the *ordo salutis* (order of salvation). [On that point, Bates questions the validity of the *ordo salutis* so prominent in many Reformed formulations, claiming it owes more to systematic rather than biblical theology.] Nevertheless, he backs away from the Catholics’ idea of infused righteousness, preferring, as I have just indicated, what he

calls *incorporated righteousness*. Again, *embodied* allegiance is a requirement for salvation, not merely a result.

In keeping with the incorporation model of righteousness, then, Bates decidedly minimizes individual election to salvation and points to the Bible's emphasis on the corporate nature of election. He points out "... *the election story* the Bible wants to tell: God's election of the Messiah through Israel's election in order to save Jew and gentile alike within his elect church" (p. 171). People are saved by their incorporation into Christ's elect body, the church. The requirement for entrance into this body is a pledge of allegiance to their Lord (King).

The book ends with a chapter entitled "Practicing Allegiance." In it Bates offers a suggestion about a better way to invite people to salvation—to do evangelism. Unless people come to embrace the actual gospel (again, recall the eight points above), they can't be saved. He goes so far as to say, "We must stop asking others to invite Jesus into their hearts and start asking them to swear allegiance to Jesus the king" (199). He insists that we dare not give people "assurance" of salvation on the basis of their acceptance of a gospel invitation, but base it on the evidence of their loyalty to Jesus. Good works growing out of allegiance to Jesus secure genuine salvation; it is not secured by praying a prayer to "accept Christ" whether or not a person ever does good works.

At this point readers of this review will readily see why some of Bates' conclusions will cause considerable dis-ease among many descendants of the Reformation, particularly those of a Calvinist orientation. While Bates does not reject, e.g., the rallying cry "*Sola Fide*," he certainly challenges what *fide* (faith) has traditionally meant for them. That is, for Bates only one who lives a life in allegiance to the King possesses eternal salvation. While many might argue that genuine salvation leads to or results in good works (again separating justification and sanctification), Bates rejects that bifurcation. Only a "working faith" saves. Readers will see a strong correlation to the appeal in James' letter, and why Luther was so unhappy with James' formulation in contrast to Paul's. This is precisely Bates' point: James had it right all along, and we should understand him to mean precisely what he said! We must cease defining saving faith in any ways that strip works from its very essence. To put it starkly, one must work to be saved, and if one finds that statement heretical, Bates would ask readers to review the evidence in the NT that doers of the word will be saved, and that judgment will be based on what one does (cf. Rom 2:6–7, 13; Rev 20:12–13).

Bates also sides with a growing minority of scholars who find in the Bible an emphasis on the corporate nature of election and salvation—again in contrast to the Reformation's descendants who stress particular or individual election to salvation. I think this is one of the strengths of the book, though it's not a major point to be sure. Likewise, I applaud his emphasis on the overarching scope of salvation that puts an important emphasis on believers' efforts to effect God's agenda for the transformation

of all things in Christ—both now and in the eschaton. Allegiance to Christ matters *now* in bringing in the kingdom of God. That’s the point of salvation (and hence the requirement of allegiance), not merely so that we can go to heaven when we die. This is a crucial message for Christians and the church today: as loyal citizens of the Kingdom of God we have a calling to promote Christ’s agenda in the world. We see why good works are important and of the very essence of God’s salvation.

Of course, Bates is not alone, nor is he the first to point out the anemic results of views of “faith” that may give people assurance of salvation (particularly when coupled with a view of “once saved always saved”) but which produce little evidence of changed lives. Dietrich Bonhoeffer famously wrote about “cheap grace” in his *Cost of Discipleship*. But the value of Bates’ book lies in the ground-breaking work of helping us see that we have misconstrued the nature of the πίστις required for salvation (as Barclay helps us see that we may also have misconstrued “grace”). Instead of insisting that people count the cost before they sign on as Jesus’ disciples (as Jesus did, e.g., Luke 14:26–35; 18:17–25), in our eagerness to make converts we may be too prone to present an inadequate (and perhaps vacuous) way to enter the kingdom. We lower the bar of entry because we fail to grasp that Jesus requires allegiance. The sober implications may well be that many people who think they are saved might turn out not to be, and may find themselves among those Jesus identifies at the end of his Sermon on the Mount: “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven” (Matt 7:21; NIV). May we by our actions show our loyalty to King Jesus, and may we be eager to invite others to swear their allegiance to him as well.

Bottom line: I highly recommend this book. I don’t expect that readers will endorse all of Bates’ conclusions or be as enthusiastic as I am about it. Of course, one may take him to task at several points. But so much is at stake in these matters—from an individual’s personal salvation to the church’s mandate to make disciples. No doubt a careful interaction with this book will provoke fruitful discussions and no little self-examination.

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