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Book Reviews

Israelite Monarchy

Block, Daniel I. *Beyond the River Chebar: Studies in Kingship and Eschatology in the Book of Ezekiel*. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2013, pp. 238, \$30, paperback.

Daniel Block is a familiar name in Ezekiel scholarship, having written the substantial two-volume NICOT commentary on Ezekiel (1997–1998). Block also collaborated in editing Jacob Milgrom’s posthumous publication *Ezekiel’s Hope: A Commentary on Ezekiel 38–48* (2012). In addition to his studies on Ezekiel, Block has produced commentaries on Ruth (ZECOT, 2015), Obadiah (HMS, 2013), and Deuteronomy (NIVAC, 2012) and served as a senior translator for the revised edition of the *New Living Translation* of the Bible. Currently, Block serves as Gunther H. Knoedler Professor of Old Testament at Wheaton College in Illinois.

Beyond the River Chebar, with its predecessor *By the River Chebar*, is a collection of articles and papers Block has presented over the years. The first volume focuses on historical, literary, and theological aspects of Ezekiel, while the current volume gives attention to issues of kingship and eschatology. Block is forthright that his ideological stance is Christian and his hermeneutical perspective is primarily grammatical-historical. Thus, he gives significant attention to the historical and cultural context from which the book of Ezekiel arose.

The first essay in the compilation provides an overview of Zion theology. Block explains that paradigmatic elements—land, covenant, Zion, and David—are suppressed in Ezekiel but not because the prophet is opposed to Zion theology. Rather, Ezekiel seeks to prevent the misadministration of the past by transforming “his audience’s perception of their relationship with YHWH” (p. 7).

In the following three essays Block discusses kingship and messiah. He explains that although Ezekiel was not fundamentally opposed to the monarchy, the prophet held a negative view of the kings of Judah. In fact, Block contends that Ezekiel utilizes Gen 49:10, typically seen as a prediction of Judah’s power, to instead predict doom.

Block spends a substantial amount of time deciphering Ezekiel’s prophecies in the light of contemporaneous Judean monarchs. Zedekiah is described as “the antithesis of the future David,” and Josiah as the “model for the messianic king” (pp. 27, 15). Additionally, Block identifies Jehoiachin as the subject of the riddle in Ezek 17:3–24 and the dirge in Ezek 19:10–14. Block concludes that in contrast to Ezekiel’s disposition toward Zedekiah, the prophet is more ambivalent toward

Jehoiachin. The manner in which Ezekiel portrays the king's exile to Babylon provides a glimmer of hope for the future of the Davidic line.

Ezekiel's usage of the terms king (מֶלֶךְ, *melek*) and prince (נָשִׂי' , *nāśī'*) is a perennial point of debate among scholars of Ezekiel. Block adds his expertise to the discussion by suggesting that Ezekiel largely avoids *melek* because of the term's association with independence and arrogance, while *nāśī'* more appropriately conveys "the king's status as a vassal of YHWH" (p. 14). Additionally, the function of the *nāśī'* is facilitative rather than political. The prince is a religious figure and cult patron who ensures harmonious relations between the nation and YHWH. In short, Ezekiel does not seek to eliminate hierarchies, but to redefine existing institutions.

The following three chapters examine the Gog oracle. In chapter 5, Block proposes that the battle of Ezek 38–39 occurs after the restoration of Israel. Gog is thus "the agent through whom YHWH declares concretely that the tragedy of 586 BCE will never be repeated" as well as the means by which the person of YHWH is made known to all nations (p. 125). Chapter 6 deals with the significance of 38:17 within the larger oracle, and chapter 7 deals with the unit's epilogue.

Finally, chapters 8 and 9 discuss Ezekiel's concluding vision. Block advocates an "ideational" interpretation, in which physical geographies communicate spiritual realities (p. 172). In chapter 8 Block outlines ten factors for interpreters to consider when investigating Ezek 40–48, and in chapter 9 Block provides his own analysis of the vision.

Block is to be commended for his interaction with Ezekiel's difficult prophecies and visions, which have puzzled both Jewish and Christian interpreters for centuries. Block's work continues to press research on Ezekiel forward, especially with regard to the terms *nāśī'* and *melek*, as well as his ideational interpretation of Ezekiel's temple vision. Nonetheless, readers may wish for a more robust explanation for the hermeneutical shift from literal to ideational. Block locates actual, historical kings and events in the earlier prophecies of Ezekiel, but sees spiritual realities in the temple vision of Ezekiel 40–48. Although continued discussion and debate over Block's conclusions will certainly occur, the quality of his scholarship cannot be questioned.

The essays in the compilation cohere well with one another, but unfortunately, a significant degree of overlap occurs. Because each essay was originally intended to stand alone, foundational information is repeated often. For example, Block's structuring of the Gog oracle is repeated verbatim in chs. 5 and 6, and his evaluation of Jehoiachin is repeated in chs. 2 and 3. Thus, the volume is better suited for researching specific topics than for reading from cover to cover.

Readers who are already familiar with the critical and theological issues surrounding Ezekiel will most readily follow the flow of Block's argumentation. The scholar provides foundational historical information, but he does not always

summarize the scholarly discussions with which he interacts. Copious footnotes are provided so that readers can engage with other critical perspectives as needed. Therefore, this compilation was produced for academic readers and not for a novice in Ezekiel scholarship.

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Wright, Jacob L. *David, King of Israel*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2014, pp. 271, \$29.99, paperback.

Jacob L. Wright teaches Hebrew Bible and Jewish studies at Emory University. He has also conducted research on war commemoration.

Wright proposes a fascinating thesis, namely that a major influence on the evolution of the Hebrew Bible was what he terms ‘war commemoration’. He argues that this phenomenon can be found in many cultures, both ancient and modern, and is used to serve a number of distinct purposes. In particular, the way in which key protagonists in a battle are remembered will shape both the cultural attitude towards those individuals, and the extent to which their descendants are viewed as worthy members of the community. David and Caleb are identified as prime examples of these warriors. Wright subscribes to a form of the supplementary hypothesis (the current form of the biblical text stems from an original base text which was then supplemented by subsequent texts in successive stages), and suggests that at different stages in the development of the Hebrew Bible the authors/editors had differing agendas and used ‘war commemoration’ to serve the contemporary need. This accounts for apparent unevenness, especially in the characterization of David.

After introducing his thesis, Wright argues that the earliest stories about David (History of David’s Rise) depict him as ‘a cunning warlord who wields his private army’ to establish the kingdom of Judah (p. 50). He was forced into such a career because, as the eighth son, he stood no chance of inheriting land, and so needed an alternative way to secure his own future (p.38-9). The HDR was later combined with a separate narrative of Saul’s rule over the neighboring kingdom of Israel and a new body of material was composed to create a unified narrative explaining how David came to be rightful ruler over both Israel and Judah. Different war stories were introduced at this stage, presenting various communities as loyal to either Saul or David (chs. 4&5). This material would speak into issues of belonging for those communities in the subsequent history of Judah. At a later stage in the composition of the text, the authors were concerned with the interplay between the nation (the people) and the state (the monarchy). This concern was likely post-exilic as the nation wrestled with the question of how it could survive without the monarchy. War commemoration was employed once again, as stories were introduced into the text,

often using individual warriors to exhibit and critique different approaches to this matter (chs. 6&7).

The book concludes with a consideration of the complexities around Caleb. Wright argues that the Calebites were an elite clan within Judah (p. 174) who needed to fight for their survival as a distinct grouping in the context of various social-demographic forces. They came under pressure first from the Judahite state, as the Davidic kings moved into their territory, most notably Hebron (p. 209). Much later, in the Persian period, they again needed to assert themselves as the Edomites laid claim to their territory (p. 216). The Calebites maintained their identity by creating memories of their ancestor as a Judahite warrior of the finest character.

Wright is to be commended for offering a novel and creative solution to the complexity of the David narratives. His thesis, that through the evolution of the text, different editors used war commemoration to serve their different contemporary agendas, offers a plausible explanation for the variety of attitudes towards David found in the Hebrew Bible. He writes with an engaging style which draws comfortably on a wide range of different disciplines (history, art, literature, archaeology). However, there are a number of weaknesses in the argument. First, and foremost, his hypothesis is that war commemoration was used in the composition of the Hebrew Scriptures to serve a variety of sociological agendas. It is unfortunate, therefore, that the examples of known war commemoration which he identifies to support this claim are not directly equivalent to the writings of the Hebrew Bible. This kind of war commemoration is not an obvious phenomenon in the Ancient Near East (p. 26), and its use in other cultures tends to employ a different medium (a monument, rather than historiography). Furthermore, Wright does not appear to provide examples of an author *creating* memories long after the event, so as to serve a contemporary need. Moreover, the Hebrew narrator is known for providing only minimal information about the nation's skirmishes. He seems far less interested in detailed military accounts than might be expected if he was engaged in 'war commemoration', and far more concerned to interpret the military history through a theological lens. This fact need not be devastating for Wright's thesis, but it requires more attention than he gives it. These multiple gaps in Wright's argument make his hypothesis significantly less compelling than he acknowledges.

A second weakness in Wright's argument concerns his diachronic approach. Wright claims to have identified different stages in the composition of the text, through observing awkwardnesses, disharmonies and contradictions. These different stages are characterized by different priorities and concerns on the part of the author/editor. This is typical fare for a source-critical approach. This approach, however, is always vulnerable to the criticism of being more subjective than is perhaps acknowledged. When Wright identifies different contemporary pressures which led to the creation of new 'war memories' he would do well to acknowledge that these contexts are generally hypothetical and the product of his assumptions about the evolution of the

text. Even when he tries to establish, for example, that Keilah, as a border town, was ‘pulled to and fro’ in its loyalties to different kingdoms (pp.54-56), the archaeological evidence he cites is from a different time period, and possibly a different settlement, than the one in question. Moreover, recent literary approaches have demonstrated that supposed tensions in the text, so often the justification for source-critical theories, may actually be intentional poetic devices which would not concern an ancient hearer. It would be appropriate, therefore, for Wright to express his assertions about the growth of the text with more circumspection. This is especially the case when Wright writes in a style which would be accessible to the non-expert who may not have the wider knowledge to test his argument.

Despite the weaknesses identified above, the student of biblical and theological studies will be able to benefit from this book, especially if they have some familiarity with source-critical approaches to the Deuteronomistic History. The argument is stimulating in helping the reader consider the various social-demographic pressures affecting the first readers of the text. The reader will engage with some of the more obscure characters in the David narrative, and, whilst they may not accept all the conclusions Wright offers, they will have a richer grasp of the role these individuals and communities would have had in the nation of Israel. That said, it is significant that Wright’s approach is almost entirely sociological rather than theological. This may affect the relevance of the book to some students.

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McKelvey, Michael G. *Moses, David and the High Kingship of Yahweh: A Canonical Study of Book IV of the Psalter*. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2014, pp. 358, \$50, paperback.

Michael G. McKelvey is an assistant professor of Old Testament at the Reformed Theological Seminary (RTS) in Jackson, Mississippi. He received his M.Div from RTS (2005) while receiving his Ph.D from the University of Aberdeen in Scotland (2008). McKelvey is also an ordained Presbyterian minister and has served as a pastor for numerous years in various locations. As such, almost all of McKelvey’s publications are written in a style that bridges the academic with the ecclesiastical [see, for example, “Ecclesiastes” in *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the Old Testament: The Gospel Promised* (2016) and “The Table of the Showbread” in *Table Talk* (2017)].

Moses, David, and the High Kingship of Yahweh is the publication of McKelvey’s doctoral dissertation. Within this work, McKelvey seeks to evaluate the nature of three literary figures—Moses, David, and King Yahweh—within the context of Book IV of the Psalter (Pss 90–106). This analysis follows a canonical approach to reading the Psalter. In McKelvey’s utilization of this approach, he has been primarily influenced

by the work of Gerald Wilson (*The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*, 1985). In agreement with Wilson, McKelvey argues that there is an “apparent narrative” within the Psalter that displays a poetic reflection upon the Davidic monarchy within Books I-III (Pss 2–89; pp. 12-14). The goal of this narrative climaxes in Psalm 89. As McKelvey states, “Books I-III of the Psalter have apparently been thematically grouped around the Davidic covenant and its apparent failure, a theme which undoubtedly occupies a major part of Psalm 89. The fall of the kingship is ultimately seen in the exile of God’s people, and as a post-exilic psalm, Psalm 89 displays the woes of Israel and its confusion over exile” (p. 38). Thus, McKelvey also agrees with Wilson that Books IV-V (Pss 90–105) “being post-exilic/post-monarchic compilations, seem to respond to what has gone before, especially Book III and Psalm 89” (pp. 15-16).

Even so, McKelvey disagrees with Wilson over the role of the Davidic covenant and monarchy within Book IV. While Wilson argues that the “Davidic kingship is no longer curial in Psalms 90–106,” McKelvey, in agreement with David M. Howard (*The Structure of Psalms 93–100*, 1997), argues that “the occurrence of Davidic superscriptions, royal psalms and Royal/Zion theology in Books IV-V imply that [the] Davidic kingship still factors into the overall perspective of the Psalter” (pp. 15; 309-11).

In second to Wilson, McKelvey’s methodology is also influenced by the work of Jamie A. Grant (*The King as Exemplar*, 2004), who is the author of the book’s forward (pp. xv-xvi). Grant notes that most evaluations of the Psalter’s structure tend to focus on concatenation or the conjunctive features that link the individual Psalms together. In addition to concatenation, Grant contends that the Psalter also contains disjunctive features that help to separate the smaller sub-groups found within the Psalter. While Grant only applies such an analysis to Psalms 1–2, McKelvey expands upon Grant’s work by applying this method to the entirety of Book IV (pp. 253-77).

The chosen arrangement of McKelvey’s chapters seems for the sake of responding, both positively and negatively, to the works of Wilson and Grant. After explaining his methodology in chapter 1, chapters 2 through 5 provide the reader with an exegetical analysis of every Psalm within Book IV. Four main elements are found within this exegetical analysis (pp. 17-18). First, each Psalm is translated. Second, the individual themes and theology of each Psalm are discussed in light of how the Psalm relates to God (theocentric themes) and man (anthropocentric themes). Third, other important elements found within each Psalm are discussed focusing on the figures of McKelvey’s emphasis—Moses, David, and King Yahweh. Fourth, the canonical relationships between each Psalm and its surrounding context are demonstrated by means of intertextual links and thematic connections. Chapter 6, then, seeks to synthesis chapters 2-5 while also defending McKelvey’s argument that Book IV consist of a four-fold structural division of sub-groups: 90–92, 93–100, 101–104 and 105–106. This chapter is also the place were McKelvey applies Grant’s conjunctive and disjunctive methodology to Book IV. Lastly, chapter 7, another synthesis of chapters

2-5, seeks to explain how the literary figures of Moses, David, and King Yahweh function within Book IV and “what they say to Israel’s post-exilic audience” (p. 282). McKelvey then concludes the work with affirming the basic arguments of both Wilson and Grant; McKelvey supports Wilson in stating that Book IV is the “editorial heart of the Psalter” (p. 326) and concludes similarly to Grant that “the messianic theme of Psalms 90–106 is of great significance in light of the New Testament” (p. 327).

Overall, the book offers two main positive features. First, the work is a well-written consolidation of all relevant research on Book IV of the Psalter. As such, the work is very extensive and provides anyone interested in studying the canonical nature of Book IV with one resource from which to begin. Second, the work contains both heavily academic topics (pp. 69-72) as well as devotional insights into the editorial design of the Psalter (p. 97). Thus, while much of the contents of the work might be too scholastic for the average Bible reader, many of McKelvey’s theological insights would be very beneficial for preaching and teaching through Book IV.

Despite these benefits, the book has a few shortcomings. In order for McKelvey to divide Book IV into a fourfold structure, he must rely heavily on the editorial placement of each superscription or lack thereof. McKelvey notes that there is an uneven distribution of superscriptions within Book IV and concludes that this sort of distribution is a sign of editorial design. For example, McKelvey argues that Psalms 90–92 are a sub-group because “the employment of psalm titles [superscriptions] in Book IV separates Psalms 90–92 from their untitled neighbors” (p. 260). McKelvey cites Grant in support of viewing the superscriptions as an intentionally disjunctive feature within of the Psalter (p. 259). While this may be true and had been argued for in the work of M. D. Goulder (see, for example, *The Psalms of the Sons of Korah*, 1982), McKelvey does not argue for the importance of viewing the superscriptions as an interpretive part of the Psalms redactional history. Instead, this is simply assumed throughout the work.

Also, McKelvey disagrees with Wilson’s argument for viewing Book IV as framed by an “overlap/interlocking” editorial technique because McKelvey views the technique to be “quite complicated for the pre-critical period of editors of the Psalter” (p. 275). While McKelvey is correct in affirming that Wilson’s approach neglects to analyze the disjunctive features of Book IV, numerous works have been written on the complicated process behind the formation of the Old Testament texts, which would confirm Wilson’s proposed editorial technique as a historical possibility (see, for example, Karel van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible*, 2009 and David M. Carr, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible: A New Reconstruction*, 2011). While these points of contention are somewhat significant, they do not negate the work’s overall contribution to reading the Psalter canonically. In all, McKelvey’s work is highly recommended.

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Jipp, Joshua W. *Christ is King: Paul's Royal Ideology*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015, pp. viii + 380, \$44, paperback.

Joshua W. Jipp received his PhD in New Testament from Emory University in 2012. He is currently an associate professor of New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. Early in Jipp's post-graduate studies he became intrigued by "the incredible amount of attention devoted to reflections upon the good king in Greek and Roman writings" (p. vii). In 2013, Jipp began to formally explore the relevance of this *ancient kingship discourse* (hereafter "AKD") to NT interpretation. Jipp's paper (a pre-publication of Chapter 2) won him the SBL Paul J. Achtemeier Award for New Testament Scholarship (p. viii).

Jipp's thesis is that Paul's teachings about Christ are best understood within the framework of AKD (p. 42). Jipp relies upon abductive reasoning (finding the simplest and most likely explanation), evaluating his claims on the basis of their historical plausibility (pp. 135–137). With his focus squarely on the historical Paul, Jipp is not interested in drawing distinctions between the "Messiah" and the "king" in the LXX (pp. 29–30), or between "biblical" and "extra-biblical" language (p. 79n11), or between "Jewish" and "Greco-Roman" concepts (p. 17); all of these can be considered collectively as *Paul's conceptual resources*. Paul *reworked* these resources in light of the Christ event (particularly the resurrection), creating a new and innovative Christ-discourse (pp. 7, 135).

Chapter 1 serves as an introduction; the next four chapters provide evidence in support of the thesis. Chapter 2 shows that the ideal king embodied the law in both AKD and Paul's Christ-discourse. (Jipp uses this insight to explain "the law of Christ" in Gal 6:2 and 1 Cor 9:21.) Chapter 3 argues that just as kings were praised through royal encomia in AKD, Christ was praised through a royal hymn in Col 1:15–20. Chapter 4 suggests that the king had a unique relationship with the gods and the people in both AKD and Paul's Christ-discourse. (Jipp also suggests here that AKD is the key to understanding Paul's participatory language.) Chapter 5 establishes that the king was discussed using righteousness/justice language in both AKD and Romans. Chapter 6 is the conclusion.

Jipp's book has two major strengths. First, Jipp's research is outstanding. His interaction with Greco-Roman sources is particularly impressive. His 48-page bibliography (accessed throughout 1,000+ footnotes) includes sources ranging from ancient poetry to LXX commentaries to specialized studies in biblical theology. Second, Jipp has successfully and convincingly demonstrated that AKD had a significant influence upon Pauline theology.

While the strengths of Jipp's book far outweigh the weaknesses, a few points of critique also need to be made. First, Jipp ties Paul too tightly to Second Temple Judaism rather than to Scripture. For example, Jipp repeatedly describes Paul as an innovator who creatively reworked the cultural scripts of his day (including

Scripture) to generate a *new* perspective on the Christ, all because Jesus surprisingly rose from the dead (e.g. pp. 13–15, 42, 273–275). Jipp seems to be suggesting that none of the prior biblical tradition anticipated a resurrected Christ, contrary to the claims of Jesus (Luke 24:25–26), *Paul himself* (1 Cor 15:4), and John (John 20:9)—not to mention the OT authors. Paul’s contemporaries may not have anticipated a resurrected Messiah but Scripture did. Given Paul’s familiarity with Scripture and his skill in biblical interpretation, can he really be called an “innovator” for speaking of a resurrected Christ?

Another example is seen in Jipp’s uncritical assumption that Paul was always working from the LXX, a culturally-biased translation of the Hebrew Bible. (Yes, Paul did frequently reference the LXX, as a modern-day scholar might reference an English translation, but that does not mean Paul got his theology from the LXX.) Paul was not ignorant of the Hebrew Bible, yet Jipp completely ignores the MT when discussing the relationship between Paul and the OT (e.g. p. 101). Yet another example is Jipp’s suggestion that Paul disagreed with the Psalmists about righteousness and depravity (pp. 240–242). To connect Paul so closely to first-century Jewish thought, rather than to sound OT interpretation, is a great disservice to a thoroughly biblical teacher.

A second point of critique is that Jipp sometimes overreaches in his quest to find links between Pauline Christology and AKD. Jipp is able to connect Paul’s words to royal LXX passages using only a single word (pp. 101, 108, 117–118)—a procedure that those versed in biblical intertextuality will find suspect. In addition, Jipp sees kingship in the language of *firstborn* (p. 107), *beginning* (pp. 116–117), *fullness*, *pleased* (pp. 120–122), *peace*, *access*, *suffering* (p. 173), *reconciliation* (p. 181), and *coming* (p. 205). He suggests kingship is even implied by the language of *priesthood*, *temple*, *gift*, *wisdom*, and *body & spirit* (pp. 275–276)! The reader is left with the impression that Jipp is wearing kingship-tinted lenses when he reads the Bible.

Third, Jipp casts OT kings as *intermediaries* between God and man (pp. 149, 209), but this may be a mischaracterization of the biblical picture. The OT presented the king as being in *solidarity* with the people. For example, the only positive law in the OT concerning kingship (Deut 17:18–20) simply stated that the king must devote himself to the Law (like every other Israelite) and not exalt himself above the other members of the community (p. 55). The Psalms likewise portrayed the king as being in solidarity with the people (pp. 163–165, 227). Where, then, is the biblical evidence that OT kings stood in a unique, intermediary position between God and man? Jipp suggests divine sonship was a special, royal trait (pp. 106–107), but all of Israel was referred to as God’s son (Exod 4:22). Jipp says AKD rulers were “spoken of as images of the gods” (p. 103), but so was all of mankind (Gen 1:27; 9:6). Jipp identifies “anointed” as a distinctly royal trait (pp. 33, 152), but the Spirit was not reserved for kings—and Paul himself used the same language to describe his readers (2 Cor 1:21).

The evidence provided in *Christ is King* does not support the notion that OT kings had a special intermediary role.

In spite of the few points of critique provided above, *Christ is King* is an impressive, important, thought-provoking contribution to the field. Jipp tackles some of the biggest issues in Pauline theology (Law, hymns, participation, righteousness) and explains all of them within a single framework. The book will be most helpful to seminary students and biblical scholars who are doing research in the areas of Pauline theology, Christology, or biblical kingship. Individual chapters will appeal to those researching a specific topic addressed by the book: the relationship between Christ (or Christians) and the Law (Ch 2); the Christ-hymns (Ch 3); Union with Christ (Ch 4); Paul's righteousness and justification language (Ch 5). In addition, Chapter 2 is one of the finest examples of social-scientific interpretation available today and is therefore highly recommended to all upper-level students as an example of what NT scholarship should look like.

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Knapp, Andrew. *Royal Apologetic in the Ancient Near East*. Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2015, pp. 419, \$59.95, paperback.

Andrew Knapp's work *Royal Apologetic in the Ancient Near East*, grew out of his 2012 Johns Hopkins dissertation. Knapp currently serves as development editor at William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. Knapp's primary goal is to determine how apologetic functioned in the ancient Near Eastern (ANE) royal literature, then to analyze texts he understands as exhibiting traits of "royal apologies." The work is organized into 10 chapters. Chapters 1–2 define royal apologetic in the ANE and presents a methodology for analyzing these texts. Chapters 3–9 analyze various ANE royal texts in light of the work in chapters 1–2. Chapter 10 serves as a conclusion summarizing the information gleaned from the seven texts analyzed in the work.

Knapp begins his work by defining apologetic literature based on rhetorical studies of apologetic material. He demonstrates that the field of ANE studies tends to define apologetic literature as a literary genre based on a definition of apology borrowed from Greek classical studies. Knapp argues that ANE apologetic is a literary mode rather than a literary genre (pp. 31–42). Based on his evaluation of apologetic as a literary mode rather than genre, apology in ANE royal material must be evaluated based on the propagandist claims inherent to each document; no overarching literary rules are can be expected for ANE royal apology.

After defining ANE apologetic as a mode, Knapp examines the way ANE royal literature uses apologetic motifs. He identifies ten motifs found in ANE apologetic material but focuses on the motifs of divine election, royal prerogative/affiliation, and popular acclamation. Knapp refers to these three motifs as the "triad of legitimacy"

for ANE kings (p. 46). With the motifs common to ANE apologetic in mind, Knapp demonstrates that there are apologetic elements to multiple ANE royal texts spanning several genres.

From the texts he identifies as examples of royal apologetic Knapp selects seven for analysis in his study: The Proclamation of Telipinu, The Autobiography of Hattusili III, The Tradition of David's Rise and Reign, The Succession Narrative of Solomon, The Tel Dan Inscription of Hazael, The Accession of Esarhaddon, and The Rise of Nabonidus. In each of these documents, Knapp explores the circumstances of ascension for the king in question, discusses the text and provides a translation of each non-biblical document, and examines the *Sitz im Leben* of each document. The telos of his approach is to offer a "the first systematic treatment of apologetic in the ancient Near East" (p. 73).

Among the ANE documents Knapp analyzes, The Traditions of David's Rise and Reign and The Succession Narrative of Solomon are unique. Both the biblical texts included in the study are reconstructed from sources within the biblical text. All of the other texts in the work are royal inscriptions with the exception of The Proclamation of Telipinu, of which Knapp claims "there is no reason to question whether Telipinu himself commissioned the text" (p. 110).

In his discussion of David's Rise and Reign and The Succession Narrative of Solomon, Knapp uses source criticism to determine the "authentic" material "within the disparate biblical record" (pp. 167–68). Knapp departs from works of previous source critics who sought to isolate each individual source within the biblical narrative. Instead, Knapp attempts to isolate the early Davidic narratives from those added to the biblical text after David's reign (pp. 168–69). The source-critical analysis of David's Rise and Reign results in a set of forty-seven individual narratives that contain sources contemporary to the reign of David. Knapp's analysis of The Succession Narrative of Solomon follows a similar pattern. In both cases, the result of Knapp's source-critical analysis yields more "authentic" narratives than usually proposed by source critics.

Knapp's study of ANE royal literature offers a new way of understanding apologetic within those texts. Against the common notion in the field of ANE studies that royal apologetic is a culturally bound genre, Knapp demonstrates that "defense against accusation is not culturally bound, but common to all human society" (p. 360). Apologetic features of ANE royal literature, therefore, is not a genre but is instead a mode of writing necessitated by the social/political issues facing the king.

Royal Apologetic in the Ancient Near East should shift how biblical and ANE scholars understand royal apologetic literature. Knapp offers readers a way to understand apologetic texts based on the concerns of ANE royal life and literature. By encouraging readers to understand apologetic based on rhetorical concerns rather than on conformity to a literary genre, Knapp offers readers of ANE royal texts a better way to identify and interact with apologetic material.

The greatest value of *Royal Apologetic in the Ancient Near East* for biblical scholars is the fresh approach to understanding apologetic concerns in the narratives recounting the reigns of the kings of Israel and Judah. Knapp's work focuses only on the reigns of David and Solomon, but he also identifies narratives from the reigns of Jehu and Joash as apologetic in mode (pp. 58–59). The motifs he identifies as central to the apologetic mode of writing are likely present in other biblical narratives as well. Other scholars may find value in exploring other royal narratives in the biblical text, as well as passages infused with royal language such as the Enthronement Psalms, to see if these texts use any of the apologetic motifs Knapp identifies.

Knapp's use of source-criticism in the current work illustrates a difference in the way many scholars treat the biblical text versus other ANE sources. Knapp considers The Proclamation of Telipinu, as an authentic representation of Telipinu's proclamation to justify his ascension to the Hittite throne (pp. 116–17). He offers no source-critical analysis of the text, even though the extant manuscripts date hundreds of years after the reign of Telipinu. Knapp's decision to accept The Proclamation of Telipinu as a unified source but to parse the biblical texts for "authentic" historical material is not one that he explains within the work. Though his source-critical analysis of the biblical text represents a more inclusive model of "authentic" material than the analyses of many other source critics, the work would benefit from an explanation of why a source-critical analysis is necessary for the biblical documents, yet not from other ANE texts.

Overall, Knapp's work is of tremendous value to students of the biblical text. His methodology encourages scholars in the field to revise their understanding of the function of royal apology in the ANE. Knapp also demonstrates that relying on definitions genre from other fields of study is not always helpful in understanding individual texts. *Royal Apologetic in the Ancient Near East* presents a challenge to biblical scholars to apply Knapp's insight into the apologetic concerns of the ANE into their interpretation of biblical texts containing apologetic motifs.

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Rydelnik, Michael. *The Messianic Hope: Is the Hebrew Bible Really Messianic?* Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2010, pp. 206, \$19.99, hardcover.

Born in a traditional Jewish home, Michael Rydelnik became a believer in Jesus after listening to the witness of his mother. Her faith in Christ led Rydelnik's father to divorce her and as a consequence Rydelnik decided to study "the messianic prophecies of the Hebrew Bible" in order to prove his mother "wrong in attributing their fulfillment to Jesus of Nazareth" (12). As time went on, Rydelnik also put his "trust in Jesus as Messiah and Lord" and became convinced that it is "essential to

understand the Hebrew Bible as messianic.” (12). As such, Rydelnik’s life experiences makes *The Messianic Hope* all the more compelling for evangelical circles. Given the modern consensus to “reject the idea that the Hebrew Bible has specific predictions of the Messiah” (1), Rydelnik’s purpose in writing *The Messianic Hope* is to call evangelical scholars to “rethink this trend” since direct messianic prophecy “is the foundational element for identifying Jesus as the true Messiah” (p. 190).

Rydelnik begins his first chapter with tracing the trend away from viewing the Hebrew Bible as messianic. Rydelnik quotes the shocking words of various scholars—Tremper Longman III, Klyne Snodgrass, Larry W. Hurtado, and Daniel I. Block—who “recognize that there is something messianic about the Hebrew Bible” but not that it contains “predictions that Jesus of Nazareth fulfilled” (pp. 3–5). Instead, Rydelnik argues that they have “abandoned messianic predictions for the sake of respectability in the academy or acceptance among critical scholarship” (190).

From here, Rydelnik explains three important reasons for acknowledging messianic prophecy within the Old Testament. First, the Scriptures themselves affirm their messianic nature. Second, the messianic Hebrew prophecies provide a biblical apologetic for identifying Jesus as the Messiah. Third, the Bible’s messianic nature “enables followers of Jesus to have confidence in the Bible as God’s inspired Word” (p. 8). The rest of the book simply seeks to provide evidence for these reasons.

Chapter two describes the different approaches to messianic prophecy that have developed since the work of Anthony Collins (*Discourse of Grounds*, 1724). Collins argues that all Old Testament prophecies were fulfilled during each prophets’ own lifetimes. A second view is known as *sensus plenior* or dual fulfillment. Three variations of this view are that of typical, progressive, and relecture fulfillment—all of which view the historical personages who fulfilled the prophetic prophecies as pointing towards the Messiah. Next, there are some who argue that the New Testament authors utilized midrash or peshet—a creative exegetical technique of early Judaism that modern interpreters should not utilize (pp. 21–22). Lastly, Rydelnik explains that a compositional approach to the Hebrew Bible provides evangelicals with a sound methodology for affirming Jesus’s direct fulfillment of these prophecies.

The next five chapters explain how one should analyze the messianic texts of the Bible from in light of a compositional analysis. Chapter three—relying mostly on the work of John Sailhamer (*Introduction to Old Testament Theology*, 1995)—affirms that the version of the Hebrew Bible found in the Masoretic tradition does not reflect the “original” manuscript in various places. Thus, Rydelnik demonstrates how certain texts (such as 2 Samuel 23:1 and Psalm 72:3) in the Masoretic tradition have diluted a messianic reading still preserved in other versions. This section would be even more helpful if it included an analysis of the different versions of Jeremiah, where the Masoretic tradition is obviously less messianic than the Septuagint. Chapter four highlights the numerous occasions of inner-biblical exegesis that read early biblical texts as messianic (see, for example, the reading of Genesis 49:10 in

Ezekiel 21:27). Chapter five summarizes the canonical approach of Sailhamer and explains its usefulness in interpreting messianic prophecies. Chapters six and seven demonstrate that the New Testament writers did not create the messianic reading of the Old Testament but continued the tradition already found within it.

In light of Rydelnik's exegetical analysis, he returns to a fuller demonstration of the presuppositions behind modern scholars who affirm that any valid exegesis of messianic prophecies should affirm a historical fulfillment before the time of Jesus. Rydelnik argues that the work of Rabbi Shlomo Yitzhaki (1040–1105), commonly known as Rashi, has been very influential to numerous scholars in the area of Old Testament exegesis. Rashi changed exegesis from being concerned with the literary aspects of the text to a concern for the historical circumstances surrounding the text. In Rydelnik's words, "Rashi no longer understood the peshat [meaning exegesis or simple meaning] as the *plain* sense of the text but the *historical* sense" (italic original, 116). In a very persuasive manner, Rydelnik provides the reader with evidence of how the reading of certain texts changed after the time of Rashi (see pp. 123–128).

The book ends with three chapters that each provide a three-part analysis of three messianic texts—Gen 3:14–15, Isa 7:13–25, and Ps 110. Each of these texts is taken from one of the three sections of the Old Testament—the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings. In each analysis, Rydelnik's exegesis looks at the text from its immediate context (called *intextual* exegesis), its broader context (called *innertextual* exegesis), and its canonical context (called *intertextual* exegesis). While one may not agree with all of Rydelnik's observations, his analysis does lead one to affirm that each of these texts is intentionally messianic and were read that way by authors in both the Old and New Testaments. A welcomed addition to this section would be an analysis of Exod 12:46 since it appears to be the referent for Jesus's words in John 19:36.

In all, *The Messianic Hope* is a wonderfully crafted argument for the importance of affirming Jesus's direct fulfillment of the messianic prophecies found within the Hebrew Bible. Though the work suffers from a few moments of repetitiveness, these are easily overlooked in light of the work's entirety. Still, there are places where Rydelnik has oversimplified the views of some scholars. For example, though Block does not view Deut 18:15 as messianic, as Rydelnik states (p. 5), Block does affirm that Isa 52:13–53:12 is directly messiah (see *For the Glory*, 2014). Thus, Block does not view the Hebrew Bible as broadly messianic, as Rydelnik states (p. 3), but as directly messianic given his view of the progression of biblical revelation. Rydelnik's response would probably be that Isaiah is "expanding and clarifying the message of the Torah" (p. 72), but *The Messianic Hope* is far too concise to deal with the issues of interpretation that divide Rydelnik and Block. Thus, Rydelnik's work may not be very useful beyond its basic argument for the traditional view of messianic prophecies.

In conclusion, while many evangelical church members and pastors may already be convinced of the messianic nature of the Hebrew Bible, that evangelical scholarship has deemed such convictions as unnecessary implies that it will only be a matter of time before this is no longer the case. As Rydelnik states in his analysis of Isaiah 7:13–25, “their approach says that faith in Jesus is still the truth even if the virgin birth is questioned or if Isaiah’s prediction of it is explained away as exegetically untenable. But truth is foundational to faith” (p. 162). In other words, Rydelnik argues that numerous fundamental facts of the faith, such as the virgin birth, will become invalid if the messianic texts of the Hebrew Bible do not directly speak of Jesus—as affirmed by the New Testament authors. Though this suggestion might be dismissed as a logical fallacy—a slippery slope—Rydelnik demonstrates these repercussions in the work of Rob Bell (*Velvet Jesus*, 2005). If Bell is considered to be an extremist, then it is questionable as to why many evangelical scholars appear to affirm many of Bell’s hermeneutical premises (see pp. 146–147, 162). Instead, as Rydelnik argues, evangelical should join the “growing movement among some biblical scholars” who approach the text of scripture in light of its “final canonical form,” which will allow one to see the “Old Testament as an eschatological, messianic text” (p. xv).

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Auld, A. Graeme. *Life in Kings: Reshaping the Royal Story in the Hebrew Bible*. Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2017, viii + 321, \$39.95, paperback.

A. Graeme Auld is Professor Emeritus of Hebrew Bible at Edinburgh University. He is the author of numerous books and articles, including *I and II Samuel: A Commentary* in the Old Testament Library series (WJK, 2011) and *Kings without Privilege: David and Moses in the Story of the Bible’s Kings* (T & T Clark, 1994).

Life in Kings opens with a statement about the focus of the book, a history of interpretation, and two brief case studies that start the argument of the book. Auld opens by stating *Life in Kings* “is about writing and rewriting the biblical book of Kings—it is a book about words and their use and their reuse, about meanings and changes in meaning... our principal concern is with the words themselves” (p. 1). After this thesis Auld summarizes the works of “the Fathers” who have explored the compositional history of Kings (as well as Samuel and Chronicles). These include de Wette, Wellhausen, and Noth from previous generations and also some more recent scholars. After tracing his own progression in scholarship and thought over a series of papers Auld ends the chapter with two case studies. One of the presentation of Hezekiah in Kings and Isaiah and the other a comparison of the material in Samuel and Chronicles of David in Moab.

Chapters 2-5 is where Auld amasses material from Samuel and Kings that is different in nature, particularly in the use of words (and their meanings). Chapter 2

begins after a discussion of the presentation of David in Moab where the ideas/words of life and death were important within the narratives. Auld starts with a discussion of the “word cluster” life/live/living (הַיְיָ/הַיָּה/הַיָּהִים). Auld notes where this cluster is present and absent in Kings, Chronicles and Isaiah and then looks at a variety of expressions and other uses of this word cluster (swearing by the living Yahweh, the life of the king, and discussion of such things as animal life). The content of chapter 2 forms the basis for the title of the book. Chapter 3 surveys other words within Samuel-Kings and Chronicles where he differentiates between word usage in synoptic Samuel-Kings and nonsynoptic Samuel-Kings. In chapter 4 he continues by looking at communication between God and the king. Chapter 5 focuses on the cult within the synoptic material surveying such things as the building of altars, the high places, etc. In chapter 6 Auld ends this section of the work by beginning of proposal of a synoptic narrative. He notes that this “reconstruction can only be provisional and incomplete” (p. 89). Here he seeks to answer three questions related to distinctiveness, coherence, and meaning (see the full questions on p. 90).

Chapters 7-9 develop Auld’s theory of the Book of Two Houses, which he has espoused in other writings. Chapter 7 focuses on the shared text(s) as presented in 1-2 Samuel. Chapter 8 focuses on the examination of prophets and prophetic material in Kings. Chapter 9 looks at the kings as they are presented in the synoptic and nonsynoptic material with a particular focus on the writing and rewriting of Judah’s kings.

Chapter 10 brings in further information from the book of Isaiah on Hezekiah, though this material had been mentioned in passing elsewhere in the work. Chapter 11 answers questions that the earlier “probings” of parallel material anticipated. This includes a discussion of “serial anticipations” where he believes that the authors “retrojected themes back into earlier times” (p. 194) and a discussion of the book of Deuteronomy as “the big anticipation” (p. 195). The book ends with a detailed presentation of samples of the shared Hebrew text.

I have found the great value to this book to be Auld’s exhaustive combing through the text to find the very nuanced differences in presentation between Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, and Isaiah. It is clear that Auld has spent a lifetime of study contemplating the material, with which he is expertly familiar. His reconstruction and presentation of the synoptic material in chapter 12 is thorough. His identification of both similarities and differences between texts is very helpful for literary considerations on why each author chose specific material, and what this could mean for the overall narrative. This, however, is not ultimately what Auld intends to do with his data. Instead of a synchronic reading of the text, Auld’s diachronic analysis is focused more on understanding concerns of textual strata and authorship, which is a literary criticism of a different type. This book will be helpful to the very advanced student, and Old Testament scholar, familiar with higher critical theory.

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Old Testament

Longman, Tremper, III and John H. Walton. *The Lost World of the Flood: Mythology, Theology, and the Deluge Debate*. Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2018, pp. 192, \$18.00, paperback.

Tremper Longman and John Walton have served as professors of Old Testament and separately published books on Old Testament topics as well as commentaries on several biblical books. *The Lost World of the Flood* is the second book they have published together, having co-authored *How to Read Job* in 2015 (IVP Academic). This book is the fifth of IVP Academic's "The Lost World" series, all of which are either authored or co-authored by Walton.

The chapters of this work are a series of seventeen propositions, a format which has been consistent throughout the Lost World series. The main benefit of the chapter titles being full-sentence proposition statements is that the reader can gain an understanding of the whole book simply by reading the table of contents. The risk involved in such an approach is that some readers may react to a proposition that they find to be provocative by dismissing the book without letting the authors explain their position.

The propositions step through a logical progression, and each chapter builds on the ground gained by the preceding chapters. First, Longman and Walton introduce to the reader that Genesis is an ancient document which should be understood the way the ancient readers would have understood it. Then they assure the reader that the events portrayed in the biblical text are based on actual events from time-space history. But they contend that communicating empirical facts is not the primary goal of the biblical author. Rather the goal of the biblical author was to make a theological point, and therefore the information contained in the text of Scripture may not be the kind of information that can be used to reconstruct what actually happened in time-space history.

For those who deny the flood was worldwide, the most common approach is to try to explain that the text does not actually say the flood was worldwide. Supports of a local flood will often translate the Hebrew word for Earth to mean 'land' in an attempt to make the story fit with a localized flood. Longman and Walton deny that the text of Genesis 6–9 supports such a possibility. They correctly assess that the story in the Bible is the story of a worldwide flood, and that one cannot force the text to say that the flood was local. Thus, tension exists in the fact that the text says the flood was worldwide and there is a lack of geological evidence for a worldwide flood. Longman and Walton's plan is to explain that the text does not mean what it says. Rather the text used the story of a worldwide flood to communicate a theological truth.

They list numerous impossibilities in the flood story, which Walton has previously discussed in his Genesis commentary in the NIV Application Commentary series.

No wooden boat of the size described in the text has ever been built, much less in ancient times. Noah and his family could not possibly have built such a boat. The waters could not possibly have risen at the rate required for the timeline given in the text, etc. The catalog of impossibilities leads them to believe that the biblical author and the original audience would not have believed that the words mean what they say. They would add to the list the proposed impossibility that the flood was worldwide.

According to Longman and Walton, the biblical author intended the flood story in Genesis 6–9 to be understood as hyperbole, and the ancient readers would have recognized the story as hyperbole. In other words, the biblical author and the original audience never believed that the flood was worldwide, and therefore the modern reader should not. The biblical author chose to represent the event as worldwide in order to make a theological point. A refrain of the book is that the interpretation of the events is the inspired Word of God, not the events themselves. But the student of the Bible should note that God sovereignly presides over the events of history, and one could argue that God has in fact inspired the events themselves as well as the recording of those events by biblical authors.

Foundational to their claim that the flood story was hyperbole is the establishment of other biblical texts as analogies of hyperbole. In this way they are consistent in their disbelief that the Bible means what it says. But the student of the Bible should be careful to consider whether their analogy texts are definitely hyperbolic. One analogy text they include is Joshua 1–12 (comprehensive conquering of the land) contrasted with Joshua 13, which begins to reveal how much of the land was yet unconquered. They argue that the earlier statements were hyperbole aimed at a theological point while the latter statements were the honest picture of the historical situation. But hyperbole is not the only way to understand Joshua's presentation of the conquest. It could also be the case, which is common in Hebrew narrative, that the earlier chapters were an overview of the story, while the latter information explained more detail. Hebrew narrative follows this circular form of storytelling in several places.

In order to establish that hyperbole also exists in the immediate context of the flood story, Longman and Walton point to Genesis 6:5 as a verse which would be understood as hyperbole by all except for the most literally-minded reader. But to claim, as Longman and Walton do, that the thoughts and intentions of man's heart could not possibly have been only evil in every action represents a fundamental misunderstanding of the depths of depravity brought on by man's sinfulness. Isaiah 64:6 provides helpful detail concerning the filthiness even of man's righteous acts apart from the redemptive work of God. Additionally, if Genesis 6:5 is an exaggeration of the sinfulness of man meaning only that sin had reached unprecedented levels and that a worldwide flood would be deserved in such a situation, then why would God restate the same fact about the total sinfulness man's heart after the flood (Genesis 9:21)?

If the point of the text is to make a theological rather than historical claim, then why would one even claim that there is a historical event as its referent? What keeps a person from arguing that the theological meaning is the only meaning, and that it doesn't matter if there is any historical veracity to the story? Could the biblical stories not be understood as parables? Contrary to Longman and Walton, it does matter that biblical events actually happened in time-space history the way they are recorded in the text. To definitively disprove that a biblical event happened as recorded in the text would strike a severe blow against any theological point made by the text. If the reader cannot believe the words on the pages of Scripture, then why would the reader believe the theological point being made by the same Scripture? Longman and Walton have found a way to disbelieve the text of the Bible while claiming to uphold the inerrancy, infallibility, and inspiration of the same text.

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Jacobson, Joshua R. *Chanting the Hebrew Bible: The Art of Cantillation*. 2nd ed. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2017, pp. xxx + 844, \$90.00, hardback.

“Don't be attracted to any interpretation that conflicts with the punctuation of the *te'amim*; don't even listen to it!” (Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra, p. 23). Whether or not you agree with Ibn Ezra's claim, the sad reality must be faced: most students of biblical Hebrew cannot even read the *te'amim* [accents] so as to discern their meaning. Joshua Jacobson presents a monumental work to remedy this situation. Now expanded into a second edition, *Chanting the Hebrew Bible* introduces readers to the Masoretic accent system and guides them all the way up to “the art of cantillation.” Jacobson (D.M.), professor of music and director of choral activities at Northeastern University, teaches and conducts around the world. He had published hundreds of compositions, arrangements, and articles. His background in Jewish literature, musical performance, and experience as a cantor instructor allows him to produce such an encyclopedic guide. *Chanting the Hebrew Bible* provides readers with a tool to learn interpreting, reading, and singing the Hebrew Bible according to the Masoretic tradition.

Jacobson divides this massive volume into seven distinct chapters that move progressively toward the skill of cantillation: (1) introduction to the *te'amim* [24 pp.], (2) understanding (Masoretic) syntactic levels [203 pp.], (3) pronunciation guidance [83 pp.], (4) text and history [31 pp.], (5) issues in reading the *te'amim* [79 pp.], (6) how to chant the *te'amim* [341 pp.], (7) appendices, charts, and guides [49 pp.]. Two chapters carry the freight of the book. Chapter two presents biblical Hebrew syntax according to the Masoretic accent system. With the current dearth of accessible published material on this subject, these 200 pages offer broad appeal to those seeking to understand biblical Hebrew at an intermediate level. Chapter six lends the

book its title and teaches the reader the “art of cantillation.” By this point in the book, assuming it has been used sequentially, the reader will know how to properly parse and pronounce the text. These 300 plus pages teach the reader, step by step, how to properly express the reading through traditional melodies and phrases. Jacobson uses an Ashkenazi tradition for the melodies in this book. He also presents the melodies in Western music notation providing audio files for most examples on his website (chantingthehebrewbible.com). This progression of chapters prepares readers to read aloud and chant the text with proper expression according to the Masoretic tradition.

The second edition makes some significant improvements to the first edition. First, the availability of an eBook (PDF) edition makes it possible to search this encyclopedic reference. Second, the companion website now hosts the audio files (previously on CD) along with instructional videos and articles. Third, the text includes numerous new examples to promote more practice. Lastly, the use of SBL Hebrew font improves the readability of the text.

It would be a shame if the only ones to benefit from this volume were cantors in training. Jacobson’s well-researched presentation of the Masoretic tradition, his system of syntactical analysis, and the emphasis on auditory reading commend this volume to a wide audience. First, very few biblical studies students have the time to read all the rabbinic sources Jacobson quotes throughout the book. He generally presents these quotes in their Hebrew original and in English translation. These quotes not only provide for historical interest but also expose readers to historic appraisals of the Masoretic system (pp. 8–9). Jacobson also includes numerous visual aids presenting historical scripts and scrolls which enhances understanding (pp. 315, 325). These features add a unique flavor to the background chapters (chs. 3–5) that most Western students have not tasted before.

Second, as far as syntactical analysis, Jacobson employs Michael Perlman’s system of diagramming sentence structure. Figure 1 provides an example of how he displays the text.

Figure 1. Stepping phrases (Judges 1:1a)



Chapter two drills this system into readers so that they begin to visualize the syntactical groupings signified by the *te'amim*. Such groupings not only express the proper way to read the text aloud, but they provide insight into the meaning. Jacobson provides the light-hearted example: “WOMAN WITHOUT HER MAN IS

NOTHING” (p. 21). At least two options arise for reading this in English: (1) “Woman without her man—is nothing,” or (2) “Woman! Without her, man is nothing.” The Masoretes have included accents to guide readers in the tradition that long predated them (p. 324). With the growing popularity of historical commentary on Scripture (e.g., *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*), learning the reading tradition encoded in the Masoretic text seems to be a natural step. Readers should be aware that Jacobson provides very little discussion of the “three poetic books” since these are not typically chanted. For more extensive discussion of both systems, see Fuller and Choi, *Invitation to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 2016; Wickes, *Two Treatises on the Accentuation of the Old Testament*, 1970. Nevertheless, the principles Jacobson develops here would make learning the “poetic” system much easier. All students of biblical Hebrew have much to gain from learning the Masoretic accents, whether or not they intend to chant.

The audio materials and emphasis on phrasing and pronunciation offer a third benefit to the general student of biblical Hebrew. While the end goal of *Chanting the Hebrew Bible* is to train readers in cantillation, along the way they will pick up proper pronunciation and inflection for reading. Jacobson uses contemporary Israeli Sephardic pronunciation due to its broad usage in the Jewish community. Nevertheless, since he is training cantors, he demands an “elevated style” that would be appropriate for public reading (p. 232). This represents the perfect blend for beginning biblical Hebrew students: precise pronunciation in a broadly accepted diction. Perhaps even more helpful is Jacobson’s presentation of the *te’amim* as “accents.” One of the three functions of the *te’amim* is to indicate the stressed or accented syllable (p. 1). Jacobson provides numerous exercises and examples written in emphatic transliteration (p. 235).

וַתִּרְאֶנּוּ	(vat-ti-RE-na)	(“they saw”)	(Exod 1:17)
וַתִּירְאֶנּוּ	(vat-tir-'E-na)	(“they feared”)	(Josh 24:7)

Additionally, learning the rudiments of chant will help cement the Masoretic system. The melodies and sequences aid memory and promote proper phrasing. This whole course of study helps to lift the silent text from the page and make it a living word again. Thus, this book offers assistance in addressing multiple weaknesses common to beginning biblical Hebrew students.

The massive scope of this single volume faces one major challenge—information management. It’s difficult to blame the ocean when a swimmer is forced to work hard to return to shore, but such is the nature of encyclopedic guides. The detailed table of contents and index provide some assistance, but no substitute exists for familiarity with the book’s contents. Chapters 1–5.4 focus on the details of the Masoretic system; chapters 5.5–7.3 take that knowledge and instruct readers in cantillation. The searchable PDF format will also aid in finding specific nuggets of information. But, sadly, eBook formats in general further distance the reader from

the scope and sequence of a text. For the sake of in-depth study I would recommend the hardback format.

Chanting the Hebrew Bible deserves recognition by a wider community of Hebrew scholars, instructors, and students. Second year biblical Hebrew instructors would benefit greatly from Jacobson's tutelage. Many principles and materials (e.g., chapter 2) would carry-over directly to a course on Hebrew syntax, while other materials may even benefit first year students (e.g., chapter 3). It can be hoped that an updated student edition will come out making this more accessible in the classroom (Jacobson, 2005). For interpreters who still pass over the *te'amim* while reading, exposure to the reading tradition of the Masoretes may provide many fresh insights. For students who only ever "see" the text, it is time to begin hearing it, speaking it, and, indeed, singing it.

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Childs, Brevard S. *Myth and Reality in the Old Testament. Studies in Biblical Theology*, no. 27. Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2009. 112 pp. \$13.00.

What is the nature and meaning of "myth" in the Old Testament? In Child's work, *Myth and Reality*, it is this very question, which remained unanswered by Gunkel and others, that he sought to address. Childs' thesis is simply, "that myth and the Old Testament have as their ultimate concern an understanding of reality" (p. 7). He notes the tension between the understandings of myth and reality and how reconciliation is found in the "redemptive activity of God." What qualifies Childs to answer such a phenomenological question? Beyond the fact that he served as the Sterling Professor of Yale Divinity School, he was also the author of numerous works that dealt with the problems of historical-critical methodology. Some of his more prevalent works *Biblical Theology in Crisis*, *Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context*, and his *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* displayed his rigor and expertise to engage the issue of myth with a careful eye.

In five chapters this little monograph works to frame and engage with the problem of defining myth and delimiting the theological implications of myth in Old Testament exegesis. Chapter one deals with the descriptive approaches to defining myth and their problems: (1) too broad (p. 15), and (2) it does not deal with the witness of faith (p. 16). Childs seeks to frame a phenomenological definition of myth (p. 16). Chapter two surveys this structural and philosophical development of myth in the witness of Old Testament and ancient Near Eastern reality. The formation of myth is the continual pull to bring the past into the present (p. 23) through tradition and memory. In Chapter three, Childs deals with the tension of the Old Testament text to reconcile its worldview with the surrounding cultures (p. 31ff). Childs demonstrates this tension by examining select text in Genesis (pp. 31-58), Exodus (pp. 59-64), and

Isaiah (pp. 65-72) and the etiological motifs that function within the texts (p. 60). That is to say, much of the Old Testament text has an issue with the historicity of myth as it relates to the biblical concept of reality (p. 73).

Chapter four picks up the discussion of myth with an analysis of the Old Testament's categorical understanding of reality. Childs notes that the problem here is not chronology (linear) but rather one of quality (p. 76). He gives three stages to the developments of the biblical understanding of this category: (1) non-being/chaos, (2) creation by God, and (3) man's disobedience (p. 83). Another category that is distinct is, space, which is to be understood in terms of an eschatological new creation, "God's new space entering into the world of 'old space'" (p. 94). The final chapter examines the theological problem of myth. While scholars, like Gunkel, provided insights into the formal analysis of myth in the Old Testament, little is said of the theological problem (p. 97). Looking from within the canonical-text, Childs' conclusion is that the theological problem deals with the experiences of Israel in the process of being made new (p. 98). All theological approaches must be grounded in the objective reality of Israel's experience and history (p. 103). In the New Testament, this can be examined through the encounter with Jesus as he sought to make them new through faith (p. 106).

This work surveys a wide range of thought within a small apparatus. The low page count is not indicative of its theological weight, for it deals with some prolegomena that encapsulate both methodology and historiography. The structure and flow of the text are helpful to the reader as it frames the problems surrounding this issue and moves into formal and functional analysis of some selected text. Any reader familiar with Childs will excuse his ponderous writing pattern in light of the insight that is gleaned from the work.

Child's examination of Gn 1:1-2, 3:1-5, 6:1-4; Ex 4:24-26; Is 11:6-9; and 14:12-21 proffers to the reader the biblical function and nature of myth as the authors of the Bible altered these patterns from the Near Eastern context. He notes how these passages are contrasted to the mystical understandings of time and space. More to this, Childs notes that these patterns are altered to posit a new reality (p. 77) and how there is no room for myth in the New Israel founded by Jesus Christ. While Childs' methodology is warranted and consistent in the examination of the biblical text, some further comments on their function, guised as etiologies, are needed. The mention of etiology, while examining Ex4:24-26, is warranted within the discussion of this issue. However, some further substance would further solidify his argument. Etiological motifs, during the time of this monograph, were not without their broad definitions. This is not to chide Childs' remarks about etiological motifs, but it seems odd that he does not clarify what this means and the methodology behind in it in a study concerned with phenomenological and historical issues.

Another area of concern in this work is Child's treatment of biblical time. He criticizes Cullmann's view of "spatial" time and notes how others scholars (mostly

Pedersen and Orelli) remark on the distinctiveness of the Hebraic concepts of time (pp. 75-76). Because Hebrew, according to Childs, emphasizes qualities of action over tenses the conceptualize of a linear time is a “modern abstraction” (p. 77). Beyond vocabulary, what other criteria might help the reader understand his thought process here? His biblical analysis relies heavily on the prophets and the eschatological focus of time, but does mean their view is normative of all biblical genres? The use of the term “reality” seems to impose a modern notion of historiography onto the biblical text.

Childs concludes his monograph by stating that Israel “succeeded in overcoming myth” (p. 97). The Old Testament is void of meaning without an understanding of the New Testament—where the Jew receives a proper understanding of the OT through Christ (p. 98). This is a strong statement; perhaps he means incomplete instead of meaningless? In essence, it seems that Childs’ desire is to base the categories of time in space in the historicity of their reflection recorded in Scripture. Despite some minor ambiguity in the work, Childs’ buttress for a historical Israel and New Israel contributes heavily to the work of biblical theology, especially in an evangelical framework. This puts him at odds with his contemporaries and even mainline scholarship in postmodernity. This work serves as a memorial for modern evangelical scholarship. It both proffers rigorous engagement with central issues concern Old Testament methodology and how to faithfully, responsibly, and constructively navigate issues of the biblical text as they arise in culture.

In summation, Childs provides a significant monograph dealing with the central issue of a phenomenological understanding of the biblical witness of myth and reality. In time that is historically negative towards the historicity of Israel, Childs defends a fundamental component for doing biblical theology—belief in the inspiration of the text. Although this examination does not give an exhaustive account of myth and reality, it does provide a remarkable critique of relevant literature and methods.

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Jarick, John, ed. *Perspectives on Israelite Wisdom: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar*. Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016, pp 520, \$128, hardback.

Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar focuses on ‘Perspectives on Israelite Wisdom,’ and covers broad issues in the wisdom tradition and corpus. The volume has no overarching thesis, hermeneutic, or methodology, but provides essays from diverse theological perspectives. After an introduction by John Jarick, the book divides into three sections. The first section covers ‘Issues in the Study of Israelite Wisdom.’ Stuart Weeks evaluates the watershed article by W. Zimmerli ‘The Place and Limits of Wisdom’ and finds his conclusions wanting. John Barton writes on four different issues on ethics in

the Old Testament but unfortunately covers each briefly with no conclusion or synthesis. Jenni Williams employs Samuel and Proverbs to illustrate women's relationship to wisdom. Aulikki Nahkola offers a paremiological study of Proverbs to understand the worldview of Israel. Will Kynes ends the first section with a fundamental critique of wisdom literature.

The second section covers 'The Wisdom Corpus of the Hebrew Bible' with two essays on Proverbs, two on Job, and three on Ecclesiastes. In the first essay on Proverbs, Gary A. Rendsburg connects literary and linguistic issues in the book of Proverbs. The next essay on Proverbs, James E. Patrick defends a connection between Proverbs and Deuteronomy through 'the fear of the Lord.' David J. A. Clines pulls imagery from Job to draw a picture of the universe from Job 38 in light of the Ancient Near East cosmology. Terje Stordalen argues a conservative redactor tamed the rebellious Job by inserting material. John Jarick shows Hellenistic influence in the structure of Ecclesiastes. Jennie Grillo examines Jerome and Gregory of Nyssa interpretation and their value for modern study (p. 248). Mette Bundvad concludes with applying a psychoanalytic spatial theory to Qohelet.

The final section covers contributions on 'Other Texts in Relation to Wisdom.' Susan Gillingham probes the Psalms to see what they tell us about the wisdom tradition. Edmee Kingsmill SLG compares the Song of Songs with wisdom literature to demonstrate its affinity to the wisdom corpus. John Day digs into the Garden of Eden to determine if there is a relationship from the 'the knowledge of good and evil' and the 'tree of life' to wisdom themes. Phillip Y. Yoo highlights the lack wisdom in the wilderness tradition demonstrates the rebellion of Israel. Katherine J. Dell positions Jeremiah as a renegade sage who uses tropes to oppose the wise (p. 381). The final three essays focus on non-biblical material in Ben Sira and Handel's *Nabal*. Deborah W. Rooke compares the biblical account in 1 Samuel 25 against Handel's *Nabal*. The next two essays cover Ben Sira, which is a deuterocanonical wisdom book. James K. Aitken and James E. Harding use Ben Sira to argue for Hellenistic influence on the text of Ben Sira.

The Oxford Seminar proceedings provide a significant collection of essays to the study of Old Testament wisdom. The essays cover a broad range of issues which enable students the ability to familiarize themselves with wisdom issues. A few essays stand out above the rest. First up, Weeks essay on Zimmerli's creation theology provides an updated critique to his creation theology. Creation theology proposes justification through the created order (p. 10), which provides an alternative for justification apart from the covenant. Weeks demonstrates Zimmerli's lack of biblical support, and his root in Lutheran and scholarly context (pp. 10-11). Wisdom literature revolves around the resemblance and difference of wisdom and historical literature. Weeks provides a way forward by stating "the more that we stress the resemblance, the greater that tension becomes." (p. 7) Tensions must exist within scripture and handled on their own terms.

Next on the list, Kynes' essay criticizes the foundation of wisdom literature and shakes the very foundation. He deconstructs the dilapidated categories and suggest

scholars form categories natural to the text. Wisdom literature as a technical term came from higher criticism and its desire to construct a category outside the text. Kynes proposes the next step in wisdom literature begins with examining the text on its own account. Readers will easily agree that categories should arise from the text, but Kynes fails to provide them within this essay. Kynes will hopefully provide it within his new book *An Obituary for "Wisdom Literature."*

In the third essay, Patrick unites Proverbs with the Deuteronomic revelation at Horeb through the fear of the Lord. His essay readjusts current scholarship from a late deuteronomic date, which disallows contemporaneous usage by Proverbs. He suggests that pre-exilic Israel shows a clear interest in the stories of Israel's History (p. 166), for the fear of Lord begins at Mount Horeb with the giving of the ten commandments (p. 164). This foundational story lays the structure for Proverbs 1-24. His essay provides a welcome readjustment to Proverbs dependence upon Deuteronomy. He perhaps stretches the imagination at times with calendar dates but provides a thoughtful examination of the material.

The fourth essay, Phillip Y. Yoo argues that the wilderness generation perished because a lack of the fear of the Lord (p. 370). Wisdom remains absent from the wilderness generation because they challenge Yahweh's authority rather than submitting to him in fear (p. 363). Yoo hinders his argument by referring to JEDP but provides overarching implications for interpreting wisdom literature. His solution provides possible answers to the presence and absence of wisdom in other scriptures.

These essays weigh in on multiple topics, but some stretch the categories for the 'Perspectives on Israelite Wisdom.' Rooke's essays fails to fit within the category because she provides no insight to the Israelite perspective, but sets her essay in 1700 A.D. The essays on Ben Sira focus on friendship and table manners which are at best sub-themes in the wisdom tradition. These issues mentioned above agree with Kynes' essay that wisdom literature is an artificial category that often expands to the needs of the community and fails to distinguish unrelated materials. The diversity provides a broad range of essays, but a definition of wisdom literature remains allusive.

The Oxford Seminar has compiled a great resource for scholars and students to wade through the issues. The brevity on each topic provides a launching point in each topic so that students and scholars will benefit in their studies. A student new to the study of Old Testament should begin with Kynes' essay to consider the validity of the genre. Next, one should consider Patrick's essay for hermeneutical methodology in interpreting Scripture. Scholars will benefit from Dell's essay on Jeremiah's use of wisdom as a trope against his opponents. She argues that Jeremiah's use of wisdom sets the stage for the next transition in Old Testament scholarship (pp. 377-79).

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New Testament

Wright, N.T. *Paul: A Biography*. San Francisco, CA: HarperOne, 2018, pp 464, \$29.99, Hardcover.

N.T. Wright is widely known as one of the most prominent Pauline scholars of today and a retired Anglican bishop. He has gained much attention in the academic field for his view on the new perspective on Paul, which has stirred up much debate among Pauline scholars. One of his most recent works that addresses this issue is *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*, which was published by Fortress Press in 2013. Currently, the author holds the position of Chair of New Testament and Early Christianity at the School of Divinity of the University of St. Andrews in Scotland.

In this book, Wright takes a biographical approach in dealing with Paul's life and theology. He begins with Paul's upbringing as a young Jew living in Tarsus, and takes the readers through Paul's entire life until the final years before his death. In order to help the reader better understand the shaping and substance of Paul's theology, Wright traces through known aspects of Paul's missionary journeys while filling in gaps of knowledge with his thoughtful speculations. The author divides his work into three parts: the beginning of Paul's life, Paul's missionary journeys, and final years of Paul's life.

In part one, Wright chronologically takes his readers through the early stages of Paul's life, including Paul's conversion experience. He surmises portions of what Paul's early childhood may have been like by comparing it with what would have been the typical lifestyle of an elite Jewish boy of that time. Though these thoughts are largely Wright's personal conjectures, Wright does an excellent job in carefully looking at the tradition of the Jews of Paul's days in order to offer perspective into what might have shaped Paul's - or then, Saul's - vicious zeal to persecute followers of the Way. In the telling of Paul's conversion experience that took place from the road to Damascus, Wright expands on the importance of Paul's personal experience during his trip to Arabia after encountering the risen Lord - something that is not explicitly explained in the book of Acts. By considering Paul's potential thoughts on being confronted by Christ and his own conversion, Wright walks the reader through the formation of Paul's reshaped worldview.

In part two, which makes up the majority of this work, the author deals with Paul's missionary journeys throughout the ancient Mediterranean world. In this section, Wright meticulously traces through Paul's visits to each city and town to understand Paul's new life as an apostle for Jesus Christ. And as he traces through Paul's visits to these cities, Wright does not fail to give the readers detailed information about religious, socio-economical, and political stances of these cities and towns, thereby helping the reader better understand the situations Paul was dealing with. Wright highlights the mistreatment and suffering that Paul experienced in various cities such

as Thessalonica, Ephesus, and Caesarea in order to provide insight into the shaping of Paul's theology and the reasons behind why and what he wrote in his letters to the early churches. As he did in the previous section, Wright includes several of his personal reflections, and thus, Wright's own theological view seeps into these chapters. This is especially evident as Wright advocates for the new perspective on Paul, and particularly when he uses *dikaiosune* with reference to covenant membership (p.147).

In part three, Wright focuses on the last few years of apostle Paul's life. He mainly explores Paul's journey to Rome as a prisoner under guard. He also ventures into what might have happened after Paul's trip to Rome. Did Paul make it to Spain? If so, where did he go after? Although the answers to these questions are pure speculation, Wright does an excellent job in providing plausible explanations of what might have happened after Paul's trip to Rome. Finally, Wright ends this chapter with an intimate view on Paul by shifting the focus away from Paul being the incredible apostle who triumphantly led this Jesus movement in the 1st century Greco-Roman world, and instead, honing in on the vulnerable man who was in need of mercy and faithfully lived his days in obedience to and for the purposes of God.

Wright's work is commendable as it allows readers to easily understand where Paul comes from, what shaped his theology, and the apostle's own thought processes behind each of his letters. But the most praiseworthy and valuable aspect of this book is how Wright offers fresh perspective as he masterfully portrays Paul as a person who struggles with the brokenness of this world and the instability of the human condition. The vulnerability of Paul shown in this book allows the reader to capture a realistic view of Paul, adding depth and enrichment when reading Paul's writings. As with many biographies, this book includes the author's own theological biases and speculations. But nonetheless, this book is highly recommended for readers interested in the field of Pauline theology. Wright's work reads easily, and readers will surely benefit from his thorough understanding of Paul's life journey.

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Longenecker, Bruce W. *The Crosses of Pompeii: Jesus-Devotion in a Vesuvian Town*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2016, pp. 366, \$39,00, paperback.

Bruce Longenecker undertakes a historical study in this book that inquires into the evidence for Jesus-devotion in the Roman city of Pompeii prior to its destruction when Mount Vesuvius erupted in 79 CE. He finds the answer by looking at cross-shaped symbols in the city's archeological record. Having previously taught in the UK, Longenecker is the W. W. Melton Chair of Religion at Baylor University. Among his previous publications, *Remember the Poor: Paul, Poverty, and the Greco-Roman*

World (Eerdmans, 2010) and *The Cross before Constantine* (Fortress, 2015) are particularly pertinent to the volume currently under review.

The book begins with an account of its origins. Longenecker began to study the Vesuvian region in order to understand better the concrete realities of first-century life in which early Christianity developed. After noting that certain traditional elements in Vesuvian scholarship are being reevaluated in fresh ways, he locates his book as part of this scholarly movement. The book “will demonstrate that first-century Jesus-devotion did, in fact, have a Vesuvian foothold in the town of Pompeii” (p. 8). For readers accustomed to studying early Christian literature, Longenecker’s study provides fresh perspectives because it focuses primarily on artifacts. The item with which Longenecker begins is a cross-shaped imprint on a ground floor wall in a bakery on the western side of Pompeii. The object that left this imprint has often been discussed by scholars in conjunction with a similarly shaped imprint in nearby Herculaneum. Although some argue that the Herculaneum cross was left by a wall-bracket and has no devotional significance, it does not follow that all cross-shaped items are therefore devoid of ceremonial meaning. Before the argument can proceed further, however, Longenecker sketches the use of the cross prior to Constantine. Relying on his previous work, Longenecker argues that the cross became an important symbol prior to the reign of Constantine (pp. 67–74). Further, he proposes that the equilateral cross was employed in the imagery of Rev 7:2–3 as an interpretation of the mark mentioned in Ezek 9:4–6 (p. 92).

Having laid this extensive background, Longenecker focuses his attention on Pompeii. After more fully stating the reasons for separating the Herculaneum cross-shaped imprint from the one in Vesuvius, Longenecker argues that the cross had symbolic overtones of Jesus-devotion and was styled after the Egyptian Ankh. Longenecker further states that the cross is not out of place alongside the religious pictures of a snake and a phallus found in the same bakery. It is conceivable that some may have looked to Jesus for protection without immediately being able to give up on all other forms of devotion (pp. 134–140). This cross anchors Longenecker’s argument that some Pompeian residents were devoted to Jesus. Three other objects serve as primary pieces of evidence. These include a graffito of the Latin verb *vivit* (he lives) in which the final *-it* are combined into a cross-shaped ligature, another graffito in which Christians are discussed, and a cross found on a stamp ring that appears to have belonged to a certain Meges. Longenecker also mounts a secondary case for Jesus-devotion in the city by presenting what are likely the freshest pieces of evidence in the book. In his travels to Pompeii, Longenecker has found nineteen crosses faintly inscribed in paving stones around the city. While clarifying that the case for Pompeian Jesus-devotion can stand or fall without this supplemental evidence, Longenecker proposes that the crosses served an apotropaic function “so that the forces of evil would not prevail against them in the places where they resided and worked” (p. 237). The book closes with two chapters that consider the significance

of Longenecker's findings along with an appendix that contains photographs and descriptions of the nineteen street crosses.

Longenecker makes a strong case for the devotional use of the cross and for the corresponding presence of Jesus-devotion in Pompeii that follows from this identification. In so doing, Longenecker stands against the majority position of Pompeian scholarship. While his minority arguments should give readers who are uninitiated to archeological studies pause before accepting the arguments too quickly, Longenecker's rigorous method and challenge of scholarly presuppositions are exemplary. He notes that historical work requires not only deduction but also disciplined inference (pp. 60–61). After showing how the pieces of the puzzle can be put together in Pompeii, Longenecker fittingly cites Sherlock Holmes's maxim: "When you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however, improbable must be the truth" (p. 253). Fitting the historical study contained in this book, the arguments are inferential rather than deductive, but the discipline utilized to constrain the inferences keeps the conclusions on track. In addition, Longenecker challenges the presuppositions that govern scholarship on Pompeii. While there is no grand conspiracy theory that has kept other scholars from evaluating the evidence in the same way that he has, he proposes that the accepted scholarly paradigm needs to be shaken up (pp. 259–260).

Three additional elements can be noted more briefly. First, the book is filled with pictures and maps to orient those unfamiliar with Pompeii. Second, Longenecker does not assume that all Jesus devotees practiced their devotion in exactly the same way as Paul or the author of Acts. Finally, Longenecker rightly notes that early Christian persecution ebbed and flowed prior to Constantine. Because Vespasian's reign (69–79 CE) seems to have been a time when persecution was at a low-point, this increases the likelihood that Jesus-devotion in Pompeii could be undertaken publically.

At this point, though, one can observe a tendency in the book to overstate conclusions. For example, Longenecker jumps from the correct observation that persecution ebbed during Vespasian's time to a comparison with the time of Constantine. Pompeii is described as "a pseudo-Constantinian island in the pre-Constantinian stream" (p. 77). Even if state-sponsored persecution was low, it is difficult to imagine that popular skepticism of Christianity alleviated social pressures to the same degree that Constantine's conversion would in the fourth century. Longenecker similarly appears overconfident when he declares that Jesus-devotion is better attested in Pompeii than Jewish presence (p. 257).

Yet perhaps the best way in which to consider Longenecker's contribution is by thinking further with the book. If students of the New Testament accept Longenecker's depiction of Jesus-devotion alongside other apotropaic devotional practices, this may shed light on certain passages in first-century Christian literature, such as Acts 8:4–24; 13:6–12; 1 Cor 8:1–13; Gal 1:6–9. Although care would be required to avoid

anachronism, *The Crosses of Pompeii* may also have ramifications for interpreting early second-century texts due to the preservation of Pompeii. For example, the Shepherd of Hermas is often thought to have an Italian provenance and regularly warns against double-mindedness. Although double-mindedness has something to do with economic practices in the Shepherd, one might consider whether there are devotional connotations in how the word is used.

Because of the book's readability and high-quality research, *The Crosses of Pompeii* will be of particular interest to students interested in Christianity within the first-century Roman world. However, the book will also benefit researchers and the libraries that enable their research on account of the well-argued presentation and because many early Christian researchers focus on literature rather than artifacts. Longenecker's case for Jesus-devotion in Pompeii is worthy of full consideration, and the book is highly recommended.

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Emerson, Matthew Y. *The Story of Scripture: An Introduction to Biblical Theology*. Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2017, \$19.99, hardcover.

Matthew Emerson (Ph.D. Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary) is associate professor of religion and holds the Dickinson Chair of Religion at Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee, Oklahoma. Emerson's work in this volume is a part of the Hobbs College Library Collection at Oklahoma Baptist University which promises to offer additional volumes in the areas of Bible, theology, and Christian ministry. In under one hundred pages, Emerson captures the essence of biblical theology for those training for Christian ministry.

Consisting of six succinct chapters, the book begins with a helpful introduction to the discipline of biblical theology in its historical and academic background. Anyone new to this field will appreciate Emerson's overview and clarity. Following an evaluation of Johannes Gabler's contribution to the discipline, Emerson explains three primary schools or approaches: the Dallas School which focuses attention on the Israel/Church relationship; the Chicago School which seeks to understand how any given text fits within the overall biblical narrative; the Philadelphia School which asks similar questions of the previous approaches, but also investigates aspects of literary context.

Emerson then moves beyond these helpful categories to summarize key points of theological importance (the Trinitarian shape of Scripture, for example), to the critical issues of biblical unity. In the end, he adopts helpful metaphors to explain how "the whole Bible is one book inspired by one author with one story that culminates in one person, the God-Man Jesus Christ. Biblical theology is the attempt to read the Bible in this structurally and conceptually unified fashion" (pp. 16-17).

In chapters two-four, Emerson covers the overall story of the Bible. Chapter two employs a Creation, Fall, Redemption, Redemption Promised structure. Careful attention is given to the major personalities and events within this structure. Chapter three continues this exploration with attention given to the redemptive arc from the Exodus to the Davidic kingdom and the hopeful message of the prophets. Chapter four traces these themes in their New Testament context as the promised deliverer is presented and his redemption accomplished. Chapter five, perhaps the real gem of the book, helpfully takes readers below the major themes from the previous chapters to the underlying theological concepts one must consider in constructing a consistent biblical theology. For example, one's understanding of covenant, kingdom, mission, and salvation have to be aligned, and Emerson seeks to assist one in this task. In chapter six, the final chapter, Emerson integrates biblical theology into various practical applications.

As much as this work is a primer on the overall discipline of biblical theology, it would be accurate to describe it as a summary of the Bible's main storyline, complete with character summaries, geographical explanations, and the personal application of the Bible's message to individuals. For strengths, one could note at least three. One, for a volume of this brevity (in total, the book is less than one hundred pages), Emerson succeeds in presenting a lot of information. Two, readers will no doubt be helped by the helpful footnotes where Emerson points to more substantive treatments of the themes in question. Three, perhaps the unique feature of the book, Emerson ends his volume by urging readers to incorporate the Bible's message into proclamation. The brief sections on preaching and teaching, doctrine, counseling, and devotion add a unique flavor to a book in this field. The benefit of this import certainly resides in the nudging of readers to recognize the immediate application of biblical theology for all of life.

Perhaps the book's greatest weakness is the opposite of a strength mentioned above. If viewed as a primer, this volume satisfies what one would expect to encounter, and it even exceeds expectations for the reasons listed above. If readers are seeking depth and an engagement with more secondary issues of the subject matter, then this volume will not suffice. To be clear, however, Emerson's approach is one of introductory investigation and not one of issuing forth the next tome to redirect or satisfy the current debates within the field.

In addition to Emerson's volume, students should consult any one of the following volumes for further introductory treatments: T. Desmond Alexander's, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem: An Introduction to Biblical Theology* (Kregel, 2009), and James Hamilton's *What Is Biblical Theology?: A Guide to the Bible's Story, Symbolism, and Patterns* (Crossway, 2013). Each of these proven works are suitable introductions to complement Emerson's primer. Additionally, for more in depth treatments, students should consider working through Graeme Goldsworthy's *Christ-Centered Biblical Theology: Hermeneutical Foundations and Principles* (IVP, 2012), G. K. Beale's

A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New (Baker, 2011), and especially the standard work of Geerhardus Vos in *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments* (Banner of Truth, 2014). Each of these authors, while disagreeing on various points and approaches, approach biblical theology with precision and nuance as each seeks to explain the Bible's unity and purpose.

In the end, Emerson has brought together a concise primer where he introduces readers to the terminology and terrain of biblical theology. Readers new to this subject will benefit from his concise and engaging approach.

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Moo, Douglas J., and Jonathan A. Moo. 2018. *Creation Care : A Biblical Theology of the Natural World. Biblical Theology for Life. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan., pp. 250, \$18.46, paperback.*

Douglas J. Moo holds a Ph.D. from the University of St. Andrews and teaches New Testament at Wheaton College. He is a respected New Testament scholar with over a dozen commentaries and works, mostly in the epistles. Jonathan Moo holds his Ph.D. from the University of Cambridge, teaches New Testament and environmental studies at Whitworth University in Spokane, WA, holds a graduate degree in wildlife ecology, and has published extensively on Christianity's understanding of nature.

The book is aptly titled as it pursues a theology of creation that considers humankind's relationship and duty to it. This is the fifth installment in the reputable *Biblical Theology for Life* series. This volume is divided into three major sections: "Queuing the Questions," "Arriving At Answers," and "Reflecting on Relevance."

Chapters 1-2 begin by posing the question, "What role does non-human creation play in God's plan?" (p. 23). The authors set out to prove that creation plays a significant role in God's eternal plans. They thus eschew the labels "nature" and "environmentalism" in favor of "creation care" as a general summary of the biblical imperative. They disagree with the "'typically instrumentalist' view of nature: that the natural world exists solely to meet human needs" (p. 29). Instead, there is a biblical and gospel imperative to humans to care for the whole of creation. Chapter 2 lays out a thorough explanation of the biblical-theological method, which the authors ably employ.

Chapters 3-5 establish God as the creator who placed humanity on the earth to be its caretakers. Humanity's goal is to bring their Creator glory and praise (p. 56). Chapter 5 develops this further, showing that this kinship between creation, creatures, and humankind is pictured within Yahweh's land-gift to Israel and the nation's duty to steward it on Yahweh the Creator's behalf. Chapters 6-7 deal with the curse of creation while affirming its enduring goodness, a goodness which is ultimately grounded in the life and work of Jesus. Chapters 8-9 pair the story of creation within

the broader story of a cosmic redemption, which is aimed at redeeming both humanity and creation. According to the authors, the New Testament universalizes Yahweh's promises to Israel to include the whole earth (p. 138). Creation's inclusion in the redemptive storyline is significant: creation will endure and is a central part of God's redemptive plans. Because of this, humanity is duty-bound to care for the earth.

The concluding section begins with a restatement of the thesis: "Creation is not just the stage on which the story of redemption takes place; creation is a key actor in that story" (p. 171). As the authors pursue implications of their creation theology, they helpfully connect a concern for the flourishing of creation with a concern for the flourishing of one's neighbors: "it is impossible truly to love others without caring for the environment in which they live" (p. 186). Chapter 13 presents data on five major crises in creation: loss of biodiversity, increase in the earth's population, deforestation, ocean pollution, soil degradation, and climate change. The book ends with a call to preach about creation, spend time in creation, exercise moderation in the use of resources, and to pursue biblically-guided activism on behalf of creation and its inhabitants.

This volume exhibits an exemplary biblical and evangelical methodology that begins with the text and then moves to application. The authors' ability to carefully elucidate the interconnectedness between mankind, creation, and God within Scripture provides strong warrant to their case that humanity cannot neglect creation. Humanity's duty to creation is necessitated by several biblical factors: our joint purpose with it—to glorify the Creator; our mandate to love our neighbors and steward resources well for future generations; and its enduring goodness.

The enduring goodness of creation is demonstrated through careful exegesis of multiple passages. They zoom the argument in close to the text when needed while generally keeping the zoom at a broader level. The overall thesis is well-grounded and imbued with strong biblical warrant: God's purposes for creation are present today and continue into eternity as God is seeking to establish "a new heavens a new earth" (cf. Isa 65:17). Creation's eternal purpose necessitates humanity's care of it.

Moo and Moo's argument that creation will be transformed rather than replaced is compelling. They argue from 2 Peter 3:10 and Romans 8:21 that the earth will be "exposed" and "delivered" but not, as is commonly understood, destroyed by fire (pp. 147-161). Yet, they gladly defer to those who may hold to a more traditional replacement view. Throughout, they present a balanced argument that will hold universal, Christian appeal.

This universal appeal continues into the application. They cite multiple sources on the present state of creation—secular, scientific, philosophical, evangelical, and liberal—that substantiate their case and remains free of emotive rhetoric. The heartbeat of the book is chapter 13, where the authors' present data on six major ecological crises. There is no doubt that the authors' share the general concern about the earth's welfare with the scientific community. The data presented appears

verifiable and credible, thus justifying the authors' concern. For example, they share the following about global warming: "There has not been, for example, a single year in the last forty years that was below normal [temperatures]" (p. 212). Paired with the other four crises, the authors make a credible case that the integrity of the earth's natural systems are under serious threat (pp. 217-218). The last chapter makes concise and practical suggestions for how Christians can stop contributing to the downward spiral of the compounding ecological crises and how Christians can aid in both preventing and remedying the current crises.

The one lingering concern is the authors' understanding of the curse in Genesis 3:15-17. They argue that the curse does not "seem to represent...some sort of mysterious ontological change in the very makeup of creation itself" (p. 103). Instead, the creation's curse is the cursed humans who care for it: "Yet, if we ask *how* God subjected creation to futility, we find that the only answer can be that God subjected creation to futility by subjecting creation to Adam and to all of humankind." Despite the utmost respect for the authors, this argument degrades into special pleading that has at its heart a fine argument: that creation has enduring goodness despite the curse. The very point of Romans 8:19-22 is that creation's experience of the curse is parallel to and like humanity's experience of the curse. Humanity shares much blame for the current ecological crisis, but creation remains cursed, ontologically, as humankind is.

In the end, this "bump in the road" does not impede the overall and most excellent argument that Moo and Moo present. I heartily recommend this book to all scholars and believers. Moo and Moo have made a compelling case that care for creation is regularly neglected in Christian ethics and urgently needs to be resurrected.

C. Randall Breland

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Tidball, Derek. *The Voices of the New Testament: Invitation to a Biblical Roundtable*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2016, pp. 277, \$24.00, paperback.

Derek Tidball is a British evangelical scholar. He previously served as the principal of the London School of Theology and is currently visiting scholar at Spurgeon's College in London.

The Voices of the New Testament is a New Testament [NT] theology aimed at "those who will never pick up the heavier" NT theologies (p. viii). Hence, it is quite brief (as NT theologies go) and intentionally light on footnotes and secondary sources. It seeks to draw together the major theological foci of the NT authors in a way that both distinguishes their unique emphases and preserves the unity between them. In a word, the book attempts to discern the unity and diversity of the message of the NT, such that at the end of his study, Tidball's conclusion is that "[t]he New

Testament writers are like instruments in an orchestra playing one glorious and harmonious melody. Each instrument contributes to that one tune” (p. 257).

As an attempt to defend the need for another NT theology amidst a growing number today, Tidball contends that his approach or method is unique. Whereas many NT theologies focus on more traditional approaches—authorial, developmental, thematic, or systematic—Tidball utilizes a schema he claims was suggested by George Caird in his NT theology wherein he imagines the nine authors of the NT having a roundtable discussion, along with a chairperson and observer. The function of the chair is not to speak for the biblical authors but to moderate the discussion, and the function of the observer is to bring to light the ways in which major questions of NT theology have been dealt with throughout the history of the church. The result is a NT theology with a very different feel; far from arid, it is engaging and conversational in style and tone.

The structure or flow of the conversation, though, is more traditional. The book contains ten chapters: Chapter 1 introduces the discussion; Chapter 2 describes the gospel as the unifying theme; Chapter 3 discusses the God of the gospel; Chapter 4 the need for the gospel; Chapters 5 and 6 the accomplishment of the gospel; Chapter 7 the metaphors of the gospel of salvation as applied to individuals; Chapter 8 the necessary response to the gospel; Chapter 9 the life called for by the gospel; and Chapter 10 the gospel and the future. As each chapter unfolds, Tidball deftly brings together the NT authors’ perspectives on each of these topics.

The book’s strength lies in its accessibility and engaging style. The book is especially valuable for those interested in an introduction to the major questions of NT theology, but who are wary of spending money or time reading other, more massive NT theologies. Thus, the book would be a useful resource for undergraduate theology students or even for a pastor to read and recommend to congregants. Further, the conversational style—first- and second-person pronouns are ubiquitous—provides a readability often missing in other NT theologies. Finally, for those wishing to use this book as an entrée into the larger, more traditional NT theologies, Tidball provides a selective bibliography of NT theologies in the indices.

Another strength of the book is its ability to bring together diverse voices on various topics. This was the book’s stated goal, and it succeeded. As an evangelical scholar, Tidball (rightly, in my opinion) sees fundamental theological agreement among the NT authors, even where theological diversity appears. For instance, he argues that there is no substantive disagreement between the Synoptic Gospels and the Gospel on John on the question of Jesus as the Son of Man (pp. 60-61), between Paul and James on the question of justification by faith (pp. 188-89), or between the NT authors on the question of the delay of the Parousia (pp. 232-33). More liberal NT scholars would contend that this approach doesn’t do justice to what they perceive as divergent and even contradictory theologies of the NT authors. But, without blunting

or diminishing the diversity, Tidball convincingly contends that the NT authors shared complementary but not contradictory beliefs.

While the disadvantage of a brief NT theology is that the author is not able to interact with scholarship on a number of issues, this disadvantage is offset in part by the imaginary observer in the conversation. The observer's speeches function essentially as brief excursions on points of scholarly disagreement, such as the rise of Trinitarian monotheism from Jewish monotheists (pp. 81-82), the relationship between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith (p. 101), the nature of early Christian belief in resurrection (pp. 121-22), models of the atonement (pp. 132-34), the *pistis Christou* question in Pauline scholarship (pp. 140-41), the identity of Israel in Romans 9-11 (pp. 198-99), the mission of the church (pp. 210-11), the meaning of Jesus' Olivet Discourse (pp. 227-29), and various views on the millennium (pp. 244-45). These excursions do not exhaust the number or depth of the issues, but they give the reader a sense for where the key debates lie.

With this said, the brevity of the book, which is one of the book's strengths, is also a weakness. This isn't a detraction from the value or the success of the book, especially since Tidball is aware of this weakness (p. vii). Nevertheless, for the sake of clarity regarding the nature of this work as a NT theology, it should be said that there are many debates in NT scholarship left untouched due to its brevity. More than this, the aim of the book is in some sense to lessen any interpretive bias so as to let the biblical authors speak for themselves as much as possible (p. 5). While this is a salient aim, it can be somewhat misleading, for actually Tidball (necessarily) interprets all along the way! For instance, one paragraph is allotted Paul at the roundtable to summarize his understanding of the "flesh" and its association with sin (pp. 31-32). In this brief context, the flesh is given "earthly nature" as a gloss, but because of the brevity of the section, the reader is left wondering what Tidball means by "earthly nature." Is this the same as a "sin nature"? Is the flesh an ontological or salvation-historical reality? Again, when Tidball begins to unpack Paul's doctrine of justification—it receives two pages (pp. 139-40)—precious little is mentioned regarding different understandings of justification, and nothing is said about the righteousness of God, the imputation of Christ's righteousness, or judgment according to works. Further, when Tidball explains the meaning of Paul's phrase "works of the law," he claims that Paul was concerned about those works that marked the Jews out as the people of God. However, given the brevity of the section and the lack of interaction with scholarship, no clue is given the reader that the answer placed in Paul's mouth at the roundtable is actually debated, especially given the rise of the New Perspective on Paul over the last 40 years. Hence, despite the book's stated aim of "minimal" interpretation, interpretations are (necessarily) advanced, but because of the book's intent to achieve brevity and limited interaction with scholarship, the reader may not be aware of the breadth or depth of the debates at hand.

In conclusion, *The Voices of the New Testament* succeeds as a NT theology aimed at those who may not otherwise read one. Tidball's approach is refreshing and engaging, and his excellent grasp of the NT authors' emphases allows the reader to gain a speedy yet summative sense of the basic questions and answers within NT theology. It is hoped that this book will be used in the church and classroom as a tool to appreciate the unity and diversity of the NT.

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Theology

Levering, Matthew. *Engaging the Doctrine of Creation: Cosmos, Creatures, and the Wise and Good Creator*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017, 372, \$44.99, hardcover.

Matthew Levering is one of the most prominent contemporary Roman Catholic systematic theologians, the author or editor of many books on topics ranging from Mary to predestination. Readers of this journal will appreciate his ecumenical posture with evangelicals: he is a member of Evangelicals and Catholics Together and is noted for his constructive engagement with evangelical thought. He currently holds an endowed chair at Mundelein Seminary.

This book is the third in Levering's series on topics in systematic theology (following books on revelation and the Holy Spirit). Levering starts by considering God as the creator with chapters on the divine ideas and on divine simplicity; more on those later. Levering then considers creation itself, arguing that the unnecessary diversity of creation—such as vast numbers of extinct species and regions of empty space—are not evidence against God's goodness. These are followed by chapters defending a substantivist view of the *imago dei*, the command to be fruitful and multiply in light of contemporary environmental concerns, a historic Fall, and a broadly retributive atonement theory. In each chapter Levering draws heavily on Aquinas while engaging with a wide variety of contemporary theological, philosophical, and scientific interlocutors.

Levering's chapters on God are refreshing to this philosopher in that they tackle two subjects that are too rarely discussed, particularly by evangelical theologians: divine ideas and divine simplicity. Given this rarity, some introduction may be in order; I will introduce divine simplicity and Levering's work on it first.

Everyone agrees that God lacks physical parts, since God lacks a body. But traditionally Abrahamic theists have gone further: they hold that God lacks parts of any kind, including putative metaphysical parts such as properties, aspects, powers, or actions. Traditionally, this doctrine has been considered vital to theology. Levering

quotes David Hart as saying that “[n]o claim... has traditionally been seen as more crucial to a logically coherent concept of God than the denial that God is in any way composed of separable parts, aspects, properties or functions” (p. 90). The main reason for this is that anything composite is thought to be dependent in some way on its parts, or on something else to put the parts together; so without divine simplicity God is just another dependent being like the rest of us rather than the Originator of all. This idea has many philosophical and theological critics, however. Levering’s chapter is devoted to defending Aquinas’ version of the doctrine from Orthodox-inspired opposition. The main objection he responds to claims that a simple God (at least as Aquinas conceives of a simple God—a qualification I’ll leave out hereafter) could not possibly be free to create. For God’s act of creation is identical to God, since a simple God has no distinct actions. Since God exists necessarily, so must creation as well. The result is what philosophers call “modal collapse”: this world, down to its tiniest detail, is necessary, with no possibility that anything could have gone otherwise than it did.

Levering’s first response to this argument is that creation is not necessary, since creatures are “contingent by nature” (p. 103) upon God. By “contingent by nature” Levering seems to mean that creatures are dependent upon God. This is surely true, yet it does nothing to solve the problem. As Levering himself seems to note, the claim that creatures are dependent upon God means only that creatures do not determine God; it does not mean that there is any possibility of God making a different world. Levering’s second response is that we cannot know *how* God’s act of creation could possibly be free, since our minds are incapable of understanding a simple God; yet we must acknowledge both God’s simplicity and freedom even though we cannot comprehend how they could both be true. This raises difficult questions of theological method. I will here just register my concern that apparent incoherence is a high price to pay, and that Levering’s retreat into apophaticism looks uncomfortably *ad hoc*. (Better ways of addressing the problem of divine freedom and simplicity include Timothy O’Connor’s *Theism and Ultimate Explanation* and Christopher Tomaszewski’s “Collapsing the modal collapse argument”, forthcoming in the journal *Analysis*.)

The doctrine of divine ideas states that God has an eternal idea of each creature (or each type of creature); these ideas are often taken to be key to God’s relationship to creation, and to perform philosophical work of the sort done by Platonic forms. In Levering’s chapter on the divine ideas his main burden is to defend Aquinas from two accusations made by Orthodox theologian Vladimir Lossky. First, Lossky argues that Aquinas’ theory of the divine ideas leaves God unfree; instead of freely coming up with what to create, God must check his data-bank of ideas. Second, Lossky argues that Aquinas makes creation importantly less valuable than divine ideas, making creation something of a disappointing knock-off of the more perfect ideas in God. (In other words, Lossky worries that divine ideas are better than creation in the same way that Plato thought the forms are better than material beings.)

In reply, Levering claims that God's ideas are (given Levering's strong doctrine of divine simplicity) absolutely identical to God (though there is a kind of "logical" difference between God's different ideas (p. 62). This, combined with the view that God creates outside of time, means that God's freedom is not hindered. Why not? Because God does not create by *first* checking the divine ideas to see what is possible and *then* selecting some of those ideas to actualize (p. 63). Levering's response here is not convincing. It is true that an eternal God's act of creation is not temporally ordered. But philosophers often distinguish between temporal order and logical order, where the latter is something like an order of reasons for God's action, and is quite consistent with the claim that God is outside of time. For example, supralapsarians and infralapsarians disagree about whether God ordained salvation because of God's permission of the fall, or the other way around; and Molinists believe that God possesses a "middle knowledge" that structures God's decisions about how to create. So barring an argument that there is no logical ordering within God (an argument Levering does not give, and which might be difficult for him given that he wants logically distinct ideas within God), Lossky could simply put his argument in a logical key: God's ideas are (presumably) logically prior to God's decision about what to create, and so they constrain God's decision even if they are not temporally prior to it. Rather than focus on God's eternity, Levering would have done better simply to make the case that anything identical to God cannot be a problematic restriction on God's freedom.

Levering replies to Lossky's second criticism by saying that, since creatures possess a different sort of reality than divine ideas, they are not "poor cop[ies], ontologically speaking, of the divine ideas" (p. 63). It is not clear to me how Levering can say this. If the divine ideas are identical to God, then the claim that God is "ontologically" greater than creatures (a claim Levering certainly would endorse) implies that God's ideas are greater as well (since they are just God under a different name).

More generally, Levering's work, while possessing many scholarly virtues (such as an acquaintance with a wide variety of material from disparate disciplines and time periods), is weighed down by a lack of clarity and precision. In other respects, however, the first two chapters are fine examples of "old school" medieval-style theology; there is a lot to be learned in them about the important western and eastern figures Aquinas and Palamas, as well as about recent theologians and philosophers working in their traditions. However, those new to the metaphysical issues involved should start elsewhere (I recommend Edward Feser's accessible book *Aquinas*). The remaining chapters are not unduly technical and will be accessible to most students; each should be an excellent introduction to a relatively conservative Roman Catholic position on its subject.

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Jeffrey A. Brauch, *Flawed Perfection: What it Means To Be Human; Why it Matters for Culture, Politics, and Law* (Bellingham: Lexham Press, 2017). 344 pages. \$15.99.

Theological anthropology is a thriving area of study. Part of the reason for this growth is due to the growing studies from the brain sciences and psychology, which have and continue to raise interesting and thought-provoking implications for what it means to be human. Another reason for the growing interest in theological anthropology has to do with the growing tensions within the broader cultural conversation on what it means to be human. Jeffrey Brauch enters these discussions as a fresh voice. He argues that, at the heart of this conversation, to be human means that we are created with dignity, value, personal responsibility, but we are also marked the Fall—in other words, *Flawed Perfection*.

Flawed Perfection is not your typical book on theological anthropology, however. It is unusual, but I mean that *positively*. Brauch is not integrating classical theological anthropology with one of the sciences or re-branding it with a particular philosophy. Brauch, also, is not writing, primarily, with the academic in mind. He writes with a broad audience in view. As a legal expert himself, he brings his legal expertise to the question of what it means to be human. Yet, his reflections are shaped and formed by his meta-perspective that we are created in the image and likeness of God, and we bear dignity, value, and personal responsibility. Yet he balances all of his reflections with the reality that humans are creatures who have fallen into corruption.

What makes *Flawed Perfection* unique is Brauch's facility with concrete legal cases, which are always brought back to a larger theological frame. After drawing our minds to the theological principles that guide and inform our thinking about these legal scenarios, Brauch rarely comes to hard and fast conclusions, but rather he raises questions to ponder and guiding principles to think more clearly about humans in light of culture, politics, and law. You might think of his objective in the book as a guide for thinking Christianly about the human in our present dialectic rather than offering an authoritarian answer book sent down from heaven. In this way, his approach is deeply earthy and practical.

Along these lines, Brauch avoids human portraits that are unrealistic. Brauch avoids a fatalistic and undignified view of humanity by upholding the traditional and biblical characteristic that humans are personally responsible for their actions. Take the specific legal examples he offers in chapter 9 on "Environmental Influence Defenses". In this chapter, Brauch explores the deeply complicated issues surrounding personal responsibility in legal discourse expressed in concrete legal cases. Several questions still deserving our reflection are raised: 1) Is there a principled way to maintain personal responsibility yet recognize differing levels of culpability for specific moral actions? 2) Should the penal consequences for specific actions vary according to one's upbringing, chemical imbalance, and lack of awareness regarding

the severity of the act? These questions are raised in the context of legal discussions surrounding Bazelon's 'Durham rule for insanity' and 'The M'Naghten Rule'. The first rule states that a person is found not guilty for action committed by reason of insanity, i.e., if the unlawful act is a product of mental disease, then one should not be found guilty. The latter rule was an earlier rule applied in western legal history, and it states that persons are held accountable for their actions based on a cognitive test of what they knew and what they did not. On the M'Naghten Rule, individual humans are punished for their actions based not only on the act itself but on their intentions in the act. One of these rules is helpful and, arguably, upholds personal responsibility (M'Naghten Rule), but the other is consistent with a physicalist determinist view of the world that eliminates personal responsibility (Durham rule of insanity). Brauch recognizes the biblically guided principle that environment (e.g., social, biological, familial) *influences* our behavior, but it does not *cause* our behavior. He concludes rather judiciously that in order to maintain personal responsibility and the dignity of humans, legal decisions should be made not on the basis of excusing criminal responsibility or changing legal standards, but on the basis of one's intentionality in the act and judging the penal consequences for the actions on environmental influences. Giving credence to environmental influences signifies his considered effort to understand humans in our legal situation as humans marked by the Fall. Chapter 9 gives the reader one example of the rich and sophisticated reflections exemplified throughout *Flawed Perfection*.

There are many other insightfully informed pieces of wisdom worth considering regarding the relationship between law, natural law, and human nature along with the implications our laws have for how we understand human nature. In my estimation, *Flawed Perfection*, while unusual, is readable and worthwhile for a wide readership. While it is not technically an academic work, it is deeply considered, based on careful research, and immensely practical. It would serve as a helpful supplementary text in a variety of courses including courses on theological anthropology and courses that cover topics at the intersection of law, philosophy, and theology. Finally, it would serve as a useful resource for a book study for advanced laymen or simply for the purposes of one's own intellectual development.

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Kotsko, Adam. *The Prince of This World*. Stanford: California, Stanford University Press, 2017, pp. 240, \$22.95, paperback.

In this engaging study of the Devil, Adam Kotsko, assistant professor of humanities at Shimer College, offers a rigorous piece of political theology. Whilst making a trenchant contribution to critiques of contemporary modernity, this book will appeal

to both specialists and a general audience alike. The introduction recalls the testimony of police officer Darren Wilson, who claimed to be frightened of Michael Brown, the young, unarmed black man he shot and killed. Brown was “no angel”—Wilson euphemistically positioned his victim as not just criminal, but as actively demonic. Yet, if anyone is the demon in this situation it *must* be the personification of racist structural violence. From somewhere has sprung “a profound theological reversal,” (p. 4) where the demonic, once the theological tool of the oppressed seeking to explain their sufferings, becomes a weapon of those who oppress. With this context, Kotsko argues that this theological discourse on the devil, the demonic and of evil emerges from a long and under-acknowledged heritage and sets himself the task of tracing the story of how this reversal has taken hold.

Chapter one explores the confrontation between the people of Israel and Pharaoh, a figure that Kotsko sees as the “most relevant biblical antecedent for the devil” (p. 22) because within the paradigm of political theology unfolded at *this* point, what Kotsko calls “the minority monotheism of the Hebrew biblical tradition, God’s wicked rival could only be a rival king” (p. 23). By the time of Christ and the New Testament (chapter two) the relationship between the God’s implacable foe and God becomes complicated by the figure of the Messiah. The older apocalyptic paradigm must be rethought—by the time of eschatological visions of Revelation, the enemy of God is not just a King, but it is now the greatest Empire on Earth, Rome itself. There is a “play of mirrors” (p. 54) as Christ and anti-Christ, city of God and Whore of Babylon confront one another forming an apocalyptic image of contemporary politics. In Revelation, “the sufferings of the wicked serve to enhance the joy of the saints” (p. 55) and given the extravagance of their torture in the lake of fire, the “stark opposition of good and evil [is] beginning to break down” (p. 56). God becomes dangerously close to his mirrored foe of the Devil and the New Jerusalem forms the counterpoint to Babylon and Rome.

This apocalyptic confrontation between Babylon (the Roman empire) and the New Jerusalem (the emerging Christian community) is complicated by much of Paul’s New Testament writing. Kotsko quotes Romans 13, and analyses how whilst Paul insists that all authority is “instituted by God”, in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, these political authorities have “forfeited any legitimacy” (p. 62) and moral authority is, instead, handed over to the Christian community.

These questions of authority and the relationship between the political present and the more intangible realm of faith is what begins the shaping of another paradigm—the patristic paradigm. After a discussion of Irenaeus and Tertullian, Kotsko argues that there is a downplaying of the political because the devil’s agents are no longer the “the kings of this world but the antibishops of the antichurch of heresy” (p. 70). The apocalyptic paradigm, irrevocably set in motion by the death and resurrection of Christ, is dangerous and these early Christian writers have *de*-politicized it, shifting the polemic onto the realm of belief and displacing the political

into the theological. As a result, “purely symbolic or theological explanations of the cross followed naturally” (p. 74).

Here, there is a moment of opportunity—a gap between paradigms—as the relationship between Rome and Christianity shifts between persecution and adoption. In this space of possibility emerges Gregory of Nyssa’s *Address on Religious Instruction*, which positions Christ’s salvific work on the cross as not only saving humanity “but the devil as well” (p. 80). Yet, the optimism of Nyssa’s approach is later repudiated by theologians from both East and West. Kotsko provides a reading of Anselm, who puts forward a God “jealous of his honour—which is to say, proud—and he is absolutely unforgiving of any debt or obligation.” In short, “it makes sense that God would not be merciful to the devil, because he is not even merciful to humans” (p. 100-1). As Kotsko puts it, “the entire life of the devil... is overshadowed by divine vengeance” (p. 105).

Following on from this Kotsko traces the “debates surrounding the devil’s fall from grace” (p. 110). Building on the problem of freedom and the will in Augustine’s account of his own conversion, Kotsko notes that Augustine, Anselm, and Aquinas “all arrive at a broadly similar account of the devil’s fall: he fell at the earliest possible moment, due to an act of will that was inexplicably insubordinate to God” (p. 130). The Devil is portrayed as evil as possible, for as long as possible, dividing off the Devil’s rebellion “into a conceptual space excluded from God’s realm of direct responsibility” (p. 131). The problem (and here the connections to the current political moment seem clearer) is freedom. Freedom is, in many ways, the founding myth of Western liberal modernity, emerging into this “empty space discovered by medieval theology” (p. 133).

By chapter five, Kotsko points out that secular modernity still has its own demons “and for those demonized populations” (women, Jewish people, the victims of racialised slavery) “the modern earthly city is surely a living hell” (p. 167). It is then from hell that we might launch a critique on secular modernity, and so at the close of the book Kotsko turns to Dante’s *Inferno*. In Dante, Satan is presented as the (semi-literal) foundation of all of God’s creation. In his journey through hell Dante never questions those he finds there and ultimately joins in with the devil’s henchmen in torturing the damned. As Kotsko notes, “the God who has become the devil turns his followers into demons” (p. 183). From Dante, Kotsko turns to consider both the prison and the concentration camp, sites of disciplinary punishment which, like hell, serve as gruesome spectacle and ultimately a distraction (see p. 188, 191). In a final twist, there remains something that God cannot control. The damned who refuse to submit to the will of judgement cannot be redeemed—the production “of bare life as pure victimization is never the last word” (p. 192).

For Kotsko, those unruly wills, wallowing in their obscene *jouissance*, become the foundation of God’s rule. In contrast to the stasis of God and his saints, in hell we see the truth of Milton’s Satan, “Here at least we shall be free... Better to reign

in Hell, than serve in Heaven.” At the close of *Paradise Lost*, Adam and Eve weave their way from the Garden. Earlier, the Prince of this World promises them that “league with you I seek/And mutual amity so strait, so close/That I with you must dwell or you with me.” For Kotsko, this serves as “a kind of fable of the transition from Christianity to secular modernity” (p. 197). We are, it seems, still dwelling with Satan. This is not cultural baggage to be discarded, as this legacy is bound up within “the core value of Western modernity... freedom” (p. 198). Yet this kind of freedom is not freedom at all it seems but it “results in a claustrophobia... more extreme than that of the medieval paradigm” (p. 200). Kotsko’s critique of freedom is far ranging but the question remains: how to break the “apparatus for generating blameworthiness?” (p. 200)

What hope there is can be found in liberation theologies that represent bold attempts to create “a new and unprecedented Christianity in the wreckage of Christianity’s modern afterlife” (p. 205). As we rethink, rework, and repurpose might all—even the devil(s) themselves – finally be saved? As a work that seeks to re-politicize political theology, explicitly connecting theological discourse to contemporary material reality, the book is a welcome corrective to dry scholasticism about evil and contemporary politics, accessible, engaging and consistently challenging to political theologians of all levels.

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Feinberg, John S. *Light in a Dark Place: The Doctrine of Scripture*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018, pp. 799, \$50, hardback.

In *Light in a Dark Place*, John S. Feinberg (professor of biblical and systematic theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School) offers a comprehensive, evangelical treatment of the doctrine of Scripture. Feinberg was one of the original signatories of the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy in 1978. He is the general editor of Crossway’s Foundations of Evangelical Theology series, to which the present volume is the most recent contribution.

The book consists of four parts and twenty chapters. The title of each chapter (apart from the introduction) refers to Feinberg’s chosen metaphor of “light”. This recurring motif reflects the author’s conviction that the Bible is inscripturated divine “revelation light” for the sake of a dark world (p. 24).

Part One on “Creating Scripture” treats the doctrines of revelation (general and special) and inspiration. Part Two on “Characteristics of Scripture” covers inerrancy and authority. Part Three (“Setting the Boundaries”) is about canon. Part Four on “The Usefulness of Scripture” has chapters on illumination, perspicuity, animation, sufficiency and preservation. A concluding chapter takes the form of the author’s testimony.

Feinberg's aim is that his work should reflect, and express, an evangelical consensus. This aim is achieved partly by confining his arguably more debatable views (e.g. his pre-millennialism and belief in a pre-tribulational rapture) to footnotes, and partly by explicit statements that certain of his commitments (e.g. to a broadly Reformed soteriology and account of human freedom) do not materially affect his doctrine of Scripture.

Feinberg writes as a conservative evangelical, and most of his references are to fellow (American) evangelical writers, although he does interact with non-evangelical scholarship, particularly as he considers challenges to his views on revelation, inspiration, canon, and inerrancy. The book also contains extended critical reviews of works by evangelicals who have in different ways challenged Scripture's inerrancy. Feinberg writes of the latter as those "who call themselves evangelical" (p. 115, 231). As this suggests, any "evangelical" consensus on Scripture may not be forthcoming!

In a review of this length, it is of course impossible even to lay out the broad contours of Feinberg's systematics. Instead, I will briefly introduce his methodology, comment on some notable (on occasion idiosyncratic) points, and then offer a summary evaluation.

Feinberg's method, in respect of any theological question, is first to ask what Scripture says. His book is therefore full of detailed exegesis of relevant biblical passages. In formulating doctrine, Feinberg favours Scripture's didactic statements over Scripture's "phenomena". This is particularly significant when it comes to his defence of the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture because Feinberg argues (against what is commonly asserted) that whether one starts with didactic statements or with phenomena, "proper theological method involves a combination of both inductive and deductive investigation" (p. 114). Feinberg's conclusion is that Scripture teaches its own plenary, verbal inspiration, which is not accomplished by mechanical dictation.

Feinberg's defence of inerrancy (he adopts his brother Paul Feinberg's definition of the term, and works from the correspondence theory of propositional truth) is extremely thorough. He prefers not to use the term "infallibility", although to the mind of this reviewer his criticism of Vanhoozer's use of the latter term (pp. 269-73) is not wholly convincing, partly because Feinberg seems to think that a given (divine) illocutionary act can only have one intended perlocution in view, a claim that I do not think can be sustained.

In *Light in a Dark Place*, Feinberg mostly presents views that would probably be accepted as mainstream by most conservative evangelicals, but occasionally he offers a minority report. Interesting examples include his reservations about the doctrine of accommodation (p. 205, 325), his distinct lack of enthusiasm for an incarnational analogy to explicate the divine and human aspects of Scripture (p. 224), and his application of the concept of illumination to unbelievers as well as believers (p. 617). Chapters on animation and preservation are welcome additions to this book which do not often feature in systematic theologies of Scripture.

In his discussion of the doctrine of revelation, Feinberg is critical of models of revelation that introduce the *appropriation* of revelation into the concept itself. This point seems to be particularly important in a context when certain evangelical writers have followed Barth by, in effect, equating revelation with reconciliation. In Feinberg's idiom, "[t]hrough humans repeatedly sin in the face of the truth, God has never turned off the light" (p. 53). However, Feinberg insists, a commitment to the *objectivity* of revelation must be balanced by an avoidance of "an overly *static* view" by which theologians may "lock God out of the world" (p. 41). Feinberg's balance at this point goes some way towards addressing the concern of those who insist that Scripture's ontology must be understood in terms of the ongoing acts of God.

Some of Feinberg's exegetical conclusions are striking: in respect to Romans 1, for example, he thinks that Paul *might* not mean that natural revelation leads to monotheism (p. 70). This is actually a fine example of Feinberg's exegetical (and theological) restraint, in evidence throughout. He repeatedly insists that we may not press a text or a doctrine to say or do more than is warranted, even if (perhaps *especially* if) the result would suit our own purposes.

The book is attractively presented, although the footnotes are in very small type, and at times the distinction between levels of headings is not clear, which can make following the argument more difficult. There are some curious claims made in the book. Feinberg writes that "[m]any of Jesus's contemporaries saw the risen Christ and still refused to believe" (p. 81) but this claim is not substantiated. His inclusion of "incandescent" as an example of a negative term like "inerrancy" (p. 236) is baffling.

This book would be a hefty-but-helpful introduction to the doctrine of Scripture for evangelical students. It may not convince many who do not agree with its conclusions, especially on inerrancy, but the cumulative force of its arguments certainly demands attention, and Feinberg sweeps away many a straw man to lay down a cogent and precise case for would-be opponents. Feinberg has not interacted with some of the best recent Reformed evangelical scholarship on the doctrine of Scripture (John Frame and Meredith Kline are conspicuous by their absence and their work would surely have helped Feinberg to make his case on authority and canon, respectively). Nor does Feinberg offer any discussion of the work of John Webster, without doubt one of the most significant and provocative contributions on the doctrine of Scripture in this century from a professing evangelical (with Barthian leanings). No doubt Feinberg would part company from Webster at many points, but the lack of any discussion of Webster's Trinitarian paradigm and actualistic ontology of Scripture is regrettable, and may mean Feinberg will fail to gain a hearing among one constituency he might just be able to convince.

At times *Light in a Dark Place* feels a little dated (for example, the assertion that Pete Enns continues to hold to inerrancy, when a visit to Enns's personal website confirms that he has denied inerrancy for some time) but this feeling (it is no more than that) may merely reflect the fast-changing landscape in respect of the doctrine

of Scripture today in “broader” evangelicalism and beyond. On the flipside of this, Feinberg’s “elder statesman” status lends his work the *gravitas* of one who has “seen it all” when weighing his more recent conversation-partners.

Feinberg writes as one who loves Scripture, and who believes his convictions about it *matter*. At times, he is excited (six consecutive exclamations on p. 660!) and this book is full of pastoral counsel and application, clearly derived as much from the author’s own experiences (detailed in the conclusion) as from his dogmatics. *Light in a Dark Place* will likely become a standard evangelical textbook on a doctrine (and above all, on a Book) which has defined its author’s life story.

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Church History

Hamilton, S. Mark. *A Treatise on Jonathan Edwards, Continuous Creation and Christology, A Series of Treatises on Jonathan Edwards, vol. 1*. N.P.: JESociety Press, 2017, pp. 101, \$17.99, paperback.

The work under consideration is the first in a series devoted entirely to the publication of “assessable and in-depth treatments of Edwards-specific subject matter” (unpaginated series introduction). As the title suggests, this volume is a philosophical and theological examination of a nexus of metaphysical positions found across Jonathan Edwards’s oeuvre. In engaging Edwards’s philosophical theology, the author—S. Mark Hamilton—follows a trajectory set by his previous essays (e.g., S. Mark Hamilton, “Jonathan Edwards, Hypostasis, Impeccability, and Immaterialism,” *Neue Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie* 58:2 [June 2016]: 1-23). The main agenda of this brief treatise, therefore, is to philosophically clarify Edwards’s overarching commitments to idealism, continuous creation, and occasional causation (chs. 1-3), and then apply these clarifications to Edwards’s Christology (chs. 4-5). Along the way, Hamilton dissents from and revises several prominent interpretations of Edwards’s philosophical theology, most notably from the individual writing the foreword to the book—Oliver Crisp.

The first half of the treatise charts out Hamilton’s revisionary account of Edwards’s philosophical theology; for Hamilton, these revisions are not only the best explanation of Edwards’s philosophical musings, but are also necessary in order to insulate Edwards’s doctrine of continuous creation from internal incoherence. These revisions are as follows: (1) Edwards is an immaterial realist (or *relative realist*, to use Hamilton’s terminology), which means, in the least, that created minds have a real and independent spiritual substance, even if ultimately dependent upon the divine mind; (2) Edwards holds that these created *minds* endure across temporal

stages as independent entities from those stages, and that created minds only have phenomenal interaction with simple or complex *ideas* across those same stages; and (3) ideas perceived by created minds across various temporal stages are actually “divine mental projections” (p. 36) created continuously *ex nihilo*. This last revision does not include, importantly, the intentions of created minds interacting with divinely projected ideas (i.e., their volition). Taken altogether, these revisions render Edwards’s doctrine of continuous creation and commitment to occasional causation consistent with moral responsibility.

The second half of the treatise applies the various revisions from the opening chapters to Edwards’s Christology, which yields, in Hamilton’s neologism, a doctrine of continuous Christology. In particular, the uncreated and immaterial mind (i.e., the divine mind) of the Son assumes—as consistent with Chalcedonian logic—a created and immaterial mind. The human nature of Jesus Christ, on this interpretation, consists of a created and immaterial mind—which endures across temporal stages—and an *ideal* body—which, “like all perceptible objects, is continuously created (by the Spirit) and re-presented *ex nihilo* to the mind of Jesus” (p. 92). Furthermore, the Spirit (of the Son) operates as the sole causal and communicative agent throughout the life of the God-man. The Spirit, quite literally, continuously creates the *percepts*—not the human mind—that Jesus Christ perceives moment by moment. This, according to Hamilton, is the gist of Edwards’s continuous Christology.

Two important gains are worth highlighting from this treatise as it applies to Edwards studies in particular and Christian theology in general. Foremost, Hamilton’s interpretation cogently weds Edwards’s “Spirit Christology” with the thornier aspects of his metaphysics, such as occasionalism. This is no small feat. Fusing together Edwards’s philosophical musings, Christology, and trinitarianism has been a difficult exercise, often leading to larger questions regarding his theological propriety (e.g., Oliver Crisp, “On the Orthodoxy of Jonathan Edwards,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 67:3 [2014]: 304-22). Secondly, Hamilton sets the stage for further investigative work into Edwards’s Christology. For example, Hamilton’s thesis regarding the ideal union of the uncreated mind of the Son to the human mind of Jesus of Nazareth could be utilized to explore Edwards’s relationship to the so-called *extra Calvinisticum*. Furthermore, Hamilton’s thesis opens the door for a more thorough understanding of how, on Edwards’s understanding, Christ’s human nature can be the “pattern of all” elect humanity (*WJE* 18:418). The created mind of Jesus Christ, in this sense, contains all ideas regarding creation and election. This includes both stable and substantialized minds distinct from the human mind of Jesus, as well as percepts that are continuously created and made present to created minds across temporal stages. Such philosophical commitments are certainly quirky, though they might prove metaphysically coherent with and a necessary corollary of Edwards’s other theological commitments (e.g., his supralapsarian Christology). In a larger

sense then, Hamilton has shown that Edwards's philosophical theology is not only salvageable, but also potentially serviceable.

Overall, Hamilton's work exemplifies well the purpose of the series: "assessable and in-depth treatments of Edwards-specific subject matter." The argument is both lucid and brief without being pretentious and vapid. For the neophyte, Hamilton's treatise can stand alone, offering a succinct analysis of Edwards's metaphysics and theology with helpful illustrations to explain trickier philosophical positions (e.g., "stage theory"). For the seasoned Edwards's interpreter, Hamilton's short treatise yields much to cut their teeth on; in particular, Hamilton's thesis provides both a metaphysical tempering and correction of prior interpretations of Edwards's philosophical theology. One prominent example pertains to Edwards's occasionalism. Hamilton argues, contrary to Oliver Crisp, that Edwards's adherence to occasional causation is not as toxic to Edwards's overall theological program as it might seem, particularly in terms of moral agency. I find Hamilton to be altogether convincing not only on this score, but also with regard to his overarching thesis. Hamilton has shown, through persuasive argument and charitable reading, that Edwards's various philosophical commitments are indeed coherent, even if certain portions are "nothing short of bizarre" (p. 70).

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Meyer, Jason. *Lloyd-Jones on the Christian Life: Doctrine and Life as Fuel and Fire*. Wheaton, Ill: Crossway, 2018, pp.265, \$19.99, paperback.

Dr. Jason Meyer is the Pastor for Preaching and Vision at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He also serves as Associate Professor of New Testament at Bethlehem College and Seminary. He has made contributions to the *ESV Expository Commentary* series and is the author of *Preaching: A Biblical Theology*. The work being considered in this review is his theological biography on Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones entitled, *Lloyd-Jones on the Christian Life: Doctrine and Life as Fuel and Fire*.

Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones was a massively influential preacher in the eighteenth century, and it will be shown that some contend that Lloyd-Jones' influence is greater today than it was in his own day. Remarkably, the ministry of Lloyd-Jones was a preaching and teaching ministry that did not include writing. The works that are in print are transcribed lectures and sermons. To write this theological biography of Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Jason Meyer was challenged with the task of reviewing the sermons and lectures of Lloyd-Jones in order to succinctly and accurately present the Doctor's theology.

Lloyd-Jones' conviction is made clear: there must not be a divorce between doctrine and life. He said, "There is nothing which I know of which is more unscriptural, and which is more dangerous to the soul, than to divide doctrine from

life” (p. 25). He believed that, “right doctrine is the prerequisite for right living” and that, “our conduct heralds the content of our doctrine” (p. 25). The preaching of Lloyd-Jones remained faithful to herald biblical doctrines even in the midst of an increasingly secularized church that was falling prey to ecumenicalism and liberalism.

In Part 2, “The Doctor’s Doctrine”, Meyer’s work of summarizing and concisely defining Lloyd-Jones’ doctrinal positions is highly commendable. There are at least three grand takeaways for the reader. First, the Doctor viewed Scripture as the ultimate authority. Second, he was unabashed in his reverence for the glory of the Sovereign God. Third, Lloyd-Jones was surgically precise in his theological positions.

The surgical precision of the Doctor in his theology is manifest in each doctrinal section. The reader will find that they are challenged constantly to reread the paragraphs, not because the language is confusing, but because Lloyd-Jones’ theological distinctions are uniquely refined. If the reader gives this work a thorough examination, they will not only learn about Martyn Lloyd-Jones, they will be taught, challenged, and very likely deepened in understanding.

Lloyd-Jones had an unapologetically high view of Scripture as authoritative and absolute. He was also unmistakably reverent and worshipful in his view of God. In each chapter, Meyer puts forward a presentation of the Doctor’s doctrine followed by specific practical results that must follow true belief in those doctrines. This formatting is helpful to see the relation between doctrine and the Christian life. Again, for Lloyd-Jones right thinking always precedes right living, and right living is the necessary, expected, and right outcome of true belief.

It is clearly seen that Meyer made a tremendous effort to understand and present the doctrinal positions of Lloyd-Jones. In fact, this book in large part serves as a synopsis of the content of the lecture and preaching ministry of the Doctor. This does not detract from the book, as it serves to reinforce the premise that one cannot understand Lloyd-Jones without understanding that the doctrine he taught was the doctrine he believed and lived by.

Lloyd-Jones’ teaching was always doctrine before application. Meyer organized this book to mirror Lloyd-Jones’ methodology. Having presented the Doctor’s theology in Parts 1 and 2, Meyer moves on in Part 3 to the presentation of Lloyd-Jones’ counsel on practical matters such as the Christian disciplines of Scripture reading, prayer, and the application of doctrine through love, the home, and work. He also deals with issues such as depression and death.

In Part 3, Meyer showed that Lloyd-Jones affirmed that Scripture was inspired by the Holy Spirit and written by the hands of men. Also, he affirmed that the Holy Spirit superintended the writing in such a way as to keep the human authors from error while at the same time maintaining the conveyance of their humanity and personality in the writing (p. 127). In helpful manner, Meyer points out three causes of difficulty the believer faces in reading the Bible. He discusses at length the Doctor’s diagnosis

of 1) The Devil's attacks, 2) Personal challenges, and 3) Interpretive Challenges. To remedy these challenges, Lloyd-Jones counsels the believer to read the Bible prayerfully, seeking the illumination of the Holy Spirit and a submissive heart for the reader. Secondly, the believer must read the Bible with care, seriousness, and systematically. Thirdly, the believer must spend time receiving the Bible in the context of the Church through preaching.

Just as submission to the Word of God is recognition of God's glory and authority over all, so prayer is submission to the greatness of God. Meyer was careful to maintain brevity in his presentation of Lloyd-Jones' teaching on prayer. He writes, "Unpacking all the various ways that doctrine impacts prayer would fill up many books. We have space here for only five brief examples" (p. 140). This approach demonstrates one of the strengths of Meyer's account, as it serves as a primer for the reader to move on to thorough and deep study of Lloyd-Jones' recordings and teachings. Meyer did not seek to record all of the Doctor's teaching in this single volume, but rather to present a concise summary of the major tenets and approach to doctrine and living.

Finally, in Part 4, Meyer provides an ample amount of quotes from contemporaries of Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones as well as those who encountered his works at a later time. He compiled these quotations and comments in order to demonstrate the tremendous impact Lloyd-Jones made in this world through his preaching and teaching. It is notable that the evidence reveals that Lloyd-Jones' impact is greater in modern times than it was in his own day.

Lloyd-Jones' life in ministry was not without controversy. Regarding the Doctor's legacy, Meyer honestly evaluates Lloyd-Jones' views on the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which he concludes that it appears Lloyd-Jones was in fact reading his experience into certain texts of Scripture rather than deriving his doctrine from the text. He also provides a succinct description of the involvement of Lloyd-Jones in the Secession Controversy. Meyer's evenhanded approach is helpful and should be appreciated.

In conclusion, this book is a useful primer to the theology of Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones. Jason Meyer is succinct in his writing and yet altogether thorough at the same time. His commitment to honestly represent the teaching of Lloyd-Jones can be seen in vast amount block and short quotations of the Doctor himself. As Lloyd-Jones is such a towering figure in evangelicalism, and a spearhead of sorts for expository preaching, this book will serve Christians well.

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Eglinton, James P., editor and translator. *Herman Bavinck on Preaching & Preachers*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2017, pp. 150, \$16.95, paperback.

Often considered a standard text among theologians and preachers, Herman Bavinck's *Reformed Dogmatics* reveal a careful dogmatician whose theological reflections brim with scrupulous insight and practical application. Though mainly known for the academic theology he championed at Kampen and the Free University of Amsterdam, James Eglinton (Ph.D., University of Edinburgh), the Meldrum Lecturer in Reformed Theology at New College, University of Edinburgh, offers readers insights into Bavinck the preacher. Eglinton, himself an accomplished Bavinck scholar, fills a glaring hole in the Bavinck corpus, for English readers know little of Bavinck's pastoral theology or his approach to homiletics. As Eglinton notes, Bavinck preached for forty-two of his sixty-seven years, so it is surprising on many levels a study of this scope only now became available.

Readers will note quickly the uniqueness of Eglinton's book, for Eglinton serves as both its translator and editor. In sum, this book consists of a biographical introduction followed by five translated sections. In the biographical introduction, Eglinton assists readers in discovering Bavinck the preacher, having preached his first sermon at twenty-four years of age in 1878, and he continued preaching across the world and in many settings until his 1921 death in Amsterdam. Critical to understanding Bavinck's approach to preaching is his family upbringing, for he was the son of a Reformed pastor, as well as Bavinck's ecclesial roots. Bavinck lived through tumultuous times of separation among the Dutch Reformed churches. And finally, Bavinck's first pastorate, which he took shortly after completing his doctoral work at Leiden, formed his theological moorings, which grounded him to labor for a theology deeply tied to the church.

Much of what Eglinton translates in these sections comes from notes within Bavinck's diary where he candidly expressed his ministerial anxieties. In this section, readers learn of Bavinck's commitment to preach with little or no notes, which "explains why, despite decades of his preaching, only one of his sermons became available in print" (p. 11). Of all the highlights one encounters in this introduction, perhaps the gem is how Eglinton carefully shows a soft side to this great theologian who, readers learn, struggled with his singleness in his early ministry, even admitting that his pastoral duties would be easier if he had a wife with whom he could confide. Further, readers will note how Bavinck, as a young pastor, lamented that when one is a minister, one is "always a minister, and can never more speak in a properly familiar way" (p. 11). While this introductory biography is brief, because Eglinton wrote it as an angle into Bavinck the preacher, seasoned Bavinck readers will appreciate the new insights into his personality and early pastoral ministry.

Following the introductory essay, Eglinton provides five translated sections that begin with Bavinck's forward to *Eloquence*. Bavinck wrote this brief forward in May 1901, and it is his attempt to explain the reasons behind his publication of *Eloquence*. "Dutch pulpits," writes Bavinck, "are not presently overflowing with good, powerful speakers, never mind preachers" (p. 17). This reality is regrettable to Bavinck, who longs for a revival of a certain sort of preaching. The following chapter is Eglinton's translation of Bavinck's *Eloquence*, which was a lecture originally given to the students of Theological School in Kampen on November 28, 1889, and put in booklet form. There are several takeaways for seminary students or local church pastors in this carefully reasoned plea from Bavinck. Indeed, one can make present day applications with each of Bavinck's concerns.

Bavinck believed all eloquence, "whether in the pulpit or in the council chamber, is actually threefold: argument, description, and persuasion. The eloquent person must know what he has to say, possess a solid knowledge thereof, and convincingly persuade the understanding of his hearers" (p. 32). Throughout each section of this treaty, Bavinck urges preachers to consider how the calling to preach requires even more of a commitment to the proper delivery mechanics and subject matter comprehension over and against all other subjects because of its Trinitarian hope and promise (see p. 37). Preachers proclaim a sacred message, and this solemn reality requires the attention and care Bavinck espouses.

In the next section, Eglinton translates "The Sermon and the Service," which Bavinck first wrote in 1883. Readers will note quickly how Bavinck laments the powerless preaching in an age where there was tension and upheaval regarding orthodoxy among churches and the larger culture. Readers will perhaps relate to Bavinck's brazen diagnosis of churchgoers' motivation, their passivity in the church services, and their lack of sacrificial giving of themselves in service to the Lord Jesus Christ. A key remedy to the spiritual illness inflicting the church, for Bavinck, is a return to Holy Spirit anointed and Word-saturated preaching. He pointedly admits how "there is a lack of earnest preparation, simplicity and truth, pace and thought, faith and inspiration, and above all, solemnity and unction" (p. 63). He summons pastors to return to the Scriptures, and he calls upon them to seek the power of the Spirit to proclaim faithfully, boldly, and with simplicity of language.

The following section is the translation of Bavinck's sermon, "The World-Conquering Power of Faith," based on 1 John 5:4b and preached on June 30, 1901. Although this sermon is the only Bavinck sermon in print, readers will quickly appreciate his homiletical skills. Bavinck speaks with pastoral sensitivities and theological precision, and he acknowledges current events and challenges of his day all while using examples and illustrations from political elections in the Netherlands to war in South Africa. His sermon structure proves exegetically and theologically clear, and he ends with both an evangelistic appeal as well as a call for the church

to be strengthened in its faith. For readers, this sermon provides an example of the preaching Bavinck called for in *Eloquence*.

In the final section, Eglinton translates “On Preaching in America,” which is Bavinck’s summary of his 1908 trip to America where he preached eighteen times. Bavinck gives a scathing summary of American Christianity. This section is brief, comprising just over three pages, and as such, Bavinck’s direct tone remains consistent. In his analysis of American churches, “the preaching mostly deals with morals,” and “preaching is not the unfolding and ministering of the word of God; rather it is a speech, and the text is simply a hook... Religion does not master the people; the people master the religion, just as they also master art and science. Religion is a matter of amusement, or relaxation” (p. 85). Further, Bavinck laments how, in his estimation, “the English-speaking world lives for the heathen and sympathizes with its missionaries” (p. 87). But Bavinck is equally critical of Dutch churches, finally offering hope for the Lord Jesus to be praised. This section ends with Bavinck’s hope that America will strive for its “own great and high calling” from God (p. 88). Finally, Eglinton includes as an appendix a translation of “On Language,” which is offered as a supplement to the reading of *Eloquence*.

Why should scholars, preachers, and seminary students indulge this helpful volume? First, scholars should read this volume because it gives evidence to how Bavinck believed robust dogmatic theology belongs in the pulpit as well as the classroom. His instruction on how best to deliver this content is still applicable. Further, Bavinck serves as a great example to modern scholars of how the academy is to serve the church, and reminders of this sort are too infrequent. Second, pastors should read this volume because Bavinck offers a goldmine of practical wisdom for the preached word. Sure, Bavinck is mainly known for his academic theology contained with the *Reformed Dogmatics* and other publications, but he began his ministerial career in the pulpit, not the ivory tower. Third, students should read this volume because every seminary student needs theological heroes from previous generations. Students desperately need the spiritual friendship that can only come by wrestling with the theological and practical works of the giants who have now been received into the joy of our master. Bavinck can be a lifelong friend to this next generation of God called men and women laboring in the seminary classroom. Regardless of one’s faith tradition, this book belongs on the pastor’s shelf.

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Philosophy

Thiselton, Anthony C. *Approaching Philosophy of Religion: An Introduction to Key Thinkers, Concepts, Methods & Debates*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2018, pp. 224, \$23.99, paperback.

Anthony Thiselton is emeritus professor of Christian theology at the University of Nottingham, as well as the University of Chester. Thiselton has authored numerous books in theology, spanning topics such as systematic theology, hermeneutics, and postmodernism, as well as exegetical works on various New Testament books. Thiselton's work in theology necessarily overlaps with topics found in philosophy of religion, which occasioned his recent book in the philosophy of religion, *Faith, Doubt and Certainty* (2017). Thiselton's latest work is the result of a fruitful ministry of writing and research, providing newcomers and seasoned students of philosophy a helpful resource for the key thinkers, approaches, and terms of the philosophy of religion.

While readers can certainly read *Approaching Philosophy of Religion* from cover to cover, one does not necessarily have to do so, for it serves as a resource to be visited as research or interest dictates. Thiselton divides the book into three primary parts, though the Introduction can serve as a standalone section as well, thus giving the book four parts. In the Introduction, Thiselton provides a brief overview of the history of Western philosophy. By addressing key thinkers and themes in philosophy's history, Thiselton provides readers with a jumping point from which they can do further study. Though a bird's-eye view of the history of philosophy, the Introduction gives readers a sufficient grasp of the general trend over the course of Western philosophy's existence.

Part I addresses the various approaches found in the Western philosophy. In addition to addressing the traditional rivals of Analytic and Continental philosophy, Thiselton focuses on the following as philosophical approaches in their own right: empiricism and rationalism (Chapter 3), existentialism (Chapter 4), feminist philosophy (Chapter 5), personalism (Chapter 6), phenomenology (Chapter 7), and pragmatism (Chapter 8). In each chapter, Thiselton summarizes the ideas of the philosophers known for the respective approach.

Thiselton shifts in Part II to the perennial issues and arguments found in Western philosophy of religion. Set up like encyclopedic entries, Thiselton provides a succinct summary of the idea (or argument) as well as incorporating important thinkers and works that have shaped discussion on the respective topic. While Thiselton includes traditional philosophy of religion topics such as the various arguments for God's existence (cosmological argument, design argument, and ontological argument), free will, and miracles (to name a few), Part II also contains more current issues found within philosophy of religion, such as animals, evolution, and gender.

Approaching Philosophy of Religion continues with Part III in which Thiselton provides a concise dictionary of philosophical terms relevant to philosophy of religion. As he does in Part II (though in a shorter manner), Thiselton includes with each term mention of important thinkers or works related to the particular term. The book concludes with a thorough (14 pages) bibliography of selected texts for those interested in pursuing further the study of philosophy of religion.

Thiselton's *Approaching Philosophy of Religion* stands out among other resource books for various reasons. First, Thiselton's writing style is unencumbered by dry, technical prose. Instead, Thiselton writes in an engaging, clear manner that helps to garner and keep the reader's attention. This is true for even Parts II and III of the book where one would expect dry and technical writing for encyclopedic and dictionary entries. Considering the fact that the audiences best suited for Thiselton's book are beginners and novices, the writing style is just as important as the presentation and content.

Another feature that stands out is Thiselton's ability to cover two millennia of Western philosophy in a succinct, but thorough, manner. The reader is given enough information about a topic to have a sufficient starting point for further study. The reader can also come back to the book in the future if they need to refresh themselves on an issue, thinker, or term found in philosophy of religion. While this observation may seem trivial, it is quite a feat to whittle down over 2000 years of philosophy into a book of 224 pages, much less to present the information in a way that is substantive while succinct.

Perhaps the greatest strength of this book is Thiselton's inclusion of topics that are not typically included in works of philosophy of religion by Christians. For instance, Thiselton's chapter on feminism as a philosophical approach addresses an approach that all Christians must (at least) be familiar with, yet unless one's work directly intersects with feminist thought, many Christians (particularly conservative Christians) have little to no interaction with feminist philosophy. Other areas that are not always included in Christian reference works on philosophy of religion are phenomenology (which tends to fall under psychology today) and personalism (a philosophical school of thought that was prevalent in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries). A related point is Thiselton's refusal to categorize all philosophical methods under the labels of either analytic or continental philosophy. Though he does devote attention to these philosophical approaches, he treats other approaches as methods in their own right.

Little negative can be said of Thiselton's work. Because it serves more as a reference book than an extended argument, there is little to disagree with other than matters of categorization or inclusion (i.e. of particular thinkers or works). If any critique can be made, it consists of the following: first, Scripture (or more generally, divine revelation) is a vital aspect of philosophy of religion, yet there is no explicit discussion found. It is possible that Thiselton includes divine revelation

under “religious language” or “religious knowledge,” but because of the central nature divine revelation plays in religion, it ought to stand as its own topic worth addressing. Second, Thiselton does not address Van Till’s presuppositionalism in any way. Granted, he does touch on reformed epistemology (via Alvin Plantinga); however, presuppositionalism has made enough inroads to warrant some mention – at least as an approach to philosophy of religion, or as a term worth knowing in the study of philosophy of religion.

Approaching Philosophy of Religion is a succinct yet substantive resource for students of theology and of philosophy—students of all levels. The book can be used as a resource for a variety of courses in theology and philosophy, paying itself over and over. Because philosophical topics are not as quick to change (like those in technology, for instance), Thiselton’s book has staying power. Another helpful philosophy of religion resource similar to *Approaching Philosophy of Religion* is Thiselton’s *A Concise Encyclopedia of the Philosophy of Religion* (2014). Here readers are given a more extended version of *Approaching Philosophy of Religion*’s Part II, written in the same style and format with more terms, ideas, works, and thinkers included. Other than that, most introductory-level books on the philosophy of religion come in the forms of anthologies or textbooks, introducing students to topic via excerpts from well-known philosophers or through addressing the subject by its various topics.

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Ward, Keith. *The Christian Idea of God: A Philosophical Foundation for Faith*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2017, pp. 229, \$32.99, paperback.

Keith Ward, Regius Professor of Divinity (Oxford University) and Professor of Philosophy of Religion (University of London), launches in this book a thorough case for what he calls *personal idealism*. While this book builds successively on previous publications (particularly *More than Matter?* and *Christ and the Cosmos*), it explores in further depth the fruitfulness of framing the Christian faith within an idealist framework. Ward is a stern critic of materialism and in *The Christian Idea of God* he gives further reasons for maintaining that mind is prior to matter.

The first part, “The Nature of Mind”, explores the distinctiveness of personal idealism, the epistemic priority of experience, and the objectivity of value (chapters 1-7). On this version of idealism, there is no strict separation between the universe and God; rather they form a unity, “though one in which the mental or spiritual aspect has ontological and causal priority” (p. 11). Indeed, the universe should be understood as a developing and progressing self-expression of God.

But, why should we take idealism to be true and what can be said in favour of this position? A case for idealism begins with the particularity of human experiencing. Drawing on an empiricist epistemology, Ward argues that all knowledge begins with experience and that the phenomenon of experiencing goes beyond purely material categories. Perceptions, for example, do not seem to be the kind of things that belong to the categories of space-time (p. 28). We place our perceptions in public space, yet perceptions themselves belong to a “private two-dimensional space” which is not shared by other people. Hence, given that experiencing transcends material categories, and that experience is our inevitable starting point in our interaction with the world, we have positive reasons for believing in the primacy of the mental. Without a mind-like reality there would be no physical reality. Indeed, this is why Ward says that almost “all believers in God are idealists in some sense” (p. 49).

A key argument in Ward’s book is that God is the most plausible *interpretive hypothesis* of the totality of human experiencing. The intelligibility, elegance, and beauty of the physical world seems to call for “some underlying wisdom or intelligence” (p. 57). This should not be understood as a proof of God. Rather the idealist hypothesis invites us to consider “the cosmos as “an expression of immense power and wisdom” (p. 57).

The second part of the book focuses on the nature of the “Ultimate Mind” and the relationship between God and Creation (chapters 8-14). In chapter 8 Ward explains more his idealist stance and contrasts his own idealism with the “immaterialist idealism” of Bishop Berkley. Ward stresses that he does not deny the reality of matter and he argues that human minds emerged, in some way, from complex physical structures (p. 99).

In contrast to a pessimistic materialism, a personal idealist view of nature invites purpose and teleology within nature. That is, “If the universe is a product of mind, then it obviously exists for a purpose. It has a goal, and the goal will be realised” (p. 101). This particular universe has been chosen to realise certain valuable states, including the emergence of human minds. This is not to say that the universe was created as a perfect and deterministic system. Rather, it is a “growing organic system” which progressively realises its potentialities (p. 124).

In part three, Ward addresses more explicitly the theological dimension to personal idealism, including the eschatological culmination of creation and the revelatory importance of Jesus Christ (chapters 17 and 22). While Ward admits that one can embrace personal idealism without being a Christian, he still thinks that there is a “natural affinity between Christianity and personal idealism” (p. 221). As suggested, Ward argues that personal idealism entails a teleological view of creation, whereby purpose is a real feature of the natural order. From this idea follows that divine action is not something to be figured out, but its role should be acknowledged as a basic aspect of the “unfolding of the processes of the cosmos” (p. 204). If the universe, as it is claimed on an idealist perspective, originates in mind, then there is

a final cause for the emergence of the cosmos as a whole. Ward is careful to distance his own approach from the interventionist understanding of divine presence as interruption of the causal nexus, suggesting instead that we should recognise God's ongoing involvement in the world in participatory terms.

Ward articulates successfully the relevance of personal idealism for Christian theology and the intimate connection between theism and an idealist outlook on reality. He shows in a clear manner why idealism should be taken seriously by those who believe in a personal God that is involved in the destiny of the world. Ward's argument for the priority of mind and its implications for our understanding of the universe is highly interesting. However, as I see it, Ward needs to clarify two parts of his argument in order to strengthen this offered idealist position.

My first concern is with regard to Ward's argumentative step from the *irreducibility* of experience (or mind) to the *priority* of experience. This book outlines several positive reasons for thinking that experience goes beyond reductionism and physical explanations. Yet, there seems to be no necessary relationship between the irreducibility of experience and the idealist thesis that mind is more fundamental than and prior to the physical. One can hold that mentality or human experiencing is irreducible with regard to physical stuff—both property dualists and substance dualists do—without committing oneself to an idealist ontology. This remains a significant gap in Ward's argument that needs to be closed.

A second issue concerns Ward's definition of idealism. As I said above, Ward takes issue with and rejects a Berkeley idealist denial of the reality of the physical. Physical phenomena are real but depend on God—an ultimate mind—for their existence. Moreover, human minds seem to emerge from material phenomena. This, to me, sounds like theism coupled with an emergentist view of the mind, but not necessarily a form of idealism. It seems difficult to differentiate Ward's idealism from a generic theistic claim that the physical is dependent on God. Indeed, Ward's articulation of idealism becomes even more confusing when he sides with the emergentist view of human minds as derivative from the physical. Ward attempts to carve a path between Berkeleyan idealism and materialism, but the idealist component of this philosophical articulation of the Christian faith remains unclear.

Having said that, Ward provides a robust challenge to materialism and a sophisticated defence of the irreducibility of mind. This book is written in an accessible way and is suitable for students, scholars, and lay people interested in the relationship between theology and philosophy.

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Benton, Matthew, John Hawthorne, and Dani Dabinowitz, eds. *Knowledge, Belief, and God: New Insights in Religious Epistemology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018, pp. 345, \$70.00.

Reformed epistemology is roughly the thesis that religious belief can be justified or warranted apart from argumentation. As the editors of *Knowledge, Belief, and God* note, Reformed epistemology is the dominant position in the epistemology of religion (p. 3). While there has been a lot of work done in the 90s and 00s, discussing how belief in God can be properly basic, the editors aim to produce a new volume discussing recent developments within the field.

The volume is broken up into the following four sections: Historical, Formal, Social, and Rational. The historical section addresses traditional problems in the field of epistemology of religion with recent developments in analytic epistemology. For example, Charity Anderson's interesting essay applies Maria Lasonen-Aarino's work on knowledge and defeat to Hume's arguments against miracles. Anderson argues that a subject can possess knowledge that a miracle occurred, while her belief at the same time fails to meet the standard of reasonability. Other interesting essays in this section include Richard Cross' essay on Scotus and Aquinas. Here, Cross discusses Scotus' and Aquinas' epistemology in light of contemporary labels to help elucidate their views on how Christian belief can be considered rational.

The formal section is, for the most part, a section on formal probability and fine-tuning. I imagine that Hans Halvorson's "A Theological Critique of the Fine-Tuning Argument" will be considered one of the more controversial articles. Halvorson argues that the fine-tuning argument undermines itself. Roughly, the idea is that, if we believe that we are warranted in believing that it is likely that God would create a life permitting universe, "then we are just as warranted in believing that God would create laws according to which nice universes are likely" (p. 133). But since the laws are not such that we should expect nice universes, either God does not exist, or we are not warranted in believing that God would create a nice universe (p. 133). Those who are sympathetic to skeptical theism, will want to pay special attention to this chapter.

The social section of the book is excellent. Max Baker-Hytch's essay, "Testimony amidst Diversity" is especially stimulating. Baker-Hytch argues that religious belief that is primarily based on testimony is deficient as it merely amounts to animal knowledge. What a subject really should be concerned with is reflective knowledge. A subject is said to possess reflective knowledge when she has a knowledgeable perspective on her reliability (p. 197). Baker-Hytch gives two reasons as to why we should think animal knowledge is deficient. I have the space here to go over one such reason.

Baker-Hytch argues that animal knowledge violates the norms of assertion. By 'norm of assertion', I mean to say that, S only can assert some proposition P, if S knows that P. While it could be said that S knows that God exists if her belief is

produced by the right sort of external conditions, S would not know that she actually meets the qualifications for being able to assert that God exists, unless she possessed reflective knowledge. For Baker-Hytch, there's a further "knowledge norm": in order for S to assert P, S needs to know that she knows; or, as Baker-Hytch puts it, there would be a "sense in which she is criticizable" (p. 200). Baker-Hytch realizes that the knowledge norm view could hinder what philosophers could actually say given the controversial nature of the philosophical domain. As Baker-Hytch puts it, it is "hard to know whether one has knowledge and hence hard to know whether one is entitled to assert the contents of one's belief" (p. 200). However, he thinks that philosophers have room to hedge assertions in such a way as to exempt a speaker from violating the knowledge norm (p. 200). Religious believers, on the other hand, are committed to outright asserting that God exists.

While this argument is interesting, I am skeptical of its success. The knowledge norm view is controversial in epistemology. It is not clear to me that the knowledge norm advocate meets the knowledge norm requirement with respect to her assertion that the knowledge norm view is true. And, if the advocate of the knowledge norm view cannot say that the knowledge norm view is true, I am not sure why one should think that the knowledge norm views gives us good reason to think that animal knowledge is significantly deficient.

As for the last section, while all of the articles deserve a read, Matthew Benton's article, "Pragmatic Encroachment and Theistic Knowledge," is especially worthy. Benton starts the article off by discussing how some contemporary philosophers believe that non-epistemic factors should play a role in a belief's epistemic evaluation (p. 267). There are some who argue that pragmatic or practical considerations should also be a part of the evaluative process. Benton moves on briefly to address Pascal's wager. Benton puts the wager as follows: "if traditional theism (including certain assumptions about a heavenly afterlife) is true and one believes it, then one stands to gain much; and if one does not believe it, then one stands to lose out on much (and, one may even be punished much!) But if atheism is true and one believes it, one does not, by comparison, gain much at all" (Ibid.). For Pascal, these truths provide pragmatic motivation to believe in theism. Benton, however, takes Pascal in a different direction. Benton argues that atheistic belief, by Pascal's reasoning, fails to be pragmatically relevant. In fact, Benton argues that because of this, atheism is epistemically irrational (p. 284). This of course rests on the assumption that pragmatism plays a role in evaluating a belief's epistemic status.

In evaluating the book overall, the book accomplishes the goal of the editors. It gives a survey of the different views and new ideas that exist in the epistemology of religion. The book contains extremely valuable essays and it should be recommended to anyone with an interest in religious epistemology. With this stated, it is odd that this book did not contain essays addressing the contemporary state of Reformed epistemology. There have been fascinating developments in the literature. For

example, Kelly James Clark and Justin Barrett have done interesting work on how cognitive science relates to Reformed epistemology (Kelly James Clark and Justin L. Barrett, 'Reidian Religious Epistemology and the Cognitive Science of Religion,' *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*. 79 3 [2011]: 639-75). Erik Baldwin and I have published several papers on the topic of Plantinga's epistemology and the world religions (For a comprehensive take, see Erik Baldwin and Tyler McNabb, *Plantingian Religious Epistemology and the World Religions: Problems and Prospects* [Lanham: Lexington Press, forthcoming]). And Andrew Moon recently proposed a new way to gloss Plantinga's Reformed epistemology (Andrew Moon, 'Plantinga's Religious Epistemology, Skeptical Theism, and Debunking Arguments,' *Faith and Philosophy* 34 4 [2017]: 449-70). Of course, not having a chapter that engages Plantinga's Reformed epistemology should not take away from what I have stated about the book. It is not often that you can say of a philosophy book that the book is worth its price. *Knowledge, Belief, and God* is one of those books.

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Cosgrove Mark. *The Brain, The Mind, and the Person Within: The Enduring Mystery of the Soul*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2018. 180 pp. \$18.00. 978-0825445262.

Is there a nexus to be found between the fields of neuroscience and theology? According to Cosgrove's short work *The Brain, the Mind, and the Person Within*, there is ample evidence that suggests the two fields belong together. While many introductory works on neuroscience and neurobiology are filled with technical jargon and philosophical esoterica, Cosgrove has an eye towards pedagogy without falling into the temptation of oversimplification or over-extrapolation.

Over ten short chapters, Cosgrove carefully introduces and discusses the state of the question concerning the anatomy, functionality, and theology of the mind. Chapters 1 and 2 introduce the reader to the mysteries found within the studies of the brain. Glial cells and neurons make the person, but the mind is no mere combination of chemicals (p. 27ff). According to Cosgrove, it is problematic to accept the mind as a "machine" view of the human brain. For consciousness exist in four realms: (1) Frontal Lobes (time), Parietal Lobes (meaning), Temporal Lobes (symbols), and Corpus Callosum (imagination) (p. 30–34). Chapter 3 further explores the transmitter chemicals (NE, 5HT, DA, ACh) that come together like a river to shape one's personality (p. 47ff). In chapter 4, the reader is introduced to the "hard problem," that is the brain neural pixie dust or the work of God's spirit? He notes the complexity of the brain's formulation of what becomes the conscious experience—it is too simplistic to say it merely functions like a machine. For Cosgrove, humility is essential here

and knowing that personhood is critical for understanding the hard question (p. 69) and how a holistic approach is a better avenue for the study of neuroscience.

Chapter 5 delves into the murky waters of free will and what Cosgrove calls “free won’t” (p. 75ff). Here his background in psychology is critical, for he notes the importance of habits in a discussion of free will. Because human nature is linked to the physical world, it is not enough to look to one side (i.e., do we have free will), but how does the inseparable relationship between body and spirit flesh out amongst impulse and choice (p. 84ff). For tracking habitual movements via brain waves does not, as Libert’s experiments claimed, to prove determinism. Chapter 6–7 delves deeper into the relations of religion and spirituality upon the brain. Here Cosgrove proffers the complexity of proper research on neuroscience, theology, and the recreation of the mind with ample evidence to support his claim. Chapter 8–10 provide somewhat of an ethical treatise (p. 14ff), positing the churches necessity of engaging with the tools of technology by holding a high view of personhood. Meaning humans are no mere machine; they desire meaning, purpose, relationships, and creativity; therefore, discussion of neuroscience and future brain technology must understand the human mind cannot be replaced or likely replicated (cf. pp. 153–54).

Cosgrove’s work in the *Brain, the Mind, and the Person* within is laudable for attempting an intersection of the Christian faith with current research in the field of neuroscience. More to this, the writing seeks clarity over complexity without sacrificing valuable content. For example, the discussion in chapter 5 broadens the readers thinking of free will and determinism. Cosgrove explains that this dichotomized way of viewing this issue does not consider “the whole of behavior,” what Cosgrove calls “Top-down” thinking (p. 80). Cosgrove further shows that in the realm of sexuality and criminal behavior that outside influences (media, abuse, pressure, drug abuse), environment, genetics, and temptations all work into this issue that modern culture has deemed the result “deterministic and materialistic preferences” (p. 81).

Perhaps the most significant chapters for recent discussion are chapters 6 and 8. In chapter 6 Cosgrove dispels the claim that religious thought and experience is a mere result of electric stimulation of the parietal lobes or temporal lobe alone (cf. epileptic’s seizure experience) (p. 96–97). He writes, “our brains seem built to easily have religious experiences and pursue questions of meaning and existence, which often ends up looking for spiritual truth” (p.100). Indeed, but how does all of this research bring to bear on the life of faith for the local church? In chapter 8, Cosgrove proffers it is in the realm of ethics; he writes, “Christians cannot abandon the field simply because suddenly it sounds like a frightening immoral failure” (p.142), but engage in these fields with moral and ethical fidelity. The truth of personhood, a holistic approach to the mind, is the key to understanding the issues of neuroscience and the dilemmas that await technological advancement (p.165). Both those in

the fields neuroscience and theology must realize that assumptions and subjective experience matters.

This work serves as a fantastic primer to the issues surrounding current discussions of neuroscience and how theology should intersect this field.

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Anderson, Kenton C. *Integrative Preaching: A Comprehensive Model for Transformational Proclamation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017, pp. 208 pages, \$22.99, paperback.

Kent Anderson's contribution to the field of homiletics is multifaceted. In addition to authoring several books in the field, he has provided an online preaching resource, www.preaching.org, for more than two decades. Anderson describes his recent contribution to homiletics, *Integrative Preaching*, as his "most comprehensive [book]" and "the best that [he has] to offer" (p. vii).

In the final chapter of his previous work, *Choosing to Preach* (Zondervan, 2006), Anderson introduced his idea of the integrated sermon. Thus, *Integrative Preaching* is the full expression of this homiletical model, and it is presented in the following four parts.

In Part One, Anderson suggests that the imagery of a cross as the best way to understand his integrative model. Among various points, the cross shows the intersection of vertical and horizontal axes, and it pictures the addition of diverse elements without compromising the nature of each element. In this way, integrative preaching is "not a choice between options but the addition of one to the other – head plus heart and heaven added to the human" (p. 9). In Anderson's view, "The cross aspires to a new and heightened form of unity, expecting something greater, beyond the possibility offered by less holistic [homiletical] options" (p. 6).

In Part Two, the author describes four functional elements of his preaching model. Anderson writes that "the first move of a sermon is to *engage* the audience" (p. 45), and he contends, "The best way to engage listeners is to tell a *story*" (p. 46). Next, "the second move is to *instruct*" (p. 57). At this juncture, biblical teaching intersects contemporary life. For its third move, Anderson asserts that "the sermon must also *convict*" (p. 67). The declaration of the gospel takes center stage here along with an anticipation of God's transforming work in the lives of people. Lastly, inspiration comes into view for the fourth move. Anderson writes, "A great sermon will result in something...until the sermon inspires its listeners, it will be incomplete" (p. 77).

In Part Three, the author discusses the homiletical materials and various postures preachers assume in communicating an integrated sermon. First, preachers present a problem with a pastoral tone. Thus, integrative preaching begins inductively. Second, the points of the sermon help listeners see how the biblical text addresses this problem. Here the preacher assumes the posture of a theologian. Anderson urges, “[Preachers] are not offering opinions... Our challenge is to read the text and discern its meaning by careful exegesis” (p. 99). Third, prayers are the main thrust at this stage of the integrative sermon. In this movement, the preacher functions “in the mode of the worshiper or worship leader” (p. 105). Anderson writes, “Preachers need to hear from God themselves” (p. 107), and with humility, “the preacher speaks in the voice of the fellow traveler, though as one a little further on the journey” (p. 108). For the final move, the preacher paints a picture in the mode of a prophet. A vision of the future is cast for listeners to see what God can accomplish for all who embrace His truth.

In Part Four, Anderson presents practical points for integrative preaching. He begins with guidance on identifying the biblical text and topic as well as pulling together ideas for the movements of the sermon. The preacher also distills the major theme for the sermon. All of this is developed with an eye towards the audience, since Anderson urges preachers “to read the text and to read the people” (p. 127). The author then addresses the assembly of the sermon which needs to be precise and intentional so that there is a strong unity and finish to the message. Anderson next challenges preachers to prepare for delivering the sermon in ways which move beyond mere rehearsal and memory techniques. Rather, preachers should strive for the message to become a part of them. The author explains, “If our sermons are not true to us in the deepest way, they will not be powerful for those who listen” (p. 148). Finally, preachers need to deliver the sermon. Practical matters here relate to the tone of verbal delivery, the physical posture of delivery, and the use of a pulpit and notes in delivery. In all these facets of delivery, preachers should seek to maximize the opportunities of specific preaching events.

Anderson’s effort to present a holistic homiletical model in a single volume of less than 200 pages is an ambitious one. A strength of his model is the mixture of diverse elements. He constantly challenges readers to resist the urge to retreat to false dichotomies such as heaven or earth, head or heart, objective or subjective, etc. Yet, it is precisely at this point where a weakness in the book emerges. Its contents may overwhelm preachers with a deluge of details. For instance, when Anderson populates a pictorial representation of his integrative model at the end of Part One, twenty ideas flood the image. Yet, readers are only a quarter of a way through his book at this stage.

At this juncture, Paul Scott Wilson’s counsel in *Preaching and Homiletical Theory* (Chalice, 2004) comes to mind. Near the beginning of Wilson’s survey of homiletical theories, he poses an important question about their utility: “Can a typical

preacher readily understand a proposed method and implement it effectively?” (p. 21). Doubtlessly, Anderson has given thorough reflection in his book-length version of his initial thoughts concerning the integrative sermon. However, perhaps a more streamlined dispensing of its main thrusts might help preachers to implement it. Currently, readers will have to wade through the significant number of the moving parts in the integrative model as they cull from it some key ideas to use in their preaching.

Consequently, *Integrative Preaching* will probably be most useful to seasoned preachers, since they will likely discern where their preaching is less than holistic in nature. They will also be aware of some of the basic homiletical building blocks for sermon development. For novice preachers, they would be better served by learning to first develop messages from the instruction offered in Bryan Chapell’s *Christ-Centered Preaching* (third edition, Zondervan, 2018). Towards the end of his work, Chapell offers the following wise homiletical counsel in relation to sermonic structures: “Just as a musician practices scales to develop the skills for more nuanced compositions, preachers who have knowledge and mastery of these basic components of sermon structure are best prepared to alter, adapt, mix, or reject them in order to take the approach most appropriate for their particular text, congregation, and circumstance” (p. 389). Interestingly, Anderson first illustrated the idea of the integrative sermon with musical compositions in *Choosing to Preach*. So, it would be helpful for beginning preachers to learn the homiletical scales of biblical exposition before trying to compose a complex sermonic score like the model presented in *Integrative Preaching*.

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Academia

Graff, Gerald, and Cathy Birkenstein. *They Say / I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*. Fourth ed. New York, NY: W.W. Norton, 2018. 328pp., \$29.98 paperback

Two highly qualified academic practitioners produced this work. First, Gerald Graff (Ph.D., English and American Literature, Stanford University, 1963), is Emeritus Professor of English and Education at the University of Illinois at Chicago and former president of the Modern Language Association of America. Graff’s co-author, Cathy Birkenstein (Ph.D., American Literature, Loyola University Chicago, 2003), is lecturer at the University of Illinois at Chicago, and teaches freshman-level writing and English courses using the book as her central recourse. Both Graff and Birkenstein, who are husband and wife, have lectured at numerous institutions over

the years promoting the concepts and templates which make up their best-seller, *They Say / I Say*, now in its fourth edition and sixth printing.

The book's overarching theme is simple, yet vital: *all academic writing occurs within a larger conversation*. It is to this idea the book expands and offers templates for students to employ, helping remind them that they are entering paths traversed by others. Because of the ongoing dialogue in which the academic writer participates, the book provides a memorable paradigm throughout its pages which also serves as its title, "they say / I say." That is, the authors exert their energy by drilling into their target audience (the academic student) not to write papers with the assumption that their ideas are isolated from others on a topic. Rather, an academic writer is almost exclusively writing in *response* to others' ideas that have been proffered before them; hence the paradigm: "they say this, but I say that."

The book aims to assist the budding writer in developing a critical mind that truly listens to the various sides of an argument before putting pen to paper in order to crystallize their own position on the matter. Indeed, the art of active listening before arguing has an ethical dimension, something the authors point out in their preface. As such the "they say / I say" approach to writing offered by the authors, "Asks writers not simply to keep proving and reasserting what they already believe, but to stretch what they believe by putting it up against beliefs that differ, sometimes radically, from their own" (p. xxiii). The entire book aims to help in achieving this goal and "To demystify academic writing by returning it to its social and conversational roots" (Ibid.).

A unique contribution the book makes, that others devoted to academic writing do not, are the offering of actual templates for the student to use covering just about any writing project they may encounter. These templates, spread out over the book's four parts, are intended to assist the writer in various situations germane to academics such as how to summarize (pp. 30–42), how to quote others (pp. 43–52), how to respond to objections and naysayers (pp. 77–90), and how to provide one's added commentary—something the author's call, 'metacommentary' (pp. 131–140). Moreover, the authors do not offer templates solely dealing with how to *disagree* with others properly. Because there is certainly an ongoing conversation in which the writer engages, he or she will find opinions that do at times concur with their own. As such, the book also provides templates on how to *agree* with others while still maintaining their own voice (pp. 59–65). The final part of the book (pp. 162–242) zeros in on specific academic contexts such as in-class discussions, online dialogue, as well academic writing in specific genres such as literature and the sciences—with brief templates provided for all of them. Finally, sample readings are given at the end of the book that exemplify the principles suggested throughout the work, followed by an index of all the templates suggested (pp. 243–294; 309–327).

There is no mistaking exactly *what* the thesis of the book is, since the authors are relentless in presenting it. That the academic writer is to write their arguments

cognizant of entering an ongoing discussion is scattered throughout just about every chapter, along with how to do it critically, fairly, and respectfully. This latter aspect is especially important as the authors themselves maintain, “The central piece of advice in this book—that we listen carefully to others, including those who disagree with us, and then engage with them thoughtfully and respectfully—can help us see beyond our pet beliefs, which may not be shared by everyone” (p. 16). Each template and surrounding narrative in *They Say / I Say* helpfully assists in fleshing out this central thesis, and because of that, it can be safely concluded that the authors undoubtedly achieved their own purpose—and do so in an engaging style.

What one is left wondering, however, is just how useful their templates are for the busy academician actively engaged in critical scholarship. In other words, while the book certainly achieves *its own end*, does that equate with the professional academic writer achieving *their end* by using the book’s advice? To this potential critique, it can be answered that the primary target of the book’s audience is the student-writer, not the professional scholar or critic. Throughout the book’s preface, for example, the authors use various terms that are germane only to high school, college, and graduate learners—for example, “student,” “class discussion boards,” and “course packs”—making clear for whom the book was written. Further, Graff and Birkenstein, who are both college professors, repeatedly point out that it was their classroom experiences with *students* that helped inspire most of the content. Thus, while the active, professional scholarly-writer can certainly pick up some new gems from the book’s templates, the book is still, nevertheless, targeted at those writing at the non-professional, student-academic level.

Another possible critique may center on the seemingly repetitive, mechanical templates that some might view as not actually inspiring critical thinking or originality, but rather providing a mere formality for the student to incorporate without serious reflection. The templates’ “repetitiveness” notwithstanding, the authors do hit this potential objection head-on in both the book’s preface and introduction. Rather than the templates taking away from a writer’s own voice or critical thinking, the authors present these them as tools for budding student-writers to be aware of the key rhetorical moves that seasoned writers pick up on subconsciously. Further, the authors do encourage students to “modify and adapt” the book’s templates into their own particular contexts thereby guarding the writer’s individuality. “Ultimately,” contend the authors, “creativity and originality lie not in the avoidance of established forms but in the imaginative use of them” (p. 14).

If anything, these potential critiques underscore the book’s overwhelmingly positive aspects. Perhaps the biggest take-away of the book is the need to represent an opposing view fairly, while being sure to imbed the writer’s own position into the ongoing conversation. Chapter two’s “The Art of Summarizing” is particularly helpful here as the authors caution newer academic writers to put themselves in their detractors’ shoes as objectively as possibly for the sake of entering the

conversation (or as they borrow the term, “the believing game”). Yet, they are to do so while simultaneously “knowing where [they] are going” (pp. 31–38), thus always maintaining their own end and contribution to the matter in sight. Indeed, keeping both goals in view is vital in presenting a robust, well-balanced critique, making *They Say / I Say* a valuable recourse for students and academic writers at all levels.

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