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Book Reviews

Gane, Roy E. *Old Testament Law for Christians: Original Context and Enduring Application*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017, 464 pp, \$35.00, paperback.

Second Timothy 3:15–17 stands as a pillar text of biblical inspiration. Bible school students embrace it, pastors proclaim it, faithful Christians memorize it and recite it from a young age. Yet for all the attention this text receives, too many neglect one of its central claims: “all Scripture is . . . profitable.” The dearth of sermons, bible studies, devotional writings, and blog posts expounding the “profit” of Leviticus for Christians today suffices for evidence. Roy Gane, professor of Hebrew Bible and ANE languages at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University, comments on the current situation, “A rich source of wisdom regarding values is contained in OT laws. However, Christians have generally neglected these laws, to our loss, because we have not regarded them as relevant to our lives” (p. xiii). So, in order to help Christians profit from “all Scripture,” Gane presents this guide to appropriating Old Testament law in every age of God’s people. While Gane surveys numerous approaches to applying God’s law as God’s new covenant people, he advocates for an approach he calls “progressive training in moral wisdom” (p. 198). Pulling from his extensive work to understand and apply difficult law passages (e.g., see his commentary on Leviticus and Numbers in the NIVAC series), he aims to see the riches of “all Scripture” benefit God’s church today.

Gane presents his case for a progressive moral wisdom approach (PMW) to God’s law in four parts: (1) an introduction to OT law [54 pp.], (2) an introduction to legal literature [72 pp.], (3) various Christian approaches to application [98 pp.], and (4) application issues and difficult texts [171 pp.]. In his introduction to OT law, Gane addresses the relevance of law for Christians in the words of Jesus and Paul, the nature of “law” in the Bible and how it was used in its original context, and the four-fold purpose of law: theological, covenantal, sapiential, and missional. He offers the preliminary definition, that “OT law is normative, exemplary, covenantal divine instruction” (p. 19). This divine instruction reveals the nature of the deity (i.e., theological purpose). This covenantal instruction “contributes to [the] preservation of an ongoing divine-human relationship that provides important benefits for God’s people” (i.e., covenantal purpose; p. 47). This exemplary instruction draws both neighbor and nations toward the deity (i.e., missional purpose). This normative instruction orders and addresses the most significant issues of living in a fallen world (i.e., sapiential purpose). Such normative, exemplary, covenantal divine instruction occurs in limited clusters but influences the entirety of the Old Testament.

While the influence of legal materials may be felt throughout the OT, not all legal passages bear equal weight. Gane introduces his survey of application

approaches by laying out the hierarchical groundwork inherent in OT law passages. Just as Jesus recognized, “love is the paramount value and virtue” (p. 148). Thus, a general command like the Shema, “Love YHWH your God with all your heart, soul, and strength” (Deut 6:5), defines whole categories of legal material. Similarly, the command to “love your neighbor as yourself” (Lev 19:18) defines another broad category of laws. Gane presents the classic illustration of this from the Ten Commandments (p. 151), but also goes on to present various sub-categories between the crowning virtue of “love” and individual commands throughout the OT. This lays the groundwork for his “indirect application” of OT law passages by Christians today (p. 142).

In preparation to explore the progressive moral wisdom approach to applying OT law, Gane surveys other options from Christian history. He begins by discussing radical continuity (theonomy), moves on to radical discontinuity (practical impossibility, dispensationalism, Lutheran theology), and concludes with various medial approaches advocating some form of continuity and discontinuity (Reformed theology, principlizing, paradigmatic, redemptive-movement). Gane’s medial approach (PMW) places an emphasis on personal transformation in the process of intellectual application of specific laws. He writes, “the purpose of OT law only reaches fulfillment when decisions are lived out by a whole person, who consequently grows in moral character” (p. 201). The final 200 pages of the books detail the general process for employing a PMW approach and then demonstrate what it looks like on specific passages.

Gane’s progressive moral wisdom approach to reading OT law offers Christians a lot of opportunities to make all Scripture profitable today. PMW resembles the paradigmatic and principlizing approaches in a number of ways; yet it maintains a focus on the transformation of the individual through the process of applying God’s law to life. This dimension of PMW provides much needed perspective to a debate overwhelmed by nuts-and-bolts proposals. Nevertheless, PMW has its own nuts-and-bolts process: (1) analyze the law by itself, (2) analyze the law within the system of OT laws and the context of ancient life, (3) analyze the law within the process of redemption, (4) relate findings regarding the function of the law to modern life (pp. 202–203). Taken by itself, this process resembles the paradigmatic process of Christopher Wright (pp. 185–186) and the principlizing process of Peter Vogt (*Interpreting the Pentateuch: An Exegetical Handbook* [Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2009], pp. 136–146). Gane himself seems to indicate this (p. 201) but emphasizes that PMW aims not just at applying laws but at moral transformation.

The most difficult stage of Gane’s PMW process is stage four: relating findings regarding the function of the law to modern life. One question he introduces raises significant tension—“Does biblical development of the value exemplified by the law show a trajectory that moves beyond the law itself to a higher moral level that should be applied in the modern life situation?” (p. 203). This question arises

specifically from Gane's assessment of William J. Webb's redemptive-movement model (p. 195). Gane is careful to critique the most troublesome aspects of Webb's model (pp. 187–195), but his inclusion of Webb's positive contributions here creates more problems than it solves (p. 213). Webb's project aims to promote a male-female egalitarian hermeneutic based on the egalitarian trajectory in scripture with regard to slavery. Gane cites Galatians 3:28, "There is neither . . . slave nor free, . . . for you are all one in Christ," which Webb also cites with regard an egalitarian position on gender roles. An extended footnote at this point would have assisted readers in differentiating Gane's approach from that of Webb. Unfortunately, Gane simply uses this dimension of Webb to illustrate the concept of redemptive trajectory and leaves the reader to wonder how this relates to the issue of gender roles. Gane's overall approach does not depend on Webb, so this appears to be an unnecessary inclusion of theological baggage that complicates his presentation of PMW. Gane would have been better served by simply presenting his own exegesis and redemptive-historical approach at this point (cf. Thomas Schreiner, "William J. Webb's Slaves, Women & Homosexuals: A Review Article," *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 6.1 [Spring 2002]: 46–64).

Despite this complicating factor, Gane's work offers much needed guidance in our current cultural context. Now, more than ever, Christians need to engage with the difficult passages of Scripture in order to respond aptly to a hyper-skeptical culture. This constitutes the greatest asset of this book—extended examples of applying the PMW approach to reading legal passages. Often these examples cannot treat the issue in full, though for more extended treatments, readers may also consult Gane's commentaries. Some issues seem to receive an imbalanced amount of attention (e.g., Sabbath, 7.5 pp.) compared to other issues in the same chapter (e.g., the first three commandments, 6 pp.). Other issues call into question modern Christian approaches to the law without offering a clear standard of application today (e.g., forbidden meat, pp. 352–358). Nevertheless, these discussions raise difficult, oft-neglected issues and attempt to walk Christians through the PMW approach to applying them so as to grow in wisdom.

Gane proves an able guide to applying difficult OT law passages through his progressive moral wisdom approach. While a reader may disagree with some of his interpretive conclusions, this book provides a wealth of wisdom for profiting from all Scripture (2 Tim 3:16). I would recommend this book for serious students of God's word who seek to understand the relevance of God's law for Christians today and aim to grow in the process. This will not be the only book needed to navigate such a difficult subject, but it provides a helpful orientation and process along with numerous case studies to work through. Most importantly, Gane serves the church today by exposing the exegetical issues that too many believers remain ill-equipped to address.

Marcus A. Leman

Dallas International University

Wegner, Paul D. *Using Old Testament Hebrew in Preaching: A Guide for Students and Pastors*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2009, pp. 176, \$19.99 paperback.

In *Using Old Testament Hebrew in Preaching*, Paul D. Wegner provides current and former students of biblical Hebrew with the necessary tools and ample encouragement to maintain and use their knowledge of biblical Hebrew. Wegner currently serves as the Distinguished Professor of Old Testament Studies at Gateway Seminary in Ontario, CA. He is also the author of other works that may be familiar to many seminary students: *The Journey from Texts to Translations* and *A Student's Guide to Textual Criticism of the Bible*.

Wegner writes *Using Old Testament Hebrew in Preaching* with a certain audience in mind: seminary students who have taken at least one year of Hebrew and pastors who need encouragement to maintain their Hebrew knowledge (p. 8). Observing the lack of Hebrew resources—compared to the abundance of Greek resources—Wegner provides his readers with practical tools for using biblical Hebrew in sermon preparations (p. 8). In the first chapter, Wegner answers the question of how Hebrew is helpful in ministry. In the second chapter, he provides his readers with the “crucial tools” for maintaining biblical Hebrew and preparing sermons from the Old Testament. In the third chapter, Wegner defines exegesis and briefly explains how one exegetes a passage. In the fourth chapter, he offers practical advice on how to prepare a sermon from the Old Testament. In the fifth and final chapter, Wegner provides helpful tips on how to maintain one's Hebrew vocabulary and translation skills and how to use Hebrew in sermon preparation. Wegner completes his work with five appendices containing worksheets for sermon preparation, an extensive list of scholarly and lay commentaries for Old Testament study, and a syntactical analysis of the Hebrew text of Psalm 23.

There is much to commend in Wegner's work. Wegner writes with a light style and does not burden his readers with drawn out explanations. He clearly defines his terms and methods and judiciously inserts charts and lists within the body of the text. For example, in his discussion on Bible software, Wegner provides charts with detailing the features and costs of various software packages, allowing the reader to compare the available programs. Throughout the book, Wegner follows his discussions with lists of helpful resources. For example, in his discussion on beginning Hebrew grammars, Wegner sprinkles various grammars throughout the section and then follows the discussion with a more extensive list (pp. 42-44). With easy access to lists of resources, Wegner saves his readers from having to flip to an appendix or to the end of chapters to find a resource.

Wegner strikes an encouraging tone in *Using Old Testament Hebrew in Preaching*. Interspersed among the chapters are quotes by and bios of great men and scholars of the Christian faith. The quotes and bios highlight the importance

of various elements of sermon preparation such as Hebrew and Greek, prayer, and the use of commentaries. The most encouraging aspect of Wegner's work is that Wegner makes the goal of maintaining and using biblical Hebrew attainable. Wegner suggests that readers consult the guidelines set by the Foreign Service Institute of the United States Department of State to determine the preferred reading level of biblical Hebrew. The levels range from R-1—an elementary level in which the reader can work through easier passages and yet heavily relies on other resources—to R-4—full proficiency (pp. 21-22). The reading levels provide the biblical Hebrew student with a realistic expectation of the work involved for the chosen level and communicate to the student that full proficiency is not required to use biblical Hebrew in sermon preparation. Furthermore, Wegner's suggestions on maintaining Hebrew vocabulary and translation skills are practical and not overbearing.

As with any reference list, readers may or may not find Wegner's suggestions helpful. However, Wegner generally keeps to resources that have proven valuable over time. Also, in his discussion on the literary analysis of various passages Wegner suggests source criticism, form criticism, and redaction criticism are useful tools to examine a specific text (pp. 72-76). Again, readers may or may not find these suggestions helpful depending on their view of various critical methods.

A seminary student, minister, or lay leader in a church who desires to continue to work on their biblical Hebrew will find Wegner's *Using Old Testament Hebrew in Preaching* a valuable resource. The book will give the reader an excellent place to start reviewing lost Hebrew vocabulary or to use Hebrew in a sermon. However, Wegner notes that the decision to continue to study biblical Hebrew is ultimately up to the reader (p. 121).

Richard C. McDonald, Ph.D.
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

Wiesgickl, Simon. *Das Alte Testament als deutsche Kolonie. Die Neuerfindung des Alten Testaments um 1800. Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament (BWANT), Band 214. Netherlands, 2018, pp.262, €75,00.*

The main point of this book is that both Orientalism and colonizing in practice were driven by German biblical scholarship of the OT. There is a need for a critical history of commentary, which this book seeks to meet. Roland Boer has pinpointed Martin Noth but the problem goes further back; German scholarship has not been self-aware (cf. E. Stegemann). We see it already well documented in recent histories of *philosophy*, e.g. Hegel's Master-Slave derived from discussion of slave trade in Haiti. When Schiller observed that less developed peoples remind us of childlike love, this is part of the same 'primitivism' to which the likes of Herder and the Humboldts subscribed.

Despite being a fascinating account there are times when the book ‘jumps’ or even doubles back on itself, repeating or expanding points already half made elsewhere. Secondary literature is rather dealt with as it goes along, like more flavouring thrown into the soup as it simmers, and usually added uncritically. *In Search of the Hebrew People. Bible and Nation in the German Enlightenment* by Ofri Ilany is one book that is possibly just too recent to be able to evaluate as so significant, and there is overall a bit of a ‘shock of the new’ throughout this book.

Attempts at writing histories of OT exegesis are considered: Diestel from 1869; Kraus from 1956 (with more theology and hagiography in its account, as well as an anti-Enlightenment bias); Reventlow from 2000, who affirmed archaeology, classical parallels and humanism in the history of biblical scholarship, yet who eschews projections by Enlightenment interpreters on to prophets and ‘personalities’. Lastly, the great multi-authored work (*Hebrew Bible/Old Testament*), edited by M. Saebø is considered to be rather traditional, and lacking in its coverage. Suffice it to say that only now in the last decade are we beginning to realise the connection of scholarship with Orientalism.

As for Edward Said’s *Orientalism*, although it did acknowledge the revolution in German biblical scholarship as having a role to play, Said gave it very much only a bit part. It was perhaps not so important to Said that it was German Protestantism during the late Enlightenment that served to define *Judaism*. The idea of a *discovery* of a religion helped Europe to identify itself through ‘othering’. Yet the criticism of modern scholarship led to a cosy relativism of a dubious ‘international’ and universal sort. From 1850 there was a German Imperialism in OT history writing, and not much escape from that style in the following century. As early as the mid-seventeenth century, travel reports provided useful archival grist to the commentators mill. The J.D. Michaelis-planned trip to Yemen 1763-7 was for the sake of his biblical scholarship. Michaelis did not go, but at least he read Carsten Niebuhr’s reports. (Max Muller never went to India, one learns *en passant*.) Then there was George Forster, who voyaged with Captain Cook, writing an account of those adventures with far from an official imperialist line, yet one that was nevertheless *culturally* imperialist.

To turn the tables and critique the critics Jürgen Osterhammel has suggested that one take non-western sources (e.g Egyptian) into account, and use them critically for a purer historiography against the western nineteenth descriptions: for these are not merely that, but in a certain light betray a spirit of cultural hegemony (Gramsci), a rhetoric of control. The fact is that the Hebrew bible is still getting used today in political discourse (as per Konrad Schmid), as if such *Nachleben* were unproblematic. This concept of *Nachleben* is double edged: it can mean a living text (Benjamin), as an antidote to Historicism, yet in disguise for while actually part of the *Nachleben* of the bible modern scholarship pretends to be pure and objective towards the text in its historical context, positioning itself as advocate of it. Foucault was right to have spotted the unconscious at work in the ordering and classifying of eastern cultures.

Furthermore, the Reader is not contextualised while the Text is: F. Segovia has seen the newer 'literary criticism' approach as taking away from author and reader to elites, and to be just as bad as a historical criticism, for each claims that it never commits eisegesis.

There is a need for a historical criticism that is more self-critical. Famously Karl Barth had said something like that, but he had seen the *Grenze* as that between humanity and God (or more accurately humanity and the gospel). Of course there is 'idolatry' in scholarship. In religious studies, Gavin Flood attacked the information gathering of the phenomenological approach in its constructing images out of raw material after its own imagination. Michaelis wanted philology to help receive the biblical words as a living language. New rules were set to reflect the idea that the text had been in flux: it was not always the majority version that were the most reliable manuscripts. There became a preference, with Bengel for the *lectio difficilior/brevior*, not the traditional *lectio clarior*. Huet had used deceitfulness to talk of ANE myth as falsifications, with the bible responding to those in more truthful a way. This was all helpful to learn what was on offer. However, this could be inverted: the original was the purest, the less self-aware, the noblest. Thus orality came *before* writing (here Herder reversed Lowth, maybe with an anti-Jewish agenda, and Rousseau and Schelling were likewise minded.) In the minds of these late eighteenth-century thinkers, Germany, as the land of poets and thinkers was called to draw out the treasure of Jews. Furthermore, German identity as a collective formed from individuals encouraged the common enterprise of an *intellectual* conquering of world as preparation for action. The German was light on his feet and not weighed down morally; he travelled the world like the Jew, but for a different purpose.

In Chapter Five one learns that Herder disliked Michaelis's new bible translation, which he viewed as introducing a new religion, as if discovering a new world, making Hebrew religion very much 'other' and there to be mastered, like foreign shores. Indeed, Michaelis saw the present-day Arabs as practising Moses' law in their customs. Hebrew was not a divine language but related to its environment. Happy Arabs needed to be asked learned questions. There was a fixed idea that oriental culture had not developed as much as western did, since only now was it meeting other civilizations. Take the topic of blood revenge, just like Arabs in the timeless Orient is what is expressed in Num 35,12; Deut 19,6; Moses simplified it with intellectual authority, as someone like Montesquieu's rational lawgiver, as the one to educate the Hebrews to a higher level, for they very much needed it. Now for Michaelis, post-biblical Judaism differed markedly from Hebrew religion; the latter, open to being taught, was more like contemporary 'patriarch-like' Arabs whose language never changed.

Eichhorn affirmed that cultural change caused any literary change. In the bible itself however there was change—and this (the point needs more emphasising) was what was being realised around 1800. De Wette confirmed the difference between

Hebraismus and modern Judaism, but from within the biblical texts (internal evidence). The universal religion was Christianity since Judaism had narrowed itself. Eichhorn's 1794 *Einleitung* became a standard work, arguing that some biblical layers were oldest and purest, expressing a pleasing primitive religion, reaching back to the childhood of man, and religiously and culturally authentic. Such an essentialism of the Orient would last as long as Martin Buber. To this a dissenting voice was raised by Herder: each culture is different (*Ältesten Urkunde* 1775), and races are not interchangeable, although he did think Africans were more sensual due to climate, as Michaelis had suggested about the 'lusty' Arabs. Yet Herder would mostly resist Michaelis' *Compendium theologiae dogmaticae* and its conclusions. One had to breathe the fresh air of the East not just theorize from data. For Herder the job of reaching back to the far past was necessary and the job of interpretation for now had to be done with care. One could not rely on contemporary parallels to primitive folk. 'An Johann Gottfried Herders Schöpfungshieroglyphe wird schließlich deutlich, dass diese Verschiebung Teil einer generellen Verfremdung war, bei der der Orient in die Ferne rückte und nunmehr nur über hermeneutische Wege und in Form von Denkmälern der Vergangenheit zugänglich schien.' (230)

Herder borrowed the dualism from Hume of a lively faith as opposed to a thinking person's philosophy. Herder viewed the Pentateuch not as a collection of episodes from different sources, but as a wild epic (cf. the Scottish *Ossian*), and as the product of a literary culture at a despotic court, even as also the product of a primitive imagination. However by 1805 Johann Severin Vater in his *Commentar über den Pentateuch* argued that the first five books of the OT consisted of a patchwork collection, to be separated out into their strands and that was the way ahead for the rest of the century and beyond—again the significance of this move is rather underplayed.

There is a lot to learn in this book, and it is useful to see various worlds of discourse interacting. However the structure of the whole is not quite what it should be, and just what *the* conclusion or thesis is, is not totally clear. The biblical-scholar players are left behind after De Wette, yet there is a story of Orientalism in other disciplines sketched (the build-up to full speed German colonialism after 1850) that is not really given any correspondence in the history of exegesis. Instead there are things like F.W. Zachariae (1777)'s reporting on the South Sea natives: just how well does this relate to the anthropology (historical or otherwise) of the OT? Sometimes too many stories vie for space. But it is a worthwhile and thought-provoking attempt to open the conversation.

Mark W Elliott
University of Glasgow

Currid, John D., *Against the Gods: The Polemical Theology of the Old Testament*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013, pp. 153, paperback.

John D. Currid (Ph.D., University of Chicago, is the Carl McMurray Professor of Old Testament at Reformed Theological Seminary in Charlotte, NC. He lectures worldwide on biblical and archaeological topics. He serves as Pastor of Teaching and Preaching at Sovereign Grace Church (PCA) in Charlotte. He has authored many books and journal articles.

The title of the book *Against the Gods: The Polemical Theology of the Old Testament* (AG) is an accurate statement of the contents. In the prologue, he acknowledges that the main content of the book was presented at a conference at Reformed Theological Seminary—Charlotte in 2007. He states that: “the book is about the relationship between the writings of the Old Testament and other Ancient Near Eastern literature.” “And so, the question for modern minds in this regard is, what precisely is the relationship of the Old Testament to Near Eastern Literature?”

The book is divided into 11 chapters:

1. A Brief History of Ancient Near Eastern Studies.
2. The Nature of Polemical Thought and Writing.
3. Genesis 1 and Other Ancient Near Eastern Creation Accounts.
4. Ancient Near Eastern Flood Accounts and the Noahic Deluge of Genesis 6-9.
5. Joseph, the Tale of the Two Brothers, and the “Spurned Seductress” Motif.
6. The Birth of the Deliverer.
7. The Flight of Sinuhe and Moses.
8. Who Is “I Am Who I Am”? Exodus 3 and the Egyptian Book of the Heavenly Cow.
9. The Rod of Moses.
10. The Parting of the Waters of the Red Sea.
11. Canaanite Motifs.

There is a basic framework to chapters 3-11. Currid identifies significant differences between the Ancient Near Eastern literature (ANE) and the Old Testament (OT). The differences are more momentous than the similarities. Three major differences that are emphasized are: 1. ANE is legendary myth while the OT claims to be historical accounts, 2. ANE is based on polytheism while the OT purports

monotheism, 3. ANE was understood as saga while the OT engaged mankind within a historical and cultural context.

Currid demonstrates that ANE provided support for the gods while the OT was a polemic against the ANE gods. The OT did not adapt or adopt ANE but rather engaged it for the purpose of refuting and discrediting ANE theology by revealing the true God of the OT.

There is nothing that is particularly ground breaking in the book, nor does the book make such a claim. Currid states: “The study is meant to be exemplary and not exhaustive” (prologue). AG is intended to provide for the layperson a rudimentary understanding of the relationship and questions between ANE and OT literatures. Even though the book is written for the layperson, a seminarian could benefit as it is a good introduction and survey of some of the more frequently identified parallels between the ANE and OT. Chapter 1 is an excellent survey of development of this discipline since 1798. The reader should keep in mind that all of this literature addresses timeless questions and circumstances that would be explored by any society or culture. It should be expected that such queries would be deliberated throughout history.

John A. McLean

Liberty University Rawlings School of Divinity

Hallam, Steven C. *Basics of Classical Syriac: Complete Grammar, Workbook, and Lexicon*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016, pp. 318, \$49.99, paperback.

Steven C. Hallam is Assistant Professor and Chair of the General Studies department at Alaska Christian College in Soldotna, Alaska. He earned his PhD from Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary and has taught courses in Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic, and Syriac. His Syriac grammar is the most recent addition to Zondervan’s language series of grammars and workbooks, and its stated aim is to get students reading the Syriac *Peshitta* as quickly as possible (p. 10).

The grammar follows a standard layout, with specific sections on the nominal system (chapters 1-6), the G-stem of the verbal system (chapters 7-11), the derived stems of the verbal system (chapters 12-16), and weak verbs (chapters 17-23). Each chapter concludes with a vocabulary list specifically relevant for interpreting the New Testament *Peshitta* and a set of exercises. Hallam also includes several appendices that recommend resources for further study, provide a summary of all relevant paradigms, and that presents a comparison chart of the three Classical Syriac scripts.

Syriac literature, of course, is written in three main scripts: Estrangelā, Western, and Eastern. Hallam takes a unique approach compared to other grammars in that he utilizes a mix of two scripts. The consonants throughout the grammar are written in Estrangelā, while the vowel pointing uses the Western script. This

combination is not found in any actual Syriac texts, but the pedagogical purpose is to introduce the student to both the oldest and most important script for biblical studies (Estrangelā), and the most common vowel pointing used in scholarly writing (Western). The exercises at the end of the chapters are in a pointed and unpointed form, so if students practice both, the mixed script should not present them with any problems in reading Syriac texts.

The greatest strength of the grammar is the numerous exercises provided that allow students to read portions of the *Peshitta* early on. Additionally, the grammar intentionally tries to simplify and generalize certain grammatical principles for ease of learning. But this latter point may also be a limitation. For example, Hallam chooses not to use the *quššāyā* and *rukkākā* (dots indicating soft or hard pronunciation for *begadkepat* letters) in the paradigms, but includes them in the exercises. The intention is to simplify phonetic concepts, but this is such a fundamental point of phonology that leaving it out can actually create unnecessary confusion.

Readers should also be aware that this grammar is not intended to be used apart from other reference grammars. Hallam specifically recommends reading Nöldeke's *Compendious Syriac Grammar* in conjunction with his own for a better understanding of the grammatical points that are made (p. 10). Even with this concession, however, there are other unfortunate reasons why an additional grammar is needed.

The grammar, as it stands, has several editorial errors in both the English and Syriac portions. For a student, the English errors are minor, and Hallam's intended meaning can still be discerned. For example, when discussing pronominal suffixes, Hallam states that "feminine *verbs* are formed regularly after the same pattern as the masculine," though he clearly means feminine *nouns* (p. 61). Moreover, he points out that the 3fs and 2fs G-stem imperfect forms are identical when he actually means the 3fs and 2ms forms (p. 106). English editing mistakes like this are not uncommon, but the most problematic are the Syriac mistakes.

For example, the paradigm for the copulative *hwā* has an error in the 3fp form. The form given is *hwāy* with the vowel as *zqāphā* (p. 83). It should be *hway* with the vowel as *pthāhā*. The same mistake is also found in the similar paradigm of enclitic *hwā* (p. 85). Additionally, the paradigm of the Peal imperative with an a-stem vowel should use a different word as an example (p. 117). Hallam uses the verb *rht*, and presents the imperative forms as following the pattern *rhaṭ*. But *rht* is an anomalous verb whose imperative form follows the pattern *harṭ*. Others have made more extensive lists of some of the errors throughout the grammar, but the point is that, especially for the Syriac portions, students who are unfamiliar with the language may unfortunately spend time memorizing paradigms that are incorrect if this is the only grammar they have. Students should be able to come to an introductory grammar and have confidence that especially the foreign language material is completely accurate, so a revision is needed.

Despite these problems, Hallam's grammar can still be useful for students just beginning Syriac studies. They will probably need another introductory grammar like Thackston's *Introduction to Syriac* just to check the accuracy of the paradigms, and a reference grammar for more detailed explanations of certain concepts, but the book has value in getting students to read the *Peshitta* quickly. If students, however, are interested in reading literature outside the *Peshitta*, a different grammar is recommended.

Dallas Goebel

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

Allert, Craig D. *Early Christian Readings of Genesis One: Patristic Exegesis and Literal Interpretation*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2018, 338pp. \$36.00, paperback.

Craig D. Allert received his Ph.D. from the University of Nottingham and is associate professor of religious studies at Trinity Western University in Langley, British Columbia. He is also the author of *A High View of Scripture? The Authority of the Bible and the Formation of the New Testament Canon and Revelation, Truth, Canon, and Interpretation*.

The book begins with a helpful introduction and reminder to see the Church Fathers through their viewpoint and not our own. Allert's overarching aim is to give "a responsible appropriation of our Christian past" (p. 6) by both letting the original author speak and not imposing our worldview and hermeneutic too quickly. This theme and aim runs throughout the entire book.

Following the introduction, Allert frames his work into two primary sections: (1) Understanding the Context; and (2) Reading the Fathers. The end of each chapter has a brief recommended reading section. This provides a great starting point for those wanting further research and study.

Part I focuses on preliminary matters such as why we should care about the Fathers as well as basic misconceptions concerning the Fathers. These misconceptions include an examination of how to not read the Fathers, namely by selectively quoting them to prove text our own assertions. This section also considers what "literal" means in the context of the Fathers themselves.

Part II seeks to engage specifically with primary sources. The corresponding chapters examine either a specific Father or key concept such as *creation ex nihilo*, the meaning of "day," or the meaning of "beginning." The final chapter looks at Basil's acknowledgment of Moses as the author of the creation narrative and as one who saw the creation account as "an education in human life" (p. 324). Thus, Allert concludes that the creation narrative is more than just history, but "a call to a deeper spiritual life wherein the salvation of humankind and the ultimate goal of seeing God (contemplation) are overarching" (p. 303).

One of the great strengths of this work is the extensive background context and primary source material that Allert provides. He does an admirable job throughout the book of showing the Fathers in their detailed context. Often the reader will be able to see an extended citation from a given Father regarding an issue. Allert argues well in many areas that authors have misused the Fathers by misrepresenting their writings. The background and primary source materials are helpful tools for the scholar and displays Allert's inclination to show rather than just assume. For example, Allert goes to much length describing the differences between philosophy and rhetoric and how they might provide clues to the understanding of "literal." In this, the reader is able to see the difference in how the Fathers defined "literal" and how we might define "literal" in our present day.

However, while Allert quotes the Fathers in detail, he does not always quote those he is contending with in detail. For example, in chapter 2, *How Not to Read the Fathers*, Allert clearly cites certain authors like James Mook to have not represented the Fathers in their full context. Yet, Allert might be accused of the same as he does not always show Mook in context. It would be beneficial to see not only the fuller context of the Fathers, but also the fuller context of those he contends with. Another example of this is found in chapter 3, *What Does "Literal" Mean?*, as Allert discusses the grammatical-historical method. He takes various passages of Paul and evaluates how Paul would be judged against the grammatical-historical method. In five different passages, such as 2 Corinthians 3:12-18 and Ephesians 5:25-33, Allert uses the five-time refrain, "the context is theological, not historical" (pp. 114-123) to prove his point of Paul diverting from the "literal" sense. Nowhere in the discussion does Allert show how those he has critiqued would take Paul's interpretations. Without further context, the reader must simply take Allert's word on the matter. Granted his priority is to show the Fathers in their context, but more context from those he scrutinizes would strengthen his argumentation.

Allert admits himself that the last chapter, *On Being like Moses*, seems like an odd discussion and concluding chapter. He engages primarily with Basil to show how Moses was viewed by the Fathers. Allert summarizes with Basil's understanding of Moses and the call "to be like Moses" by living a life "unenslaved to the passions of the flesh, free, intimate with God" (p. 324). In other words, there is a call to return to paradise. While Allert lays a decent foundation for this argument, it would be reinforced by demonstrating other Fathers with the same perception. Moreover, this conclusion seems like an odd way to end the book. Perhaps a summary of Part II drawing all the chapters together and then ending with the emphasis on Moses would better serve the force and concept of "being like Moses."

Early Christian Readings of Genesis One is an excellent read for both those interested in patristics and even for those with a lesser interest. For those that are interested, it provides a great view into the Church Fathers and their interpretations of the Genesis account. It is an attempt to show the Fathers views of creation, not simply

what we want the Fathers to see or say. For those with lesser interest in patristics, the value of the book comes by reminding the reader of the importance of authorial intent. A given work, especially ones by the Fathers, can easily be used out of context to prove an argument. It is all too easy to proof text a work just to bolster our own argument. However, as Allert shows, this is not faithful to the original authorial intent. In summary, this book has value for a wide range of biblical and theological studies, from the beginning to the advanced student. It provides a foundational starting point of opening a window into the Church Fathers views on creation and also exposes the reader to primary source materials for context and further areas of study.

Eugene P. Ho

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

Mark J. Boda. *The Heartbeat of Old Testament Theology: Three Creedal Expressions*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017. 220 pp. \$11.99, paper.

Mark Boda is professor of Old Testament at McMaster Divinity College. Boda has made many scholarly contributions to the study of the Old Testament. His most recent works include a commentary on the book of Zechariah in the New International Commentary on the Old Testament series and *'Return to Me': A Biblical Theology of Repentance* in the IVP New Studies in Biblical Theology series. The volume under review is part of the Acadia Studies in Bible and Theology series.

In *The Heartbeat of Old Testament Theology* Boda sums up the theology of the OT in “three creedal expressions.” These expressions are explained through a metaphor related to the heart. He says, “I invite you to don your theological stethoscope and listen for the heartbeat that represents the very core of the theology of the OT” (pp. 1-2). With stethoscope in hand, then, the reader is invited to listen in to “three basic rhythms that compose the heartbeat of the OT, identified with three basic creeds that can be discerned throughout the OT: narrative, character, and relational creeds” (pp. 7-8). Metaphor aside, Boda’s methodology falls in line with what he calls the “selective intertextual-canonical approach” (p. 7) to OT theology. As we will see, this methodology is a blend of Von Rad’s diachronic method, Eichrodt’s cross-section method, and the popular canonical method (using Hasel’s categories from *Basic Issues*).

We are introduced to the first rhythm in chapter two, the narrative rhythm. Here Boda is leaning heavily on the work of Von Rad and his diachronic approach. The narrative rhythm highlights the importance of Israel’s history in the expression of their religion. Three key texts are used to demonstrate this: Deut. 6:21-23, 26:5-9, and Josh. 24:2-13. Boda emphasizes how each of these texts describes the redemptive story of Israel using finite verbs expressing past action. In addition, the exodus (“bringing out”) and conquest (“bringing in”) sum up the core historical actions of Yahweh. Both events being the focus of the three key texts. Boda says, “At the

core of Israel's story of salvation is release from a place of oppression and provision of a place of freedom" (p. 18). This narrative expression therefore teaches that the events of Israel's salvation history are "fundamental to the theological expression of Israel and the OT" (p. 22). In Boda's analysis these events become a creed for Israel, which "binds together the historical experience of the present ... with the historical experiences of the past" (p. 23).

Boda builds on the work of George Ernest Wright with the second rhythm—the character rhythm. This rhythm is based on Yahweh's description of Himself in Exodus 34:6-7. The character rhythm is communicated to Israel using participles and nonperfective finite verbs that emphasize the consistent activity of Yahweh and adjectives and nouns that highlight His personal attributes. In this way, the creed "speaks of God as One who does this or that ... and by extension as One who possesses these characteristics" (29). The bulk of this chapter contains a very interesting and detailed exegetical study of Exodus 34:6-7.

Chapter four contains the last rhythm—the relational rhythm. Boda draws on the work of the eminent OT scholar Walther Eichrodt and his cross-section approach. However, Boda exchanges Eichrodt's covenant language with this relational rhythm. In this chapter Boda traces the Abrahamic, Sinaitic, Priestly, Royal and New Covenants. In each he demonstrates a relational reciprocity that involves both parties. Boda argues that each covenant contains these bilateral elements. He says, "While Yahweh is clearly the initiator in the relationship, the people's response is essential. This relational agreement focuses on a clear declaration of the identity of the two partners in this relationship: God and people" (p. 62).

Having assessed the heartbeat of the OT, chapters 5 and 6 of the book demonstrate how the three rhythms are integrated together in the biblical text (chap. 5) and how these three rhythms contain global implications (chap. 6). In chapter five, Exodus 5:22-6:8 and Nehemiah 9 (a favorite of Von Rad) are used to demonstrate the integration of all three rhythms. Boda claims Exodus 20:2, "I am Yahweh your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt," as Israel's "manifesto" (p. 82). It is in this declaration that the narrative rhythm ("I brought you out of the land"), the character rhythm ("I am Yahweh"), and the relational rhythm ("I am ... your God") are expressed. In chapter six Boda labors to demonstrate how the three rhythms have universal implications. Leading his argument is a thought-provoking explanation of the Noachic covenant, which is addressed in pp. 95-101.

In chapters 7 and 8, Boda takes the OT pulse in the NT and the Christian life respectively. While Boda does not advance his argument for the three rhythms in chapter seven, the discipline of Biblical Theology demands that he move his analysis into the NT. Most readers will appreciate his attempt to prove there is some continuity between the pulse of the OT and the NT. Boda is very pastoral in chapter 8 and aims to consider what impact his biblical theology has on the creation, culture, and the church today (p. 121). Boda exhorts believers to rehearse the mighty acts of God (p.

124), to remember that salvation is defined in communal terms (p. 125), to not lose an appreciation for the “glorious redemption story” (p. 126), and for preachers to be “released from the pressure of relevance to proclaim and celebrate the transforming story of redemption” (p. 126). Boda continues, arguing that the narrative rhythm is foundational for our faith and our faithfulness (p. 127-128). Many will appreciate how Boda ends the chapter with quotes from both John Piper and D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones emphasizing the need to make the Triune God first and foremost.

Boda rounds out the book with a Postscript (chap. 9) and an Appendix. The Postscript is a transcript from a sermon the author preached in a chapel service at Acadia Divinity College. The sermon text is Exodus 33:7-11 and it is the author’s attempt to demonstrate how his theology might be explained sermonically. The Appendix contains a revised edition of Boda’s chapter in *Hearing the Old Testament: Listening for God’s Address*, ed. Craig Bartholomew and David Beldman, 122-53 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012). Here the reader will discover a more detailed explanation of the hermeneutical principles that guide Boda’s Biblical Theology.

The end matter of the book continues with a detailed bibliography (17 pages), index of modern authors, index of Scripture, and index of subjects. These tools of course help to make this book a more lasting resource. This reviewer noticed one spelling error (Noahic, p. 98) and an inconsistent subtitle (p. 95).

Some of the interpretive challenges that arise throughout the book include Boda’s understanding of the bilateral nature of the covenants. Boda’s relational creed seems to supersede the text in these places. He sees both the Abrahamic and Davidic covenant as bilateral in nature (p. 68). He may even see the Noahic covenant as bilateral (p. 96). Readers may also wonder exactly what Boda believes about the nature of Scripture. While Boda does provide some helpful thoughts on the character of OT revelation in the appendix (pp. 157-164), it is still unclear exactly what Boda believe about the nature of Scripture. Boda explains his view using terms like “communicative,” “incarnational,” “inscripturated,” “authoritative,” “cumulative,” and “progressive.” One might have appreciated the more common language of inspiration, inerrancy, clarity, necessity, and sufficiency. Certainly, this volume practically demonstrates a high-view of Scripture. This reviewer, however, would have appreciated a more detailed explanation of the nature of Scripture itself.

While some readers might chafe at the “creedal language” or tire of Boda selling his heartbeat metaphor, this volume proves to be a succinct and helpful contribution to the popular disciplines of Biblical and OT Theology. The strength of the volume is found in the authors text driven conclusions and cogent understanding of the rich heritage of Biblical and OT Theology. Further, Boda is able to encapsulate this in a mere 150 pages. Therefore, In this reviewer’s opinion, *The Heartbeat of Old Testament Theology* is a good introduction for anyone seeking to explore where Biblical and OT Theology has been and where it might be headed.

John W. Dube
Arizona Christian University

Fuller, Russell T. and Choi, Kyoungwon. *Invitation to Biblical Hebrew Syntax: An Intermediate Grammar*. Kregel: Grand Rapids, 2017, pp. 528, \$64.99, hardback.

Fuller and Choi's *Invitation to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (IBHS) is a thorough discussion of biblical Hebrew syntax from a traditional Semitic approach. The book serves as a companion to their elementary Hebrew textbook: *Invitation to Biblical Hebrew*. Whereas the elementary grammar focused on morphology, the intermediate grammar focuses on syntax. Fuller is an expert of Hebrew morphology and syntax and was trained at Hebrew Union University in Cincinnati, OH. Choi too is an expert in Hebrew studies. He received his training under Fuller from SBTS. The widespread use of the author's elementary grammar to train thousands of students in biblical Hebrew leads to great expectation; IBHS exceeds expectations.

The book is divided into three main sections: The first section is a discussion of biblical Hebrew syntax proper (pp. 21–237). Although these discussions occupy the bulk of other Hebrew syntax books, this section comprises around half of IBHS. This section of the book is arranged in outline form and by section number. Moreover, grammatical terms are represented in all caps. Concise definitions of these terms are found in the first appendix (pp. 417–424). Footnotes in this section serve to vital purposes: 1) they explain in greater detail the syntax under discussion, and 2) they refer students to the appropriate section numbers of other Hebrew syntax books. Exercises accompany each syntactical discussion. These exercises include questions assessing basic comprehension while drills force students to identify and analyze.

The second section of the book is the compositions. This section begins with a discussion on methodology: namely, how to use and work through this vital section of the book. The compositions follow. Initially, the reader finds an English composition. The same English composition follows but with the addition of several footnotes describing the appropriate Hebrew syntax to be used in translating. Citations to syntactical discussions abound in this section. Based on this document, the student is to compose the English into biblical Hebrew. A key accompanies the composition. Finally, an unpointed Hebrew key concludes each composition. The first eight compositions are prose while the final four are poetry.

The third section is a discussion of prose and poetry accents. This section describes the accents and their purpose in detail. Examples and diagrams abound in this section to aid comprehension. The section concludes with a commentary on the accents of the seventh composition found in the book and of Psalm 1. In this way, the authors provide an illustration of the principles discussed throughout the section.

This book has several strengths. First, throughout the book, students will see that Hebrew syntax is constantly compared and contrasted to other Semitic languages. This characteristic pervades the book because of the author's approach to interpreting biblical Hebrew; namely, they argue that Semitic languages ought to

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be the lens whereby one interprets and explains Hebrew syntactical constructions (see their discussion on pp. 11–12). By incorporating other Semitic languages into the discussions, the authors achieve several noble ends. 1) The authors provide the student the ability to make connections about how and why Hebrew developed which alleviates the language’s “foreignness” (see the discussion of the imperfect on p. 28). 2) This characteristic is an encouragement to the students to learn other Semitic languages. This is a certain strength.

Second, the book provides the students with ample opportunity to practice the skills taught in the book. The exercises and drills in the first section and the compositions in the second section are all examples of this strength. The emphasis on practicing the basics of Hebrew syntax is a characteristic that sets this book apart from others and is rooted in the authors traditional pedagogy. The result of this characteristic is that students are able, not merely to identify Hebrew syntax, but they are able to create it. Those who can create Hebrew syntax will not only know more than those trained merely to recognize the syntax, but they will read the actual text of the Bible with greater ease.

Third, the book provides a thorough discussion of the Hebrew accents. The accents are often relegated to secondary or tertiary importance in Hebrew studies because they were added to the consonantal text long after the consonants. Despite their late addition, they are of vital importance since the accents often determine sense units like English punctuation marks. Although the accents are important to the proper understanding of Hebrew syntax, they are often neglected in Hebrew studies. This critique cannot be leveled against IBHS. The discussions of the accents are thorough while the compositions provide the student the opportunity to construct Hebrew with the accents. A clear strength of this book is the opportunity it provides the student to master the accents through identification and composition.

Perhaps one weakness of the book is the lack of vocabulary that accompanies each chapter. Of course, this book is a syntax book, and vocabulary is not a syntactical category. Nonetheless, the book will be used by many third semester Hebrew courses. Since the ability to recognize Hebrew vocabulary is essential to reading the Hebrew Bible—this is the hope of the authors (10)—the inclusion of vocabulary at the end of each chapter would have been a welcomed addition.

Overall, IBHS stands out among Hebrew syntax books. It provides a thorough discussion of the syntactical categories while offering the student ample opportunities to practice their newly learned skills. Students will find this book both challenging and fun as they grow in their understanding and love of biblical Hebrew. It might even invigorate many students to master other Semitic languages for glory of the Lord!

Anthony Ferguson
Gateway Seminary

Abernathy, Andrew, T, ed. *Interpreting the Old Testament Theologically: Essays in Honor of Willem A. VanGemeran*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018, \$33.99, hardback.

The present volume is a Festschrift in honor of Willem A. VanGemeran, Professor Emeritus of Old Testament and Semitic Languages at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. To honor his legacy, as indicated by the title, the focus of the essays is the theological interpretation of the Old Testament, a task over which VanGemeran has labored for decades. The movement known as Theological Interpretation of Scripture (TIS) has garnered more widespread support in recent years. VanGemeran is, in many ways, a forerunner of this movement—a point noted by several contributors.

Following an introduction by the editor (pp. 17–21), this volume’s 21 essay contributions are divided into three sections: 1) Theological Witness Gleaned Through Interpretive Practices, 2) Theological Witness in Specific Old Testament Books, and 3) Theological Witness Amidst Community. Both a Scripture and an author index follow the essays. The group of contributors is composed primarily of Old Testament scholars, but also includes one New Testament scholar, one systematic theologian, and one former seminary president who now occupies a pastoral position. Each contributor was asked to allow the following Christological and ecclesiological questions (respectively) to inform his or her individual chapter’s topic: “how do we move from an Old Testament text to Christ?” and, “how do the Scriptures given originally to Israel address the Christian church today?” (p. 20).

The first section contains six chapters reflecting various “interpretive habits” viewed as fundamental to a theological reading of the Old Testament. In chapter 1 (“Original Context and Canon”), John Monson proposes a “context-canonical” model for interpretation that considers the land, material culture, and cognate texts of the biblical authors, in addition to the larger framework of the Old Testament. The burden of the article, however, is a theology of land. In chapter 2 (“Genre and Theological Vision”), the editor, Andrew Abernathy, provides an excellent biblical and theological foundation for the appreciation of genre in interpretation. Going beyond simply stylistic variation, he argues that different genres invite readers to experience, and live in light of, the multi-layered reality of the biblical text. Chapter 3 (“Theological Dimensions within Biblical Books: ‘What is the Message from the LORD?’”), by Richard Schultz, explores the different dimensions of context for theological interpretation. These include the immediate context within the biblical book (with a discussion of the role of literary structure) and the broader canonical context. In chapter 4 (“The Tri-Partite Old Testament Canon and the Theology of the Prophetic Word”), Stephen Dempster argues that the bond between the Former and Latter Prophets is essential for understanding key themes in the Prophetic corpus. Separating these sections (as is done, for instance, in the ordering of English Bibles) obscures the patterns and continuities that emerge from a unified reading.

Next, Daniel Timmer (in “The Old Testament as Part of a Two-Testament Witness to Christ”) argues that the Old and New Testaments are a complementary and unified whole due to the divine authorship of Scripture. He describes a Christian reading of the Old Testament as “guided forward reading, in which various beliefs and conclusions (exegetical, dogmatic, etc.) feed back into one’s reading of the Old Testament, closing off some interpretive options and favoring others” (p. 101). He nevertheless acknowledges both unity and diversity in progressive revelation. In the final chapter of the section (“Theological Interpretation as a Traditional Craft”), Stephen Chapman calls for interpretation within the context of a community, a process he describes in terms of mentorship. This “craft-oriented approach” allows readers to depart from individualistic interpretations to be shaped instead by imitation and routinization of practices within interpretive communities. The kind of community the author has in view is both far and wide, spans location and time (especially the pre-modern period), and includes even Jewish interpreters.

The second section contains essays on specific books of the Old Testament as case studies for theological interpretation. In chapter 7 (“The Pagan Context of Abram’s Call and the Mission of the Church”), Carol Kaminski looks at Genesis to appreciate the polytheistic culture from which Abram originated. This perspective, she says, allows believers to better envision God’s gracious work in our own pagan culture. Richard Averbeck, in chapter 8 (“Reading the Ritual Law in Leviticus Theologically”), maintains that the sacrificial system outlined in Leviticus remains relevant for the New Covenant believer. Specifically, he looks at the sin offering, the Day of Atonement, and the food laws to demonstrate the centrality of God’s presence with his people, which ultimately finds its fulfillment in Jesus. In chapter 9 (“The First Principle of Wisdom in Deuteronomy: The Fear of YHWH as Allegiance to YHWH Alone”), Daniel Block surveys the fear of YHWH in Deuteronomy as an identity marker for God’s people. Just as with the original audience, the hearing of the Gospel in the Torah of Moses today should produce total allegiance to God (p. 164). The next chapter, by Lissa Wray Beal (“Setting the Table for Christ in the Elisha Narratives in 1 and 2 Kings”), synthesizes the ministries of Elijah and Elisha related to eating and drinking. These prophets, especially Elisha, prefigure the miraculous deeds of Jesus’ own ministry, as well as the greater meal, namely the institution of the Lord’s Supper. In chapter 11 (“A Theological Interpretation of the Cyrus Passages in Isaiah”), Bo Lim addresses the identity of Cyrus in Isaiah. Noting the various interpretive and methodological approaches, Lim concludes that a theological interpretation involves a multi-faceted view of Cyrus as a transitional figure who is both “messiah” and “monster.” Thus, some of the salvation prophecies were fulfilled in the Persian period, while others look forward to a future resolution. In chapter 12 (“The Presence and Absence of God in Jeremiah”), James Hoffmeier looks to the prophetic word, rehearsals of the exodus, the exile, and the future for characteristics of God’s presence. This lays the groundwork for God’s ultimate

presence in the incarnation. Chapter 13 contains a discussion by Anthony Petterson on the messiah in Zechariah (“Messianic Expectations in Zechariah and Theological Interpretation”). While Petterson rejects the idea of messianic overtones to the Angel of the Lord, he finds and traces the messianic theme in the shoot, kingship, and shepherd motifs. Mark Futato devotes chapter 14 (Psalm 8: A Christological Perspective”) to the exploration of Psalm 8 from a Christological, but not ‘messianic,’ reading. This chapter contains a fresh translation with many explanatory notes on the Hebrew text, in addition to a section on the literary structure and canonical context of the Psalm. In the final chapter of the section (“The Prayer of Daniel [2:20–23] in the Two-Testaments Scriptures”), Ron Haydon connects the motif of wisdom in Daniel to the wisdom in Colossians within a trinitarian framework.

The third section of the volume has a more communal focus, exploring topics such as ethics, missions, family, and ministry. M. Daniel Carroll R. begins with an assessment of the connection between Old Testament theology and ethics in the works of five scholars: Childs, Scobie, Goldingay, Brueggemann, and Andiñach (chapter 16, “Ethics in Old Testament Theologies: Theological Significance and Modern Relevance”). Weighing the similarities and differences between each of these authors, Carroll R. demonstrates that there is more than one way to develop the ethics of the Old Testament from its theology. In chapter 17 (“‘Live Such Good Lives Among the Nations...’: The Missional Impact of Old Testament Ethics in the New Testament”), Christopher Wright emphasizes the role of a missional hermeneutic for ethics in the lives of believers. Next, Richard Hess (in “The Family in the Old Testament as a Theological Model for Covenant Community”) surveys the biblical and archaeological data, in addition to the evidence from personal names, to show the family as a context for expressing devotion to God. This sets the backdrop for a concluding paragraph on Jesus’ role in his human family. In chapter 19 (“Typological Trajectories in the Epistle to the Hebrews”), New Testament scholar Dana Harris demonstrates how the author of Hebrews appropriates material from the Old Testament that already contained theological reflections on earlier historical events. Thus, she says, the typology in Hebrews is not *sui generis*, but rather, draws upon typological trajectories already present in the Old Testament itself. Kevin Vanhoozer, in chapter 20 (“Toward a Theological Old Testament Theology?: A Systematic Theologian’s Take on Reading the Old Testament Theologically”), reflects on various levels of Old Testament theological interpretation, providing two case studies from Numbers 12 and 22. He looks to Walter Moberly as a good model of sound theological interpretation. In the final chapter (“But, It’s Poetry! A Pastor’s Reflection on the Relevance of Old Testament Poetry”), Gregory Waybright describes the use of biblical poetry to provide pastoral care for those in emotional crisis. He summarizes a sermon he preached on Psalm 62 as an example.

As is evident from this all-too-brief summary, this book covers a plethora of topics, displaying the wide-ranging scope of theological approaches to the

Old Testament. Especially helpful are several contributions that give space to the methodological issues undergirding TIS. This orients the uninitiated reader to the foundational tenets of the movement. Vanhoozer, for example, classifies various attempts at Old Testament theology in terms of “non-theological,” “weak,” and “strong.” What makes an evangelical Old Testament theology ‘weak,’ he says, is a refusal “to read the Old Testament in light of what is known of God in the communion of the saints” (p. 303). On the other hand, a ‘strong’ theological interpretation deploys proper theological categories involving “the nature, presence, and activity of the triune God” to “describe not only the content of Scripture but also the nature and purpose of the text itself, as well as its authors and interpreters” (p. 303). Vanhoozer’s discussion, alongside Haydon and Harris in particular, provides helpful insight into what is meant by theological interpretation.

Readers looking for a monolithic application of a unified approach, however, will likely be disappointed. In fact, some chapters appear to be at odds with one another. For instance, in his methodological discussion, Haydon emphasizes a Trinitarian hermeneutic of the Old Testament as a cornerstone for a faithful reading (see pp. 224–27). Chapman, on the other hand, states that though there is a valuable role for the creeds, Trinity, and Christology in a Christian reading of the Old Testament, “biblical interpretation can still be theological without them—or at least without making them the explicit and exclusive starting points in theological reflection” (p. 119). One may suspect that Vanhoozer would rank this kind of approach low on his taxonomy of theological interpretation.

Nevertheless, the volume as a whole succeeds in honoring an esteemed member of the interpretive community, Willem VanGemeren. Together, these essays invite readers to grow in communion with the Triune God and in community within the Church, through reading the Old Testament as Christian Scripture.

Andrew M. King
Spurgeon College, Kansas City, MO

Fuller, Russell T., Kyoungwon Choi. *Invitation to Biblical Hebrew Syntax: An Intermediate Grammar*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2017, pp. 528, \$64.99, hardback.

Building upon the foundation laid in *Invitation to Biblical Hebrew: A Beginning Grammar*, Russell Fuller and Kyoungwon Choi present an intermediate grammar which leads students of Biblical Hebrew (BH) towards internalization and mastery. The text is unique among similar intermediate grammars in its use of traditional Arabic/Semitic linguistic categories and pedagogy, while ignoring modern linguistic jargon. Most directly stated, this means analysis presented from linguistic scholars like Elizabeth Robar, Jan Joosten, T. Muraoka, Cynthia Miller-Naudé, and others is not incorporated in favor of traditional Semitic analysis. This makes the text

accessible to most intermediate students, yet confusing for those who have been exposed to the more modern syntactical terminology.

Invitation to Biblical Hebrew Syntax: An Intermediate Grammar is divided into three sections, each working together using the pedagogical method put forward in the introduction. The first main section is titled “Syntax” and consists of grammatical explanations and categories with examples throughout. Each chapter ends with extensive exercise questions to reinforce the concepts, as well as drills for identifying grammatical categories and constructions from the Hebrew Bible. A detailed answer key is provided at the back of the book with full explanations which carefully incorporate the chapter’s material to further help students master the syntax. This section of the text book utilizes passive learning as students learn the material through memorization and apply it through observation.

The next major section entitled, “The Compositions,” ingrains the grammatical and syntactical principles from the “Syntax” into the student through the traditional recitation method of learning classical languages. Fuller and Choi provide a four-step process for using the compositions (p. 245). This process includes (1) composing the Hebrew text from the English text with detailed footnotes that reference sections of the syntax, (2) correcting the composition with the answer key, (3) mastering the Hebrew text, and (4) reciting the Hebrew text out loud using only the English text. The first nine compositions are written by Dr. Fuller using BH syntax, vocabulary, and stories while the final three are poetic texts from the Hebrew Bible.

The final section focuses on the Masoretic accents. Fuller and Choi begin by putting forward the value of the accents as well as their importance since, according to them, the accents “reflect the divinely inspired text” (p. 352) in their vocalization and chanting or they at least “represent an ancient rabbinic interpretation of Scripture, an invaluable resource for syntax and exegesis” (p. 352). This is followed by a detailed examination of how the entire accent system works by dividing them into a hierarchy and pointing out their patterns in BH prose and poetry. This is followed by a commentary on the accents in composition seven and Psalm 1.

The greatest strength of *Invitation to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* is found in the compositions, yet this is largely because of their dependence upon and interaction with the syntax/grammar section. When the passive learning found in the first part of the book is combined with the active use of these principles in the compositions, a mastery of BH results that is unparalleled in other methods of learning ancient languages. Reciting the compositions force the learner to think through the vocabulary, morphology, and syntax actively, speeding up the process of internalization. This process is still unbelievably difficult and time consuming, yet it is also enjoyable, rewarding, and powerful. Upon mastering the syntactical principles and applying them in the compositions using the footnotes, students will find reading the Hebrew Bible more enjoyable, less confusing, and more natural.

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The Hebrew accent section of the textbook has also been widely praised, and for good reason. Fuller and Choi have presented the accent system in a way that new students can learn efficiently yet with a detail and rigor that experienced scholars and translators are likely to benefit from as well. Fuller displays his thorough grasp of the Masoretic system with this chapter as he puts his decades of research and experience on display. At the same time, it must be stated that Fuller's view that the Masoretic tradition is "inspired as accurately preserving Ezra's inspired text, allowing for an isolated copyist mistake and/or a rare lapse in the tradition" is a minority position (p. 352). To be sure, the Masoretic accents, especially the vowels, should be considered an accurate preservation of the Jewish cantillation tradition going back quite a long time, possibly as far as the time of Ezra. Still, some room must be left for emendations when manuscript and legitimate principles of textual criticism warrants it, something Fuller appears to generally reject in favor of a practically inspired Masoretic text.

Another strength to this textbook is also one of its more important disadvantages. The text avoids categories and terminology from modern linguistics that can create a burden for students. From start to end, the Syntax section uses simple terminology and defines terms and categories with examples. Every term and category provided has a purpose and connects with BH directly. Fuller's approach and terminology is, according to the introduction, based on medieval Arabic grammar and Semitic terminology (p. 11). The grammar prefers these grammatical categories while completely disregarding modern linguistics. The advantage here is, upon mastering the text, readers will truly understand the language, the categories native to the language, and the way the language works.

The disadvantage to this approach, however, is largely found in moving beyond intermediate Hebrew studies and in utilizing a wider range of BH resources. Picking up and reading a volume from, for example, the Baylor Handbook series, may pose a challenge. The reason for this is that many of the categories being utilized within modern scholarship are disregarded by Fuller and Choi. This should not lead to the conclusion that *Invitation to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* is inaccurate or a bad textbook because it rejects the use of non-Semitic linguistic phenomena to analyze BH. The textbook's lack of modern-linguistics is one of its strengths, yet students utilizing the textbook must understand the drawback found in mastering some terminology and ideas which are no longer used in the wider scholarship of BH.

In utilizing passive learning of the Syntax section, active learning in the Compositions, and an excellent analysis of the accent system, Fuller and Choi have done a massive service to those seeking mastery in BH. Faithfully laboring in all three of these sections is sure to challenge and progress students of the Hebrew Bible. After this, those desiring further proficiency may want to pick up the reference/syntax grammars from van der Merwe/Naudé, Waltke/O'Connor and/or Joüon/Muraoka to understand the different approaches used to discuss and describe BH.

Jonathan Ahlgren
Southern Seminary

Haydock, Nicholas. *Old Testament Theology and the Rest of God*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2016, 87 pp., \$16, paperback.

Nicholas Haydock with the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students provides a short study of 86 pages on “rest.” He notes how the field of Old Testament theology has devoted scant attention to the concept of “rest” with two noteworthy exceptions. Gerhard von Rad supposes there were competing understandings and applications of the concept of “rest,” while Walter Kaiser, Jr. considers both Testaments to present a unified view. Haydock intends to trace how the theology of “rest” developed and progressed through ancient Israel’s history and to show how its essence remained the same. He defines “rest” as “having a holistic state of being, freely given by God in accordance to his word” (p. x). It is never achieved by human effort but always a gift from God. Haydock seeks to demonstrate the thesis that ancient Israel held one coherent theology of “rest” that was central in Old Testament theology and distinct in the context of the Ancient Near East.

He begins with “rest” in the creation narrative and Genesis 2:1-3 where God “rested” on the seventh day. Haydock notes that God’s “rest” never ends and considers it to prefigure the eternal rest to come. Then he examines the story of Noah, whose name means “rest,” and sees Noah as a second Adam of sorts and the post-diluvian world as a type of the new creation. Yet because sin remains, there is a tension, which calls for God’s future resolution.

Haydock stresses the contrast between the biblical view and that of the Ancient Near East. He summarizes how the motif of “rest” was treated in the Enuma Elish, the Atrahasis epic, and the creation myth of the Egyptian city of Memphis. In the general outlook “rest” is the outcome of the conflict between the gods and chaos in whatever form, and humanity exists to carry the workload of the gods and thereby give the gods “rest.”

The author provides a brief study of Sabbath-rest (Exodus 20:8-11), its uniqueness in the ancient world and eschatological overtones. Just as “rest” belongs to God (Psalm 95:11), so also the Sabbath (Isaiah 58:13; Ezekiel 22:8; Nehemiah 9:14). According to the promise in Isaiah 56, the experience of God’s Sabbath-rest will be enjoyed by Gentiles.

He discusses the Tabernacle and the interplay between God’s rest, his word, and his presence (e.g. Exodus 33:14). The theme of “rest” is closely tied to the land as an inheritance (Deuteronomy 12:8-12; 25:17-19). God promised to give Israel “rest” from the surrounding enemies. This emphasis governs the portrayal of the conquest of the land in Joshua (21:43-45). It is God’s freely given gift and yet only those who hear his voice enter it (Psalm 95:7-11). According to Judges, after the military victory of each judge, “the land had rest for (x) years.” That expression is repeated through the period up to Gideon and then disappears. Here the “rest” is cessation of war. While the period of judges was marked by repeated turbulence and enemy attack, God promised to David and with him Israel “rest from all your enemies” (2 Samuel

7:10-11). Again, God establishes “rest,” not human effort. In this connection the author notes that promise given in Isaiah 11:10 regarding the future new David.

Haydock points out how “rest” is associated with Solomon’s temple but again, only to those who are faithful (1 Kings 8:56; 6:11-13). The Zion theology flowing from the temple construction gives the eschatological hope of “rest” for all Gentiles (Micah 4:1-8). He points out some prophetic texts that speak of “rest.” According to Isaiah 28:11-13 and 30:15, God’s word and its call for faith would lead to “rest,” but Israel refused (cf. Jeremiah 6:16-17). Instead they brought down upon themselves God’s judgment, which is the absence of “rest” (e.g. Micah 2:10; Habakkuk 2:5; Lamentations 1:3; 5:5). Yet the prophets also promised a future restoration and “rest” from harsh subjugation (e.g. Isaiah 14:1-3).

The author considers the connection between “rest” and Purim in Esther (Esther 9:16-22) and sees it as having eschatological overtones along with the Feast of Tabernacles/Booths. He concludes this survey with Chronicles where “rest” comes up fairly often. Haydock states: “The direction of the Old Testament continues to look forward to the coming eternal rest; a rest inaugurated by the coming king whose rule will be eternal and where warring nations will cease and turn to worship the living God” (p. 82).

By way of evaluation, Haydock does a nice job of bringing together the Old Testament texts that speak of “rest.” He rightly emphasizes that “rest” is freely promised and given by God for Israel and also for the Gentiles, yet enjoyed only by those faithful to God’s word. While the study makes a fresh contribution to Old Testament theology, I did not find some of it persuasive. The author did not convince me that all the texts cited display one overall theology of “rest.” Often he commits what lexicographers call an “illegitimate totality transfer” by downloading into one basket all of the statements using the vocable “rest.” The word “rest” does not necessarily convey one general concept. In this respect the study would have been stronger with more lexical work. For example, the noun or verb “rest” implies “rest from something,” such as “rest from the attacks and raids of enemy nations” or “rest from war.” His definition is too vague, “a holistic state of being.” Moreover, certain key passages call for more exegesis, such as the promise in Isaiah 11:10, “and his resting place will be glory.”

In the conclusion the author suggests the need for further study of the New Testament on “rest.” He helpfully points out that in Matthew 11:28-30 Jesus offers to give what only the God of Israel can give, the gift of “rest.” In this connection one should also note the importance of Hebrews 3-4 on the theme of “rest.” Haydock is to be thanked for highlighting “rest” in Old Testament theology. He suggests that the Lord’s gift of rest “may well be a suitable way of presenting the gospel to those offering their busy lives to the idols of money and materialism in an attempt to earn rest” (p. 85).

Paul Raabe
Grand Canyon University

Barclay, John M. G. *Paul and the Gift*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015, xvi + 656 pp., \$70, hardback.

In one sense, *Paul and the Gift* is a book about many things. It includes anthropology and the history of interpretation. It is a comparison of Paul and Second Temple Jewish authors. It is part Pauline theology, part commentary on Galatians and Romans. In another sense, though, Barclay's monograph is a book about one thing: grace. While its methodology traverses a wide array of disciplines relevant to biblical studies, its content never strays far from the concept of beneficence.

Barclay, who a decade and a half ago succeeded James D. G. Dunn as Lightfoot Professor of Divinity at Durham University, has proved himself a fitting heir to that professorship. Prior to *Paul and the Gift*, Barclay was perhaps best known for *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora* (1996), an overview of Jewish reactions to the wider culture, as well as many well regarded articles, chapters, and edited volumes on Paul and Hellenistic Jews. But it is *Paul and the Gift* that secures his legacy. With it, he presents Paul's theology of grace from a genuinely new perspective—no small feat!—and also reframes aspects of the debate over the New Perspective on Paul.

Part I, "The Multiple Meanings of Gift and Grace" (pp. 9–188), sets out the foundational categories for the rest of the volume. Following a vein of research in anthropology (beginning with Marcel Mauss, "Essai sur le Don" [1925]), Barclay locates the concept of grace within a wider framework of gift-giving (ch. 1, pp. 11–65). In particular, he differentiates ancient benefaction, which encouraged and expected reciprocity, from the modern idea of "pure" gift, one that brooks no return whatsoever. Barclay then develops "perfections" of grace (ch. 2, pp. 66–78). This short chapter is the most significant, because it gives Barclay the taxonomy with which he will compare Paul and his contemporaries. Barclay uses "perfection" to designate "a concept [drawn out] to its endpoint or extreme" (67), and he finds six ways grace has been perfected over the past two millennia. It can indicate (1) *superabundance* (that the gift is of great scale), (2) *singularity* (that grace cannot coexist with the possibility of judgment), (3) *priority* (that it precedes any action on the part of the recipient), (4) *incongruity* (that it does not match the worth of the recipient), (5) *efficacy* (that it causes a change in the recipient), and (6) non-circularity (that a "pure gift" breaks the cycle of reciprocity). These are important categories, for as Barclay argues, "Rival claims to maintain or defend the principle of 'grace' may turn out to constitute *not degrees of emphasis, but different kinds of perfection*" (p. 70; here and elsewhere, emphasis original).

The payoff is evident even in the next chapter, when Barclay surveys the reception of Paul's theology of grace from Marcion to Augustine, through the Reformers, all the way to the many-sided debate on the apostle today (ch. 3, pp. 79–182). Among other conclusions, Barclay finds incongruity to be the "bedrock" of Augustine's theology of grace (p. 85); that Luther's innovation is interjecting non-circularity

into the concept of grace; and that the debates between the New Perspective, the “traditional” perspective, and the apocalyptic approaches to Paul are muddled by conceptual ambiguities. Most significantly, E. P. Sanders builds his framework for “grace” in Palestinian Judaism around priority (since, in his words, “getting in” is by grace), but Barclay faults Sanders for mistakenly assuming that priority implies incongruity or other perfections of grace: “at the heart of his project,” Barclay critiques, “is a lack of clarity concerning the very definition of grace” (p. 157). One upshot of these new categories, as the author notes in the conclusion to the section (ch. 4, pp. 183–88), is that it allows us to pursue a comparative investigation of Paul and other Jews on the topic of grace in a way that is “at once more complex and less loaded”; it is not a question of whether Judaism was a religion of grace but rather an analysis of “*different* Jewish perfections of grace” (p. 187).

Having constructed his conceptual boxes, Barclay begins the sorting. Part II, “Divine Gift in Second Temple Judaism” (pp. 189–328), considers five important Jewish works. Although Barclay does not claim that they are necessarily “representative of the whole gamut of Second Temple viewpoints” (p. 192), they are apt choices, presenting both diaspora and Palestinian voices, as well as varied perspectives on grace. The Wisdom of Solomon (ch. 5, pp. 194–211) perfects the superabundance of grace in particular, rejects singularity, and limits incongruity since that would violate the “system of moral and rational symmetries” that God has set up in the world (p. 211). Philo of Alexandria (ch. 6, pp. 212–38), likewise, speaks of divine beneficence especially in terms of its superabundance, but also its priority, since God is the source of all in his philosophy. Philo is further concerned to show, in keeping with the expectations of the Roman world, that the gift is given to a fitting recipient, and thus for him grace is specifically congruous. By contrast, in the *Hodayot* of Qumran (1QH^a) (ch. 7, pp. 239–65) grace is celebrated as incongruous, given to those who do not deserve it. It is also superabundant, prior, and efficacious, but not singular nor non-circular. In *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* (ch. 8, pp. 266–79), God’s mercy is incongruous, but not as an essential characteristic of grace, but instead in service of his “irrevocable promises and indefeasible plans” for Israel (p. 279). Fourth Ezra (ch. 9, 280–308) resolves a dialectic: the character of Ezra articulates divine grace as incongruous, since humanity’s sinfulness precludes the possibility of meriting salvation, but by the *dénouement* of the work the heavenly voice (first Uriel’s, then God’s) insists on “a cosmic order of justice” (p. 307), that there are righteous ones who deserve God’s gifts. Thus, it “displays most openly the theological problems associated with divine mercy or gift if they are perfected as incongruous benefits to the unworthy” (p. 308). Barclay ends the section with a summary of the “diverse dynamics of grace in Second Temple Judaism” (ch. 10, pp. 309–28).

A little over two fifths of *Paul and the Gift* is a close study of two of Paul’s capital letters. Part III is on “Galatians: The Christ-Gift and the Recalibration of Worth” (pp. 329–446). Barclay has a chapter introducing the letter to Galatia, the conflict

behind it, and major interpretations (ch. 11, pp. 331–50). He then writes something of a commentary on the letter: Galatians 1–2 (ch. 12, pp. 351–87), 3:1–5:12 with 6:11–18 (ch. 13, pp. 388–422), and 5:13–6:10 (ch. 14, pp. 423–46), the last of which includes a summary of the section (pp. 442–46). In Galatians, Paul’s major concern in terms of grace is incongruity. He assumes priority and at least hints at efficacy, but there is no real focus on divine mercy as superabundant, singular, or non-circular here. Barclay throughout mentions the social concern of Paul, that he is forming “*innovative communities*,” in which “*communal practice is integral to the expression of the good news*” (pp. 443–44). He stresses that, in Christ, grace reconstitutes social “value systems” and “other forms of cultural or symbolic capital,” altering hierarchies, including “the value-system of the Torah” that differentiates Jew and gentile (p. 444). Here he attempts to beat a fresh path between the “Lutheran” Paul (opposing “works-righteousness” as a means to salvation) and the New Perspective (opposing “works of the Law” as a form of cultural superiority). He also emphasizes that his interpretation “requires *no denigration of Judaism*” on the apostle’s part (p. 445).

Part IV, “Romans: Israel, the Gentiles, and God’s Creative Gift” (pp. 447–574), follows the same commentary-like format, dividing Paul’s epistle thus: Romans 1:1–5:11 (ch. 15, pp. 449–92), 5:12–8:39 with 12:1–15:13 (ch. 16, pp. 493–519), and chapters 9–11 (ch. 17, pp. 520–61). If Galatians so recalibrates worth as to (seemingly) endanger the normative status of Torah and the special place of Jews, Romans “displays a notable development beyond Galatians, expanding, adding, modifying, and even apparently reversing aspects of the earlier letter” (p. 453). Paul adds “dialectical counterpoints” to his views of the Law and Israel, seeing the Christ-gift as corresponding to the essence of the former and retaining the ethnic priority of the latter (p. 545). Incongruity remains Paul’s dominant perfection of grace, and in this letter the apostle integrates it into new matters. (For example, in ch. 17, Barclay argues that Romans 9–11, rather than veering from dark premonitions of divine condemnation to bright hopes for universal reconciliation, has a consistent theme: the incongruity of divine election, that God’s people is ever a people created *ex nihilo* by God’s grace.) Romans adds statements that indicate the superabundance of the Christ-gift and its priority. The other perfections of grace are absent (non-circularity), not developed (efficacy), or have an ambivalent status (singularity). Barclay’s chapter on conclusions (ch. 18, pp. 562–74) rehearses the major concepts of the study and its primary implications. The book ends with a helpful appendix on Greek, Hebrew, Latin, and English words revolving around gift-giving (pp. 575–82), before a bibliography and indices of authors, subjects, and sources. (The index of subjects is short, only two pages, but otherwise the end matter is well constructed.)

The greatest strength of this important work is Barclay’s sixfold taxonomy of grace. It gives us a multidimensional rubric to compare views of grace, rather than a clumsy one-dimensional ruler. A particularly helpful corollary of this taxonomy is that we can speak more accurately about the ancients. For example, consider Philo’s

insistence on the congruity of divine favor. Barclay rejects characterizations of his theology as having a “debased” form of grace, something that amounts to a “payment” or an “earned” reward (p. 237). That would be to make one perfection of grace, incongruity, the sole measuring stick. (And it is one that is actually counterintuitive: In the everyday world, we regularly deem recipients “worthy” of gifts without mistaking that for payment: an elementary school student brings home straight As, and her parents take her out for a special dinner; a long-serving, hard-working, honorable policeman receives a community service award with a financial windfall. It would be crass to speak of the celebratory dinner as mere “wages,” and we many would object if the community service award went to a scoundrel. The Christian affirmation of incongruous grace, stemming from Paul, is, in truth, shocking.) Therefore, Barclay can call Philo “a profound theologian of grace” (p. 238), even if his concept of divine beneficence differs markedly from Paul’s. A second corollary is that the taxonomy brings conceptual clarity to contemporary Pauline scholarship. The last forty years have seen various attempts to defend or impugn the “New Perspective on Paul,” but the meaning of “grace” has often imperceptively shifted with each commentator, with the result that many of the disputants speak past each other. Barclay has brought these nuances to light, and future New Testament scholars need to make use of them. My only complaint with Barclay’s taxonomy is that the full taxonomy often seems to slip from view. To be sure, the ancient authors have their own priorities, and so we should not expect each category to receive equal mention in any work. But for Paul and 4 Ezra, far and away the main focus is on incongruity, and Barclay only engages the other perfections incidentally.

Despite this signal strength and a number of other smaller ones, I remain unconvinced about a couple of matters. First, Barclay sometimes speaks of his proposal as if it were an alternate to both the “old” and “new” perspectives on Paul. For example, about Gal 5:6 (“neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything”) he writes, “It seems that Paul’s target is neither ethnocentrism nor the false opinion that good works can gain benefit from God. He subverts *any* form of symbolic capital that operates independently of Christ” (p. 393). But this is a generalization and combination of the two views, not an alternative to both. Paul is still against ethnocentrism, but he undermines non-Jewishness, as well as Jewishness. He is still against “earning” salvation, but he is also against any other conceivable form of merit apart from Christ. Better, then, is Barclay’s final characterization of his own reading of Paul as “a re-contextualization of the Augustinian-Lutheran tradition” and “a reconfiguration of the ‘new perspective’ ” that “reshapes them both” (p. 573). Second, Barclay’s continual appeal to “worth” language threatens to bleed out other effects of God’s action in Christ. When Barclay paraphrases the apostle’s densely charged argument in Gal 2:15–21, for instance, almost every use of the *dik-* (“just,” “right”) root is glossed in terms of “value” (p. 371, defended over pp. 370–87). Yet the polarity that Paul develops in this passage is between rightness and *sin*, and

“worth” is not the most natural antonym for “sin”—not to mention that Greek has words for “worth” that Paul employs elsewhere.

More generally, *Paul and the Gift* is valuable because it contains introductions to five important Jewish writings and abbreviated commentaries on two of Paul’s most important letters—all of which provide a handy point of reference. Locating the language of “grace” concretely within anthropological study of gift-giving in ancient cultures also brings a richer, fuller backdrop to classic Pauline words like *charis*, *dōrean*, and their cognates. Because of its wide scope, covering history of interpretation and Second Temple Jewish works, few undergraduate students would be able to make much use of this monograph. The writing is clear and most everything includes an English translation, so it might be suitable as early as master’s-level coursework. For the most part, though, this is work of a scholar written for other scholars, and as such it succeeds. *Paul and the Gift* will stand as the definitive work on Paul’s theology of grace for many years to come.

Timothy A. Gabrielson
Sterling College

Runge, Steven E. and Christopher J. Fresch, eds. *The Greek Verb Revisited: A Fresh Approach for Biblical Exegesis*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016. 688 pp. \$34.99.

The topic of verbal aspect has been highly contested since the publication of Stanley Porter and Buist Fanning’s dissertations over twenty-five years ago. Despite the copious amount of literature written on the issue, there appeared to be no way forward in the debate. That is, the paradigms set forth by Stanley Porter, Buist Fanning, and those who followed did not create a paradigm by which solutions could be found. However, with the publication of Steven E. Runge and Christopher J. Fresch’s *The Greek Verb Revisited: A Fresh Approach for Biblical Exegesis*, the apparent stalemate in this quarter-of-a-century debate shows tremendous promise for new ways forward. For that matter, the impact of Runge and Fresch’s new monograph upon the topic of verbal aspect within the Greek verbal system can be summarized in the remarks of Constantine Campbell, who states that this volume “deserves careful consideration” since it will “no doubt occupy a significant position within modern discussions of the Greek verbal system” (endorsements page).

In *The Greek Verb Revisited: A Fresh Approach for Biblical Exegesis*, Steven Runge and Christopher J. Fresch edit a volume in which linguists and Biblical scholars come together and address questions concerning the Greek verbal system that have been debated for the last twenty-five years. What is more, these scholars address these questions in light of the most recent developments within linguistic studies, developments which in many respects are grounded upon discourse grammar. According to Runge and Fresch, the goal of this volume is not to give the

definitive answer to these questions that have been debated for almost three decades. Rather, it is to “break the impasse and to see the discussion move forward” (pp. 3–4). Furthermore, the thesis of this volume is that the most linguistically viable position is that the Greek verbal system is made up of a combination of both tense and aspect (p. 3). While it is beyond the scope of this review to thoroughly interact with each essay, after concisely providing a summary of the content of this book, I provide substantive interaction with a select article representative of Runge and Fresch’s work.

Runge and Fresch divide the book into three sections—section one: overview, section two: application, and section three: linguistic investigation. Section one consists of four chapters which seek to provide the theoretical framework for the thesis set forth in the book. For instance, in chapter two, Christopher J. Thomson interacts with the differences between the way aspect is defined in general linguistics and New Testament studies, and then in chapter three, Rutger Allan examines how the augment and perfect developed in classical Greek.

In section two, Runge and Fresch seek to apply the theoretical framework discussed in section one, incorporating essays which apply a discourse approach to various corpora. For instance, in chapter five Stephen Levinsohn seeks to demonstrate that within narrative genre, foreground is communicated through verbs that move the story forward while background information is set-forth in verbs that do not portray an event. In chapter 6, Patrick James applies his classical Greek training to examine the function of the imperfect, aorist, historic present, and perfect within John 11.

In section three, a selection of the most controversial linguistic issues is discussed; some of these include the historical present, the augment, the middle voice and the morphology, pedagogy, semantics, and discourse function of the perfect verb form. In chapter 11, Peter J. Gentry examines the function of the augment in Hellenistic Greek, diachronically tracing its origin and usage, and providing a wholistic analysis of the function of the augment both diachronically and synchronically.

Now that the content of Steven Runge and Christopher Fresch’s *The Greek Verb Revisited* has been briefly summarized, I will now more thoroughly interact with one of the essays within the book in order to provide a sampling of the type of work the reader can expect to find. In her article “The Historical Present in NT Greek: An Exercise in Interpreting Matthew,” Elizabeth Robar addresses the issue of the use of the present tense verb form in historical narrative. She argues that this form is used in narrative as an “editorial device to indicate thematic prominence” (pp. 341–346; 350). Further, she states that the scope of the present verb form in narrative is the entire discourse unit in which it opens (pp. 349–350). For this reason, Robar holds that one has to understand the broader discourse episode in order to determine the units in which the historic presents are located (p. 350). She maintains that identifying discourse units is based upon two discourse features, lexical choice and developmental markers (p. 349). Moreover, she suggests the following delimiters for determining the discourse units of the historic presents, basing them upon the

section of the narrative episode in which the historic present is located—end section: the unit is the clause itself; middle section: the unit may be either a single speech unit or encompass multiple speech units; and beginning section: its scope is the entire narrative episode itself (p. 350).

Robar identifies with Steven Runge, stating that her thesis is very similar to his processing hierarchy (p. 332). Moreover, she comments that the traditional view that the historic present is used to communicate vividness, bringing an event from the past into the present, should not be completely dismissed but should simply be linguistically nuanced (pp. 332–333). That is, she replaces the traditional concept of vividness with prominence, in which the present verb form requires more processing time than the expected verb forms. What is more, in support of tense being a semantically encoded feature of the Greek indicative verb form, Robar traces the history of the historic present cross-linguistically and seeks to show that the historic present is far more prevalent in languages with a more developed tense system, particularly the present and future tense (pp. 333–335).

In conclusion, although the topic of verbal aspect will continue to be highly contested for many years to come, Steven E. Runge and Christopher J. Fresch's *The Greek Verb Revisited: A Fresh Approach for Biblical Exegesis* has made a significant contribution to this challenging topic. Although I found this work to be characterized by succinct, clear argumentation grounded upon solid research, I do have one minor criticism. Namely, I found the three-fold division to be a bit unclear. For example, in the third section the focus of the essays are supposed to be upon theoretical issues that lie behind the approach to the Greek verb by scholars represented in this work. However, the first essay within this section does not appear to match the parameters set forth in the section, since Elizabeth Robar is merely testing her theory within the book of Matthew. This essay would fit best within the second section, since it is applying the theory. Nonetheless, I enthusiastically recommend this book to anyone who desires to be conversant with and aware of the most recent research on this controversial and significant issue within Greek grammatical studies.

Michael Graham
Bar-Ilan University
Ramat Gan, Israel

Garlington, Don. *A Commentary on the Greek Text of Second Corinthians*. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2016, pp. 473, paperback.

It has been said that “of the writing of commentaries there is no end.” Even though this reality could lend itself to a stale treatment of texts already analyzed, *A Commentary on the Greek Text of Second Corinthians* is a welcome resource to Greek students and pastors alike. In distinction from other kinds of commentaries, this commentary by Pauline scholar Don Garlington has as its target audience “students of the Greek New Testament” and thus functions as “a kind of ‘halfway house’ between the likes of Murray Harris and Margaret Thrall, on the one side, and Philip Hughes and Mark Seifrid, on the other” (p. xi). The result of this endeavor is a commentary that focuses on analysis of the Greek grammar and syntax of 2 Corinthians. Even though Garlington occasionally mentions the historical-cultural background of a passage, the focus is more on exegetical insights deriving from grammatical and syntactical analysis. The introduction, therefore, is understandably minimalistic, with a brief section on the purpose of the letter (to prepare the Corinthians for Paul’s upcoming visit), the contents of the letter (the opponents at Corinth are deemed to be Judaizers), and the integrity of the letter (Garlington sees no good reason to doubt its integrity).

The strength of the commentary, therefore, is its ability to provide one with analysis of the Greek text of 2 Corinthians. At the outset of each subsection, the Greek is provided, although one needs to know Greek since no translation appears alongside. Further, the Greek text is divided into clauses or phrases and indented to show subordinate and modifying relationships. Even though the nature of the relationships aren’t always made clear, this user-friendly portrayal of a passage allows for easy analysis of the passage’s flow of thought at a glance. The commentary is also consistently conversant with the major Greek lexica (e.g., BDAG) and grammars (e.g., BDF, Zerwick), which is convenient to a Greek student learning how to use such resources. Additionally, the commentary utilizes syntactical categories that a typical second-year Greek student should recognize (e.g., anarthrous definite article, subjective/objective genitive, first-class conditional sentence, ingressive aorist, Apollonius’ Canon), and Garlington helpfully labels—and in some places defines—various rhetorical devices in the text (e.g., anacoluthon, asyndeton, hendiadys, litotes, paronomasia, metonymy, epidiorthosis, paraleipsis). Finally, whenever the syntax is ambiguous, the commentary lists the major interpretive options, with an asterisked option at the end marking the view preferred by the commentary (although the reasons for the preferred view aren’t always clear).

Two other strengths are worth mentioning. First, throughout the commentary there are select bibliographies for each subsection and categorized by topic. The bibliographies provide the best up-to-date secondary literature on the theme in question (e.g., suffering in 1:8-11). The bibliography for 5:14-21 is especially good, covering the categories of “flesh” as sin, Christ the last Adam, Christ the servant,

the new creation, reconciliation, atonement/sacrifice/redemption, righteousness/justification (pp. 178-84). Students and pastors should find these focused lists helpful for deeper study of a passage.

Second, the commentary is aware of the prominence for Paul of the Old Testament in 2 Corinthians. Even though analysis is necessarily brief due to the focus of the commentary, Garlington still highlights biblical-theological themes in the letter, such as Paul's greeting in 1:2 against the backdrop of God's covenant love for his people (4), the triumphal procession in 2:14 as linked to the prophetic hope of the return to Zion (64), and the exodus imagery of 3:1-4:6 (p. 103). The last Adam imagery is likely overemphasized in a few places (e.g., 3:18; 4:4, 16; 5:21), and Garlington's view of righteousness as covenant faithfulness won't convince everyone (e.g., pp. 178, 290, 345), but this need not reduce the value of these biblical-theological highlights.

There are a few weaknesses of the commentary, although none significantly detract from its overall value. There is little discussion of the text-critical questions in various places in 2 Corinthians, even if occasionally the mention of such a question is raised (e.g., p. 392). Garlington also appears to commit an etymological fallacy in analyzing the meaning of *katargeō* in 3:13 (p. 93), and there are some questionable exegetical conclusions regarding whether or not a noun or prepositional phrase is emphasized based on where it appears in its clause (e.g., p. 129). Further, the many typos throughout the volume also may irritate some readers, even though authorial meaning is always clear.

Additionally, given the focus of the commentary on Greek grammar and syntax, it is rather surprising that the insights deriving from verbal aspect were not more prominent. The relationship between tense and aspect in the Greek verb is one of the most heavily debated questions among Greek grammarians, but the debate and its exegetical value played little role in the commentary. Moreover, many Greek grammarians believe time to be grammaticalized within the indicative mood, but almost none would argue that it is grammaticalized in the non-indicative moods. Nevertheless, Garlington appears to hold this view, labeling the aorist participles in 1:22 as indicating "past historical and once-for-all actions" (p. 39; cf. 262, 270), despite the fact that most Greek grammarians today would reject such an analysis of the aorist tense-aspect.

Nevertheless, these weaknesses do not detract from Garlington's otherwise solid analysis of the Greek text of 2 Corinthians as well as the commentary's user-friendly approach. The commentary should prove especially fruitful to a Greek student seeking to apply their knowledge to a book of the New Testament. Perhaps also a pastor preaching through 2 Corinthians would find this commentary useful in deriving exegetical and theological insight from an analysis of the syntax and structure of the Greek text.

Joshua M. Greever
Grand Canyon University

Boyd, Gregory A. *The Crucifixion of the Warrior God: Interpreting the Violent Old Testament Portraits of God in Light of the Cross*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2017, pp. 1,492, \$59.00, paperback.

Christians are largely united in the affirmation that Jesus Christ is the supreme revelation of God's character given to humans, whose person and works fulfill the highest aspirations of the Old Testament (OT). Christ reveals a God who teaches us to love our neighbors as ourselves and shows us how to love by dying an undeserved criminal's death not only for those who return his love but also for his enemies. However, this picture of a perfectly loving God appears to be incompatible with the brutally violent images of Yahweh found in the OT. Among other things, the OT command to kill every man, woman, and child in a given region plainly seems to contradict Jesus' teaching to love all persons, even one's enemies, as oneself. The 1,500 page tome, *The Crucifixion of the Warrior God: Interpreting the Violent Old Testament Portraits in Light of the Cross*, from pastor-theologian Gregory Boyd aims to reconcile, or at least refocus, these opposing visions of God. In short, the proposal is that, initial appearances notwithstanding, the violent OT depictions of God indirectly reveal God's cruciform love.

Before defending his vision as to how the violent OT depictions of Yahweh indirectly reveal God's cruciform love, Boyd argues against competing treatments of the problem of contradictory portrayals of God. Among the most prominent are the *dismissal solution* and the *synthesis solution*. Advocates of the dismissal solution claim that texts which portray God as violent are not the product of divine inspiration, and so need not be affirmed. Boyd rejects the dismissal solution principally because the NT presents Jesus as affirming the OT as divinely inspired and worries that such a path will lead to the rejection of large swaths of the OT (e.g., the flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the killing of the Egyptian firstborn, the downing of Pharaoh's army in the Red Sea, the conquest of Canaan, and the divinely orchestrated attacks of Assyria and Babylon against the Israelites), leaving it unclear as to whether a coherent narrative would remain. Boyd also argues that there is good reason to maintain that Scripture is infallible, which implies that the disturbing bits of Scripture cannot merely be dismissed.

For such reasons, many conservative theologians opt for the synthesis solution. This is the solution wherein one seeks to justify the violent OT portraits of God by showing that they are compatible with the God of love revealed in Christ. Defenses of the synthesis solution include the notion that humans are not appropriately epistemically situated to judge the moral quality of Yahweh's actions, that God's holy righteousness entails that he must punish sin in ways that are jarring to human sensibilities, that Yahweh must engage in violence to ensure the instantiation of certain greater goods, and that Yahweh's brutal behavior is an act of accommodation to the limitations of human sin and stage of moral development. Boyd ably dismantles

each of these synthesizing justifications for divine violence, although the last of them plays a significant role in his own constructive proposal.

Because Boyd believes that the violent scriptures concerning God can be neither dismissed nor justified, Boyd calls us to reinterpret violent scriptures concerning God in light of God's most supreme self-disclosure, namely, the self-giving divine love found in the crucifixion. This Boyd dubs the Cruciform Hermeneutic, a hermeneutical principle that Boyd defends extensively and which drives his entire reinterpretative project.

At first blush, the reinterpretative approach might seem radically novel. However, Boyd reminds us that this basic procedure can be found in Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Origen of Alexandria, Gregory of Nyssa, and John Cassian, among others. To varying degrees, these church fathers maintained that violent OT portraits of God should be reinterpreted in light of Christ, and for them this meant using allegorical interpretation to render disturbing passages compatible with Christian revelation. While Boyd rejects the allegorical approach as not sufficiently grounded in history, he maintains that these early Christian theologians were moving in the right direction.

The implementation of the Cruciform Hermeneutic is taken by Boyd to generate what he calls the Cruciform Thesis, a thesis which is comprised of four dimensions. First, there is the Principle of Cruciform Accommodation, which takes cues from the idea that on the cross God stooped to accommodate fallen humanity by bearing the curse of human sin, thereby exemplifying the ugliness of the fallen human condition. This accommodational divine reality leads Boyd to submit that we should expect to find God assuming literary appearances that reflect the ugliness and sinfulness of God's people. And this, Boyd argues, is what God does with many of the "sub-Christlike" portraits of him in Scripture. According to the Principle of Cruciform Accommodation, God has accommodated his revelation to the fallen, culturally conditioned values of the ancient Near East, even to the point of allowing Scripture to depict him in tribal, warring ways.

The second principle of the Cruciform Thesis is labeled the Principle of Redemptive Withdrawal. This is the principle that God punishes by withdrawing his protective presence from sinners as opposed to placing external penalties on them. On this conception, punishment by withdrawal always has redemption as its ultimate goal, not that which is carried out for the sake of mere retribution. The Principle of Redemptive Withdrawal reflects the cross in that there Jesus experienced the consequences of human sin, not from the violent actions of the Father, but by the Father's withdrawal for the sake of redemption. While various OT authors might attribute violence to God, the principle at issue encourages us to see whatever violence that transpires as the mere byproduct of Yahweh's withdrawal rather than something that God specifically intends.

The third principle, the Principle of Cosmic Conflict, builds on the second. It is the principle that there are malevolent spiritual agents at work, which, in conflict

with God's heavenly hosts, bring damage and destruction to terrestrial beings when God withdraws his protective presence. In Boyd's view, the Principle of Cosmic Conflict reflects the crucifixion because it was the dark forces who orchestrated the brutal execution of Christ.

Finally, there is the Principle of Semiautonomous Power. According to this principle, when God assigns supernatural power or authority, God does not control how that authority is used. Indeed, agents may use that authority in ways in which God despises. By implication, when a prophet uses his God-given powers in violent ways, we cannot assume that God affirms the violent behavior. Supposedly, the Principle of Semiautonomous Power is represented in the fact that Jesus at least believed that he could use the divine authority granted to him to contravene the Father's will.

Taken together, these principles are said to help Christians reinterpret violent OT passages in a manner that allows for a coherent, Christlike image of God. Boyd's case for this conclusion is thorough and multifaceted and in certain places convincing. Nevertheless, many readers of Boyd's book will be left unpersuaded by the overarching Cruciform Thesis. Perhaps most centrally, many will find it difficult to believe that God has inspired large swaths of the OT that do more than inadequately grasp or even distort the character of God; they present God in ways that God, in Boyd's view, entirely detests.

But, persuaded or not, Boyd's book is a great achievement. It is well-researched and weaves together various fields of study on behalf of an original theological proposal that promises to advance insight into one of the most intractable problems affiliated with the Christian faith. *The Crucifixion of the Warrior God* is must reading for all who want to understand how violent OT texts bear witness to the God who died for humanity out of love.

Jordan Wessling
Fuller Theological Seminary

Sammon, Brendan Thomas. *Called to Attraction: An Introduction to the Theology of Beauty*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2017, pp. 160, \$22, Paperback.

Brendan Sammon is an Assistant Professor of Systematic Theology at Saint Joseph's University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He teaches courses on both The Beauty of God and Beauty and Consciousness at the Movies. In his first book, *The God Who is Beauty: Beauty as a Divine Name in Thomas Aquinas and Dionysius the Areopagite* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2013), Sammon examines the Medieval thoughts binding theology and beauty together. In *Called to Attraction: An Introduction to the Theology of Beauty*, he broadly explores how beauty and theology have interacted from ancient origins to the twentieth century.

Sammon moves through time periods for each of the seven chapters of his book. A helpful introduction sets up the book with three introductory arguments to set the boundaries for what he intends to accomplish in his short volume. First, he argues his theology of beauty is derived from a divine name approach. Consequently, all of his conclusions flow from the idea that beauty is an attribute of God. He writes, “These divine names could be called God’s public identity, or the appearance that God takes in the world outside of those faith traditions that have arisen around what is believed to be God’s revealed identity.” (p. 3). His second introductory argument is that beauty is a more helpful category for theological discourse than aesthetics. He argues beauty is more ancient and more meaningful, and so he is making a theology of beauty and not a theological aesthetics. Last, he highlights he limited his book in scope because as it is intended to be an introduction to the subject.

The seven chapters are titled: Ancient Origins of Beauty’s Association with God, The Beauty of God in the Early Church, Giving God the Name Beauty, Beauty at the Dawn of the Middle Ages, The Medieval Theology of Beauty, The Theology of Beauty in the Modern Period, and The Return of Beauty in the Twentieth-Century. Each chapter examines a few key people or themes considered significant for the period. These figures range from Plato and Augustine to Kierkegaard and Hans Urs von Balthasar. The themes highlight biblical books such as Genesis and focus on ideas such as the display of beauty or how theology developed to include beauty as a name for God.

This book hits on key figures throughout church history and holds most of the expected voices found in a theology of beauty. Such voices include Aquinas and Dionysius the Areopagite, who the author has previous works written on. The sections on these two men are helpful and insightful. Sammon also writes on the Apostle Paul and St. Francis of Assisi. In these sections, he leads to reader to understand how these men of theological heritage contributed to the conversations on beauty. Their contributions validate the topic of beauty in theology. However, it is worth noting that Sammon does not include Jonathan Edwards. In a book on beauty that surveys key figures, leaving Edwards out is an interesting choice. Edwards’s absence may be due to Sammon’s Catholic background. However, he includes Fyodor Dostoevsky (Eastern Orthodox) in his chapter on the Modern era making Edwards’s absence curious. It is also worth noting the shift from the Medieval to the Modern Era misses the significant conversations in the Renaissance on beauty.

For a biblical-theological student, this book is very helpful for an entry level class or discussion on beauty and aesthetics. It is manageable in both length and content, giving preliminary facts and details to help a reader know the theological importance of beauty through the centuries. Sammon has placed discussion questions at the end of each chapter to help the reader grasp and comprehend the themes. This inclusion may prove extremely helpful in an entry level class.

The theme of beauty is woven throughout the biblical text and human history, and this book highlights how the theme has been explored in various epochs. It is helpful in giving a birds-eye view of the entire landscape for discussions of beauty. Anyone looking for a short and manageable read as an introduction to beauty and aesthetics will benefit from this book. However, it should be paired with other material covering beauty from the Protestant tradition. At the very least, Sammon's book should be supplemented with another that covers the works of Jonathan Edwards as it relates to discussions on beauty and theological aesthetics.

Amanda Jenkins
Grand Canyon University

Billings, J. Todd. *Remembrance, Communion, and Hope: Rediscovering the Gospel at the Lord's Table*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2018, pp. 217, \$25, paperback.

J. Todd Billings is the Gordon H. Girod Research Professor of Reformed Theology at Western Theological Seminary in Holland, Michigan, USA. He has written extensively on systematic and historical theology in the Reformed tradition. In addition to his academic work, Billings is an ordained minister in the Reformed Church in America. The balance of academic rigor and pastoral sensitivity that is part of Billings' own persona permeates his theological approach to the Lord's Supper in this text.

This book is a theology of the Eucharist in the Reformed tradition. Billings unabashedly theologizes from within a broad Reformed mode that takes seriously—and with relative authority—the confessional tradition of this theological and ecclesial family. Billings begins, however, with surfacing the need for a book of this nature in the contemporary Protestant scene. He helpfully diagnoses the functional theologies that often undergird the Sunday morning experience in North American churches today. In many churches, a conjunction of an overly individualistic and judicial understanding of the gospel and an overly cognitive engagement with the Eucharist, result in an anemic worship experience. Rather, Billings argues, emphasis on the Pauline motif of “union with Christ” serves as a better conceptual infrastructure for both the message of the gospel and the meaning of the Eucharist that will, Billings wages, result in deeper and more comprehensive worship. Part two of the book is the heart of the constructive portion. Here Billings offers a vision of the Eucharist that draws especially on the Reformed confessional tradition. Finally, in the third part, Billings highlights the intersection of the Eucharist with another prominent theme in Reformed theology, union with Christ. Drawing on insights made explicit in his 2011 *Union with Christ* (Eerdmans), Billings shows the telos of the gospel not to be a simple, judicial forgiveness of sins, but indeed a robust union with Christ. Billings

explores this motif in conjunction with those notions that form the title of the text: remembrance, communion, and hope.

My evaluative comments will focus on part two, Billings' constructive retrieval of a Reformed vision of the Eucharist. At the institution of the Eucharist, Christ said of a piece of bread, simply and straightforwardly, that it was his body. Interpretations of this utterance in the broad catholic tradition take this statement at face value. Yet, many in the Reformed tradition have a penchant for adding preponderance of qualifications to what Christ said. Billings is, in this regard, no different from his theological predecessors. For instance, Billings' writes that the Eucharist "not only *signifies* but also truly *exhibits, offers, and communicates* Jesus Christ" (p. 74), in the Eucharist "God *signifies, assures, and seals* his promise...the Spirit *offers, presents, and communicates* Christ's body and blood" (p. 75), and that "By the Spirit, the Supper presents a material sign that *displays* the gospel promise, and when received in faith, *assures, nourishes, and enlivens* the recipients" (p. 76, emphasis added in above quotations). Certainly many in the Christian tradition think that all these verbs are denoting veridical aspects of the Eucharist. But why not just say, "This *is* the body of Christ"?

Seemingly, for Billings and the Reformed, when in the liturgical setting, the minister refers to the elements as the "body" or "blood" of Christ, the minister does not intend to communicate that potential recipients are being offered the body or blood of Christ. Rather, potential recipients are offered "whole person of Jesus Christ" (p. 73) by means of the elements so termed "body" and "blood." Billings quotes favorably Jan Rohls, that the terms "body and blood" "do not stand 'for two different materials—that is, two parts of Christ. Instead they designate the whole person of Christ sacrificed for us, the person along with his work.'" At times, Billings goes on to say, "this is explicit in the confessions," wherein he cites the First Helvetic Confession, "In the Lord's Supper the Lord truly offers His body and His blood, *that is, Himself*, to His own to enjoy (pp. 73-4, emphasis Billings'). But it seems that this qualification is just to deny that when Jesus said that a piece of bread was his body, he meant that a piece of bread was his body. Moreover, I do not think that any proponent of a straightforward read of the dominical words would wish to hold that a recipient of the elements does not receive the whole Christ. In fact, even the Roman Catholic Catechism holds that in the Eucharist one receives the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Christ, which is just to say, the whole of Christ. Nevertheless, for the broad catholic (in distinction from the "Reformed" catholic), it is in virtue of the fact that the bread and the wine are the body and blood of Christ that the whole Christ is offered to potential recipients. Perhaps it is all well and good that the Supper does all these other things. But it seems odd that there is not an explanation forthcoming as to why one ought not interpret the dominical words in a straightforward manner. Despite this push back on but one—yet key—aspect of this text, there is much to glean from Billings creative retrieval of the Reformed confessional tradition.

Book Reviews

There will be three main audiences that will benefit from this text: academic theologians, Reformed pastors, and non-Reformed pastors with an inclination for a deeper understanding of the central act of Christian worship. With respect to the first group, this book is a significant contribution to the study of sacramental theology and theologies of the Eucharist. In light of George Hunsinger's 2008 *The Eucharist and Ecumenism* (CUP), David Grummett's 2016 *Material Eucharist* (OUP), and my 2018 *An Incarnational Model of the Eucharist* (CUP), Billings' book furthers what appears to be a resurgence of interest in the Eucharist in contemporary academic theology. Secondly, pastors in the Reformed tradition will find this text a treasure trove of resources from within their own tradition for teaching their congregations a robustly Calvinian doctrine of the Eucharist. Finally, there are many pastors today in Protestant and Evangelical churches who desire a deeper appreciation of the Eucharist for their congregations, but perhaps do not know where to sail in the sea of deep metaphysical waters that are many aspects of the traditional discussion. Billings' text will be a helpful guide toward one safe harbor that is prominent in the Christian tradition. One need not take on the full package of Reformed theology to glean helpful insight into the theology of the Eucharist from this text. And, at the very least, it would serve to open up the theological imagination of many with respect to the use of the Eucharist in Christian worship.

James M. Arcadi
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

Kalantizis, George and Marc Cortez, eds. *Come, Let Us Eat Together: Sacraments and Christian Unity*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2018, pp. 238, \$26, paperback.

This edited volume is the proceedings of the 2017 Wheaton Theology Conference jointly sponsored by the Wheaton College Department of Biblical and Theological Studies (with which both editors are affiliated) and the Wheaton Center for Early Christian Studies. It brings together scholars from diversely ecumenical backgrounds to investigate theologically the role the sacraments play in bringing about, promoting, or inhibiting unity between Christians. Although such sacraments (or sacramental rites or ordinances) as baptism and holy orders receive some attention, as the title might indicate, the essays in this volume focus primarily on the sacrament/ordinance of the Eucharist. As such, this volume contributes to the renaissance, of sorts, of theological engagement with the doctrine of the Eucharist. This recent renaissance comes in the wake of George Hunsinger's *The Eucharist and Ecumenism* (Cambridge University Press, 2008) and has been followed by David Grummett's *Material Eucharist* (Oxford University Press, 2016), James Arcadi's *An Incarnational Model of the Eucharist* (Cambridge University Press, 2018), and J. Todd Billings' *Remembrance*,

Communion, and Hope (Eerdmans, 2018). I here offer some comments on a select few of the essays in this helpful text.

Given the evangelical location of this publication (the site of the conference, the publisher, the editors), it is natural that many of the contributors come from this theological background; however two Roman Catholics and two Eastern Orthodox offer their contributions. Of the two essays by Roman Catholic authors (Matthew Levering and Thomas Weinandy, OFM, Cap.), Matthew Levering's essay is much more optimistic and inviting. In his essay, he probes the manner that the Road to Emmaus vignette displays the Eucharist as a poignant locale for growing in knowledge of Christ. Yet this locale is founded upon the exposition of the Scriptures that Christ offers his fellow road-walkers, a foundation that is open to all Christians. Weinandy's essay simply describes the rationale for the Roman perspective on the nature of ordination and how celebrations of the Eucharist independent of this order are not valid. The essays by Eastern Orthodox writers (Bradley Nassif and Paul Gavilyuk) look to the beginning and the end as sources of unity. For Nassif the revitalization of study of the Patristic period within Protestantism is a point of convergence with Orthodoxy. Gavirlyuk looks to the unity of the eschaton as a means for pursuing unity here and now.

Katherine Sonderegger's essay, "Christ as *Ursakrament*," might alone be worth the cost of the book. Sonderegger, an Anglican theologian and priest, helpfully probes the thought of the twentieth-century Dominican theologian Edward Schillebeeckx who presented Christ—God incarnate—as the primal sacrament. For Schillebeeckx, Chalcedonian Christology describes Christ as a divine person who acts in and through the human nature of Christ, thereby revealing and communicating God to humans. However, Sonderegger reads beyond Schillebeeckx to bring a Pauline theme regarding Christ becoming sin for us to bear on our conception of sacrament. She writes, "We might say that this just is *sacrament* in the full and mystical sense: that the divine exchange who is Christ takes on the world's sin...and makes it his own" (p. 122). This ecumenical import of this conception consists in the purification of the church—resulting in its holiness—that Christ effects in and by his incarnation.

The essay by Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen is more centrally focused on ecumenism and thus secondarily focused on the sacraments. His essay is a good example of balancing out abstract theological principles with concrete practical application. He takes as his point of departure the statement in the Lutheran Augsburg Confession that the church is to be found here the gospel is preached and the sacraments administered according to the gospel. This minimalistic proposal, so Kärkkäinen argues, ought to be accepted by those on either end of the ecclesial spectrum. He contends that Baptist and free church traditions ought not see their additions to these twin principles as necessary. Likewise, the Roman Catholic and Orthodox ought not insist on their particular explication of episcopal ministry as the only

location in which gospel preaching and sacramental action occurs. Kärkkäinen then offers some modest practical steps for working toward Christian unity.

I note in conclusion the delightfully surprising essay by art historian professor Matthew Milliner. One might wonder what a piece of art history is doing in a theology book and conference. But, Milliner's argument is that when one attends to various artistic streams within the tradition, one notices more points of theological convergence than one might expect given explicit theological differences between traditions. For instance, the "law and gospel" motif is typically attributed to the Lutheran tradition, yet a theme of this nature can easily be used to explicate the icon of the Sinai Pantocrator of the Orthodox tradition. Or, for another example, the Weirnar altarpiece of the Lutheran Lucas Cranach the Younger clearly displays an imputed righteousness that is the hallmark of Reformation theology. Yet, Milliner sees in the divine mercy image traced to the Roman Catholic Sister Faustina Kowalska a similar motif with, like Cranach, Christ's grace and mercy flowing out of Christ to be infused into the faithful.

This book will serve well especially for evangelicals looking for a deeper discussion of the sacraments—the Eucharist in particular—and the implications this might have for the evangelical self-conception in the milieu of ecumenical discussions. Given the conference paper style of the essays, they are not overly technical and so will be readable by a wide array of those outside the theological academy, such as pastors and interested laypersons. For those within the academy, given this text's broad and diverse author pool, this text could also serve as a textbook in an introductory course on the sacraments/ordinances or ecumenism.

James M. Arcadi
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

Wilder, Michael S. and Timothy Paul Jones. *The God Who Goes Before You: Pastoral Leadership as Christ-Centered Followership*. Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2018. \$29.99.

Michael S. Wilder and Timothy Paul Jones are both serve as professors at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, KY. Professor Wilder is J.M. Frost Associate Professor of Leadership and Discipleship, and Professor Jones is Associate vice president for the Global Campus and also serves as Gheens Professor of Christian Family Ministry. Both are scholars but also have served as shepherds of local congregations.

Many of the books on leadership in church or in religious or denominational settings rely heavily on secular and pragmatic theories with faint references to biblical passages. According to Wilder and Jones, this often leads to confusing or non-applicable theories for leadership in religious settings. As a corrective, Wilder and Jones embark on a different path in presenting leadership from a more substantive

biblical perspective. According to the authors, their approach leads avoids using oversimplified biblical concepts, or worse, worldly principles in forced applications for leadership in religious context. By pointing out the shortcomings of the current anthology of leadership books, the authors survey the whole canon of Scripture, overviewing themes on leadership with contextual and exegetical precision.

The book is divided into 3 major sections or parts. Part One is setting the foundation for Leadership through Followership. Part Two is Precedents on leadership from the Old Covenant, and Part Three is Precedents on leadership from the New Covenant. In part one, Wilder and Jones debunk several contemporary concepts on leadership that exhibit principles more common to business and government work. The concept of “Jesus as a CEO” (pp.4-5) is their first target to demythologize and redefine as worldly, carefully demonstrating how Jesus Himself would not align with these new paradigms. In response to this trend, the authors state, “No matter how high Christian leaders may rise in an organization, we never cease to be servants” (p.29). Wilder and Jones challenge the reader to look deeper into the Scripture for a true picture of leadership, and they introduce a concept of “followership” as equally important as a quality for leadership. Their analysis on this point provides a refreshing model in a sea of faulty concepts related to church leadership. Additionally, the authors do not merely give the reader abstract concepts, but instead provide clear diagrams and figures displaying what biblical leadership might look like in a variety of settings. Further, the authors emphasize how leadership contains a moral component, a correct concept, a usage of power as delegated by the Lord, and the opportunity to proclaim truth as given by God (p.11). The authors stress that leadership is never done in a vacuum but it is a community experience. Readers will find this emphasis to be a refreshing rejoinder to the “it’s lonely at the top” concept which comprises most leadership concepts being applied in churches and religious bodies.

In part two, the authors provide examples and concepts from the Old Covenant. Their primary focus is on leadership from the template of judges, priests, kings, and prophets. Here they take the “high calling and shortcomings” of each and show the reader what the intent was for these offices and how sin has corrupted our concepts of these. Using various diagrams, the authors show the reader a right exhibition of leadership and the corrupted version of such. For example, the authors explain that even kings were not exempt from servanthood, showing that “the king of Israel was never meant to possess power that was unchallengeable or absolute” (p.68). The authors demonstrate that all leaders are not lone chiefs calling others to follow them, but are listening and serving the community. The authors point out that even Israel’s demand for a king was not totally wrong. Israel’s error was that it wanted a “sovereign man instead of a sovereign God” (p.62).

Throughout part three, Wilder and Jones lead readers through leadership concepts derived from the New Covenant. Here they emphasize the importance of followership and the main principle for leadership quality. Leaders are to be examples

to their followers in how to follow because good leaders, the authors stress, are good followers. Leaders are shepherds who not only follow, but feed and are willing to lay down their life for the sheep. Again, using graphs and diagrams, they show the reader what this might look like (p.185). Wilder and Jones remind the reader the oft used term “co-laborer” in the New Testament reveals that leaders are on equal footings with all who work in the church. The sheep are not the property of the shepherd, but fellow laborers.

This book presents a need approach to the lively discussion of leadership. Their approach is much needed to cut through the morass of leadership concepts that do not truly display biblical leadership characteristics. Their overall work is thoughtful and a theologically fashioned approach to leadership for anyone aspiring to be in ministry or leadership in a religious setting. Students preparing for ministry will benefit from this helpful analysis. In fact, careful readers will detect clear biblical support for the model advocated in this volume, and the import for practical integration is broad. Because the authors approach the subject of leadership with acute scholarship and pastoral sensitivities, one could find a wide array of ministries for which this counsel would apply. At this juncture within the western Christian church experience, a book of this caliber and tone is a welcomed help to those seeking to model shepherd leadership.

Numa Gomez
Grand Canyon University

Smith, R. Drew, Stephanie C. Boddie, & Ronald E. Peters, eds. *Urban Ministry Reconsidered: Context and Approaches*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2018. pp. 320, \$24.71, paperback.

When one speaks of contemporary cultures, it is customarily understood that cultures are shaped by members of a particular society that share a set of practices and beliefs that are dominant or ubiquitous to that particular group. Additionally, when speaking of culture, it is also understood that culture also comprises the activities and values produced out of interaction with principal objects that include, but are not limited to, religious beliefs and practice. With that general classification in mind, the book *Urban Ministry Reconsidered* attempts to answer the question: what does it mean to minister to societal groups and cultures in urban spaces? The question is grappled by each contributor, who at the conclusion of their chapters suggests means by which ministries can provide or modify their ministerial approaches to an urban community’s context and needs.

Urban Ministry Reconsidered offers various insights that explore the complex and varied cultural contexts that have led to new conceptualization and arrangements for urban ministry. From the onset, a caveat is given as the editors make it clear that the topic of “urban ministry” is multifaceted and complex by the ambiguity of the terms

“urban” and “ministry” since “there is no uniform understanding of what is meant” by such terms (p. 1). The book offers various essays from over thirty contributors who explore the topic of urban ministry in and out of the context of the United States while acknowledging that large numbers of the world’s population reside in urban settings. The book also explores various avenues and spaces for urban ministry within the context of large cities. However, it also includes exploration of settings not normally thought of as urban but remain at locations where a type of “urban ministry” can take place, such as prisons and university settings. Additionally, the book explores immigration issues, gun violence in the inner city, urban digital context, ministry in African churches in France, ministry to Ugandan youth affected by war, and public leadership to name a few.

Despite the broad range and varied context in which the topic of urban ministry is explored, the book’s overall focus and unifying theme remains constant as each contributor outlines various suggestions by which Christians can develop strategies to properly evangelize and assimilate in the content of urbanization’s fast-growing speed, intricacies, and reach. For example, chapter three explores “urban ministry approaches” that according to the author have, “tended to view cities as places marked by compromised good and unchecked evil.” More specifically, the chapter focuses on the grace that is required despite a city’s tendencies of wrong and evil, while pointing out some of the shortcomings of western missiology dualistic approaches. Indeed, the chapter proposes a new way of thinking about “incarnational ministry” (p. 28). The writer points out that “the urban context represents both fallen humanity and the triumph of human achievements” (p. 34). Therefore, it is within this dissonance that the church can bring complex and varied people into a knowledge of “saving grace” while they discover that grace together. Another significant chapter is chapter twenty, which proposes a different way of doing urban ministry. In particular, the chapter explores school voucher programs and the black clergy response. By focusing on educational inequalities within American, the writer suggests that school voucher issues provide a glimpse into a vast opportunity for church leaders to improve a system that could benefit all students (p. 175).

Despite the fact that the book contains over thirty chapters, there is an overall unifying theme. Each contributor outlines various suggestions by which Christians can develop strategies to properly evangelize and assimilate in the content of urbanization’s fast-growing speed, intricacies, and reach. Additionally, the authors of each essay suggest that such strategies must frame theological and sociological responses to the various economic, sociopolitical, and health issues faced by the societies explored. *Urban Ministry Reconsidered* offers insights that consider how complex and varied cultural contexts have led to new conceptualization and arrangements of urban ministry. The book surveys urban ministry with ample qualitative and quantitative research that offers numerous perspectives in a multitude of context with various authors proposing constructive ideas for change.

In summary, the authors underscore the different ways churches can and should search for policy restructuring and more effective agendas that promote human thriving (p. 11). However, the breadth and depth of what both terms “urban” and “ministry” imply, coupled with the multitude of social, geographical, economic, and political context explored, give the book its strengths and weaknesses. The topic of urban ministry is broad, complex, and too comprehensive to cover, but only in a tangential way, in a work of only approximately 320 pages. The book does not allow sufficient room to better explore each context with more depth and breath. *Urban Ministry Reconsidered* is inclusive in its global perspective and therefore would serve well in introductory sociology or anthropological class for anyone, especially those considering ministry in an urban setting.

Alvaro Tejada
Regent University

Loose, Jonathan J., Angus J. L. Menuge, and J. P. Moreland, eds. *The Blackwell Companion to Substance Dualism*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell Publishers, 2018, pp. 528, \$159.99.

In recent years, there has been an uptick of interest in the philosophy and theology of the soul. Moving beyond the disciplinary divide of philosophy and theology, there is a growing demand for interdisciplinary discussion of the soul akin to a hybrid car that runs on gas and electric. Like the gas car, there has been a flurry of philosophical critiques of physicalism/materialism with an openness to philosophical variations of the soul (e.g., *After Physicalism*, *The Waning of Materialism*). And like an electric car, there has also been several recent constructive defenses of the soul in light of broader theological considerations (e.g., *Soul, Body, and Life Everlasting*, *The Soul of Theological Anthropology*, and *The Ashgate Research Companion to Theological Anthropology*). There are fewer collections defending the philosophical coherence of the immaterial self (e.g., *The Case for Dualism*, *Contemporary Dualism*). It appears that *The Blackwell Companion to Substance Dualism* is a contribution to this smaller body of literature. It aims to offer a philosophically cogent defense of substance dualism, akin to cars running on gas, but it is actually more of a hybrid—running on gas and electric.

As the title suggests, many readers will come to the collection with an expectation. If the reader is at all like me, then she will likely assume that the *Companion to Substance Dualism* is, strictly speaking, a philosophical defense of substance dualism (i.e., the view that we are comprised of two substances, a soul and a body). With that comes the assumption that the authors will offer detailed defenses of variations of substance dualism, constructive developments, and implications. It accomplishes only one of these, but there is more to the collection than one expects. The *Companion* is structured in three parts. In the first part, the authors articulate the

most common conceptions of substance dualism (e.g., emergent substance dualism, Cartesian substance dualism, and Thomist substance dualism) along with defenses for substance dualism in light of the famous unity of consciousness argument and near death experiences. While not an exhaustive list of substance dualism variations, the volume gives helpful exposure to the three most common models in the literature. The second part consists of a series of essays engaging with alternatives to substance dualism. Helpfully, an alternative is presented and a response from a defender of substance dualism is given. Unfortunately, the alternatives listed only include physicalist, or nearly physicalist, alternatives to substance dualism. The reader might expect to see other monist alternatives, namely, neutral monism and/or idealism. Only giving attention to substance dualism and physicalism gives the reader the impression that these are the only options in the literature when, in fact, there is a quite vibrant and growing literature devoted to dualist and materialist alternatives. In this way, the informed reader may expect a comprehensive engagement with dualism's alternatives, but the novice will be none the wiser. In the third part, the authors give their attention not to implications of dualism, but to dualism in light of biblical and theological concerns. This leads to the more substantive concern about the volume appearing to run on gas, but actually running on gas and electric.

The focus of the volume is a concern. While the editors have elected to give a whole section to the topic of substance dualism in the Bible and in Theology, as an outside reader, I find this move a bit odd. Including these topics in a volume on "substance dualism" in a series called *Blackwell Companions to Philosophy* seem out of place. When I came to the volume I expected to see a volume devoted primarily to the philosophical exposition and defense of variations of substance dualism along with a critique of its main alternatives. The *Companion* does a pretty good job, as I stated earlier, on the exposition and defense of substance dualism, but it misses several important figures, and, more importantly, several important topics in the discussion.

By including a section on the biblical and theological issues (approximately 90 pages!), the authors were limited to specified variations of substance dualism. Granted they chose some of the most likely candidates in the debate to defend some of the most common options in the analytic literature (e.g., Cartesianism, Thomism, and emergentism), but the *Companion* could have incorporated other defenders, some lesser known defenders and some more widely known and exotic defenders (e.g., Uwe Meixner, J. M. Schwartz, Stephen Priest, David Lund). Furthermore, they could have included a wider set of arguments that favor some version of substance dualism. Instead, they were limited to the arguments in the papers defending specific versions of substance dualism along with two others (arguments from the unity of consciousness, and arguments from NDE's); but there are certainly other important arguments in a *Companion* that purports to introduce the reader to a wide set of issues concerning substance dualism. Some of the arguments that I would have liked to have seen substantially developed include the following: the Knowledge Argument, the

Modal Argument, The Simplicity Argument (Charles Taliaferro and Stewart Goetz touch on these in their chapters), rationalist arguments, and scientific arguments. All of these arguments, and others, deserve special treatment. Other topics that one might desire to see in the *Companion* include topics on the compatibility of substance dualism with biological evolution, physics, quantum physics, psychology, and, more important, a historical background section on the soul with specific defenders throughout history. A second reason why the election of a Bible & Theology section seems odd has to do with the nature of the book as a text primarily in philosophy, but one would have thought this was apparent. There is a third reason. By including this section, the editors have a pretty specific set of topics that seem to comprise a different *Companion* altogether. These topics deserve treatment in their own right and would likely find a more hospitable reception in a collection on *The Blackwell Companion to Theological Anthropology*, but even that might not be specific enough because all the authors are engaging specifically Christian issues, so maybe the volume would be entitled *The Blackwell Companion to Christian Anthropology*.

For all the reasons listed above, the inclusion of a section on Bible and Theology seems odd and out of place, but, for some, these chapters may be a welcome surprise. And this is not to say that these chapters are not useful high-quality chapters. They are. They simply do not fit the remit of the volume as it is normally conceived. Lending a bit of charity, I can conceive of why the editors chose to do so. There does seem to be an affinity between the soul and theological beliefs throughout history. Just look at Augustine's *Confessions* with the close moral relationship between the soul and God. See also Descartes' *Meditations* in which he develops the metaphysical connection between the soul and God. I imagine the editors had motivations to offer an apologetic for both the soul and Christian belief, but it seems that a section on the soul's implications for theism in general might have been a better fit as reflected in Augustine and Descartes. A section on natural theology would make some sense as it would give additional exposure to the nature and reality of the soul.

Aside from this one concern, the essays in all three parts are exceptional. In fact there are several that are worth highlighting for one reason or another. Angus Menuge offers the reader a refreshing argument for substance dualism, and a critique of physicalism, from the first-person perspective, which he then applies to the Creation narrative wherein God gives the mandate to humans to take dominion in the world. Jon Loose exposes the reader to very clear reasons for why substance dualism is favored when considering the doctrine of resurrection. J. P. Moreland gives one of the most thorough defenses of substance dualism in his development of the unity of consciousness argument. Finally, Charles Taliaferro's chapter deserves a mention for its comprehensive nature, which exposes the reader to the lay of the land on substance dualism. While some of the chapters are predictable if one is familiar with the literature, all of the chapters expose the student to a broad set of issues and literature in the growing body of literature on substance dualism. While

the *Companion* gives the appearance of running on gas in a philosophical series, the reader will be surprised to learn that it runs on both gas and electricity as it exposes the reader to biblical issues on the soul and topics typically in the domain of analytic theology.

Joshua R. Farris

Paluch Lecturer, University of St. Mary of the Lake, Mundelein Seminary

Kvanvig, Jonathan L. *Faith and Humility*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018, pp. 219, \$54, hardback.

Jonathan L. Kvanvig is Professor of Philosophy at Washington University-St. Louis. This particular monograph came out of a project funded by the Templeton Religion Trust and the contents of Kvanvig's Wilde Lectures, delivered at Oxford University in the spring of 2017. His work in philosophical theology expands far beyond the topics of faith and humility and includes questions of heaven and hell, a defense of Philosophical Arminianism as an alternative to Molinist accounts of divine providence, and serious reflection on the nature and possibility of omniscience. And, lest anyone might wonder what my own view of the merits of this book might be: it is excellent and a must-read for anyone working in philosophical theology.

In *Faith and Humility*, Kvanvig first argues that faith fundamentally is a disposition in service of an ideal (i.e., a functional account of the nature of faith that allows for a wide range of cognitive and affective components). Second, he argues that the best construal of the nature of humility is as a virtue of attention, where one possesses humility insofar as one possesses the excellence of attending to oneself no more than is reasonable. And then finally, Kvanvig argues that his other-centric construal of faith functions well as a balancing virtue with humility, where balancing virtues are (roughly) a complementary set of virtues, such that the possession of one virtue is enhanced, made easier, or rendered more likely by the possession of its complement.

Whenever Kvanvig writes something, it is worth paying attention; this is because whatever he has to say will be argued carefully with wonderfully didactic prose. This book is no different. He begins by articulating a particular methodology, which reemerges at various points throughout the book, namely, that what is *fundamental* to a concept might not be necessary and sufficient to that concept. This methodological conclusion helps advance Kvanvig's critique of the various accounts of the nature of faith, where even if he identifies something which is, strictly-speaking, a necessary constituent of faith, he can argue that it fails to be fundamental. Thus, although Kvanvig understands faith to carry with it *some* cognitive element or other, the cognitive component is not what fundamentally makes faith important. Similarly, it is not necessarily the non-cognitive components that are fundamental to faith either;

rather, what is fundamental is the way in which one has ordered one's life around an ideal (i.e., the functional account of faith).

It is worth making a few critical observations concerning the organization of *Faith and Humility* before moving on to a more substantive engagement with its contents. The book is divided into two sections that are dedicated respectively to faith and, subsequently, humility. While the section on faith is well-organized and connected in clear ways, the chapters contained in the humility section are less so. In particular, the humility chapters appear as if they once were independent papers that have been conjoined in an attempt to fill out an otherwise very brief section on the nature of humility. This is unfortunate; it would have been good to hear much more about humility on its own before turning to its connection to faith. Second, at a few points in the book, Kvanvig appears to take on a straw-man as his interlocutor. This is especially apparent in his third chapter, on cognitive accounts of the nature of faith. His primary interlocutor in that chapter appears to endorse a doxastic view of faith (as opposed to the more broadly construed *cognitive* family of views) where faith requires belief-that something or other is the case. Undoubtedly, there are plenty of fundamentalist Christians for whom such an understanding of faith might be close to accurate, but it seems to me that they would be unlikely to make the sorts of clear distinctions between beliefs and other cognitive states that Kvanvig (admirably) highlights throughout his text. Thus, in this place and others, a clear identification of Kvanvig's opponents would have been helpful to the reader.

Concerning the particular contents of the book, I found myself largely agreeing with Kvanvig's treatment of both the nature of faith and humility. One area of discussion that seems unfinished, however, is in Kvanvig's understanding of how to go about identifying the precise object of one's faith (i.e., the ideal towards which one's life is oriented). For illustration, Kvanvig writes that democracy or equal opportunity might serve as an ideal, but it is not the *concepts* which serve as ideals (p. 112). Rather, it is the instantiation of such concepts that serve as an ideal, an ideal that might be highly valuable even if it might never be fully satisfied. Faith in such possible states of affairs, however, is a different thing from faith in God, who is a person as opposed to an ideal of some sort. Thus, one is left wondering what faith in God might amount to? Is faith in God a disposition in service of realizing the state of affairs of Christ's reign? Perhaps it is instead a disposition to be obedient to the commands and teachings of God (as Kvanvig's discussion of James indicates, pp. 115-120). However, both of these objects seem reasonable as objects of faith in God based on Kvanvig's discussion of the matter; but it seems that one might in principle be disposed to realizing Christ's reign without being disposed to submit to it oneself. If so, then we have two competing possibilities for the proper object of Christian faith (and presumably more besides). A bit of disambiguation would be helpful.

A more central concern with Kvanvig's book surrounds his assumption that faith is best construed as a virtue. Now, I actually share this view, but I am not satisfied

with Kvanvig's defense of that claim. The closest to an argument I can find in support of this claim is: (i) we should order our inquiry towards an understanding of faith most worth having; (ii) the understanding of faith most worth having construes faith as a virtue; therefore, (iii) we should order our inquiry towards faith construed as a virtue. Many of the alternative views Kvanvig considers in the book would likely reject (ii) in the above argument. Rather, they would claim that their alternative cognitive or non-cognitive views of faith, at least in a biblical or Christian context, are more valuable all-things-considered in virtue of their immeasurably high practical value (i.e., since having their type of faith supposedly brings salvation along with it). This lacuna at the motivational center of Kvanvig's project is unfortunate; nevertheless, the resulting work is an astounding work of erudition.

For the student of biblical and theological studies, careful attention should be dedicated to the taxonomy of positions of faith clearly delineated by Kvanvig in chapters 2-5. Keeping straight the difference between cognitive, doxastic, non-cognitive, preference-based, and functional accounts of faith would help the reader to think critically about their own understanding of faith. Moreover, this book can be read in conjunction with Matthew Bates, *Salvation by Allegiance Alone* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017), which defends a very similar account of the nature of faith from a biblical scholar's perspective.

Jonathan C. Rutledge
University of St. Andrews

Moreland, J. P. *Science and Secularism—Learning to Respond to a Dangerous Ideology*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway 2018, pp. 222, \$16.99, paperback.

J. P. Moreland is a household name within contemporary Christian philosophy of religion, and has been one of the most important apologists for the last thirty years, particularly in terms of supporting Christianity's compatibility with reason and natural science. This task has by necessity opposed Moreland to scientism, yet this present work is his first explicit, critical engagement with the position, building upon three decades of philosophical practice.

Moreland's *Scientism and Secularism* is a well-timed work which purports to dissect and criticize scientism as an ideology central to the contemporary secular West. In providing a thorough critique of scientism as an epistemological position, it also provides us with an accessible summary of the basic project of Christian apologetics as it has taken form within the framework of modern analytical philosophy, as well as an important defence of *first philosophy*, particularly of the epistemic primacy of philosophy in relation to the empirical sciences.

The book is intended to be accessible to the interested layman, yet without unduly watering down the case being made. The work's approachability lies both in

the clear and concise presentation of the relevant arguments, as well as the familiar touch Moreland brings in with the personal reflections and exemplifying anecdotes he intersperses throughout the text. These generally edify and help explain the case and do not detract from its analytical structure, which could easily have been the case in a less well-edited work. However, they also provide the book with something of a homiletic character that transports it outside the domain of pure philosophical argument, making the final result into a testimony which not only purports to criticize the errors of scientism, but also calls for a more thorough transformation of secular society as such. It is quite successful in the former sense, but tends to overreach in the latter.

With regard to its case against strong scientism, the work is exemplary. It recounts the plethora of decisive arguments against strong epistemological scientism which have been put forth during the last decades, and clearly portrays its incoherence as well as detrimental effects for a non-specialist audience. An additional critique of weak scientism, defined as a position that affords some epistemic space for non-scientific truth claims, while maintaining the supreme authority of empirical science, is also provided.

This latter critique is anchored in Moreland's support for the primacy of philosophy and science's inevitable dependence on extra-scientific presuppositions, and maintains that the totality of scientific presuppositions by necessity must presume the epistemic authority of philosophy, since they are based in principles of a philosophical character. Thus, empirical science, being derivative, cannot be ascribed supreme epistemic authority. Still, proponents of the general supremacy of science do not really need to eschew philosophy's epistemic authority. One can just as easily maintain that empirical science, as a set of institutions and a tradition of knowledge, supported by the necessary philosophical assumptions, generally speaking provides us with the best and most correct understanding of reality as such, and that extra-scientific traditions of knowledge therefore ought to be compatible with science and the philosophy that supports it.

Notwithstanding Moreland's incisive critique of methodological naturalism (pp. 162-171), the more nuanced position that science is the best tradition of knowledge we have given the necessary truths philosophy provides, and that extra-scientific traditions therefore ought to conform to science as far as possible, takes a bit more to defeat, and could possibly survive Moreland's direct theoretical objections presented.

This issue could fruitfully have been addressed by a more thorough general critique of scientism as a complex worldview with its associated myths and narratives, rather than merely as an epistemological position, strengthening the case in association to the more general problems associated with scientism as a secular ideology. Such a broadened understanding of scientism could also have been a useful bridge towards the critique of secularism Moreland also wants to provide, but does

not quite substantiate—save for the interesting arguments for a basic integration of religion and science presented from page 181 and onward.

While presenting a good case against scientism as an epistemological position from the point of view of modern analytical philosophy, as well as a forceful critique of the principle of methodological naturalism (Moreland ingeniously asserts that methodological naturalism, insofar as it must accept agent causation, cannot in principle rule out divine action [p. 166]) the work is to some extent weighed down by the author's insistence on presenting intelligent design as a preferred alternative to not only secular cosmologies, but theistic evolution as well. Moreland does not provide significant support in this regard (while doing so in other works), and the defence of evolution-excluding intelligent design is in this context strictly unnecessary for his critique of scientism. Nor does Moreland engage extensively with the variants of theistic evolution that are currently debated. The anti-mechanistic Aristotelian-Thomistic variant of theistic evolution in particular, would for instance entirely evade the central criticism Moreland here provides, a criticism which is based in a supposed bracketing of divine action with regard to the processes of nature (cf. Austriacio, Nicano Pier Giorgio, et al, *Thomistic Evolution* [Providence, RI: Cluny Media, 2017]).

As it stands, the book is a highly useful and detailed overview of the basic problems of strong epistemological scientism, and will effectively enable the reader to profitably engage with more detailed explorations of the field, such as Stenmark's *Scientism* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2018) or classics such as Feyerabend's *Farewell to Reason* (London: Verso, 1987) or Lakatos' and Musgrave's *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge* (Cambridge: CUP, 1970). It provides decisive support for the epistemic primacy of philosophy as well as for the rational respectability of theism, and presents an accessible and detailed introduction to Christian apologetics in the modern analytical tradition. The two main drawbacks are its insufficiently supported criticism, and call for transformation of, secular society, as well as its superfluous and not fully substantiated advocacy of intelligent design. The risk is that these flaws may be heavily targeted by critics, with the result that this important book might not be judged upon its true merits, but rather disregarded as an insufficient and clandestine case for creationism.

Johan Eddebo

Uppsala Religion and Society Research Centre, Uppsala University

Speaks, Jeff. *The Greatest Possible Being*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018, 175pp, \$45.

In *The Greatest Possible Being*, Jeff Speaks takes aim at critically analyzing the method of perfect being theology. Perfect being theology is a philosophical method for developing a specific doctrine of God. In particular, the method claims to guide one's thoughts towards deriving the divine attributes. Speaks is skeptical about the

ability of this method to accomplish this task. Over the course of eight chapters, Speaks offers an analysis of metaphysical, epistemological, semantic, and theological issues related to the task of perfect being theology.

Speaks starts out by offering an introduction to the general idea of perfect being theology. According to Speaks, perfect being theology involves two basic steps in order to derive a specific conception of God through reason alone. The method is meant to help one identify which attributes are divine attributes. In step 1, a perfect being theologian selects a modal principle about God's greatness. In step 2, a perfect being theologian selects a greatness condition that fits with the preferred modal principle. In these two easy steps, one should have a recipe for identifying which attributes are God's.

With regards to step 1, Speaks identifies three different modal principles that a perfect being theologian might use in order to derive the divine attributes. These principles are stated as follows: 1) God is the greatest conceivable being, 2) God is the greatest possible being, and 3) God is the greatest actual being. Once a modal principle has been selected, one connects this principle with a relevant greatness condition.

In step 2, a greatness condition is meant to help the theologian identify which attributes are possessed by the greatest actual, possible, or conceivable being. Speaks claims that there are two desiderata that a greatness condition must satisfy: entailment and informativeness. With regards to entailment, it should follow from the fact that some particular property F is a great-making attribute, and the relevant modal principle, that F is a property of God's. The informativeness desiderata states that it should be possible, without relying on prior substantive claims about God, that a candidate divine property satisfies the greatness condition.

With these distinctions in hand, Speaks claims that there is an easy way to show that a particular modal principle is false. In order to show that a particular modal principle is false, one will need to show that certain implausible properties satisfy the modal principle and the greatness condition. These implausible properties are ones that are quite obviously not divine attributes. For example, the property *being a well-shaken martini* is quite obviously not a divine attribute. Yet, Speaks argues that this property can satisfy different modal principles and their relevant greatness conditions. Thus, implying that the modal principle is in fact false.

As a test case, imagine that one's preferred modal principle is that "God is the greatest actual being." Speaks says that whatever turns out to be the greatest actual being might not be that impressive. Speaks offers the comical example of Michael Jordan. Speaks argues that the modal space for the greatest actual being in our world might be much smaller than we think. It might very well turn out that the greatest actual being in our world is Michael Jordan. Surely, says Speaks, no one will think that Jordan is God. Of course, I should think that the perfect being theologian will deny that the modal space in our world is really so small that a being like Jordan turns out to be the greatest actual being. However, Speaks will say that the method

of perfect being theology, by itself, does not specify how big the modal space is, and thus the method is not useful for clearly deriving the divine attributes.

What about the other modal principles? Speaks argues the conceivability modal principle is of little help to perfect being theology. Why? Because one cannot specify the relevant sense of conceivability without making the modal principle collapse into the ‘God is the greatest possible being’ modal principle. Speaks offers a helpful analysis of different conceptions of conceivability, and the problems that each view faces.

Yet, one might wonder what is wrong with the modal principle ‘God is the greatest possible being.’ Speaks offers an assortment of arguments for why this modal principle cannot be used to derive the divine attributes. However, I often found myself thinking that Speaks has ignored some obvious moves that perfect being theologians traditionally make. One worry that I have is that Speaks has not given a proper analysis of what it means to be the greatest possible being, nor of what makes a property a great-making property.

Traditionally, theologians and philosophers have said that a proper analysis of *greatness* entails that God has all of the perfections, or great-making properties, in an unsurpassable way. This sort of analysis can be found in Anselm, John Duns Scotus, and Leibniz, among others. This analysis has also received a rigorous defense in Yujin Nagasawa’s recent work, *Maximal God: A New Defence of Perfect Being Theism*. With this analysis of greatness, the perfect being theologian then gives an analysis of what makes a property a great-making property. Typically, it is said that a great-making property is a property that it is better to have than not to have. Traditionally, this has been analyzed as identifying fundamental properties that would make any being whatsoever intrinsically better. A classic example is *being powerful*. Any being with the property *being powerful* is intrinsically better than any being that lacks the property *being powerful*. Further, any being that has the property of *being powerful* in an unsurpassable way is better than any being who lacks this.

Speaks dismisses these kinds of attempts to fill out the method of perfect being theology as being *impure* forms of perfect being theology. Speaks claims that this analysis of God’s greatness is an impure form of perfect being theology because it does not allow one’s selected modal principle to play any role in one’s reasoning about God’s perfection.

I find this questionable. It seems obvious that a proper analysis of ‘greatest possible being’ entails having all of the great-making properties. Moreover, I find it obvious that this understanding of greatness would play a significant role in my thinking about God’s perfection. This is evidenced by the fact that many debates in philosophical theology are about which model of God includes more great-making properties, and which involve God in having those properties in an unsurpassable way. For instance, classical theists often argue that open theism provides a less than

perfect model of God because open theism denies that God has certain attributes like exhaustive foreknowledge.

However, Speaks maintains that even this impure form of perfect being theology cannot be used to derive the divine attributes. In his critique of this impure method, I found that Speaks' discussion of the candidate great-making properties continually focused on kind-relative properties like *being a well-functioning cardiovascular system*, instead of fundamental properties that are intrinsically great-making, all things being equal. Traditionally, perfect being theologians have tried to clarify this point by distinguishing pure perfections from impure perfections. Speaks does offer a brief discussion of the pure/impure perfections distinction, but Speaks dismisses this as trivial.

All in all, I think that Speaks's exact analysis of perfect being theology is less obvious than it might have been; at points it is often difficult to pin down precisely where his objections lie and from where his objections come. That being said, Speaks clearly identifies a host of problems that perfect being theologians need to avoid when developing their method. More advanced theology and philosophy students will want to consider the problems that Speaks identifies, and make sure that they avoid them. Beginning students will be better off starting with a book like Thomas Morris' *Our Idea of God*, or Yujin Nagasawa's *The Existence of God*. Once beginning students have mastered this material, they should be in a good position to engage with Speaks's arguments.

R. T. Mullins

University of St Andrews

Gaffney, Donald V. *Common Ground: Talking About Gun Violence in America*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2018. pp. 160, \$15, paperback.

Donald Gaffney is a Disciples of Christ minister and alumnus of Sandy Hook Elementary School. Since the massacre in 2012, Gaffney has been invested in conversations surrounding gun violence, including through support of the Sandy Hook Promise, a non-profit organization founded and led largely by family members connected to the Sandy Hook shooting with the goal of decreasing gun violence. As the title would suggest, Gaffney attempts to address the topic of gun violence through a call for self-reflection, mutual understanding, and productive conversation rather than through explicit advocacy for a singular political agenda. *Common Ground* contributes a unique voice to the politically heated topic of gun violence as it provides regular opportunity for the reader to reflect on forces which often undergird espoused positions.

In the first two chapters, Gaffney focuses on how perspectives on gun violence have evolved, first through individual narratives and then in the broader narrative

of American culture. He focuses on the narratives of Suzanna Hupp and Gabrielle Giffords, both of whom suffered from gun violence, yet arrived at differing positions as to how gun violence can be prevented. These narratives provide a framework for advocates of both sides of the gun debate to sympathize with each other's position and engage in civil conversation.

In the third chapter, Gaffney addresses contemporary gun violence statistics, gun legislation, and gun policy advocacy groups with a desire that the reader look past abstract statistics and recognize the stakes of gun violence and its potential prevention. Although he does try to maintain a "common ground" tone, he honestly discloses his support for Gabrielle Giffords's gun control advocacy efforts and makes a case for gun control legislation. In this context, he warns about the use of statistics, writing "one noticeable effect of studying data is the loss of a sense of humanity" (p. 46). Although it is most certainly true that an emphasis on statistics can lead to abstract dehumanization of human stories, a case can certainly be made that statistics have an important role to play in discerning which national policies would most likely mitigate gun violence. Nonetheless, Gaffney desires that the reader sympathize with the narratives of individuals involved in gun violence rather than numerical data. He then attempts to make an argument for gun control by comparing the largely successful results of automobile safety legislation to potential gun control legislation.

Gaffney advances his position throughout the fourth chapter as he seeks to explicate the biblical concept of violence. Here he navigates through the complex concept of violence and the Bible, ultimately concluding that, although God engages in violence as a necessity of his cosmic justice, God abhors violence and that Christians are called to sacrificial love. Gaffney asks what appears to be a pivotal question, "Are there ever times when evil needs to be faced with violence?" (p. 84). However, he then states that this question is often debated and that it is not within the scope of the book. He does implicitly answer this question, at least in part, by demonstrating how individuals have misused the Bible in support of violence. This line of thought certainly implies that there is a biblical standard regarding the use of violence, but direct and extended discussion on this topic would have been helpful to foster the conversation.

In the final two chapters, Gaffney argues that Christians should maintain allegiance to God before state, which will lead them to oppose violence and, consequently, advocate against gun culture. He links Christian gun rights advocacy with nationalism and epitomizes the basic pro-gun argument with the statement, "It takes a good guy with a gun to stop a bad guy with a gun" (p. 87). He attempts to refute this statement by explaining that all people have the potential for good and evil, thereby seeking to dispel the myth of "good guys" and "bad guys." He concludes that all people are guilty of violence, at the very least through words. This line of thought echoes the words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, as the one who harbors hate in the heart and externalizes hate through speech is guilty of murder in the eyes of

God. This is an important theological point, as it not only renders all individuals as morally guilty of great violence, but it demonstrates the potential for individuals to commit violence in the world as an outworking of this internal reality. However, Gaffney does not in this chapter differentiate the spiritual culpability of “violent” speech from the civil culpability of physical violence. As this book primarily focuses on issues related to public policy, the distinction between physically violent and non-violent sins is one that is worth noting. Despite this fact, Gaffney’s discussion in this chapter does well to foster introspection and discussion on the culture of hostility, which is indeed related to physical violence.

Common Ground has much to offer in providing a framework for conversation between Christian laypeople who advocate for and against gun control. Although Gaffney takes a definitive position in this debate throughout the book, he does discuss both sides and provides ample ground for reflection and mutual understanding. The goal of establishing “common ground” would have been more fully achieved with a more nuanced presentation of positions opposed to his own; however, *Common Ground* is nonetheless thought-provoking and may indeed be a useful text for the lay Christian to begin thinking about gun violence in America. In attempt to maintain the presented spirit of the book, this would best be done in community with Christians of various perspectives on the topic at hand. Gaffney is most certainly correct that all Christians desire the cessation of needless violence, but the best solutions unto this end are likely to come through reason, community, and genuine mutual understanding between those who differ ideologically.

Andrew Snyder
Regent University, VA

Romaine, James, ed. *Art as Spiritual Perception: Essays in Honor of E. John Walford*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012, pp. 288, \$40, hardback.

E. John Walford is an important figure in the engagement of Protestant evangelical theology with art historical studies. His interest in this relationship has been fuelled by a dual concern with the relative paucity of religious voices in the literature of art history and criticism, not least in scholarly readings of seventeenth-century Dutch landscape painting, and the related issue of the spiritual substance of artworks. These concerns reflect aspects of his own life journey as an art lover who converted to Christianity in his twenties and as a former student of the late art historian Hans Rookmaaker at the Free University (Vrije Universiteit) of Amsterdam.

These interests, and the various ways they have been expressed in Walford’s career—not merely in publications (most notably *Jacob van Ruisdael and the Perception of Landscape* and *Great Themes in Art*), but also in teaching art history courses in Amsterdam and at Wheaton College, Illinois—are highlighted in this Festschrift’s Forward entitled “Mentoring Eyes” by Marleen Hengelaar-Rookmaaker,

daughter of Hans Rookmaaker. She shows, in what is a fittingly generous and clearly personal tribute (Hengelaar-Rookmaaker writes, for example, that in high school she “looked up to this highly articulate, uncannily wise, and seemingly brilliant student of my father’s,” p. 15), how important Walford’s art historical work, both in publications and lectures, was and continues to be for his students, especially in the way it portrays Western visual art as a viable and vital arena for serious Christian thinking and participation.

The 16 essays which follow Hengelaar-Rookmaaker’s Forward are testaments to this intellectual enterprise. They are all written by scholars who know Walford in different ways (most are his former students) and emulate his passion for close readings of visual imagery. This enthusiasm is most apparent in *how* these scholars examine works of art as visual manifestations of spiritual perception. In the introductory essay, “You Will See Greater Things Than These”, James Romaine, the volume’s editor, describes Walford’s distinct historical methodology as “content-oriented” (distinguishable from strict form-, iconographic-, biographic-, context- and market-oriented methods of art history), which involves “a careful study of the art object’s formal and iconographic elements, as well as the historical, social and religious context in which the work was created” in order to bring to light possible spiritual meanings (p. 23). This methodology undergirds the interpretive processes of every essay in the Festschrift, making most of the contributions predictably heterogeneous, some even emphasizing comparable doctrinal themes—namely, nature and the supremacy/provision of God.

A few authors, however, employ Walford’s method of “meaningful seeing” to tackle broader questions (p. 24). William Dyrness, for instance, offers an intriguing essay on the capacity of Hans Holbein’s painting *The French Ambassadors* (1533) to communicate an unease with the process of secularization, but also how, in conveying this information, the painting calls contemporary viewers to respond to its message. Alternatively, Calvin Seerveld attempts to philosophically ground Walford’s categorical framework for the narrative of *great themes* and examines how it could be developed to provide a more dynamic reading of Rococo Enlightenment artistry, using Antoine Watteau’s painting *The Dance* (1717-1718) as a case study. Linda Stratford, moreover, skilfully shows how the “complex play of overlapping trails and paths” in Jackson Pollock’s painting *Autumn Rhythm: Number 30* (1950) can be seen as an “allegorical representation of spiritual rebirth” within the context of a Christian worship setting (p. 239).

Even so, most of the contributors understandably focus upon a single work of visual art and how, within the religious context of its creation, the artwork expresses a particular theological doctrine. Among the kinds of visual artworks evaluated, most are oil paintings and, perhaps in tribute to Walford’s own passion for seventeenth-century Dutch artistry, half were produced by Dutch/Flemish artists. It may seem prejudicial to single out a couple works of art for special comment, but the inclusion

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of pieces from other visual mediums, such as *The Brancacci Chapel* (15th c.) and Joseph Beuys' performance *Coyote: I Like America and America Likes Me* (1974), encourages different kinds of analysis—in these particular cases, the evaluation privileges the audience's perception (reception) over the artist's intended meaning (creation). Matthew Milliner's essay "Academia's 'Religious Turn'", for instance, examines past commentary on *The Brancacci Chapel* in order to show how these responses disclose a turn to the religious in art historical criticism (p. 92). Similarly, James Watkins' essay "The Liberating Myth" surveys how the viewer's perspective on the origins of Beuys' personal mythology directly influences his/her interpretation of *I Like America's* iconic, and possibly, liberating "action" (p. 255).

Although the volume contains a helpful introductory essay by Romaine (the editor) on Walford's historical methodology and an essay by Hengelaar-Rookmaaker concerning the personal and professional relationship between Walford and several of the contributors (both essential to a Festschrift), there is no added entry by the honouree himself. While such a contribution is not necessarily expected for a Festschrift, readers would have benefitted from a brief account by Walford, say, on his then recent work in digital photography which is only touched upon in the Acknowledgments and Afterward, "A Portrait of E. John Walford". Furthermore, a few of the essays are in need of some structural editing. It does not aid the reader, for example, when the thesis is not clearly presented until nearly halfway through the essay or, in the case of two essays, omitted altogether, leaving it to the reader to work out the central claim.

Overall, however, this Festschrift is commendable not only because it offers a contextualized analysis of 16 works of visual art from 16 notable Western artists whose lives and work span from the fourth-century to the twentieth-century, but also because it provides fresh and variegated contributions to both the fields of art history and Christian theology—not least in the way it shows how art can be a powerful expression of spiritual perception and meaning. Due to the topical breadth of the essays which comprise this volume, it is perhaps best a resource to be selectively utilized in accordance with particular interests. A number of essays, for example, would directly benefit students who are examining the artistic interpretation of key Christian doctrines within a particular period of Western history, while others might better serve as topical readings for introductory or more specialized courses on art and art history. In many ways, *Art as Spiritual Perception* is a milestone of Walford's andragogical vocation even as it continues to provide readers the benefit of his artistic insight.

Caleb Froehlich
University of St Andrews

Dreher, Rod. *The Benedict Option: A Strategy for Christians in a Post-Christian Nation*. New York, NY: Sentinel, 2017, pp. 304, \$17, paperback.

Rod Dreher is a popular Christian author and blogger and is senior editor at *The American Conservative*. He has written several books: *Crucy Cons* (2006), *The Little Way of Ruthie Leming* (2013), and *How Dante Can Save Your Life* (2015). His most recent book, *The Benedict Option*, is a bestseller and has prompted discussions in churches and small groups around the world.

In *The Benedict Option*, Dreher announces that conservative Christians have lost the culture war and that a new dark age is approaching. According to Dreher, the Waterloo of Christian conservatism was the legalization of same-sex marriage in the U.S. Supreme Court case, *Obergefell v. Hodges* (p. 9), and the enemies are several: secularism (9), moral therapeutic deism (the belief that God just wants us to be happy, pp. 10-11), and consumerism (p. 11). In response, Dreher calls Christians to withdraw strategically and form communities modeled after the sixth-century monastic, Saint Benedict, who, in order to preserve Christian culture and values safe from the cultural demise following the fall of Rome, started a monastic community at Monte Cassino in Italy. Dreher is not calling Christians to become Benedictine monks—although it is easy to be confused about this, given the title of his book. Dreher’s principled application of Benedict for contemporary believers is “[working] on building communities, institutions, and networks of resistance that can outwit, outlast, and eventually overcome the occupation” (p. 12). This involves applying selected features of Benedict’s handbook, the *Rule of Saint Benedict*, which are the following: living a life of order, prayer, stability, asceticism, stability, community, hospitality, and balance.

It also means applying “Benedictine spirituality” to every area of social life, including politics and education. In politics, for example, Dreher claims that Christians are “politically homeless” (p. 80). Democrats have not supported Christian values, and Republicans have been more interested in power and the economy. It is a mistake, he says, to think that the church is “the Republican Party at prayer” (p. 78) or that someone as “morally compromised as Trump” will save us (p. 79). Moreover, Christians must not think fighting the culture war was ever as easy as simply voting since laws do not change the heart. A Benedictine withdrawal from politics does not mean complete capitulation; it just means being more prudent and focusing on the political issues that matter most, such as religious liberty and local problems. Dreher also says Christians should still look for ways to cross the aisle and work with liberals to “combat sex trafficking, poverty, AIDS, and the like” (p. 83).

Dreher calls Christian parents to pull their kids out of public schools (p. 155), and he wants them to pull their children out of regular Christian schools, too (pp. 158-159). Public schools teach liberal sexual values and only prepare children for the workforce. Private Christian schools may not teach the same sexual values, but they

use the same workforce development model of education and, as an afterthought, require a few Bible classes. Dreher says, “The trite theological education many received at Christian school will serve more as a vaccination against taking the faith seriously than as an incentive for it” (p. 159). Instead, Christian families should pursue a classical Christian education, which takes an integrated approach to its curriculum, ordering all learning in accordance with the Christian worldview. If classical education is not an option, he says, then Christians should homeschool their children instead.

Dreher is correct in identifying deep flaws in both public and private schools and in criticizing those who think that the best hope for cultural change lies in politics. He is also correct in his description of the corrupting effects of technology and the pernicious nature of pornography. Hopefully, Dreher’s message will awaken the slumbering church to the dangers of moral therapeutic deism and cause parents to rethink their parenting and educational strategies in order to provide their children the best chance of catching the Christian vision of the good life.

However, I have a few points of criticism. Dreher’s prophetic description of our cultural demise may be correct, but it also may be too soon. Certainly, it is difficult to be a conservative Christian in the United States these days, but political correctness and rampant consumerism is not the same as religious persecution. Christians are not yet suffering in our country in ways they have in other times and places.

Moreover, Dreher’s Benedictine prescription raises a couple of concerns. First, the fundamentalist movement of the early twentieth century similarly called for strategic withdrawal from the public square, but many Christians think it was a mistake and did more harm than good. How is the Benedict Option different from the fundamentalist movement? I put this question to Mr. Dreher at a recent talk he gave, and his answer was that the fundamentalists understood something important, but the early twentieth century was too early for such a strategy. Also, fundamentalism is often accompanied with anger and “siege mentality,” but Christians should be characterized by joy and hope in spite of adversity. He may be right about fundamentalism, but many readers will not be convinced that now is the right time for a Benedictine withdrawal. Many Christians still take seriously Jesus’ call in Matthew 5:13-16 to be salt and light in the world and are intentionally active in the world for this reason. Such Christians have not yet given up hope that the fields are still ripe for the harvest.

Second, Dreher does not give adequate attention to one particularly important opportunity and responsibility that the church has at the present time. Our society has seen racism and hate arise in ways not many could have predicted just a decade ago. This is an excellent opportunity for the church to be a light, demonstrating Christ’s love for people of all races and showing the country what true Christian love looks like in a diverse society like ours. Unfortunately, when the church reflects on its own (lack of) accomplishments in this area, Christians should consider

the great responsibility and unfinished work we still have. For example, Sunday mornings continue to be the most segregated mornings of the week, and the price of Christian private schooling has created access problems for people of color. The “strategic withdrawal” Dreher proposes would likely increase the segregation in our communities unless the church addresses this. To his credit, Dreher sees the problem. He acknowledges that in the past many private schools in the South have been known as “segregation academies.” He says, “Benedict Option schools would be wise to make special efforts toward racial reconciliation by recruiting black families, especially given that public schools are effectively resegregating. Additionally, the future of Christianity in America, both Catholic and Evangelical, is going to be a lot more Hispanic. So should the future of Christian schooling” (p. 159). However, Dreher says nothing more about this and gives no practical advice for addressing it. Our society needs racial reconciliation, and this is an opportunity for the church to shine. We need to make sure that any withdrawal does not lead to increased segregation. I hope Dreher can offer some practical advice for making racial reconciliation and desegregation a reality in Benedictine communities.

Gregory L. Bock
The University of Texas at Tyler

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