REVIEWs

Reviewed by Keith Essex, Assistant Professor of Bible Exposition.

“I believe that a sermon’s content should explain and apply the Word of God as it is found in a biblical text, and a sermon’s form should unleash the impact of that text. The second part of that declaration is the special province of this book” (13). So begins Jeffrey Arthurs, associate professor of preaching and communication at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in the sixth and latest volume of Kregel’s *Preaching With* series. One of the earlier books in this series is *Preaching with Passion* by Alex Montoya from TMS. In the present work, Arthurs describes six biblical genres and suggests how they can guide contemporary expositors in developing variety in their preaching.

The author creatively borrows from Martin Luther with an introduction that states 9.5 theses which clarify the presuppositions of this book (13-20). In essence, variety in preaching is important because Jesus and other biblical preachers used various forms, and both listeners and preachers could use some variety too. However, while variety is necessary, it is not sufficient; a sermon must herald God’s Word, flow from a clean heart, and have as its purpose the glory of God. When these characteristics are present, the preacher has the freedom to choose from a variety of sermon forms to communicate his message. Arthurs explains the most important thesis for his book: “The defining essence of an expository sermon lies primarily in its content, not in its form” (16). That principle is foundational for the author’s argument and his advice to preachers though the rest of the volume. He even suggests to preachers that “[w]e must patiently help people distinguish between biblical doctrine and communicative procedure” (17), a task made easier because “most North Americans in the twenty-first century have been socialized to expect variety and multiple perspectives” (17).

Nine chapters form the heart of the book. Chapters 1 and 2 defend Arthurs’ theory that variety in preaching is biblical and it can enhance receptivity. The first chapter declares that God is “the great communicator” who used a variety of literary forms in His special revelation, the Bible, because He is both an artist and a persuader.

This is the first and basic reason we should preach with variety (21-28).
The second chapter gives the other reason for variety in preaching: the need to adapt our sermons to the way contemporary hearers listen. The preacher needs to learn how to “speak Bantu to channel surfers” (29-37). The author concludes, “Why preach with variety? Not because we’re trying to exalt self, but because we want to exalt God; not because we call the shots, but because God sets the pattern as the Great Communicator; not because we want to manipulate listeners, but because they speak Bantu” (37).

Chapters 3 to 9 are devoted to a discussion of six biblical genres [psalms, narratives, parables, proverbs, epistles, and apocalyptic] (38-199). Each genre is allotted one chapter, except narrative, which has two. The author first describes the genre. He then suggests ways the genre can be preached. He concludes with a checklist to aid the preacher in both his exegesis and exposition of the genre under consideration. Arthurs does give this caveat: “I do not assert that we must slavishly and minutely copy the exact genre of the text. . . . The key to genre sensitive preaching is to replicate the impact of the text, not its exact techniques, although technique is the best place to start” (27-28). The author concludes with a one-page epilogue that summarizes the essence of the book (201). Endnotes (203-20) and a bibliography (221-38) complete the volume.

*Preaching with Variety* is a stimulating read for the biblical expositor. Its strength is in its descriptions of the biblical genres discussed and its suggestions of the various ways the preacher can enhance his variety. The different biblical genres remind expositors of the necessity of such elements as evocative language, the lean story, lead-in statements, summary statements, pithy statements, end stress, rhetorical questions. Arthurs cautions the preacher not to go too far or too fast in reduplicating the exact biblical genre in a sermon, although he gives only broad suggestions and not specific directions on how to accomplish this. However, he does make it clear that the goal is always to explain the content of the text to the listener, not to show the creative skill of the preacher.


William P. Brown is professor of Old Testament at Union Theological Seminary/PSCE in Virginia. As the subtitle for the series (A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching) indicates, the Interpretation commentaries seek to present a contemporary exposition integrating history and theology. Each commentary is based upon the RSV or (more recently) the NRSV.

The volume is a very readable exposition throughout, in which the author freely expresses his own thinking and feeling. In his preface he wonders whether any traditional commentary on Ecclesiastes could be considered a legitimate undertaking
in light of the book’s mysteries, ambiguities, and contradictions (vii). Thus, Brown follows the model of a dialogical commentary exhibiting the simultaneous operation of “a hermeneutics of trust and a hermeneutics of suspicion” (viii).

At the outset, he compares Qoheleth with the Mesopotamian tale of Gilgamesh (1-7). He believes that the Gilgamesh epic was the source of the original Qoheleth’s reflections. Rejecting Solomonic authorship, Brown places the book’s composition in the fourth or even third century B.C. (8), even though he admits that Ecclesiastes itself claims to have been written by Solomon (10). Throughout the commentary, the reader is reminded that the commentator believes that a variety of editors were involved in the composition of Ecclesiastes (cf. vii, 116). Yet, Ecclesiastes is viewed as “an indispensable part of the canon” (33).

Brown correctly (and eloquently) highlights the various themes of Ecclesiastes. Some of those themes include the following: God-given enjoyment of life (37), reverence for God out of an awareness of our finitude (45), individual accountability for how one lives before God in the world (56), and the inevitable common experience of death (91). Illustrating his thoughts with writers like Gustave Flaubert (26), Mark Twain (69), and Barbara Kingsolver (102), Brown weaves them into the teachings of Ecclesiastes. Such citations provide material for the preacher in today’s pulpit. Exegetical problems receive short shrift since detailed treatment of the Hebrew text is outside the intent of a dialogical commentary. However, that does not mean that Brown totally ignores tough problems. For example, he dedicates over a page and a half (in other words, approximately one percent of his entire commentary) to the crux interpretum in 5:9 (Hebrew, 5:8), providing some excellent insight to its solution.

The commentary concludes with its own epilogue exploring “Qoheleth’s Place in Christian Faith and Life” (121-37). The bibliography includes recommendations for further study (139-40) and a list of the works cited in the body of the commentary (140-43).

Brown’s volume would not be the first choice (or even a second) for the expositor to add to his library if he is looking for a verse-by-verse, exegetical commentary. The commentaries by Michael Eaton (Tyndale OT Commentaries; IVP, 1983), Duane Garrett (New American Commentary; Broadman & Holman, 1993), and Tremper Longman III (New International Commentary on the OT; Eerdmans, 1998) serve that purpose better. For the expositor capable of mature theological discernment (able to separate the wheat from the chaff), this commentary can be a catalyst for illustration, preaching, and application.

“More so than any other corpus in Scripture, the Psalter contains discourse that is as visceral as it is sublime. In the psalms, pathos is wedded to image” (ix). Thus the author contends for the significance of this volume on metaphor in the Psalms. His introduction deals with “A Poetics of the Psalmic Imagination” (1-14), presenting a case for the power of evocative language in the Psalter. Brown asserts that metaphors act as “‘grids’ or ‘filters’ through which reality is viewed and reconfigured” (6), so that the reader might apprehend that reality differently. Metaphor “exploits an irresolvable incongruity between the target and source domains to generate a ‘semantic shock’” (7). Therefore, metaphors in Hebrew poetry require that the reader think more and more about the text (9). Indeed, the Psalter’s poetry is not just visceral, it is intensely reflective and cognitive.

By their very nature, metaphors provoke hermeneutical discussion. If metaphor is “the hinge between multiple lines of associations and manifold worlds of meaning” (8), how can it be “delimiting” hermeneutically (10)? Brown throws down the gauntlet for reader-oriented methodologies by insisting that the reader’s imagination must be subject to the full appreciation and understanding of the ancient imagination (12). In his view, the reader is not sovereign, nor is the text a mere corpse (223 n. 110). He concludes, “Perhaps the time has come to declare the resurrection of the text and the receptivity of the reader” (ibid.). In the remainder of the volume, Brown’s modus operandi identifies the source and target domains for each metaphor, seeks to discover its meaning in its ancient Near Eastern background, and examines its associations within the Psalter itself (14).

Eight chapters take up the examination of the following topics:

1. metaphors of refuge (15-30),
2. metaphors of pathway (31-53),
3. arboREAL metaphor (55-79, a detailed analysis of the metaphor in Psalm 1),
4. solar metaphor (81-103, an examination of metaphor in Psalm 19),
5. water metaphors (105-34),
6. animal metaphors (135-66, a non-exhaustive survey of animal motifs and metaphors in Psalms),
7. personal metaphors for God (167-95, anthropomorphisms involving the senses, face, hands, mouth and voice, breath, emotions, and roles such as king, warrior, parent, and teacher), and
8. impersonal metaphors for God (197-206, including light, shield, shadow, mountain, fountain, portion, and cup).

Metaphors may also have counter metaphors. For example, the pit and Sheol are counter metaphors of the refuge metaphor (26). As the author observes, the language of lament sets the psalmist “between pit and refuge, between God’s absence and presence, death and deliverance” (27). A metaphor’s meaning informs the meaning of its counter metaphor and vice versa.

Brown proposes that neither refuge nor pathway comprises a root metaphor
encompassing the entire Psalter. Both are complementary, each to the other. Their association is robust, but they are not interchangeable and neither can subsume the other (39). Refuge features being present before God, while pathway designates the struggle toward God via law and wisdom (42, 45). The two metaphors are “the warp and the woof of the Psalter’s variegated tapestry” (53).

From time to time, the author’s analyses appear strained. For example, his treatment of Psalm 19, comparing its concepts with the iconography of synagogue mosaics (100-103) might strike the reader as esoteric. However, although the discerning evangelical reader might weed out some of the association, the point of the diversion is still pertinent: neither natural nor special revelation can be detached totally from the other. The interrelationship is a major aspect of what the psalmist presents in Psalm 19.

Polyvalency of metaphors comes to the fore in Brown’s essay on water (105-34). Many waters frequently represent overwhelming danger and chaos (106-22), but water also pictures refreshment and renewal (122-34). Images of sweeping floodwaters and the overwhelming power of thunderous cataracts and waves are foundational to two different experiences and perspectives. Metaphors are flexible and are capable of conveying widely differing meanings. Readers must pay close attention to context in order to interpret such images properly. “Destructive and cleansing, formless yet sustaining, water can convey diametrically opposing nuances even within one verse or line of poetry” (105).

In his conclusion, Brown takes up Psalm 139 to examine its metaphors (207-15). Extensive endnotes (217-62), an extremely helpful index of Scripture and ancient sources (263-70), and an author/subject index (271-74, detailed in the former case, and very limited in the latter) close out the volume.

William P. Brown is professor of OT at Union Theological Seminary/PSCE in Virginia. Among the books he has authored are Character in Crisis: A Fresh Approach to the Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament (Eerdmans, 1996), Ecclesiastes (Interpretation; John Knox, 2000; see earlier in this issue of TMSJ), and The Ten Commandments: The Reciprocity of Faithfulness (Westminster John Knox, 2004). He is also editor and contributor to Character & Scripture: Moral Formation, Community, and Biblical Interpretation (Eerdmans, 2002).

Dee Duke, Prayer Quest: Breaking through to Your God-Given Dreams and Destiny. Colorado Springs, Colo.: NavPress, 2004. 178 pp. $11.00 (paper). Reviewed by Gregory H. Harris, Professor of Bible Exposition.

A popular website promises a secret means of getting what you want from life by visualizing your goals and dreams to such a degree that they eventually become reality. From a website promoting “The Secret,” the following is promised:
There is a universal intelligence or knowingness in each and every one of us. When you are open to this intelligence of the heart, it guides you in the right direction to do what is best for you and those around you. Following this intuitive knowing attracts to you whatever you need as you need it. You find yourself having, being and doing whatever is right for you in the moment for your highest good. Your heart knows what actions are appropriate for you to take to attract to you what is appropriate for you.

In *Prayer Quest*: *Breaking through to Your God-Given Dreams and Destiny*, Dee Duke presents very much the same approach. Throughout the book he offers ways to develop and follow one’s dreams. Of course, in this case dreams do not refer to revelatory dreams, such as to Joseph had in Matthew 1 or to the common dreams that occur during sleep. Duke uses dreams in the sense of goals, desires, or wants, writing, A dream is a desire felt so strongly that we think and meditate on it constantly until we see it in our mind as clearly as if it were reality. A dream believes that what is desired will happen; it is accomplished by anticipation and positive expectation. People who dream tend to be upbeat and enthusiastic. They give hope to those around them, attracting people to their dreams and causes (26).

Self-help sources abound, in both the secular and the Christian world, without much difference at the core of each. Something like the statement above is expected from the secular world on a website promising entrance into “The Secret,” but not in a book from a Christian publisher such as NavPress that teaches in essence the same approach.

Using John 14:12 as a launching pad (“he will do even greater things than these,” 23), Duke launches into instructing readers on how to dream their own dream, which he repeatedly claims is God’s dream. For instance, Welcome to the reality where dreams come true! God has a dream, and it is certain to happen just as He imagines it. He has placed the stamp of His image on our souls, so that we also dream great dreams. As we learn to passionately share and enjoy God’s dreams, we will see Him work in amazing ways . . . (15).

Again, it is not so much their own dreams Christians are to pursue, but ultimately they are God’s dream for Christians. Duke asks in question #9, “What do these passages [Titus 2:1-4; Romans 12:10-12; Joshua 1:7-8] teach about God’s dream for each of us?” That is a brash assumption in these and other verses. The answer, biblically speaking, is nothing. Nothing appears in any of the contexts in regard to a “believer’s dreams,” nothing about what “we think and meditate on . . . constantly until we see it in our mind as clearly as if it were reality,” or believing “that what is desired will happen; it is accomplished by anticipation and positive expectation” (26).

Although proponents of *Prayer Quest* would no doubt argue that the book is replete with Scripture references throughout each chapter and therefore thoroughly biblical, rarely do the references in their context relate to the point made. Rather, the author’s presuppositions frame them. One of dozens of such examples is the “Parable
of the Ten Virgins” in Matt 25:14-30. The context deals with events specifically related to the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem, the second coming of Christ to earth, and the end of the age (Matt 24:1-3). Duke instead writes, “The most common reason that most believers have given up dreaming God’s dreams is illustrated by Jesus in Matthew 25:14-30” (24).

The author coaches his followers on how to dream with God, for example, by developing “dream notes” as “one of many ways to release your imagination in prayer” (28-29). Still referring to these as God’s “dreams and plans” (28), he cites “do not judge or be critical of your thoughts now—just let them flow” (ibid.). He further counsels, “Determine to dream with God again” (ibid.).

Duke acknowledges that the source of such dreams is not a given. He states, “Your dream notes may stem from one of four sources (although discerning between these is difficult and not always necessary)” (29). He then lists the four sources as “thoughts from God,” “your own original thoughts,” “thoughts from the world (good, neutral, or evil sources),” and “thoughts from Satan and his demons” (29). Duke prays in this regard, “Father, please help me to understand whether this thought is from You or from some other source. Help me to discern which thoughts are worthy of Your dream for my life” (28).

In reference to one’s heart (that is, used in the sense of the seat of one’s thoughts, motives, and desires), the Creator who made the heart states and asks about it in Jer 17:9: “The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?” He then answers in 17:10: “I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind.” Further, Jesus said in reference to the heart in Mark 7:20-23:

And He was saying, “That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.”

Those who imply their thoughts are God’s thoughts plainly contradict what God has stated in His Word. For those whose “dream prayers” originate in their own heart (even with a “God-tag” placed on them), do so from a source that is “more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick.” Has this changed since the time of Jeremiah or Jesus? Yet Duke explains to his readers, “Select the dream notes you believe God wishes you to pursue” (29). How does someone know? Feelings? Your original thoughts? What issues forth from your heart?

For those who “will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths” (2 Tim 4:3-4), Prayer Quest is a book for them. For those who want to justify the lusts of the flesh, in the name of God, this book should make them feel good about themselves. For those who want to be a disciple of Jesus, counting the cost, leaning
not on their own understanding, denying themselves, and taking up their cross to follow Him, avoid this nonbiblical theology.


Wyclif’s legendary status as “the Morning Star of the Reformation” fails to survive Gillian Evans’ vigorous professorial investigation (113, 244, 249). Evans holds the professorship of medieval theology and intellectual history at the University of Cambridge. She is author of *The Language and Logic of the Bible: The Earlier Middle Ages* (Cambridge University Press, 1984), *Law and Theology in the Middle Ages* (Routledge, 2001), and *Faith in the Medieval World* (InterVarsity, 2002). In addition, she edited both *The Medieval Theologians: An Introduction to Theology in the Medieval Period* (Blackwell, 2001) and *The First Christian Theologians: An Introduction to Theology in the Early Church* (Blackwell, 2004), contributing a number of the essays herself. Writing extensively on the Middle Ages and on a wide range of patristic and medieval authors (including Augustine, Anselm, Bernard of Clairvaux, Peter Lombard, Alan of Lille, and Gregory the Great), Evans is eminently qualified for a rigorous examination of Wyclif’s writings within his medieval academic environment at Oxford University.

Evans’ portrait of Wyclif reveals a complex and conflicted man—an irascible academic as well as a contrite cleric (14). His academic setting at Oxford forms the dominant background for Evans’ portrait of both the ecclesiastic and the educator (16-128). According to the author, the Oxford with which Wyclif was contemporary bore no signs of the lethargy that John Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs* attributed to it (24). On the contrary, Oxford thrrobbed with academic rivalry and thrived on a combative and competitive style of teaching (76). Such pedagogical methodology “made Wyclif and his opponents habitually adversarial in their problem-solving” (84). Wyclif alleged that spies attending his lectures maliciously recorded his most shocking remarks to use against him (85). These adversarial habits in the academy often spilled over into the pulpit (123).

As a parish priest, Wyclif was more educated than most. In 1379 (some years after he had left the parish ministry), he authored a book on “The Pastoral Office” in which he defined the duties of the godly pastor: to feed his sheep with God’s Word, to purge his flock of contagious spiritual disease, and to defend his flock against ravaging wolves (93-94). Evans concludes that Wyclif found pastoral ministry less than satisfying, so he returned to Oxford to pursue a doctor of theology degree (94). He was a staunch critic of absentee pastors who held a plurality of parishes and/or benefices that drew them away from their pastoral duties (94-95). In this reviewer’s opinion, Evans’ focus is so much on the educator (and, later, the
public servant of the royal court, 129-93) that the ecclesiastic lacks adequate coverage. This may, in part, be due to an absence of adequate documentation, the result of the ultimate condemnation and burning of Wyclif’s books in 1410 (204). However, if a pastor, rather than an academic, were to write the biography, Wyclif’s portrait probably would include a more detailed examination of his pastoral practices for comparison with his pastoral philosophy.

Throughout his teaching career, Wyclif exhibited a bent for theology. His writings on logic deal with theological topics: “the Trinity, transubstantiation, divine foreknowledge, futurity and eternity, necessary futurity, time as fourth dimension” (100). In De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae (“About the Truthfulness of Sacred Scriptures”) he declares that no human writing is superior to the Bible, all Christians have a right to read it, and the Scriptures are the best foundation for secular and ecclesiastical life (121). As far as the Wycliffite translations of the Bible into English are concerned, Evans finds no evidence of any contribution directly from the hand of Wyclif (230). Although he advocated preaching and teaching in English, embarrassingly little remains to demonstrate that he did any of it himself (243).

Evans portrays Wyclif as an angry man in his old age (129, 197), exploding in diatribes against perceived enemies (204). In her opinion, some of that anger arose from his frustration over never attaining to a position of power and becoming “a pawn in other people’s political games” (135). In 1374 Wyclif served as a member of a diplomatic commission to meet a papal delegation in Belgium (144). All the clergies except Wyclif immediately received appointments as bishops (144). He became bitter (145) and sensitive at being slighted (167). At his passing “there is no saintly deathbed scene, no reconciliation; there are no edifying words of wisdom to report. We have to turn from him as he fell, angry and despairing” (214). Evans paints a dark and disappointing picture of a failed hero.

On occasion Evans’ own political sensitivity manifests itself. One passage comes during her discussion of a violation of the rule of sanctuary when Sir Robert Hauley was pursued inside Westminster Abbey by the Constable of the Tower and slain in 1378. Wyclif argued the king’s right to violate the rule of sanctuary (179-80). Evans’ own political opinion flares as she compares Wyclif’s arguments with those of President Bush and Prime Minister Blair “when they took the USA and Britain into war in Iraq in 2003” (180). She appears to use this biography as the springboard for expressing her own political bitterness and/or agenda (cp. 183-84, “Alarm bells ring when politicians are seen to attempt to suborn the academics and undermine their independence by making the funding of their research dependent on their arriving at conclusions acceptable to the Government of the day”).

In spite of the author’s pessimistic approach and assessment, her volume is still worth reading. Every future biographer of Wyclif needs to begin with Evans’ book. It is as much an exposé of early Oxford as it is of Wyclif. The reader will find Evans’ enthusiastic study of the Middle Ages infectious.

For those interested in the ministry of Francis Schaeffer or apologetics in general, *Truth with Love: The Apologetics of Francis Schaeffer* is a helpful book. Bryan A. Follis, rector of All Saints’ Church, offers a heartwarming and intellectually stimulating presentation of the apologetic ministry of Francis Schaeffer, which he developed from his dissertation at Trinity College, Dublin.

Schaeffer possesses a mythical and even heroic status for many evangelicals today, a status that is rightly deserved. Yet, while Schaeffer has left much in the form of writings and video series, he and his ministry are often misunderstood. Follis, though, does a good service by explaining with precision and clarity the true Francis Schaeffer. This includes who Schaeffer was as a person and his approach to apologetics.

Follis shows that understanding Schaeffer starts with knowing what motivated him. Schaeffer, a convert from agnosticism, was driven by love—love for God, love for people, and a love for truth, a combination that is rarely found.

As well known as Schaeffer is because of his ideas, he was primarily a frontline evangelist, not an academic. Thus, Schaeffer’s theology of apologetics was not always air-tight, nor did Schaeffer feel the need to respond to every criticism. Schaeffer also did not believe that “there is any one apologetic which meets the needs of all people.”

While Schaeffer certainly did his share of speaking and writing to large audiences, he was at his best when he was engaging individuals. As Follis points out, so many were willing to listen to him because they knew he cared. Whether it was the maid at the hotel, the man with cerebral palsy asking nearly incoherent questions, or the disheartened and lonely visitor to L’Abri, Schaeffer carefully listened to individuals and reached out to them with the love of Christ. Any attempts to understand Schaeffer apart from comprehending his love for the person will certainly be unsuccessful.

Follis is also helpful in clearing up confusion about Schaeffer’s views and methodology. He shows how recent attempts to label Schaeffer as a presuppositionalist or evidentialist are inaccurate. He incorporated elements from both systems, but was not an adherent of either approach.

Schaeffer adopted much from the presuppositionalist, Cornelius Van Til, but he also differed with Van Til in significant areas. One difference was that Schaeffer was more open to allowing the unbeliever to question the truth claims of Christianity, something which Van Til opposed. In reality, Schaeffer forged his own apologetic method, one that Follis says is close to the verificational method. This approach starts with hypotheses and subjects them to various arguments to see if they are true.

One of the more interesting parts of the book is Follis’s description of how Van Til viewed Schaeffer and why Schaeffer was reluctant to engage in public
dispute with Van Til. Follis also evaluates the critics of Schaeffer, like Clark Pinnock and others, to show that they largely misunderstood Schaeffer. Follis shows that attempts to label Schaeffer as a rationalist are misguided, especially since Schaeffer was so reliant upon prayer and the Holy Spirit. For Follis, to consider Schaeffer a rationalist is ridiculous because he lived his life so much in light of the supernatural.

Follis’s final chapter, “Conclusion: Love as the Final Apologetic,” is powerful. Here he shows how the apologetic of Francis Schaeffer can help today in the postmodern era. With keen insight, Schaeffer anticipated what is known now as postmodernism. Though one must be aware of the mindset of today’s postmodern, he or she is still made in the image of God and must be challenged to see the emptiness of his or her worldview and embrace Jesus Christ.

Follis offers helpful instruction on how a Schaefferian approach can deal with recent trends. Though Schaeffer was relational and emphasized community, he never did so at the expense of objective truth. Thus, Follis criticizes the church’s current fascination with postmodernism. He also singles out the emerging church movement as abandoning the importance of objective truth in its quest to be more relevant, mystical, and community-oriented. As Follis points out, Schaeffer believed that being relevant or community-oriented and committed to objective truth were not mutually exclusive. Both can exist simultaneously.

This reviewer found the book to be inspiring as well as informative. For dealing with such a large topic as the life and beliefs of Francis Schaeffer in a little over 200 pages, one could criticize Follis for not discussing this or that, but that could be said of nearly every book of this nature. What Follis intended to address, he did well.

One does not have to agree with Schaeffer on every detail to learn from him. For Schaeffer, apologetics was not just a theoretical or academic issue. It was personal and it was done in love, something all can learn from.


The commentary series of which this volume is a part targets primarily the needs of clergy and seminary students (8). It is confined to Psalms (3 vols. by Goldingay), Proverbs (by Tremper Longman III), Song of Songs (by Richard S. Hess), Job, and Ecclesiastes. The second Psalms volume is scheduled for publication in late 2007. Goldingay’s volume was a finalist for the 2007 Christian Book Awards by the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association.

A general introduction (21-78) opens the volume, providing readers with discussions of the Psalms’ relationship to history (21-37), poetry (37-45), worship (46-58), spirituality (58-69), and theology (69-78). Included in the final area of
introduction is a brief examination of the relationship of the NT and the Psalms (75-78). Each psalm’s commentary consists of three sections: translation (Goldingay’s own with technicalities relegated to footnotes), interpretation (supported by both bibliographical and technical footnotes), and theological implications. The third section is periodically anemic, consisting of basic application or generic summaries, as in the 10-line summary of Psalm 5:1-12 (133).

Making a leap in logic, Goldingay appeals to the songs of Miriam, Deborah, and Hannah to deduce that “many of the composers of psalms in the Psalter were women, though one can imagine that female authorship might need to be concealed in a patriarchal context in Israel” (32). Overall he is unsupportive of Davidic authorship of any psalm (26-28). Ignoring biblical (2 Sam 22:1; Hab 3:1, 19; Isa 38:9, 20; Ezek 19:14) and contemporary examples of hymn superscriptions and subscriptions (even though he cites an extrabiblical text including one, 34), he makes no mention of James Thrill’s theory regarding psalm superscriptions and subscriptions. In fact, he asserts that the psalm headings were not part of the original compositions (109).

Some literary works among ancient Near Eastern peoples exhibit similarities to biblical psalms. Goldingay properly cautions against thinking “in terms of direct development from it [i.e., such secular literature]. The similarities rather reflect a common humanity and a common culture” (32). Perceptively he writes that Hebrew poetic parallelism “keeps the psalm moving, keeps the hearers involved, and enables the psalmist to have two runs at expressing adequately what needs to be expressed” (56). The author identifies and explains the interpretive significance of a variety of literary devices throughout the commentary.

Goldingay’s translation sometimes borders on idiosyncratic. He renders 1:1’s “Blessed” (NRSV, “Happy”; NLT, “Oh, the joys of”) as “The good fortune of” (79) and neglects to counter any potential association with “luck.” In nearly every instance he translates “sin” (חטא, פשע) as “failure” (79, 593; see “fall short” in 4:4 [116]), which he defines as moral failure (82) or “a reprehensible failure to do what was required, a missing the way for which we are responsible” (593). Three exceptions appear at 26:9 (“sinners,” 380), 32:5 (“my sinful wrongdoing,” 452), and 39:1 (“so as not to sin with my tongue,” 553). The commentary on Psalm 32 (452-61) clears up any doubts about the author’s view of sin. It is, indeed, a biblical reality for which he is willing to employ the term “sin.” “Selah” becomes “Rise” (107, 599), creating a misleading juxtaposition in 7:5-6, “(Rise) Rise, Yhwh” (142-43). “Composition” replaces “psalm” (ענף, עניין, 592) and “daughter Zion” appears as “Ms. Zion” (9:14). With minimal explanation, the author avoids terms like “hate” (“Against, Be,” 591), “love” (“Dedicate oneself,” 593), “sin” (“Fail, failures,” 593), and “iniquity” (“Waywardness,” 601).

Goldingay makes little reference to dates for the psalms (30), since historical references are lacking in most psalms and background is not as significant as it is for prophetic literature (24-25). Likewise, he steers clear of identifying any specific liturgical setting for individual psalms (54-55). Exemplifying his reluctance to assign
a background to individual psalms, he speaks of imagining the use of Psalm 6 on the lips of someone like Hannah or even as the prayer of a woman who had been raped (137; quoting Marchiene Vroon Rienstra, *Swallow’s Nest: A Feminine Reading of the Psalms* [Eerdmans, 1992]). Women as well as men might relate to and find comfort in this psalm—a fact that exegetes and expositors too often ignore.

Imprecatory psalms are given meager treatment (66-67)—a lack one would hope to find remedied in later volumes. According to Goldingay, no psalm’s original meaning had any prophetic reference to the Messiah. Instead, the NT uses them “in a way that sees new significance in them” (72). His view is similar to ISP (inspired *sensus plenior*): “The Holy Spirit who inspired Scripture is inspiring the writers to see a new significance in the words that appear in Scripture” (77; cp. 234).

At 2:11-12 the commentator eliminates reference to “the Son” (“submit sincerely, Lest he be angry”) siding with Symmachus, Jerome, NRSV, and NJPS (93). Though he avoids any messianic interpretation of Psalm 2, he accurately notes that it depicts a situation unknown in any Israelite king’s reign (95-96) and that kings from all over the world are involved (98). About whom does the psalm speak then? He concludes that it “belongs to the Jewish people as the people of God . . . in particular to the State of Israel as a focal embodiment of the Jewish people” and also to the church “as an expanded version of the people of God” (105).

Goldingay observes that 14:1-3, if kept in isolation from verses 4-6, “could be taken as a statement about universal wickedness” (212). However, he himself interprets the text as a reference to the permeation of corruption within the psalmist’s immediate community (213, 214). After stating that Paul (Rom 3:10-12) makes the point that “the whole of humanity can be described in terms of vv. 1-3,” the author repeats that the psalmist’s meaning is only that “communities can degenerate to that point” (217), thus taking a stance at odds with a commentator like Willem A. VanGemeren (“Psalms,” in *Expositor’s Bible Commentary* [Zondervan 1991] 5:144-45).

This reviewer especially appreciates the author’s recommendation that the two copies of Psalm 18 (2 Sam 22) not be assimilated and harmonized with one another (253). It seems viable to identify 2 Samuel 22 as the royal archive’s copy of the original composition (presented as an exhibit of David’s psalmistry) and Psalm 18 as the revised version for the more liturgical use in the Temple.

Comment on Psalm 19 distances the psalm from any concept of revelation (either natural or special), thereby eliminating any treatment of the psalm along these lines (298-99). “At the end,” writes Goldingay, “it has to come to a plea for redemption” (299). However, his summation rings hollow on the heels of translating the final word of verse 14 as “my restorer,” rather than “my Redeemer,” and a commentary that relegates נַחֲלָה (נַחֲלָה) to implying “‘Do your duty by me’” (297).

At the conclusion of the volume, Psalm 41:13 is handled in a separate chapter as the coda to Psalms 1–41 (590). A glossary of terms marked by asterisks throughout the commentary elucidates key vocabulary and concepts (591-601). A select bibliography (602-5) omits major commentaries by James Montgomery Boice
Practical and purposefully theological, this commentary contains a variety of quotable excerpts: “Christians are reticent about telling God things that God presumably knows, though they are then oddly unrestrained about itemizing what God should do even though they recognize that God could work this out” (62). “Doxology requires theology” (69). “God even has the glory in the grammar” (55). Seminarians and pastors alike will benefit substantially from Goldingay’s 3-volume commentary.

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The Apocalypse Code is Hank Hanegraaff’s reaction to what he and others would consider fanciful interpretations of the Book of Revelation by Hal Lindsey and Tim LaHaye. Though many premillennialists would not necessarily hold many of the same interpretations on selected passages, Hanegraaff seems to lump all premillennialists together through “guilt by association.” He specifically targets Tim LaHaye since he considers him to be “the standard-bearer for Lindsey’s brand of eschatology” (xviii). Yet the absence of Robert Thomas’ two-volume work on the book of Revelation in his rather extensive bibliography of books (295-99) and articles used (300) is significant. One would hope that at least one sentence within Thomas’ first volume, Revelation 1–7 (524 pages), or the second, Revelation 8–22 (690 pages), might contribute in some way to Hanegraaff’s argument. In addition, Hanegraaff has no references to the works of MacArthur, Ryrie, and Pentecost on eschatology. Hanegraaff takes two authors and any speculation they may bring to the text to imply that anyone who holds a premillennial understanding of the Book of Revelation must reach that conclusion by the same hermeneutical means.

Using an acronym “LIGHTS,” which begins with “L” for a “literal
understanding” of the text, Hanegraaff presents his methodology as the proper means “to interpret the Bible for all its worth . . . “ (xxvi). Though this sounds very similar to a premillennial understanding of the text, the outworking or application of his hermeneutics causes the interpretational paths to diverge.

For instance, the “T” section of his acronym “LIGHTS” is chapter six, “Typology Principle: The Golden Key” (161-203). Perhaps a better subheading would be “The Hermeneutical ‘Get Out of Jail Free’ Card.” In reality, what Hanegraaff does in the name of typology is employ an allegorized hermeneutic whenever a text does not support his preterist theology. Allegorizing of different texts basically undermines a great deal of what he argues for in a literal approach to the text (his “L” section in the LIGHTS acronym). If the “L” (literal principle) and the “T” (typology principle) stand at odds with each other, how can one discern which is dominant?

Most Bible-believing scholars readily accept types as a legitimate component of hermeneutics and recognize that wide debate exists regarding the number and breadth of what is and what is not a type. However, Hanegraaff’s use of typology inserts his theology and supports it with what he calls typology. For instance, in writing about the paramount importance of types, he writes, almost by fiat pronouncement and with no support, “Persons, places, events, or things in redemptive history serve as types of Christ or spiritual realities pertaining to Christ. Palestine is typological of paradise” (9). Hanegraaff refers to the land of Israel as “Palestine,” a term God never used for the land; the name “Palestine” came from Philistia (Exod 15:14; 14:29, 31; Joel 3:4). Hanegraaff has shown his bias, already denouncing what he considers to be racial discrimination against Arabs (xx-xxiii) and the modern “explosive debate over real estate” in the Middle East (xxiii-xxvii). He presents his conclusion, which presumably will be in the “H” (historical principle) section. “Ultimately, we must decide whether the land is the focus of the Lord or the Lord the locus of the land” (xxvii). Yet God is the one who repeatedly refers to the land, His covenant promises, and Jerusalem throughout the Word. Just one example of this hermeneutical divide is Zech 14:1-4:

Behold, a day is coming for the LORD when the spoil taken from you will be divided among you. For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women ravished, and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city. Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle. And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south.

Obviously, this is important since it describes the return of the Lord to earth. Does Zech 14:1-4 refer to literal Jerusalem where “His feet will stand on the Mount
of Olives," or is it some sort of life lesson for Christians to decipher? Would Hanegraaff place this under the "L" (literal) section, "H" (historical), or "T" (typological)? This is important because he ends his introduction saying,

In the pages that follow, you will answer these and a host of other questions by internalizing and applying the principles of a methodology called Exegetical Eschatology. . . . In the process you will not only be equipped to interpret the Bible for all it's worth but you may well discover that you hold the key to the problem of terrorism in one hand and the fuse of Armageddon in the other (xxvii).

Repeatedly throughout the book, Hanegraaff uses typology to allegorizes prophetic texts that do not suit his preterist preunderstanding.

Hanegraaff cites the need for Scripture to be interpreted by Scripture as the last element in his LIGHTS acronym:

Finally, the S in LIGHTS represents the principle of scriptural synergy. Simply stated, this means that the whole of Scripture is greater than the sum of its individual passages. You cannot comprehend the Bible as a whole without comprehending its individual parts, and you cannot comprehend its individual parts without comprehending the Bible as a whole. Individual passages of Scripture are synergistic rather than deflective with respect to the whole of Scripture.

Scriptural synergy demands that individual Bible passages may never be interpreted in such a way as to conflict with the whole of Scripture. Nor may we assign arbitrary meanings to words or phrases that have their referent in biblical history. The biblical interpreter must keep in mind that all Scripture, though communicated through various human instruments, has one single Author. And that Author does not contradict himself, nor does he confuse his servants (9-10).

Such reasoning is sound and many premillennial scholars would wholeheartedly agree with the principle. Accordingly, since Hanegraaff claims to base his teaching from within the text, to use his own words, individual passages must be compared in Scripture to see if they harmonize. In other words, his scriptural synergy principle applies just as much to himself as it does to Lindsey, LaHaye, or anyone else.

One of the major positions Hanegraaff holds in interpreting the Book of Revelation is that Nero was the first beast of Revelation 13:1-8, namely, the Antichrist. Hanegraaff mocks LaHaye's (and others') rejection that the advent of the Antichrist has occurred in history past and that instead, a future individual with relevance to the Jewish people is divine prophecy that awaits fulfillment. Hanegraaff's position that Nero is the first beast is full of exegetical problems, only one of which this review has space to cite. When he describes the death of Nero by suicide on June 9, A.D. 68 (148-49), the scriptural synthesis principle is just as true for him as for anyone. Hanegraaff rails against "unbridled speculation, or subjective flights of fancy" (xvii) and encourages the reader concerning his own The Apocalypse Code: "In the pages that follow, you will answer these and a host of other questions by internalizing and applying the principles of a methodology called Exegetical
Eschatology. . . . In the process you will not only be equipped to interpret the Bible for all it’s worth but you may well discover that you hold the key to the problem of terrorism in one hand and the fuse of Armageddon in the other” (xxvii). No, actually Jesus’ words in Acts 1:7 offer a better theology of who knows the timing of end-time events: “It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority.”

To put such principles as Hanegraaff says he employs requires that Jesus Christ returned to earth at the latest on June 8, AD 68—the last full day of Nero’s life—because if Nero is the Antichrist, he must be alive at the Lord’s return. Either Nero meets this biblical requirement, or he must be discarded as a consideration for fulfilling the biblical requirements for the Antichrist. To accept that the death of Nero in anyway remotely matches this Scriptural requirement—plus dozens of other requirements—is contrary to Acts 1:7 and numerous other prophetic passages.


Dr. Jim Rosscup says in his article on “The Priority of Prayer in Preaching” that “prayer is not an elective but the principal element in the kaleidoscope of spiritual characteristics that mark a preacher. These traits unite into a powerful spiritual force. They build a spokesman for God.” In The Cup and the Glory written by the professor of Bible exposition at The Master’s Seminary, Greg Harris presents a powerful spiritual force that challenges the reader to live out what Scripture reveals on the road of suffering. The lessons he draws are sign posts on this road that reveal the human heart, the depravity of man, the believer’s ongoing struggle with trust, the walk of faith, the unexpected challenges, the bearing up under adversity, God’s work of perfecting, and the sufferer’s increased sensitivity to God’s glory.

As I sat around the dinner table with several TMS men, the discussion of this book centered on the very personal nature of suffering and how Professor Harris’ lessons on suffering caused many to examine wounds that had festered, but had never healed. One talked about the death of a believing father while dealing with the contempt for a hard-hearted, faithless mother; another discussed anger and disappointment with God over the suffering of his child; and still another added only tears for a brother dying of cancer. That, then, is the real strength of the book; it draws the reader into a biblical discussion of suffering and stimulates examination where pain may have been a roadblock. As Dr. Harris states, “Deep treasures lay embedded in God’s Word, ready to be mined and assayed.” This book is rich with spiritual principles mined by a prospector eagerly willing to share his nuggets of truth with biblical certainty. If you liked D. A. Carson’s book on prayer, A Call to Spiritual Reformation, or D. Edmond Hiebert’s book, Working with God Through
Prayer, you will thoroughly enjoy The Cup and the Glory . . . again and again and again.


The following review of Logos Bible Software 3, the latest version of the most widely used computer Bible program, expresses the view of this reviewer and is not an official viewpoint of The Master’s Seminary.

The reviewer remembers well the day that a 5 1/4 inch floppy disk arrived with the beta version of the very first Bible program designed for the Windows operating system. He has observed over nearly twenty years as the Logos program has developed into what it is today—the largest available digital library of biblical literature in the world. In its early days, Logos did not attempt to keep up with some of its more scholarly competitors, but sought to include various biblical works and sets and entire libraries that could serve the study needs of as wide an audience as possible. They succeeded in doing that and continue to publish an enormous library of digitized works for all levels of scholarly abilities.

However, creative people at Logos heard and responded to the requests of those interested in more serious original-language-based, scholarly works. They hired appropriate people and improved and expanded their scholarly resources with each upgrade to their Libronix system. Now Logos 3 reflects their commitment to serve both the scholarly community as well as the broader Christian community. With this version, Logos in some ways has positioned itself as the leader in computer Bible programs. Some programs may still be their equal in scholarly texts, but Logos 3 undoubtedly is the leader in all-round programs that include features that can serve every level of those engaged in biblical studies.

I have used Logos 3—Scholars Library: Gold for nearly ten months in preparation for classes, in preparing sermons, in personal study, and also in focused research for an academic commentary on James. Having migrated years ago to another Bible program, I wondered if Logos could measure up on the scholarly level. I am pleased to conclude that in this version it has not only measured up to the competition, but has surpassed it in many ways.

For those already familiar with the Windows interface of Logos, the friendly drop down menus are still there, with all the many standard works available in the program under the “My Library” tab. Also, the sizable windows holding the various Bible versions and texts can still be viewed and compared either horizontally, vertically (my favorite), cascading, or arranged according to one’s preference.

Why do people use computer Bible programs? Some use them to compare different versions of a passage, perhaps with a commentary alongside. Logos still
fulfills that function well, with dozens of English Bible versions included as well as a growing number of commentaries and study Bible notes. I was very pleased that the Gold version includes the entire New International Greek Testament Commentary—enough to make the upgrade to the Gold version more than worth the additional cost. Some use the versions to do simple word searches as one would do in a Cruden’s, Young’s, or Strong’s concordance. Logos does that type of search very well. What Logos adds to English Bible searches is the ability to search all of its many other resources for places where that word is also discussed. For example, if you search for the word redemption, Logos will not only find all the times it appears in a Bible version, but will direct you to the entry for redemption in the New Bible Dictionary and in many other study resources. This is a very helpful and timesaving function, especially when doing a topical study. That type of search through all the available resources in a program is, to my knowledge, a function unique with Logos. The sheer number of resources available in Logos, compared to some other Bible programs, makes it an excellent choice for those who desire those types of extensive researches.

Such are functions that can be performed with paper books also, but Logos helps do them with blazing speed and directs to resources about which one may be unaware. It also provides so many of the resources that laymen, and even many pastors, do not always have on hand. One imagines a Saturday evening in a pastor’s home, a distance from his study at the church, when he needs to confer with some resource that he does not have at home. With that and many other resources available at the click of a mouse, no problem! Furthermore, the more complex the search becomes, the more likely one is not to perform that search in books because of time constraints. Logos saves time, not to encourage laziness, but so that time can be used in reflecting on the text rather than in data gathering.

For those who use the biblical languages, computer Bible programs have been a special boon. They can have the Masoretic Hebrew text, the Septuagint Greek translation, and an English Bible text all in parallel columns, with each linked and scrolling through the passage simultaneously. Searches can be done on both the form of the original word in the text and also on its lemma or lexical form. All original language texts are morphologically tagged, so a window with the parsing of each word opens with the mouse. Though we who teach the biblical languages are not excited about beginning students using such helps as crutches, busy pastors, whose language abilities are sometimes rusty, can again use those languages in sermon preparation. The frustration of figuring out the form of an irregular verb, for example, can be relieved by looking up that verb in a lexicon and discovering its various usages in the immediate context and also in its wider usage. Inclusion of the valuable Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament (Balz-Schneider) is another advantage of the Gold Version.

Such lexical and morphological searches have been available in Bible programs for years. When one wants to go beyond that function and desires to find a certain form of the Greek word and not just its lemma (for example, all third person
singular forms of \( \lambda \varepsilon \gamma \omega \)), computer Bible programs start to show their value. That type of search can be done very easily and results in more accurate observations by the exegete. Again, this could be done with a good hard-back Greek concordance, but who will take the time to look up every third person singular form in the Moulton and Geden Concordance entry for \( \lambda \varepsilon \gamma \omega \)?

Other programs can do this as well, so this discussion could apply to them. What does Logos offer uniquely in its new versions for more complex Greek and Hebrew searches? Research in this area of language study has been extensive in recent years. For example, OpenText.org has prepared an extensive syntactical analysis of the entire NT that is available Online. The various functions of words and phrases in the clause and sentence are identified and are fully searchable. Knowledgeable exegetes recognize that the value of word-based study for interpretation is enhanced when the words are studied, not in isolation, but as the basic components of larger phrases, clauses, and sentences. In addition to having the entire OpenText database, Logos 3 now includes another valuable database—the Lexham Syntactic Greek New Testament—which draws more on traditional terminology used in Greek grammars to analyze NT syntax. The results of these syntactical analyses are presented in an attractive graphical format that will prove to be immensely helpful to the student/professor/pastor who wants to study more than just the individual words of their Greek NT.

In any case, one should already be doing this type of study as part of an analysis of any passage. Professors have taught exegesis students for years that they cannot stop at the word level, but must move on to view all the passage being studied at the clause, sentence, and paragraph levels. Some teachers call this a sentence flow analysis. Now searches can be done for entire syntactical constructions—not just for morphological forms. Furthermore, for those who prefer the traditional line diagramming approach to a passage, Logos provides that as well.

Finding something substantial to criticize in Logos 3 is hard. Perhaps its syntactical search engine could be more intuitive, but Logos has anticipated a learning curve and provided a step by step video instruction to help those at any level of language and computer ability. I also found a shortcut for doing a complex linguistic search apart from the command driven or the graphical search engine. Just placing the cursor on a Greek or Hebrew word, right clicking, choosing Bible Study, in a few seconds yields more information on that single word than one ever dreamed existed! Here the lexical and grammatical databases yield their best results by organizing the resulting information into simple categories.

My long experience in observing closely the development of nearly all the computer Bible programs and all their upgrades, as described above, permits me to respond to my students who constantly ask what program(s) I recommend. Some programs I recommend for those who want help only in scholarly language study. Some also are very versatile for those using the Mac environment. But, in this reviewer’s opinion, if one is looking for the best all-round computer Bible program for both general and scholarly help, the new version of Logos is the one for an
individual, and also for those in his church. Furthermore, as evidence of their responsiveness to user requests, Logos is also developing a version for the Mac operating system. They have excellent pricing plans for the various levels of programs they offer also. I recommend at least the Scholars Library as a starter for serious study. Whatever level one chooses, looking at such a purchase as an investment for the future is wisest—and also one that can be enlarged since Logos will continue adding valuable resources in the years ahead.


“Here is a New Testament theology that will not only guide students and delight teachers but reward expositors with a lavish fund of insights for preaching.” So promises the book jacket of this magnum opus from the well-known British NT scholar, I. Howard Marshall. For over forty years, a steady stream of writing has come from the pen of the honorary research professor of NT at the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, including commentaries on Luke (NIGTC), Acts (TNTC), 1 & 2 Thessalonians (NCBC), the Pastoral Epistles (ICC) [see *TMSJ* (Fall 2002) 13:290-91], 1 Peter (IVPNTC) [see *TMSJ* (Fall 1991) 2:213-5] and the Epistles of John (NICNT). From this wealth of background study, Marshall has presented his conclusions concerning NT theology in his latest volume.

With so much material in print, the reader comes to the present work already knowing where the author stands on many historical, exegetical, and theological issues. In this volume many examples re-express previous viewpoints. Though Marshall has much to commend in his positions, the present reviewer rejects some of his statements. For instance, first, he holds that the Pastoral Epistles are best viewed as “allonymous,” i.e., “they contain Pauline materials that have been adapted within a Pauline circle after his death in order to make his teaching available in a form adapted to the needs of the congregations at the time when there was the danger of succumbing to a heresy compounded of Jewish and ascetic elements and some misrepresentation of Paul’s teaching” (398). Second, source criticism of the Synoptic Gospels is a given; Markan priority is assumed (Mark is the first Gospel discussed in the volume [57-94]) with Matthew and Luke basing their books on Mark, sayings of Jesus, and “Q,” a narrative about Jesus (51-53). Third, Marshall’s moderate Arminian position is evident when he states, “[T]he perseverance of believers is simultaneously dependent on their own steadfastness and on the activity of God” (242) and when he declares that the warning passages in Hebrews “seem to allow that a person who has been a believer and enjoyed the blessings of salvation can lapse into a state of unbelief” (619). Fourth, throughout the volume, the church is seen as the “new Israel,” although the author states, “Thus there is not so much a superses-
The promise of the ancient promises to the Jews that they be God’s people as rather a spiritual renewal of those promises in the new covenant . . . and the extension of the covenant people to include all who are spiritually descendants of Abraham through their faith in Messiah” (712). Thus, ultimately, he prefers to speak of the Christian believers as the “renewed Israel” (711-2). Though the discerning reader must have his antenna attuned to such viewpoints, profit in the author’s approach to NT theology is still present.

Marshall begins his work with an introductory chapter entitled “How Do We Do New Testament Theology?” However, before he discusses how to write a theology of the NT, he first defends the legitimacy and possibility of the enterprise (17-23). The author claims that despite the problems of occasionality, diversity, and development, “it makes sense in the light of canonization to ask whether there is a common, basic theology in the set of books that the early church canonized” (20). Thus, “the aim of students of New Testament theology is to explore the New Testament’s writers developing understanding of God and the world” (23). Having defended the legitimacy of NT theology, Marshall describes how it can be accomplished (23-46), concluding the chapter with a helpful summary of his proposal (46-47). The scope of NT theology is the books in the canon of the NT. These books must be understood in historical, “jesusological/christological,” and “missiological” contexts. The stage of description attempts to elucidate the theology of the individual books directed to the specific occasions or purposes for the writings. The stage of analysis seeks to find the central thrust of the books’ theology and its detailed outworking. The stage of studying development explores the way in which these various expressions of theology have developed. The stage of synthesis determines the ways in which these books display common beliefs [unity, harmony] and/or a variety of beliefs [diversity, contradiction]. The stage of application, the ways this NT theology has been and should be taken up into the dogmatic theology of the church, lies beyond the task of the present volume. This methodical approach to NT theology explained and modeled is the strength of this work.

Chapters two through thirty proceed according to the proposal on how to do NT theology described in chapter one. Marshall breaks the NT into four sections: Jesus, the Synoptic Gospels, and Acts (49-206); the Pauline Letters (207-488); the Johannine Literature (489-601); Hebrews, James, 1-2 Peter, and Jude (603-704). Each section follows a basic pattern. The canonical books are first individually presented. The presentations begin with an introduction that gives data concerning the authorship, the occasion, and, most essentially, the purpose of the book. Then Marshall gives an overview of the book, which he calls “the theological story.” Up to this point, these chapters read like a NT survey. With this “survey” foundation, the writer details the “theological themes” of the books. The book chapters conclude with helpful summaries in a conclusion. Having isolated the theological themes of the individual books, the writer synthesizes the theology of the individual books into a whole for the section in an individual chapter. Here, the common theological themes of the individual books are brought together. In sections two and three, the
Pauline Letters and the Johannine Literature respectively, he further synthesizes the theological material of that section with the previously discussed synthesis of the proceeding section(s) in an additional chapter. A similar additional chapter in section four would have been helpful; as it is, Hebrews, James, 1-2 Peter, and Jude are not synthesized into the rest of the NT by the author.

The volume concludes with a chapter where Marshall discusses “Diversity and Unity in the New Testament” (705-32). He acknowledges, “[W]e have to recognize that the theological languages and concepts used by the early Christians developed and diversified” (711). But he continues by asking, “But to what extent were they still recognizably bearing testimony to the same things and the same experiences despite all the diversity” (711)? For Marshall, the answer lies in the fact that all of the NT writings emerged from and were directed toward mission. In essence, NT theology is missionary theology. The unity of the NT writings can be unpacked in the following way: the context of mission—God the Father; the center of mission—the saving event; the community of mission—the renewed Israel, the response of faith, the Holy Spirit, the church, and the love commandment; and the consummation of mission—the fullness of salvation.

The present volume takes its place in the heritage of the previous evangelical NT theologies of George Ladd (Eerdmans, 1974, 1993) and Donald Guthrie (1981). Many of Marshall’s conclusions echo and update what is in those works. However, he begins the discussion of NT theology with the individual books, whereas Ladd and Guthrie begin with and concentrate more on the theological synthesis. Ladd’s synthesis of the sections of the NT into the Synoptic Gospels, Paul, John, and other NT writings is echoed in Marshall. However, the present volume does not proceed to use the categories of dogmatic or systematic theology as its ultimate organizing principle as did Guthrie. The NT exegete and expositor can now gain a basic understanding of the contemporary “broad evangelical” discussions of and conclusions concerning NT theology by reading, in the following order, Marshall, Ladd, and Guthrie.

Two annoying characteristics of the present typeset of New Testament Theology: Many Witnesses, One Gospel make reading the book harder, particularly for American readers. First, the numeral “1” is consistently rendered by the capital “I” in the text, footnotes, and indexes. Second, in accord with British custom, commas and periods are placed outside, rather than inside, the quotation marks. But the NT expositor should not let these annoyances keep him from reading the volume.


It is encouraging to note that the study of early Jewish Christianity has
experienced something of a revival in recent years, after decades of serious neglect. The neglect can most likely be traced to the influence of such scholars as Adolph Harnack and Rudolph Bultmann, who saw Jewish Christianity as a primitive form of the faith that was quickly replaced by a Gentile Christianity, influenced by Paul. This volume could be viewed as something like a status quaestionis regarding the subject.

The book is an edited collection of papers, most of which were originally delivered in the Jewish Christianity Consultation at recent meetings of the Society of Biblical Literature. The chairman of that consultation, Matt Jackson-McCabe, is editor of the book. The first chapter by Jackson-McCabe discusses the problem of what to call this early movement—Jewish Christianity, Christian Judaism, etc. The following chapters are divided into two main sections: “Part I: Groups” and “Part II: Texts.” The authors, who evidently have thought deeply about their subjects, discuss familiar themes: the early composition of the Jerusalem church (Hebrews and Hellenists); the identity of the so-called Judaizers opposed by Paul; and the continuing history of those Jewish groups called by the Fathers “Ebionites” and “Nazarenes.” Later chapters deal with the Jewish-Christian character of the mythical “Q” document, the Gospels of Matthew and John, the Apocalypse, and the Didache. The final chapter is a very helpful discussion of what is often considered the last ancient writing by a Jewish Christian author, the Pseudo-Clementines, written by the world’s authority on that composite document, F. Stanley Jones.

As is always the case in a collection of different authors, the chapters are uneven, with some more valuable than others. In this reviewer’s opinion, the most insightful and helpful chapter for the non-specialist and/or pastor is the one by Patrick Hartin, “The Religious Context of the Letter of James.” It is so good in analyzing the thought of this neglected epistle that it alone is worth the price of the book. The chapter on the Didache by Jonathan Draper is also quite insightful, especially serving as an excellent introduction to the issues raised by the study of this unique little gem from the early church.

Sadly, the editor’s introduction is perhaps the weakest part of the book. Consider as one example the following biased and almost arrogant statement by Jackson-McCabe, “No serious scholar believes that the canonical Letter of James . . . was produced within the Jerusalem community, let alone by James himself” (11). Having been engaged in a serious study of this subject myself, I marvel at his describing such recognized scholars as Luke Johnson and Richard Bauckham as not being serious scholars, because they can offer no better alternative to the authorship of the epistle than James the Lord’s brother! These and other statements revealing his higher-critical bias may indicate that the title “no serious scholar” might apply to the editor himself.

This flaw is fortunately not indicative of the other excellent chapters. Readers will benefit greatly from becoming more familiar with a movement in the Christian world that sadly disappeared after ca. A.D. 400. The current revival of “Messianic Judaism” both in Israel and in the Diaspora is an indication that Christians need to pay greater attention to the deep Jewish roots of their faith. This
volume is a good place to do just that, as is the more conservative work by the evangelical Norwegian scholar, Oskar Skarsaune, In the Shadow of the Temple: Jewish Influences on Early Christianity (InterVarsity, 2002).


Diversity in writing style is surely confirmed by this book from the pen of John Piper. “Refreshing and personable” well describes his style this time. The introductory sections offer suggestions on how to read the book, advise on its aim, and inform the scholar that the fruitlessness of the quests for the historical Jesus caused him to set aside the conjectures and speculations of those seeking to get behind the Gospels somehow (29). Piper forthrightly assesses all those efforts as “massive minds assembling, with great scholarly touch, a house of cards,” to which he immediately adds, “It helps to be sixty years old. I have watched the cards collapse over and over” (31).

What he did was read the Gospels, wherein is the only true, compelling portrayal of Jesus, and gather all the commands which came from Christ’s lips. Then, by eliminating those which would not have any abiding significance to one’s faith and life, he ended up with fifty different commands worthy of reflection. Crunched down into one sentence, his aim finds expression in these words: “My aim has been to probe the meaning and the motivation of Jesus’ commands in connection with his person and work” (19, emphasis original).

The treatments average about six pages per command, with each set within its context, the comments being marshalled under several headings covering the whole of the pericope in which it stands. Demand #1 is “You Must Be Born Again” with its Scripture references, John 3:5, 7 and John 3:3, placed in italics immediately beneath the chapter title. Demand #50 is “Make Disciples of All Nations” with its references, Matt 8:11-12; Luke 21:12-13; Luke 21:24, similarly placed. Demand #25 is “Your Righteousness Must Exceed that of the Pharisees, for it was Hypocritical and Ugly,” using Matt 5:20; 23:27-28; Mark 7:21-23; Matt 5:8, as its biblical base. The next demand builds on #25 so that #26 presents the Pharisees from another angle: “Your Righteousness Must Exceed that of the Pharisees—Clean the Inside of the Cup” (196). As one glances over the list of demands or the chapters, familiar subject’s are brought to mind: loving your neighbor, loving God, not being angry or proud, taking up one’s cross, praying always, striving to enter the narrow door, and laying up treasures in heaven.

A healthy blend of devotional warmth and orientation with careful study, as evidenced by quite a number of footnotes and careful exegesis has produced a book admirably suited, because of its set up, to be a series of informative, instructive, and
encouraging readings, either daily or weekly or whatever fits best with one’s schedule, e.g., this reviewer, with anticipation of being blessed, will dip in bi-weekly.

Thanks to Bethlehem Baptist Church, who, in awarding their pastor (Piper) a five-month leave from preaching, provided the concentrated period needed to pull it all together, and gave to the Christian, evangelical world what must be rated as a very good and stimulating book. Read it, and it will become perhaps just as quickly a “favorite from Piper.”


Stanley Porter must be the world’s leader in the number of books that one person has edited. The amazing thing about them is the high degree of academic excellence that pervades his works. One of his recent edited collections of chapters by different authors is a compilation of addresses given as part of the H. H. Bingham Colloquium in New Testament at McMaster Divinity College, where Porter is president. Delivered as part of the 2005 Bingham Colloquium, the theme of the book is obvious from its title—a summation of recent scholarly work on the concept of the Messiah in both the Old and the New Testaments. Porter introduces the theme and the chapters in his opening chapter. Craig Evans sums up the conference and offers some brief concluding observations.

The material is handled canonically, with four chapters by Tremper Longman, Mark Boda, Al Wolters, and Loren Stuckenbruck on Messianic themes as traced through the Law, the Writings, the Prophets, the Qumran documents, and other Second Temple “apocalyptic” literature. While the chapters are serviceable as surveys, little fresh ground is plowed. The theological position that seems to be advocated in the chapters could be described as an evangelicalism broadly understood. Too much ground is conceded, in this writer’s opinion, to higher critical views. Recognition of a eventual supernatural Messiah predicted by the OT writers is acknowledged, although some traditional texts are questioned as to their legitimate application to Jesus. Another work that is often mentioned by the writers (see 2, 4, 13, 20, 25, 46, 144) and one that better serves the theological character of these writings is The Lord’s Anointed: Interpretation of Old Testament Messianic Texts, eds. Satterthwaite, Hess, and Wenham (London: Scholars Press, 1998).

The five authors who cover the Messianic themes of the NT, in my opinion, rescue the book from the level of academic mediocrity. I. Howard Marshall explores “Jesus as Messiah in Mark and Matthew” with his usual thoroughness and aplomb. Stanley Porter himself writes of “The Messiah in Luke and Acts: Forgiving the Captives” with his usual bibliographical thoroughness, while focusing on one theme of the Messiah’s work in one author. Tom Thatcher covers what he calls the
“negative Christology” of the Gospel of John, while S.A. Cummins stresses Paul’s “Corporate Christology” of God, Jesus, and the covenant community. Cynthia Long Westfall effectively covers the Messianic ideas as expressed in Hebrews and the General Epistles in a marvelously compact fashion.

If you are a pastor preaching on this vital subject or a professor desiring an update on some current thinking about the Messiah, this book could serve you well. Better overall works are available (e.g., The Lord’s Anointed above), but Porter is to be thanked for his efforts, in this and many other volumes, to bring before readers stimulating chapters on similar themes. Also, for a more popular study of the subject that interacts with Jewish views, see this reviewer’s The Messiah: Revealed, Rejected, Received (Indianapolis, Ind.: AuthorHouse, 2004).


Two early Christian documents supercede all others, except Scripture, by providing the earliest compendiums of the apostolic church’s preaching and practices. First, in regard to doctrine, is Irenaeus’ Proof of the Apostolic Preaching (ca. A.D. 180) which provides an exposition of the biblical basis on which the apostolic preaching rested. Second, in regard to practice, is the anonymously authored Didache (ca. A.D. 90), which delivers the first Christian handbook. William Varner, Ed.D. (professor of biblical studies, The Master’s College), has devoted his considerable scholastic energies to the latter during a recent sabbatical, in order to produce this veritable goldmine.

Varner has written in such a way that serious laymen, pastors, and scholars alike will profit from engaging this work, which is at once provocative, deep, and readable. This piece of first-rate scholarship provides an extensive bibliography of Didache research (139–45), plus lexical (109–26), topical (127–30), and authorial (147) indexes.

Of particular value are two chapters which provide the Greek text (chap. 3) and the author’s translation (chap. 4). Three of the most interesting essays include “The Scriptures of the Didache” (chap. 5), “The Ministers of the Didache” (chap. 8), and “The Theology of the Didache” (chap. 9).

While reflecting his own personal “take away,” the author does lead the reader to some of the most practical lessons emphasized by this ancient document in “The Lessons of the Didache” (chap. 10).

All in all, this reviewer highly recommends this fresh study of such a critically important historical document. This is a must read for every pastor.