

REVIEWS

Kenneth E. Bailey, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes. Cultural Studies in the Gospels*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2008. \$23.00. 443 pp. Reviewed by James E. Rosscup, Professor of Bible Exposition.

Those who study the Bible with informed sources have profited from Bailey's past books, *Poet and Peasant* and a companion work *Through Peasant Eyes*, devoted to Jesus' parables. In this latest product the same author has four chapters on the birth of Jesus, two on the beatitudes, four on the prayer Jesus taught His disciples, three on dramatic acts of Jesus, seven dealing with Jesus and women. Three of the latter are also on parables, and join twelve other chapters devoted to gospel parables. This effort repeats six parables dealt with in Bailey's two previous books, with just a bit of new material and some fresh organization. These six comment on the Two Debtors, the Widow and the Judge, the Good Samaritan, the Rich Fool, the Pharisee and the Tax Collector, and the Great Banquet.

The chapters on the Savior's birth delve into detail on Luke 2:1-20, the genealogy in Matthew 1, the visit of wise men and Herod's atrocities, and Simeon and Anna. On dramatic acts, Bailey studies the Call of Peter (Luke 5:1-11), the Inauguration of Jesus' Ministry (Luke 4:16-31), the Blind Man and Zacchaeus (18:35-19:11). On Jesus and the Women, the writer has an introductory chapter, then the Woman at the Well (John 4:1-47), the Syro-Phoenician Woman (Matt 15:21-28), the Lady in the Stoning Threat (John 7:53-8:11), the Woman and Simon the Pharisee (Luke 7:36-50), the Widow and the Judge (Luke 18:1-8), and the Wise and Foolish Women (Matt 25:1-13). Three of these are on parables, and later Bailey has an entire section on further stories of Jesus.

On Jesus' birth, the author sees Joseph and Mary as accepted into a private peasant home of Davidic people or relatives, not forced to resort to a lonely cave or cold stable. The birth was in the family living room because the guest chamber was already filled. Bailey stresses the honor that Middle Eastern village people showed guests. In Matthew 1, he seeks to answer why, despite a custom of Jewish genealogies tracing males, Matthew mentions four women. As to the wise men, they were from Arabia since gold was mined there, and frankincense and myrrh are from trees that grow only in that area. He cites Justin Martyr (A.D. 160) who says five times in his *Dialogue with Trypho* that these travelers hailed from Arabia, and adds that Tertullian and Clement of Rome made the same claim (53).

The book offers insights on the nine beatitudes and each detail of the prayer in Matt 6:9-12. It argues that prayers such as this one should be brief, simple, and direct can be potent, as were prayers of Jesus in the Gospels, though at times He prayed for great spans of time. Much is devoted to the meaning of "Abba," a word that an Aramaic person used for his or her human father, a respected person of rank, or a teacher. Bailey disagrees with Joachim Jeremias' claim that "father" was unique on the lips of Jesus, and points out that the OT uses "father" a dozen times in reference to God. He feels that the phrase "Our Father" is defined by Jesus in the Parable of the Prodigal Son.

The chapters on Jesus and women provide many cultural aspects. Bailey refers to the woman at the well as "the first Christian female preacher" (cf. John 4:29-30). She left the well and became a spring for others as she shared the message. On the woman in Simon's house, several customs enrich the discussion, and lessons stand out—e.g., forgiveness, love, faith, obedience, the elevation of women. Culture is vital in the account of the ten virgins. For example, the foolish women did not prepare by having a clay flask of oil to replenish their lamps, and could not borrow preparations for the coming of the bridegroom. In the spiritual analogy, people cannot get commitment and discipleship on loan, but must personally be ready for Christ's coming.

Scholars on parables bring much difference of opinion to the study of the Unjust Steward. Bailey is certain that this manager is not only a rascal when first his boss accuses him, but a deceitful embezzler in his brief, private, individual deals with clients before he leaves office. He causes a large portion of the debts to be lost to the boss to reap his selfish gain in the clients' gratitude to him for saving them money. The boss later would take the loss quietly rather than incur the debtors' angry accusation that he had gone back on arrangements they felt were by his authority. The steward is explained this way by some. Bailey does not grapple with the view of others that the steward, accused of guilt at first, later helps his boss and the clients by cutting away his own interest, thus ingratiating himself with the debtors. The boss gets his full amount and seems to be a hero for generosity. Parabolic studies see the matter quite differently, and it does not appear as simple as Bailey makes it. In either view, however, the boss praises the steward not for being clean but for working an ingenious plan to play to his advantage after he has turned in the books.

Bailey's treatment of the Pounds takes the entrusted amounts to represent spiritual gifts, whereas scholars vary with several different views here. Jesus gives the entrustments by grace, then reward in the roles of greater responsibility in service. He also is generous, Bailey feels, in not punishing or rejecting an unfaithful slave. He does not deal with the similarities that exist between this parable and the Parable of the Talents (Matt 25:14-30), as an example of what happens to an unfaithful slave there.

The book is often stimulating, quite readable, steeped in cultural benefits drawn from decades of research, and liable to stir one to agree or disagree. In view

of the substantial comments just on parables (nearly 200 pages, 239-426), serious students of Scripture will find this a provocative work to add to their shelves of parabolic studies. In this reviewer's appraisal, the book has much to offer but rates after specialist parabolic commentaries by Arland Hultgren, Klyne Snodgrass, Stanley Ellisen, and Simon Kistemaker, in that order.

A. Philip Brown II and Bryan W. Smith. *A Reader's Hebrew Bible*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008. xxviii + 1652 pp. \$49.99 (cloth). Reviewed by William D. Barrick, Professor of Old Testament.

Philip Brown is associate professor of Bible and ministerial education at God's Bible College (Cincinnati, Ohio) and Bryan Smith is Bible integration coordinator for Bob Jones University Press (Greenville, S.C.). The project commenced after Brown saw *A Reader's Greek New Testament* (Zondervan, 2004), then compiled a sample of Jonah to present to the publisher as a proposal.

A Reader's Hebrew Bible (RHB) makes a good first impression. Attractively bound in tan Italian Duo-Tone with gilt-edged pages and a ribbon page marker, it displays clean typeset pages with legible fonts. It appears to be a durable edition that will stand up under a lot of use. An informative "Introduction" (xii-xxvi) prepares the user well, explaining the volume's purpose, text, and glosses. Experienced Hebrew Bible readers will find that it takes time to adapt to the absence of text critical apparatus and *masorah parva*, but beginning Hebrew students will take to it like a duck to water.

A few glitches exist in the first edition due to software conversion problems. For example, at Ps 107:21-26 (1220) a Hebrew accent (*telisha parvum*) appears in the margin to the right of the verse numbers. Those, along with other examples elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, should have been inverted *nuns*. In addition, only in Genesis, an error in typesetting code produced a *seghol* with a *tsere* in 322 words (e.g., $\Psi\text{וּל}$ instead of $\Psi\text{וּל}$, Gen 1:20). Brown performs yeoman service by revealing the errata himself on the Internet at the following URLs that he posted July 10, 2008: <http://exegeticalthoughts.blogspot.com/2008/01/readers-hebrew-bible-review-by-its.html> and <http://spreadsheets.google.com/ccc?key=pgvtUNGb0ZrsJiCb86RGMfA&hl=en>.

All proper nouns occurring less than 100 times in the Hebrew (less than 25 times in the Aramaic) are screened in gray. Footnotes accompany all words occurring less than 100 times in the Hebrew Bible and less than 25 times in the Aramaic sections. An appendix lists all Hebrew words occurring more than 100 times together with their respective glosses (1644-50). A second appendix lists all 27 differences between the text of *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (BHS)* and the electronic database for the Westminster Leningrad Codex 4.4 (WLC) (1651-52).

BibleWorks 7.0, a popular Bible software program, employs WLC as its Hebrew Bible text. The pattern for each footnote entry is as follows:

^{fn#}Homonym# Lemma stem: *HALOT*; BDB; Alternate.
^{fn#} II מוּשַׁבֵּט QAL: cease; recede; DCH: **depart**.

The primary lexicons are Koehler and Baumgartner, eds., *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (*HALOT*; Brill, 2001) and Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon* (BDB; Clarendon Press, 1907). Alternates include Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon* (Eerdmans, 1971) and Clines, *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* (DCH [sic]; Sheffield Academic Press, 2001). All glosses are context-specific, not arbitrarily chosen (xxi). From time to time Brown and Smith cite a commentary, author, or other reference work for the alternate meaning. For example, in Josh 9:4 footnote 7 presents the alternate as “NICOT: act as an ambassador, WBC: disguise oneself as a messenger” (377). Brown and Smith derived these alternate glosses from Marten H. Woudstra, *The Book of Joshua*, New International Commentary on the OT (Eerdmans, 1994) and Trent C. Butler, *Joshua*, Word Biblical Commentary (Thomas Nelson, 1983).

Actually, these two sample entry types occur very seldom. Most footnotes in *RHB* are like footnote 48 in Jer 10:14—“צָרָה QAL: smelt; refiner, goldsmith” (807). DCH and Holladay tend to be the most frequent alternate sources for glosses. Anticipating questions concerning the use of Holladay, the authors explain that “substantial differences” exist between it and *HALOT* (xviii). Brown supplied this reviewer with the following statistics concerning alternate glosses in *RHB*: 244 from Holladay, 172 from *DCH*, 8 from WBC, 4 from NICOT, and 1 from *NIDOTTE* that occurs in 4 separate instances. In addition, author-supplied glosses occur in 185 instances (not separate glosses). Absence of an alternative gloss does not necessarily indicate satisfaction with *HALOT* and BDB (xxii). Sometimes the authors were either unable to find an adequate gloss or were uncertain of what one would be.

Brown and Smith follow the practice of the J. Alan Groves Center for Advanced Biblical Research by displaying both *Kethib* and *Qere* readings in the text. The text (*Kethib*) of Gen 8:17 in *BHS* reads אֲנִי־הָאֱלֹהִים, while the margin offers אֱלֹהִים־אֲנִי as the *Qere*. In *RHB* the text reads: אֲנִי־הָאֱלֹהִים^Q אֱלֹהִים־אֲנִי^K (12). Thus, the authors assume the traditional viewpoint that the Masoretes employed *Qere* to correct the text (xv). They do not mention the possibility that the *Qere*, according to John Barton (*Holy Writings, Sacred Text* [Westminster John Knox, 1997]) and James Barr (“A New Look at *Kethibh-Qere*,” *Oudtestamentische Studiën* 21 [1981]:19-37), might not be a correction of the *Kethib*, “but a registration of the reading tradition which enables the scribe not to be misled by it” (Barton, *Holy Writings* 124).

Description of the text and practices of the volume leads to a more pragmatic issue: How should Hebrew teachers utilize *RHB*? Since *RHB* encourages the student to learn all Hebrew vocabulary found over 100 times in the Hebrew Bible, it does not interfere with the very important role of vocabulary acquisition.

The authors point out that the volume “seeks to facilitate reading . . . , it cannot serve as a replacement for the standard lexica” (xvii). Reading *RHB* produces a literal translation, not a technically accurate translation. Students will more readily gain confidence in their reading ability by having the rarer words glossed for them in the footnotes.

RHB does not replace good lexical skills, sound exegetical work, and careful textual critical analysis (xvii-xviii). Readers “must discern which gloss is contextually appropriate” (xxi). Users must not construe reliance on *HALOT* and *BDB* as agreement with their glosses. In fact, on a number of occasions the two authors had reason to question the accuracy of glosses offered by one or more lexicons. Brown and Smith purposefully offer no alternate translation in such situations (xxii). In addition, the authors treat multi-word idioms word-by-word, leaving the determination of actual meaning to the reader (xxiii).

When the text is difficult in both *Kethib* and *Qere*, some exegetes resort to conjectural emendation. The authors of *RHB*, however, avoid it completely, giving the reader no hint at all as to how to resolve the reading. For example, two footnotes occur in Prov 22:20 (םִשְׁלֹשֵׁים וְשָׁלוֹשׁ יָמִים, one for each reading: “שְׁלֹשֵׁים וְשָׁלוֹשׁ יָמִים, the day before yesterday . . . III שְׁלֹשֵׁים וְשָׁלוֹשׁ יָמִים fighting charioteer; adjutant” (1366). The footnotes give no indication that commentators and Bible translations are nearly unanimous in reading the text as “thirty [sayings]” (שְׁלֹשֵׁים וְשָׁלוֹשׁ יָמִים). Wrestling with these issues contextually teaches the student to think.

Therefore, teachers might recommend or require *RHB* as a text in beginning Hebrew and Hebrew reading courses with the confidence that it will not undercut their teaching goals. Indeed, with *RHB* teachers will find that they can require a greater amount of reading without having to supply word lists for the assigned passages. In schools with required chapel attendance, students can carry *RHB* with them for checking OT texts in the Hebrew—another great method for expanding and retaining knowledge of the Hebrew Bible.

James W. Bryant and Mac Brunson. *The New Guidebook for Pastors*. Nashville, Tenn.: B & H Publishing Group, 2007. 311 pp. \$24.99 (paper). Reviewed by Alex D. Montoya, Associate Professor of Pastoral Ministries.

This book is written as a follow up to *Criswell's Guidebook for Pastors*, written by W. A. Criswell, famous Southern Baptist preacher and pastor. James W. Brant is a professor of theology at The Criswell College, and Mac Brunson is senior pastor of First Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Florida. These two men have teamed up to produce a new manual for pastors to guide them through the maze of pastoral responsibilities.

The book contains 21 chapters of practical advice to pastors, with each chapter having the caption of “The Pastor and His. . . .” It covers the whole field

from the call to the retirement. It provides a good companion volume to Criswell's book, bringing many of the issues pastors face up to date. The chapters are full of practical wisdom and suggestions, but not much on theological foundations. The chapters on "His First Church," "Missions, and Evangelism," "His Ethics," "Changing Churches," "His denomination" are clearly new items to consider.

The authors have a Southern Baptist background, and write for a Southern Baptist pastor, which might be an obstacle if the reader is not a Baptist. Aside from this, the authors provide a much needed update on what a young pastor needs to know. The book also provides some valuable resources in the appendixes, which by themselves would be worth the price of the book.

Christopher Cone, ed. *Dispensationalism Tomorrow & Beyond: A Theological Collection in Honor of Charles C. Ryrie*. Fort Worth, Tex.: Tyndale Seminary, 508 pp. \$29.00. Reviewed by James E. Rosscup, Professor of Bible Exposition.

Twenty-three chapters seek to reflect Dispensationalism in its best, most defensible light. They celebrate Ryrie, long-time Professor of Systematic Theology at Dallas Theological Seminary, and author of the definitive *Dispensationalism Today*. He also did *The Ryrie Study Bible, Premillennialism and the Christian Faith, Biblical Theology of the New Testament, The Grace of God, The Holy Spirit, Revelation, Acts, Basic Theology, Balancing the Christian Life, So Great Salvation, "Epistles of John" (Wycliffe Bible Commentary), The Miracles of Jesus, The Bible and Tomorrow's News*, and a number of journal articles and chapters in other books. He even has written the first chapter in the current book, advocating "The Necessity of Dispensationalism."

Cone is president of Tyndale Theological Seminary and Biblical Institute. He joins Ryrie and fifteen other writers. Robert Thomas of The Master's Seminary contributes Chapters 6 ("The Principle of the Single Meaning") and 9 ("The New Testament Use of the Old Testament") from his own book, *Evangelical Hermeneutics*.

Some chapters are of substantial help. Others might give the impression that they stress points found more or less in systems the work opposes, such as amillennialism. The work joins a large number of books in the past three decades which collect chapters by main exponents of a premillennial dispensational conviction.

In Cone's "Four Pillars of Dispensationalism," this reviewer must confess that only one of these points seems to distinguish dispensationalism substantially from other theologies. This is his fourth point, using consistent, literal hermeneutics to explain Scripture. Cone lists a lot of ideas to favor a historical/grammatical method (25-30). Parts of this seem inconclusive in rejecting one system's handling of biblical phenomena and favoring another. Some will conclude that certain

dispensational interpreters on specific passages practice solid and natural hermeneutics, but other dispensational views on texts meet with rejection even from many others in the system. And passages are open to different interpretations, some of which have more solid proof. However, candidly, this is also true of systems that the book opposes, such as amillennialism and postmillennialism. Dispensationalists do contend for a basic approach that often measures texts according to the most natural, evident, straightforward sense that the words convey.

Charles Ray in “Basic Distinctives of Dispensationalism” (chapter 4) presses some interesting points. One is the difficulty that amillennialists face in conceiving of Satan as bound in the present age (Rev 20:2) when quite a number of NT passages are lucid on the very strong, deceptive activity of Satan or demons today (48-49). A further point is the non-premillennial idea that has the church present since the beginning of the Bible (50). Contrary to this, Ray shows, dispensationalists argue for distinguishing Israel and the church, and say the church began at Pentecost (Acts 2). Among Ray’s observations are these: non-mention of the church in the OT, Paul’s calling the church a “mystery hidden in God,” not made known in pre-NT generations (51), the church as yet future in Matt 16:18, the church as “one new man [person]” (Eph 2:15), not an old entity to which God is simply continuing to add more people. With these is the factor that the apostles were at a stage of the church’s *foundation* in Eph 2:20, not integrated after it was far along in a lengthy history (52).

Ray also sensitively reconsiders NT texts in which covenant theologians equate the church with Israel (53-58). An example is Gal 6:16, “the Israel of God.” He defends rendering the word *kai* there in the primary sense as “and,” so as to refer to Gentiles who believe (distinct from people of Israel) “and the Israel of God,” i.e., people ethnically of Israel who also are genuinely of God (55). This fits with the idea that Israel is Israel in an ethnic sense in its vast multiplied occurrences in the NT, just as in the OT (56).

Some will wonder about wording in chapter 13 where “the day of the Lord” seems limited to being a time of God’s *wrath*. Some passages appear to see the “day” (era) as continuing on to include *blessing* in the kingdom that follows judgment. For example Joel 3:14 seems to focus on judgment in “the day of the Lord,” and in the context about that time v. 18 refers to blessing “in that day,” naturally the “day” the context defines.

Both judgment and blessing will occur in a “day” in which God shows extraordinarily that He is indeed “Lord.” Later, the current work does cite Paul Enns to the effect that the Day of the Lord even carries through the millennium (280), conceding that it also includes a blessing aspect. The work also allows that among relevant texts, 1 Cor 5:5 is one which states that “the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus” (282). If so, statements of chapter 13 at different points would be more effective if everywhere consistent, i.e., the “day” is only one of wrath, or within it God also shows his Lordship in blessing for which the judgment has cleared the way.

Ray's chapters 14-15 craft a very careful look at interpretations of Dan 9:24-27. He shows that views lack defensible evidence when they posit that the "sevens" refer to days, weeks, or months. He argues it as more reasonable that the reference is to *years*. His contribution also helps on views about *which period* the "seventy sevens" covers. He defends the meaning of years as actual years, the first sixty-nine transpiring before the Messiah's death and the end of the seventieth seven at the Messiah's Second Advent.

John Whitcomb's detailed reasoning that the two witnesses (Revelation 11) are two individuals comes in chapter 17. He argues that numbers in the Revelation are, for the most part, sensible if seen as literal (359). He even makes an ambitious effort to support the two witnesses being Elijah and Moses brought back from the afterlife. Not all dispensationalists can agree that Moses will die twice, and so far apart, once in Deut 34:5-7 and again in Rev 11:7-8. And not all will concede that Elijah personally needs to be one of the two future heralds. For example, Daniel Wong has developed much reasoning against the probability that the two are Moses and Elijah, rather the two are future servants who are as yet unknown ("The Two Witnesses in Revelation 11," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 154, July-September 1997).

Jerry Hullinger in chapter 18 assesses in diligent detail views on the time of the temple in Ezekiel 40-48. He argues against it being just an ideal and not a literal temple, or Solomon's historical temple, or the church (Eph 2:11ff.) or Christ (John 2:19), or the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21-22 (377-85). He himself reasons that it meets the best hermeneutical demands to see it as literal during the millennium, after Christ's Second Coming.

Chapter 21 has the sobering arguments of Ron Bigalke, Jr., to defend dispensational teachers as advocating social action to improve the world. He shows evidence to argue unfairness of Reformed claims that the system is socially irresponsible, indifferent, and concerned only with the future.

The work has enough to show that dispensationalists in a number of passages ought to be taken seriously. They seek to explain Bible verses in their most natural sense, and some individual efforts reasonably achieve this.

Russell T. Fuller and Kyoungwon Choi. *An Invitation to Biblical Hebrew: A Beginning Grammar*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2006. xviii + 364 pp + 6 DVD set. \$99.98 (cloth). Reviewed by Kyle C. Dunham, Faculty Associate.

As an addition to the Invitation to Theological Studies series, *An Invitation to Biblical Hebrew* furnishes a useful introductory grammar for beginning students to biblical Hebrew. Russell T. Fuller, associate professor of Old Testament interpretation at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Kyoungwon Choi, at the time of publication a Ph.D. student at SBTS, take up the time-tested deductive approach, focusing on "mastery of the fundamentals of Hebrew phonology (the

sounds)” and “of Hebrew morphology (the forms of the language)” (xvii). The authors contend that “until phonology and morphology are mastered, syntax cannot be truly understood or appreciated,” on the premise that “Hebrew cannot be learned in a year” (xvii). The aim of the approach, and ultimately of the grammar itself, is “that students will master Hebrew so well that they will actually use it for ministry” (xvii). By presenting the language in such a “thorough manner,” the authors seek to counteract the unsettling tendency for erstwhile seminary students to ignore Hebrew upon graduation, concluding that “this will only happen—not by computer programs—when students truly learn the language” (xviii).

Within that goal, the grammar is an accessible, largely effective primer to the fundamentals of biblical Hebrew. The grammar divides into two parts: (1) Phonological Principles (chapters 1-6, 26 pp.) and (2) Morphological Principles (chapters 7-38, 256 pp.). The section devoted to phonological principles covers the alphabet, syllabification, the shewa, the dagesh (*lene* and *forte*), the *qamets* and *qamets hatuf*, gutturals, and the rules of proto-Hebrew. The section on morphological principles divides into four sections: (1) Particles (chapters 7-9, 17 pp.); (2) Nouns and Adjectives (chapters 10-16, 49 pp.); (3) Strong Verbs (chapters 17-28, 53 pp.); and (4) Weak Verbs (chapters 29-38, 98 pp.). The first portion takes aim at particles, covering the article, the interrogative markers (וְאֵלֶּיךָ and וְאֵלֶּי), the direct object marker, inseparable prepositions, and the preposition וְ. The portion on nouns and adjectives follows, with treatment of the noun in its absolute and construct state, the syntax of nouns and adjectives, the pronominal suffixes attaching to prepositions and nouns, and segholate nouns. The third section presents the strong verb, including the perfect and imperfect forms, participles and infinitives, and an introduction to the seven principal stems. Presentations of the stative verb and the attachment of pronominal suffixes to the verb are included. The final portion deals with weak verbs and is the lengthiest, comprising over one-third of the entire grammar (proportionate to the difficulty of what the authors identify as the “Mount Everest of Hebrew” [189]). The various weak verbs are analyzed, those with gutturals or *aleph* in the first, second, or third root letter; with *waw* or *yod* in the root; with *nun* as first root letter; and geminate verbs. With its comprehensive treatment of the weak verb, the textbook mitigates considerably the difficulty of that elusive aspect of Hebrew grammar and in so doing offers its greatest contribution.

The terminology of the grammar is geared by the authors’ own admission to beginning students, not to Hebrew scholars, with popular and at times colloquial expressions (xvii). Such turns of phrase as “the shewa is an impoverished vowel, the low rent district of Hebrew—some are vocal about it, others are silent” (13) and “down from Sinai, we now examine the idolatries of the particles, those demons only exorcised through memory—mostly” (31) illustrate this tack. The grammar follows modern Israeli pronunciation (4). Emphasis is placed on understanding the rules of so-called proto-Hebrew (i.e., pre-biblical Hebrew) (Fuller and Choi designate chapter 6 “the heart of the grammar” and “the Hebrew Sinai”) (25). Here the reader realizes the authors’ governing methodology: to grasp Hebrew morphology the

student must become a skilled craftsman able to dismantle each word to its original (pre-biblical) form and to reassemble it.

In addition, several other aspects of the grammar will prove beneficial to the beginner. The authors' consistent use of mnemonic devices and catch phrases assists in the assimilation of some of the more formidable features of Hebrew grammar (the acronym SQeNeMLeVY [18 n. 5] is one example). The mastery of proto-Hebrew forms provides a solid foundation for grasping with alacrity how Hebrew words are "put together." The authors' correlation of the pronominal element with the suffixes and prefixes of the perfect and imperfect verbs is a helpful correlation for comprehension of the morphology of the strong verb (104, 110). Further, the authors' explication of certain aspects such as circumstantial clauses, which differentiate *waw* + noun constructions from *waw* consecutive constructions, is informative (164–65). The charts and appendices are very beneficial in illustrating the concepts of the book.

A few other features of the grammar are of benefit. The authors place welcome emphasis on drills and repetition, placed along with probing questions at the end of each chapter. This technique compels the student to master elemental concepts and is on the whole a strength of the grammar (one caveat is that the cumulative drills become somewhat exacting by the end of the book; drills on the material of chapter two—syllabification of words, placement of the dagesh, and distinguishing the silent vis-à-vis vocal shewa—are included in *every* subsequent chapter [by chapter 25 the drills portion is longer than the lesson itself, nearly three full pages]). In addition, the authors use a variety of innovations which set the grammar apart. For instance, vowel pointing variations for verbs are taught via a color method (e.g., A = red; E or Ê = green; O = orange) (127) (however, this reviewer is admittedly ambivalent toward the color method; see below). Treatment of the morphology of nouns and verbs utilizes a "box" method to illustrate the process of adding suffixes and shifting accentuation (51 and *passim*), which may allay some of the discomfiture arising from the occasionally perplexing alteration of Hebrew forms.

A few minor weaknesses of the grammar merit mention. First, no direct Scripture is cited or incorporated until the final two chapters, so the longsuffering student must wait some time to apply his or her knowledge of Hebrew to the text itself (in fairness, the authors modify and create Hebrew texts for translation in the grammar often close to actual biblical texts, yet without citation). Second, the box method of morphology has drawbacks. The concept is never thoroughly explained in the grammar (although more so in the DVDs), but is used pervasively with nouns and verbs. The authors use boxes in lieu of a paradigmatic strong verb (such as לָטַק) to master the conjugations, which lacks opportunity for audible reinforcement and requires greater rote memorization. Third, the color method for verbs is of uncertain value to this reviewer, who was as confused at times by the explanation of the colors as by the various modifications of the forms themselves, as illustrated in the following explanation:

If the details are forgotten, remember A/Ē for all stems except the Pu“al, Hoph‘al A/A... Pi“ēl has a little green (3ms) in the perfect; Niph‘al has a little red (2, 3fp) in the imperfect-imperative; Hithpa“ēl is the most colorful A-ē/Ē-a; Hiph‘il has the Hireq-Yod A-î/Ī-ē; the Pu“al and Hoph‘al are Communists (all red) A/A (135).

Fourth, curiously the authors omit explanation of the triliteral root system of Hebrew verbs.

In addition to the grammar, a set of six DVDs with thirty-eight lectures, which feature Russell Fuller’s presentation of the lessons of the textbook, are available. The DVDs will prove quite helpful to those seeking further reinforcement of the concepts, including perhaps students without opportunity for formal seminary training. While the format of the presentation is simple (Fuller is seated, teaching the lessons with a white board), the technique is effective, and Fuller takes opportunity to provide fresh insights and to enhance and reinforce the concepts. The DVDs are exceptionally profitable in drilling down the tools and pedagogy of the grammar. Fuller’s closing statement expresses his desire that the knowledge gained will be used for God’s glory, a worthy desire this reviewer echoes.

J. Daniel Hays, J. Scott Duvall, and C. Marvin Pate. *Dictionary of Biblical Prophecy and End Times*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007. 512 pp. \$35.99 (cloth). Reviewed by Dennis M. Swanson, Director of the Seminary Library.

The world of biblical and theological reference works has for some time needed a new, updated reference source on biblical prophecy. J. Barton Payne’s excellent *Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1973) is now severely dated and not formatted to deal with specific terms. Rather it treats prophecy by prophecy in the text. John Walvoord’s *Every Prophecy in the Bible* (Colorado Springs, Colo.: Victor, 1999), was much along the same line, but was a decidedly disappointing production.

This current volume is arranged along the lines of a normal reference work, dealing with terminology (both biblical and theological), prophecy within individual books of the Bible, and concepts. The authors have presented this work as “conceived with the purpose of helping lay people in the church study and understand biblical prophecy” (7). The authors state that they have “no theological agenda to push or prophetic viewpoint to champion, other than a strong commitment to the Scriptures and a passion to interpret the biblical texts in accordance with the intention of the biblical writers” (ibid). The phrase “strong commitment to Scripture” as opposed to inerrancy strikes this reviewer as an interesting choice of words.

As laudable as the authors' intentions were, the end product presented in this work is a disaster. The individual article headings are a mish-mash that obviously had no input from any editorial hand experienced in reference subject headings. For instance, instead of listing all of the views of the rapture under a standard and easily understood heading such as "Rapture, Views of" (with individual "see" listings for the names of each view placed alphabetically, for example, "Mid-Tribulational Rapture: See Rapture, Views of" pointing to the single main article) each view of the rapture is given a separate entry. The problem is that the entries for the Pretribulational Rapture (348-51) and Prewrath Rapture (351-52) follow each other with no break. This gives the appearance to the target audience that these are the only two rapture views. The Midtribulational Rapture (284-86) and Posttribulational Rapture (337-40) entries are lost. Even more oddly, an actual entry for "Rapture" (362-64) has much of the same material as in the scattered articles. The same problem plagues several subjects such as those related to the millennium and the Book of Revelation (where articles related to the interpretive options of Revelation are scattered throughout the volume). A lengthy article has charts for the "Seven Churches of Revelation" (416-24), but then the work has individual articles for each of the seven cities. The "see" references that are used at the end of the articles are not set off adequately in terms of type font or style to catch the eye. The authors decided not to use "see also" references, simply using "see," apparently not knowing the difference or being unaware of standard reference work formatting.

Though choices for entries are also a question for any reference work, some of the omissions are egregious. Entries exist for the Abrahamic, the Davidic, and the New Covenants, but no entries for or even references to the other biblical covenants (e.g., Noahic, Palestinian, Mosaic, and Priestly). By comparison, an entry does occur for the entirely insignificant and obscure individual named Noadiah in the OT (314). Some of the "see" entries are distracting. On page 416, an entry for "Servant of the Lord" appears with the line "See Servant Songs." That "see" line is followed immediately with the entry for "Servant Songs" making the "see" entry rather pointless. Actually, the first entry "Servant of the Lord" would have been the stronger and more logical heading for the entry. Though the volume has an entry for "Heaven" (200-201), it has none for "Hell" or even "Eternal Punishment," not even a "see" reference that would point the reader to the inadequate entry for "Lake of Fire" (246). A one-paragraph entry for "Second Advent" (409) is followed immediately by a lengthy entry for "Second Coming," clearly rendering the previous entry superfluous since no meaningful distinction exists between the two.

Another confusing choice is listing Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John as "Book of" instead of "Gospel of." This is most problematic with the Gospel of John. Under the heading of "Book of John" (231-32) one is left wondering exactly what is meant, the Gospel account or one of the three epistles. In fact, it is not until the second paragraph of the entry that the reader is informed that the Gospel account is being discussed. As one progresses through the article the question arises over whether the epistles will also be discussed at all; they are not. Some biblical books,

despite their obvious importance in biblical prophecy (e.g., The Book of Romans, especially Chapters 9–11) are left untreated. The labeling of the entries with “Book(s) of” is inconsistent, sometimes used and sometimes not (e.g., 1 and 2 Thessalonians).

Bibliographic entries for the articles (or even a separate bibliography listing) are conspicuous in their absence. In the 122 endnotes (483-87), a decidedly poor practice in a “dictionary”; the authors give no indication as to which article a particular note pertains (and the formatting of the superscript numbers renders them difficult to find). The only index is a Scripture Index “with Apocrypha.” However, the Apocryphal Books are not in their standard location (between the Old and New Testament) nor are they categorically labeled, but simply listed after Revelation. This work might have been salvaged with a simple index listing of all the articles, but this was not done. An index of people named would have been an easy and useful addition. Multiple typographical errors and several misplaced or misleading “header labels” (see the top of pages 342, 343, 344, 345, and 346 for examples) are further blemishes.

The volume gives every appearance of being rushed through production without careful editorial examination and with no regard for the use of standard subject headings or standard reference-work formatting. The good material that appears (and there are some well-written, albeit unremarkable, portions in this volume) is hopelessly lost in the confusing maze of this “dictionary.” It cannot be recommended at any level, for it is over-priced, poorly executed, and incomplete.

Michael P. Knowles, ed. *The Folly of Preaching*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. 2007. 264 pp. \$18.00 (paper). Reviewed by Alex D. Montoya, Associate Professor of Pastoral Ministry.

This book has an emphasis on the methods and models of preaching, with Michael Knowles providing a number of well-known and some not-so-well-known preachers giving their emphasis on preaching. The book has four main divisions:

- “New Creation”: The Social Dimensions of Preaching
- “Not with Plausible Words of Wisdom”: Homiletic Method
- “Grace Sufficient”: The Theology of Preaching
- “Grace Sufficient”: Sermons

Among the contributors are David G. Buttrick, Tony Campolo, Thomas G. Long, Martin Marty, John R. W. Stott, Elizabeth R. Achtemeier, and Haddon W. Robinson. The editor endeavored to garnish the best of these authors, and use it to emphasize the nature of preaching. He utilized the Corinthian exhortation on the foolishness of the message preached as the theme.

As would be expected in a book of this nature, the sections vary in style, approach, and theological foundations. One derives profit in its reading, and the preacher is challenged with various themes. The section on "Sermons" provides examples on models of preaching. Although not intentionally expositional, the sermons do expand one's concept of preaching.

Paul E. Koptak. *Proverbs*. NIV Application Commentary. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003. 712 pp. \$29.99 (cloth). Reviewed by William D. Barrick, Professor of Old Testament.

The NIV Application Commentary's primary aim is to provide biblical expositors with a tool that will help them bring the message of Scripture into a modern context (7). To expedite the series' aim, the authors divide each commentary into three sections: "Original Meaning" (traditional exegetical material), "Bridging Contexts" (explanation of the text's timeless truths that move readers closer to present-day application), and "Contemporary Significance" (modern application). The last two sections of each passage studied are the obvious focus of this volume and are extremely helpful as guides to application for the devotional reader as well as the teacher and preacher.

Up front, Koptak warns readers not to think of the Book of Proverbs "as the kind of success handbook we find in the self-help section" (19). Throughout the commentary he remains cautious in making application of Proverbs to modern readers. In doing so, he makes the reader aware of the similarities and differences between the world of Proverbs and today (20; cp. 76-81). For Koptak, the purpose of Proverbs is "to foster wisdom," (24) and it "sets out for its readers three pursuits under the banner of wisdom: knowledge, character, and piety" (63). By looking at both the rhetorical elements of Proverbs (25-27, 33-35) and its relationship to ancient Near Eastern wisdom literature (27-30), he prepares readers for both interpretation and application. At key junctures he focuses on the importance of literary context (e.g., 152-54, 284-87). Koptak addresses many comments directly to the preacher and teacher to offer suggestions on how to preach difficult passages within Proverbs (e.g., 216-17). Repeatedly, he points out catchwords, clusters, strings, themes, and structures that provide a literary context even for the collections of individual proverbs (337, 354-55, 381, 393-94).

Rather than adopting the viewpoint that Proverbs prepares civil servants for service in the Israelite royal court (cf. 30-31), Koptak adheres to a family orientation in the book. In his first words dealing with Prov 1:8-19, he writes, "The literary setting for the instruction in chapters 1-9 is the home schooling of a young man coming of age" (71). This approach presents lessons for young people and parents alike. Indeed, the commentator claims that the text "urges parents to take seriously the task of wisdom education in the home" (110). Parents will find this commentary

supportive of their educational role with their children, as well as challenging them to avoid the mistake of applying the truths of Proverbs to the young alone (112).

An examination of some of the key interpretive issues within Proverbs presents a picture of Koptak's interpretive conclusions. On the personification of Wisdom in Proverbs 8, Koptak identifies a NT development of an analogy between Wisdom and Christ without taking the passage as prophetic (42, 243, 258-61). Without getting bogged down in the various views of 11:30, the commentator works through the text to demonstrate that the meaning is that "the wise promote life, they do not take it away" (325). In regard to the rod in 13:24 and 23:13, he denies that the text supports corporal punishment (362, 547). Presenting four views of 22:6 (and a fifth in a footnote), he concludes that the proverb speaks primarily of "the initiation into adulthood and the teaching of its expectations and responsibilities" (518). He identifies the "son" in 30:4 as "any person who learns wisdom" (657).

A work of this size covering the entire book of Proverbs must be limited in depth and detail. Such constraints force an incomplete discussion of some key topics (such as the meaning of *peti*, "simple"; 59-60). Even though this volume was published prior to Waltke's two volumes on Proverbs in NICOT (Eerdmans, 2004, 2005), Koptak lists the work in his helpful "Select Bibliography on Proverbs" (51-56).

In conclusion, this volume does not replace the need for exegetical works like Waltke's (NICOT). Koptak's contributions exegetically and expositionally are comparable to those of Duane A. Garrett's *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs* (NAC; Broadman, 1993) and Tremper Longman's *Proverbs* (Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms; Baker Academic, 2006). Expositors, however, will find that Koptak's commentary provides greater guidance in applying the text of the book of Proverbs—its greatest contribution.

Robert Letham. *The Holy Trinity: In Scripture, History, Theology, and Worship*. Phillipsburg, N.J.: P & R, 2004. xv + 551 pp. \$24.99 (paper). Reviewed by Cliff McManis, TMS alumnus and Associate Professor of Theology, The Cornerstone Seminary.

Dr. Robert Letham, the former pastor of Emmanuel Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Wilmington, Delaware, teaches systematic theology at Wales Evangelical School of Theology. He writes from a Reformed perspective (ix).

Letham's work is a welcomed *tour de force* in trinitarian studies. He begins this substantive tome by begging for a "recovery of the Trinity at ground level" (7) among evangelicals (5), in all areas of life and worship (1), in most pulpits and pews (1), and especially in the Western church as a whole (3-7). He laments that Christians and the church abroad have relegated the Trinity to insignificance. Even theologians and scholars have failed here, for Letham alleges that the doctrine of the

Trinity has not been significantly advanced or developed since the work of Calvin. Consequently, a “serious *lacunae* in contemporary Christian awareness of the triunity of God” (11) has developed. Letham’s goal is to fill the void.

He divides his work into four parts. The first section he calls “Biblical Foundations,” in which he gives a cursory overview of selected OT texts, a survey of the deity of Jesus and a basic examination of triadic NT patterns of the Holy Spirit (17-85). The second section is “Historical Development,” in which he traces trinitarian progress from Irenaeus [A.D. 130-200] to Calvin [A.D. 1509-1564] (87-268). The next section he calls “Modern Discussion.” Here he traces the influences of Barth, Rahner, Moltmann, Pannenberg, Torrance, and others (269-376). The last part covers “Critical Issues” In this he metes out practical implications of trinitarian theology on worship, prayer, song, missions, and others (376-478).

In his work, Letham gives priority to “Historical Development” by committing 179 pages to the discussion; he gives the least attention to “Biblical Foundations” with a mere 68 pages. This is in keeping with his observation in the Introduction that one cannot appreciate the Trinity without “a wide and thorough historical underpinning” following “carefully and patiently the development of the church’s understanding” (11). In hindsight, Letham’s study is based more on historical theology than on biblical theology. In fact, at times Letham downplays “Biblicism” (5), “biblical studies” (5), and biblical exegesis (384) in favor of historic creeds (383-84), church Fathers (378), and even philosophical theology (360-62, 379). Despite this periodic tendency, overall, Letham proves himself to be vigorously committed to biblical authority and inspiration.

One clear theme gives continuity to Letham’s study. He repeatedly bemoans the fact that throughout church history, the “Eastern and Western churches have faced different tendencies toward imbalance on one side or the other” regarding views of the Trinity (2). Letham’s mission is to establish a modern-day corrective, providing the perfect biblical balance. The East, from the earliest times, has been prone to subordinationism (and tritheism), due to over-emphasizing distinctions among the divine persons, thus relegating the Son and the Holy Spirit to sub-deity roles that are somehow derivative ontologically or by altogether positing three distinct gods (3, 211, 251, 354, 377, 463). Letham says Pannenberg, Moltmann, Gunton, and Bray are guilty here (321, 463). On the other hand, the Western church has routinely leaned toward modalism, blurring eternal distinctions among the three persons of the Trinity due to an imbalanced focus on the divine essence. Augustine is the culprit here (3). Because of his Neo-Platonist inklings (430) and his ahistorical/allegorical hermeneutics, Augustine had a faulty starting point for explicating his doctrine of God. Letham avers, “Augustine held to the Trinity only with some difficulty” (446); even worse, he writes, “[T]he Augustinian model has bred atheism and agnosticism” (212; cf. 408). Other Western theologians who inherited the sin of Augustine’s modalism in one degree or another include Aquinas (235), Barth and Rahner (7), Warfield, Charles Hodge, Berkhof, and Packer (4).

Only Calvin (252-268) and Owen (409, 117, 419) come away somewhat unscathed from the historically exacting pen of Letham and his tacit examples of heresy.

Letham's solution to striking the delicate balance between starting with the distinction of persons versus starting with the divine essence when systematizing a biblical doctrine of God is to pursue "equal ultimacy" (463). Simply put, this entails a restraint from conceiving of the divine being separately from person. Or positively stated, recognize, "The one Being of God is identical with the communion of the three divine Persons and the Communion of the three divine Persons is identical with the one Being of God" (462). According to Letham, only T. F. Torrance [1913-2007] has been able to pull this off (356, 373). Following suit with Torrance, Letham suggests his own remedy toward the perfect, biblical, trinitarian balance by delineating his six "Vital Parameters" which constitute his working definition of the Trinity (381-83). His six parameters are as follows: (1) we need to recognize the equal ultimacy of the being of God and the three persons; (2) the three persons are *homoousios*; each person is the whole God; (3) the three persons mutually indwell one another in a dynamic communion; we need to invoke the historic doctrine of *perichoresis*; (4) the three persons are irreducibly different from one another; the Son is eternally distinct from the Father and the Spirit; (5) there is a fixed, eternal order among the persons regarding their relations; the Son is sent from the Father only; the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son; this is the historic doctrine of *taxis*; (6) finally, "A doctrine of the Trinity that is to be faithful to the Bible from which it emerges must give equivalent expression to each of the above parameters."

True to his promise, at least for this reviewer, Letham delivered—he craftily and painstakingly advanced the doctrine of the Trinity in a refreshing, edifying, and biblical manner. Of his many contributions, one stands out. He forges a meticulous and unrivaled historical analysis of the development of trinitarian thought in the church, especially in the seminal centuries. Letham reminds readers that Irenaeus bolstered a healthy triadic view of God and excoriated ontological dualism (96); Tertullian bequeathed to the church helpful terms like *trinitas* and *persona* (98); he reminds the reader that *hypostasis* and *ousia* were once synonymous (119); Athanasius gave *hypostases* new, more precise nuances (144) and introduced the concept of "mutual indwelling" (139); the Cappadocians enhanced and clarified the doctrine of the Holy Spirit (164); people frequently confuse the "creed of Nicaea" of A.D. 325 with the "Nicene Creed" of A.D. 381 (87, 115, 168). Other examples abound.

As for weaknesses, not many were glaring ones. At times, he overstates the case: "For the vast majority of Christians, including most ministers and theological students, the Trinity is still a mathematical conundrum" (1; cf. 5, 212, 272, 356, 408). Letham does not know "most" ministers first hand. Also, for a treatment that intends to be comprehensive and up to date, it is surprising that Letham is not conversant with other solid works recently wrought that advance trinitarian studies from a biblical and exegetical stance, like Carl Henry, Millard Erickson, Bruce

Demarest and Gordon Lewis, James White, John Feinberg, and Wayne Grudem. Despite the oversight, Letham's work is monumental and will serve the church well for years to come.

Tremper Longman III. *Proverbs*. Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006. 608 pp. \$39.99 (cloth). Reviewed by William D. Barrick, Professor of Old Testament.

The commentary series of which this volume is a part targets primarily the needs of "scholars, ministers, seminary students, and Bible study leaders" (12). It is confined to Psalms (3 vols. by John Goldingay), Proverbs (by Longman), Song of Songs (by Richard S. Hess), Job, and Ecclesiastes. Tremper Longman III, the Robert H. Gundry professor of biblical studies at Westmont College (Santa Barbara, California), is the editor of this series as well as the author of this particular volume. He has authored or co-authored more than twenty books, including commentaries on Ecclesiastes (NICOT; Eerdmans, 1997), Daniel (NIVAC; Zondervan, 1999), the Song of Songs (NICOT; Eerdmans, 2001), Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs (Cornerstone Biblical Commentary; Tyndale, 2006), and Jeremiah and Lamentations (NIBC; Hendrickson, 2008). Longman also wrote *How to Read Proverbs* (InterVarsity, 2002).

A general introduction (21-87) precedes this volume's commentary section, providing detailed examination of Proverbs' title, canonicity, authorship, and date (21-26), social setting (26-28), text (28-29), genre and literary style (29-36), structure (36-42), ancient Near Eastern background and relationships (42-56), theology (56-61), relationship to Ecclesiastes and Job (61-63), relationship to the NT (64-69), extrabiblical developments of the metaphor of Woman Wisdom (69-72), and selected theological topics (72-87). Longman's introduction rivals Bruce K. Waltke's longer introduction (2 vols., NICOT; Eerdmans, 2004) in its detail and exceeds introductions in both Duane A. Garrett's (NAC; Broadman, 1993) and Paul E. Koptak's (NIVAC; Zondervan, 2003) introductions. One significant aspect of Longman's approach to Proverbs is in his rejection of any systematic structure to Proverbs 10-31 (15-16, 40-41). In other words, he believes that the collections in the final two-thirds of the book are arranged randomly (with an occasional rare grouping) without a context to help the reader understand the individual proverb. In regard to the relationship between ancient Near Eastern wisdom literature and the Book of Proverbs, Longman states that they merely share "an international tradition of wisdom" (54) that possesses some similarities.

Longman's commentary consists of three sections: translation (his own with technicalities relegated to footnotes), section-by-section interpretation with repetition of translation to mark off each discussion (supported by both bibliographical and technical footnotes), and theological implications (including some discussion of

application and relationship to the NT) following each section's commentary. For example, the commentary for Proverbs 1 begins with the translation of all 33 verses (91-93). Its interpretation commences with 1:1-7 as a section including an introduction (93-94), verse-by-verse comments (94-103), followed by identification of theological implications (103-4). Then the next section (1:8-19) is covered in the same fashion (104-10), followed by 1:20-33 (110-14). Some chapters, though possessing multiple sections, have only one discussion of theological implications (e.g., chapters 2 and 5; 126-27, 163-65). Due to Longman's view of the random nature of Proverbs 10-31, he provides no treatment of theological implications for those chapters.

In his commentary, Longman views Woman Wisdom as representing "not only Yahweh's wisdom but Yahweh himself" (59). However, he does not mean that Proverbs 8 prophesies concerning the Messiah (70, 212). Rather, the NT identifies Jesus as Wisdom herself (68). According to Longman, "Seeing this connection between Jesus and Woman Wisdom has important implications for how Christians read the book of Proverbs" (ibid.). Thus, wisdom in Proverbs is ultimately a choice between God and false gods, not just a way of living or thinking wisely. Being one of the most controversial issues of interpretation in Proverbs (203), this issue of Wisdom's relationship to Yahweh (and/or Jesus) provokes one of Longman's longest treatments of theological implications (208-13).

Proverbs 11:30 is a *crux interpretum*, with commentators taking a number of different views. Longman identifies three major interpretive approaches, including the popular "winning souls" and leans toward the view that "the actions and advice of the wise preserve and enhance the lives of others" (266). Unlike Koptak (see review of Koptak's work in this issue of *TMSJ*), Longman interprets 13:24 as a reference to corporal punishment (292). The topic is significant enough in his opinion to require an entry in his "Topical Studies" appendix ("Physical Discipline," 564-65). Proverbs 22:6 presents another *crux*. The commentator first warns that the reader must recognize "some built-in ambiguities" (404) in order to prevent being too dogmatic when applying the text's principle. Secondly, he reminds the reader that these proverbs are not laws or promises. As he puts it, "The proverb is simply an encouragement to do the right thing when it comes to raising one's children" (405). In regard to the "son" in 30:4, Longman indicates that the preceding four rhetorical questions in the context make it clear that "the questioner is asking about human beings" (523).

In his "Topical Studies" appendix (549-78), Longman offers an alphabetically arranged entries on twenty-seven select topics touched upon by individual proverbs in the randomly organized final two-thirds of Proverbs. Examples of these topics include "Alcohol" (550), "Appropriate Expression of Emotions" (551), "Business Ethics" (553), "Illness and Health" (558-59), "Messengers" (563), "Rumors/Gossip/Slander/Insult" (568-69), "Table Manners" (572-73), and "Women/Wife" (576-78). The volume closes with a fairly extensive "Bibliography" (579-93), "Subject Index"

(594-96), "Author Index" (597-99), and "Index of Scripture and Other Ancient Writings" (600-608).

As with other volumes in this series, Longman's *Proverbs* presents ministers and seminarians, as well as informed laymen, with a welcome addition to the growing number of recently published commentaries on Proverbs. Wise expositors will utilize a variety of these commentaries as guides in the study of this important section of God's written revelation.

Victor H. Matthews and James C. Moyer. *The Old Testament: Text and Context*. 2d ed. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2005. xv + 357 pp. \$34.95 (cloth). Reviewed by William D. Barrick, Professor of Old Testament.

Both Matthews and Moyer are professors of religious studies at Missouri State University. Matthews has authored at least six books including *Manners and Customs in the Bible* (3d ed., Hendrickson, 2006) and *Studying the Ancient Israelites: A Guide to Sources and Methods* (Baker, 2007). In addition, he has co-authored at least eight books, including *Old Testament Parallels: Laws and Stories from the Ancient Near East* (3d ed., Paulist, 2007), as well as *The Social World of Ancient Israel* (Hendrickson, 2005) with Don Benjamin, and *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament* (InterVarsity, 2000) with John H. Walton and Mark W. Chavalas. Moyer has written numerous book reviews and articles for *Biblical Archaeologist*. With Matthews, he co-authored "Archaeological Coverage in Recent One-Volume Bible Dictionaries," *BA* 55 (1992):141-51—one of several articles dealing with one-volume Bible dictionaries, atlases, handbooks, and commentaries.

Hendrickson published the first edition of *The Old Testament: Text and Context* in 1997. Revisions in this second edition add nearly 36 pages to the volume, including updated archaeological data, new sidebars illustrating the text's discussions and providing new translations of ANE texts, restructured chapters, recomposed study questions concluding each section, "Additional Resources" (312-16) providing students with tools to pursue further studies, and an expanded "Glossary of Terms and Concepts" (317-31). Indexes for "Names and Subjects" (333-42) and "Ancient Sources" (343-57) conclude the volume.

The textbook's 105 sidebars are its key feature. Examples of their subject matter and representative pages are as follows: biblical information (9, 73, 152), archaeological information (12, 25, 94), historical information (15, 287), literary and interpretative information (30, 53, 132-33), various translations of ANE texts (83, 140, 179), and Scripture quotes (63, 67, 106).

The authors provide 243 study questions presented in 39 sets (some with as few as 2 questions). Many of the questions have no relation to the textbook's coverage. Students must seek the information in the suggested resources contained

in pages 312-16. Throughout the text the authors place unfamiliar technical terms in bold type, indicating that the glossary provides a definition. Outside the shaded sidebars, Matthews and Moyer have also inserted 11 maps, 2 charts, 6 drawings, and 21 photos where pertinent to the discussion. However, it could not be considered richly illustrated—pages of text remain uninterrupted by such insertions (e.g., 183-214 and 234-78). Although the volume is an introductory textbook to the canonical OT, it includes overviews of deuterocanonical books (294-307).

One of the strengths of this volume is its utilization of archaeological data and ANE literature to illuminate the historical and social setting of OT events and characters. Matthews and Moyer present superb parallels between the biblical text and ANE records (e.g., 169, 192, 256). Other positive aspects of the volume include their treatment of *khosed* (158), their understanding of biblical acrostics (210) and chiasms (212), and their recognition of the defensibility of a patriarchal date for the composition of the Book of Job (244). They also offer very sound reasons for the absence of “God” in the Book of Esther (275).

Beyond these positive observations, however, the volume possesses many negatives. To start with, the volume exemplifies a minimalist and documentarian approach championed by liberal theologians applying a hermeneutics of doubt and suspicion regarding the biblical record. Apparently Darwinian evolution is one of the authors’ presuppositional standards (“questions that have troubled humanity since the cave,” 237). Social and religious evolutionary philosophy informs their treatment of the development of the Jewish religion (219-21). The volume also promotes multiple authorship for Isaiah (212). The authors attribute apparent differences between parallel biblical texts to either the biblical writer’s ignorance or an editor’s agenda (175). Denying the messianic interpretation of Isaiah 53, the authors adhere to multiple interpretations of the text (216). In addition, they belittle and misrepresent the NT view of Satan (245). In fact, they argue that the writers of Scripture utilized non-historical events to communicate truth (276)—an example being the Noahic Flood (52, 276). Furthermore, they take an agnostic stance with regard to the historicity of the exodus (81) and explain away divine revelation whenever possible (89, 119, 243, 288).

In a methodological matter, Matthews and Moyer frequently cite detailed statistics, but provide no sources to support them (e.g., 83, 86, 217). As far as coverage is concerned, they omit any reference to the finds at Ebla (Tel Mardikh). For the sake of accuracy, the glossary needs corrections as follows: Qumran is not the only site for Dead Sea scroll discoveries—there are eight additional sites (“Dead Sea Scrolls,” 320); “Haplography” (323) is the accidental deletion of a word or phrase where two of the same were originally present; and, the entry for “Theodicy” (330) is much too general.

While this volume contains some valuable information, the authors’ approach and views create an atmosphere of antsupernaturalism and minimalism antithetical to divine revelation. Evangelical teachers would do well to avoid its use

as a textbook. All of the good material occurs readily elsewhere within either a neutral or a soundly evangelical context.

Donald K. McKim, ed. *Dictionary of Major Biblical Interpreters*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2007. xxvii + 1107 pp. \$45.00. Reviewed by Dennis M. Swanson, Director of the Seminary Library.

In 1998 InterVarsity Press released the *Historical Handbook of Major Biblical Interpreters* also edited by Donald K. McKim, a rather disappointing production. The publicity releases for this new volume announce it as a "revised and vastly expanded edition" of that work. The statement, however, on the verso said, "Some material previously appeared" in the *Historical Handbook* and is a much more accurate reflection of the reality of this much improved and valuable work. Though the publisher treats this as a true "second edition" (which is technically true), carrying the former works preface as well as a new preface; the fact that it has a new title demonstrates the publisher's desire for this to be seen as an entirely new work.

McKim, formerly the academic dean and professor of theology at Memphis Theological Seminary and currently the reference editor for Westminster John Knox Publishing, has clearly grown in his craft. Some of his early editorial efforts were often heavy handed and reflected his own theological biases rather than furnishing the impartial and thorough work one expects in standard reference works. He clearly assembled a fine staff of assistants as well as a first-rate group of contributors. McKim himself contributed one full article (William Perkins, 815-19). The scope of the essays has a largely Western orientation, reflecting interpreters from Europe and North America as McKim admits. He states in his new preface that in this work, "there is a lack of sufficient entries on women biblical interpreters and on those from outside the predominant areas of Western Europe and the United States" (xii). This is an odd complaint from the editor, who seems to be criticizing his own editorial decisions (he stated one paragraph earlier, "the list of those to be included in such a volume has been my decision, in consultation with others"). Interestingly, the two women for whom there are entries (Fiorenza Elisabeth Schussler, 895-99; and Phyllis Trible, 989-92) also represent two of the five articles for living individuals, and two of the three for those who would be considered currently active scholars.

The first part of this volume consists of six introductory essays presenting a survey of "Biblical Interpretation Through the Centuries." The periods are covered by different contributors and include The Early Church (1-14); The Middle Ages (14-121); The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries (22-44); The Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries (45-66); Europe in the Twentieth Century (67-87); and North American in the Twentieth Century (88-102). Like the individual article, each section contains a useful introductory bibliography. The essays are well done, clearly written and logically presented; particularly in the more complex later essays.

Also included are useful indexes of Persons, Subjects, and an alphabetical listing of the individual articles.

The selection of individuals for articles in a work like this is almost certain to solicit discussion on inclusions and exclusions. However, by and large this reviewer has few disagreements with the selection. One could argue that the omission of Samuel Prideaux Tregelles (1813-75) is a decided mistake. Most certainly the omission of I. Howard Marshall (b. 1934) is significant, considering the fact that another living scholar of the same era (Walter Brueggeman, b. 1932), along with the aforementioned Schussler and Tribble, were included. Marshall's influence among evangelicals in biblical interpretation is considerable. Of those included, the oddest entry is perhaps for John Locke (668-70), who though possessing a biblically derived foundation for his theories of politics and economics, his works on biblical studies were not unique and really made no lasting contribution in the field.

The selection for the articles was, however, largely even-handed and represents early Catholic, Reformed, evangelical, and even dispensational contributors. Those of varying denominational affiliations are also represented. All the articles are generally two pages or more and contain significant bibliographies. The articles are exceptionally thorough and do not shy away from pointing out negative aspects of writers' lives, such as the Nazi affiliations of Gerhard Kittel (614-18), or theology controversy, such as the significant errors of William Barclay (144-46). In a couple of entries, two individuals are listed together because their work is more often considered in a united rather than an individual manner (Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, 606-8; and B. F. Westcott and F. J. A. Hort, 1038-43).

This work represents a major and welcome addition to the world of reference works in biblical and theological studies. It will be an excellent jumping off point for students beginning their research and will be exceptionally useful for pastors who would like a little background on various commentators and scholars whom they encounter in their studies but know little about.

New American Standard Bible Audio. Narrated by Stephen Johnson. Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishers. 58 CDs. \$99.95. Reviewed by Gregory H. Harris, Professor of Bible Exposition.

Hendrickson Publishing has released the updated New American Standard Bible on audio CD. For those who desire to listen to the Bible being read while traveling or working out, this is a helpful product. The quality and clarity of the CDs are pretty much on a par with those of other CDs. The CDs are arranged in the same order as a written Bible, making it easy to find the book and chapter one seeks. It will take anyone hundreds of hours to listen to the entire Bible being read. To have the technology available to do so is a blessing for those who live today.

It should be understood that listening to someone read the Bible is somewhat similar to listening to someone sing a song: some will thoroughly enjoy it; others will not. This will be somewhat like “beauty is in the ear of the beholder.” The reading by Stephen Johnson is not a natural reading but rather is a somewhat dramatized one, and the potential purchaser needs to understand this before purchasing the series. People who will listen to these books of the Bible being read will most likely love it or hate it, but probably very few of those will be in the in-between category. Again realizing that a lot of this will be along the lines of personal preference, I did not enjoy listening to this (as any other professor will have those who greatly like his classes and those who do not); so my criticisms are not meant as a harsh or hateful attack. Often it seems that the focus was on the reader and how it was being read rather than the content of what was being read. To me, it was almost like having a fairy tale read rather than the holy Word of God. That being said, I am sure you would have other people listen to this audio Bible, thoroughly enjoy how it is done, and would thus benefit accordingly. I recommend listening to a CD (perhaps from the Hendrickson website) before purchasing the entire set to see in which category you belong.

Not many options are available for those who desire to listen to NASB on CD, especially the 1977 version. Much to my delight, I was able to find a used and no longer being released 1977 OT NASB read by E. W. “Red” Jeffries on Amazon.com. (I had previously purchased the NT by the same reader as a separate set.) For those interested in obtaining this, they may want to see what is available online.

Either way, or with other versions recorded and made available, listening to the Bible being read is a helpful way to saturate oneself with the Word of God. It also puts us back in the Bible world, as most of the original recipients had the Word of God read aloud while in the assembled congregation.

Mark D. Roberts. *Can We Trust the Gospels? Investigating the Reliability of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John*. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2007. 202 pp. \$12.99 (paper). Reviewed by Kelly T. Osborne, Associate Professor of New Testament.

With a Ph.D. in New Testament from Harvard University, Mark D. Roberts (hereafter MR), senior pastor of Irvine Presbyterian Church, is one of the brave souls helping to stem the tidal wave of disinformation about Jesus flooding our world. One need only look at the best-selling success of Dan Brown’s *The Da Vinci Code* (New York, Doubleday, 2003) and Bart Ehrman’s *Misquoting Jesus: The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why* (New York, Harper-Collins, 2005) to see how widely views hostile to traditional and specifically biblical Christianity are promoted, purveyed, and consumed by a reading public that seems more anxious

than ever to find ecclesiastical cover-ups, edgy portrayals of Jesus, or some new spin on what has been in existence and known for hundreds of years.

In his stand against false views and misinformation about Jesus, MR gets straight to the point in the title of his “blook”—a book based on a blog (21-23)—*Can We Trust the Gospels? Investigating the Reliability of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John*. For a Bible-believing Christian the obvious answer is “Yes, of course, we can trust the Gospels!” But MR writes for readers “who don’t have specialized academic knowledge and who don’t want to wade through a much longer volume” (23), and includes those who are “troubled by negative views of the Gospels” as well as those “unfamiliar with the Bible” (20).

The book as a whole does a good job of answering the question posed in its title, but MR does narrow the focus to whether the canonical gospels offer “*reliable historical information* about Jesus of Nazareth” (13, MR’s emphasis). In chapter 1, he relates how his personal experiences during undergraduate days at Harvard University initially caused his faith in the historical accuracy of the canonical Gospels to be shaken, but later strengthened, as he wrestled with historical and critical issues raised in class by some of his theologically liberal professors (14-19). His method is to state the issues in the form of fifteen FAQs (= Frequently Asked Questions; note the typical blog terminology), to which he responds with one short chapter devoted to each question (25-195). Sample questions/chapter titles are: Chapter 2, Can We Know What the Original Gospel Manuscripts Said? Chapter 9, Are There Contradictions in the Gospels? Chapter 10, If The Gospels Are Theology, Can They Be History? Chapter 11, Do Miracles Undermine the Reliability of the Gospels? Chapter 13, Does Archeology Support the Reliability of the Gospels? His procedure is clear, the discussion concise, the style informal and the eventual overall answer to the book’s central question (“Can we trust the Gospels?”) is a simple and solid “Yes” (195). For all of this, MR’s efforts should be applauded and commended.

Because the book is intended for a wide popular, as opposed to a scholarly or academic, readership, and because it is published by Crossway Books, a well-known conservative evangelical publishing house, it is imperative that the issues and problems raised regarding the reliability of the Gospels be dealt with clearly and accurately. This MR does well in chapters 2 and 3 (Did the Evangelist Know Jesus Personally?), giving a brief but useful introduction to key matters of NT textual criticism (25-37) and arguing for the traditional authorship of the Gospels (39-51).

In chapter 4 (When Were the Gospels Written?), however, MR begins to give this reviewer some cause for concern over whether to recommend his book. He allows for a late date for the composition of Matthew, Mark and Luke, namely, A.D. 65-85, 60-75, 65-95, respectively (54-58). The implication of these dates is that Mark was written first and Matthew and Luke used, i.e., copied from, Mark’s Gospel and a hypothetical “sayings of Jesus” source, designated by modern scholars as Q. This scenario for the origin of the Synoptic Gospels is generally known as the Two Source or Two Document hypothesis. MR makes explicit use of this hypothesis in

chapter 5 (What Sources Did the Gospel Writers Use?) as he tries to show that Matthew and Luke depend on Mark and Q. Even among conservative evangelical scholars today, unfortunately, such views on Gospel chronology and origins are routinely espoused, even though the earliest external evidence we have for Gospel composition points to independence from one another and the order as they appear in our Bibles (see R. L. Thomas and F. David Farnell, *The Jesus Crisis*, Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1998, Introduction, Chapters 1 and 3).

According to MR, the Gospels fit the genre of Hellenistic biography and therefore cannot be expected to record the *ipsissima verba* (Latin for “his own words”) or the precise words of Jesus, but only the *ipsissima vox* (Latin for “his own voice”) or general content of what Jesus said (84-92). MR actually illustrates this principle with, not the words of Jesus, but with the voice which comes from heaven when Jesus comes to be baptized by John, and Matthew’s account has, “This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased” (3:17, NRSV), whereas Mark (3:11) and Luke (3:22) have “You are my Son, the Beloved; with You I am well pleased” (86-87). MR’s dismissive attitude toward harmonizing the differences leads him to say,

It would be pretty hard to argue that the voice from heaven said the same sentence twice in slightly different ways (though I expect this argument has been made somewhere). No, it seems more likely that Matthew and Mark used slightly different words for the same vocal event (86-87).

But here MR should consult W. Hendricksen’s commentary on Matthew (*Exposition of the Gospel of Matthew* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1973] 215), who suggests this very thing, namely, that God did indeed speak “in slightly different ways” to Jesus and to John the Baptist (and others? Cf. the review of D. L. Bock, *Studying the Historical Jesus: A Guide to Sources and Methods* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002] in *TMSJ* 15/1 [Spring 2004]). Of course, in circles of scholarship where historical-critical methods are *de rigueur*, and where MR completed most of his NT training (18-19, 54 n.1), Hendricksen’s commentary may lack reputation. But it is surely not so difficult to believe that God spoke more than one sentence to and about His Son on the occasion of His baptism, unless, of course, one has already accepted historical-critical methods like the Two Source hypothesis.

Chapter 9 gives further evidence that MR’s approach depends on historical-critical methods. Discussing Jesus’ healing of the paralytic (Matt 9:2-8; Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:17-26) MR assumes that the Two Source hypothesis is an accurate way to describe how the different accounts were composed (107-8). He then argues that Mark’s “digging through” the roof and Luke’s mention of “roof tiles” are not contradictory, since the latter merely “paraphrased Mark’s text so that his readers wouldn’t worry about how one ‘digs through’ a tiled roof” (108). MR’s opinion is that “Mark’s version is more literally accurate” (108). Later MR states that it is misguided to harmonize these accounts by trying to show that “both Mark and Luke are literally accurate” (109). He suggests that such effort at harmonization is

“unpersuasive if not downright silly” (108). But since we simply do not know what kind of roof the house had, does it make more sense to say that there could have been more than one kind of roofing material over the house and give both Mark and Luke the benefit of the doubt in terms of their accuracy, or to say that Mark is more likely to be literally correct and that Luke is careless about the detail? But, someone may ask, why quibble about insignificant details of the text like roof tiles? For the person who believes in the inerrancy of Scripture, however, the more important question should be: Precisely which details in the text are insignificant, and who is to make the decision as to which details are important and which are not, and why are they designated thus?

MR is inconsistent when in chapter 10 he argues that, although the Evangelists wrote theologically, they were still concerned about history. He states, “Believe that Jesus was really God in the flesh and you’ll pay close attention to what he actually said and did” (120). True, the kind of roof over the house where the paralytic was healed might not quite qualify as “what he actually said and did,” but, throughout the Gospels, both the location and the responses to Jesus by individuals and groups in both speech and deed are recorded as part of the account of His words and actions. Is the environment given by the Gospel writers as the backdrop to Jesus’ words and deeds less important than the verbal interactions of men and women with Him? Perhaps, but does that mean that these details are recorded inaccurately? Since the Evangelists thought various amounts of background information important enough to include, the topographical, historical, social, and geographical material given in their accounts must not be dismissed as unimportant. The difficulty with historical-critical methodology continues to be that once part of it is accepted, where does one draw the line?

Chapters 11-15, on the other hand, really form the strongest part of the book as they tackle in straightforward, non-technical language such matters as miracles (127-38), non-biblical literary and archeological evidence about Jesus and early Christianity (139-62), whether political ambition caused Christians to change significantly the content of the NT texts (163-72), and why the canonical Gospels ultimately came to be regarded as the only accounts worthy to be part of the NT (173-86). MR concludes with a chapter giving his final, positive answer to the question stated in the book’s title (187-95). General and Scripture indexes bring the book to an end (197-202).

The aim, the tone, the style, and much of the content of this book (chapters 1-3, 11-16), as noted above, are all reasons to appreciate MR’s answers to the FAQs he sets forth, because they will be helpful in countering many of the erroneous ideas and views on Jesus and the Gospels currently being disseminated. In the places this review has noted, however, the work clearly suffers from the effects, and thus the dangers, of historical-critical methodology. This is disappointing, and readers of this journal are strongly urged to exercise great caution in using and/or recommending this book.

Anthony B. Robinson and Robert W. Wall. *Called to Be Church. The Book of Acts For A New Day*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006. 286 pp. \$20.00 (paper).
Reviewed by Alex D. Montoya, Associate Professor of Pastoral Ministry.

Anthony B. Robinson is a pastor in the United Church of Christ and Robert W. Wall is a professor of Christian Scriptures at Seattle Pacific University. Together they have written this volume as an exposition of selected passages from the Book of Acts with a present-day application of these passages.

In fourteen chapters they cover the main movements of the Book of Acts, from the birth of the church in Antioch through its growth, conflicts, and ultimate spread to the Gentile world. The final eight chapters of Acts are summed up in a discussion on church/state relations. The fifteenth and final chapter of the book are their concluding reflections.

Each chapter has two sections. First, there is a general exposition and explanation of the passage done in a non-technical manner, void of references, many quotations, and outside substantiation. The authors draw from the previous commentary by Wall in the New Interpreter's Bible series. The exposition is basically good, but certain liberal tendencies bleed through.

The second portion of the chapter is an attempt to make a contemporary application of the lesson learned from each section discussed. The authors give some great insight into how to learn to do church from the life of the early church. They show a keen knowledge of the relevant issues confronting the church today, and this work can be a valuable tool in knowing how to address them. Not all the applications were on target, but enough is given to make this a good tool in the study of the church.

Allen P. Ross. *Recalling the Hope of Glory: Biblical Worship from the Garden to the New Creation*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2006. 591 pp. \$35.99 (cloth).
Reviewed by Paul S. Lamey, TMS alumnus and Pastor of Preaching, Grace Community Church, Huntsville, Ala.

Allen Ross is professor of divinity at Beeson Divinity School, Birmingham, Alabama. His contributions to evangelical theology have been primarily in the area of OT exposition (series commentaries on Proverbs in *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Genesis and Psalms in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, larger commentaries on Genesis *Creation and Blessing*, and Leviticus *Holiness to the Lord*). In *Recalling the Hope of Glory: Biblical Worship from the Garden to the New Creation*, Ross delivers a stimulating book that spans the disciplines of exegesis, biblical theology, and systematic theology. However, the book probably fits best within the larger discipline of biblical theology as Ross attempts to survey the theme of worship

throughout Scripture. The author relates the genesis of his thoughts on worship as beginning when he was a boy growing up in a German Baptist Church. Ross has since traversed many denominations and in the meantime immersed himself in the message and backgrounds of Scripture. His rich heritage and study have culminated in a work that is neither overly erudite nor too simplistic.

In recent years a few books have made unique contributions to the church's understanding of worship, such as Hughes Oliphant Old's *Worship: Reformed According to Scripture*, John Frame's *Worship in Spirit and Truth*, also his *Contemporary Worship Music: A Biblical Defense*, and Ryken, Thomas, and Duncan's festschrift in memory of James Montgomery Boice, *Give Praise to God: A Vision for Reforming Worship*. Ross' work stands apart from these and other works in that his stated goal is different:

The intent of this book is to take the readers through the Bible so that they may see these patterns and principles emerge and in the process understand more fully their Christian heritage and thereby discover ways to improve their worship. This is not simply a theology of worship; it is an inductive study of the biblical material as it was revealed over time, for the purpose of identifying the abiding theological truths that must inform our worship today (64).

The book has ten parts which are further divided into twenty-eight chapters. The first of two tables of contents lists the contents in "brief," and the second gives a complete outline of the book's detailed structure. Both are useful in reading and reviewing the material. A moderate number of footnotes in which readers will find a treasure trove of additional resources and excursions deal with most technical matters.

Part one (chapters 1-2) covers foundational matters in which Ross moves the reader from creation to eternity with a conservative approach affirming the historicity and authority of Scripture. He introduces worship by examining the Lord's self-revelation and seeks a definition of worship. Ross maintains a Trinitarian emphasis in defining worship. Part two (chapters 3-5) covers worship in the original creation of the garden, emphasizing the image of God. Part three (chapters 6-8) is an overview of worship during the patriarchal period. Ross's discussion of Abraham's altar building as "proclamation" was enlightening. Part four (chapters 9-12) examines worship under the leadership of Moses. Here Ross explores the institution of a holy place and worship leadership in Israel. In part five (chapters 13-17) Ross summarizes the celebratory aspects of worship expressed as praise in Israel. Here he covers the use of the Psalms in worship and seasonal celebrations. Part 6 (chapters 18-20) is an examination of worship reform in summarizing OT prophetic literature. Part seven (chapters 21-24) looks at worship in anticipating the New Covenant with particular attention to Jesus' teaching on worship, including a chapter on communion (chapter 24). Part eight (chapters 25-26) details patterns of early church worship with an emphasis on Acts and the NT epistles. Ross does not delve into extra-biblical material such as the *Didache* and early church fathers. Part nine

(chapters 27-28) is a wonderful section on the future realities of worship in glorious perfection. Part ten does not contain formal chapters, but concludes the work with Ross's fifteen "Basic Principles for More Glorious Worship."

A few areas caught this reviewer's attention. First, Ross notes that "The Bible itself does not give a comprehensive definition of worship; it simply describes things that people have done or should do when they receive the revealing words and works of God" (50). He also rightly eschews the popular approach "of explaining worship on the basis of the etymology of the English word" (ibid.).

The subject of worship in general and music in particular is a loaded minefield in the church today. Ross's tenacious commitment to the biblical text and less to various traditional applications was refreshing and created a greater appreciation for Scripture. "For serious, thorough study of the subject, people need to consult the Bible every step of the way. . ." (65).

Readers will appreciate Ross's consistent emphasis on the centrality of the Word in worship. The author writes that "Whenever proclamation has been lost to worship, worship loses its way and becomes empty ritual" (146), and "if the revelation of God inspires fear and adoration, it also leads to spiritual renewal in the worshiper" (53). The Word has always given shape to other aspects of worship. Writing about the Passover, Ross remarks, "Without this proclamation, people would think of it as just a good meal" (160).

Additionally, his commitment to the authority of Scripture is conspicuous. Regarding the origin of Israel's worship, He writes, "It is hard to accept a theory that says that the whole religious system of Israel was simply borrowed from the pagan world and then artificially credited to God's revelation at Mount Sinai" (132). The following lengthy quote captures the author's commitment to a thoroughly biblical understanding of worship:

Worship begins with the response to divine revelation. But if little time or attention is given to the revealed Word of God, read, proclaimed, or taught, then to what do people respond? The result is that worship becomes superficial or sentimental. If the church is truly interested in recapturing the spirit and nature of the prophetic and apostolic ministry of the Word in worship, then there will have to be a greater emphasis placed on reading, teaching, and preaching the Word of God, but it has to be with clarity, accuracy, power, and authority (429).

This reviewer found few areas of disagreement or concern. In a section entitled "The Savior in the Garden," the author's failure to discuss the *proto-evangelium* of Gen 3:15 (cf. 114-16) is perplexing. Second, Ross's passing reference to a "covenant of works" without further explanation (107 n. 57) seemed out of place in light of his consistent emphasis on the explicit covenants of Scripture. The author has no discussion of normative principles of worship. This raises some interesting questions. For example, though dancing was a part of Israel's liturgy on special occasions, one wonders how the author believes this should be a "part of the praise of the people of God" today (507). Yet these are minor issues in light of the

magnitude of the work. With further clarification, the author could have remedied these concerns, but the volume would have then grown well beyond its current 500+ pages.

Ross gives the reader a helpful 54-page, topically divided bibliography (513-67). Notably absent from the bibliography are John Frame's works on worship and specific volumes from the works of Hughes Oliphant Old, both of whom have made significant contributions to the church's understanding of worship. Ross's work has no author index, but it does have Scripture and subject indexes.

This volume is a major resource that should be on the shelf of every serious student of Scripture. Ross is to be commended for delivering a fine volume that makes a valuable contribution to biblical theology and the church's grasp of worship.

James E. Rosscup. *An Exposition on Prayer: Igniting the Fuel to Flame Our Communication with God*. Bellingham, Wash.: Logos Research Systems, 2008. \$199.95. Reviewed by Gregory H. Harris, Professor of Bible Exposition.

Dr. James Rosscup, the original professor of Bible exposition at The Master's Seminary, has released a voluminous work on prayer as a Libronix (Logos) Bible Software addition. In his introduction the author humbly writes in the opening line, "The writings before the reader are a result of countless hours in the Scriptures since around 1992. And these were outgrowths from former years of meditations in studies and special devotional times." Virtually anyone (included this reviewer) who has had the privilege of sitting under Dr. Rosscup as a student could have written those opening sentences and more, because they so encapsulate his life and are so evident to those who know him, both colleagues and students. He is a man of God who prays. (Can there be a man of God who does not pray?) Jim Rosscup is a gifted and meticulous scholar with decades of teaching experience; but even beyond this, he is a child of God who never got over the fact that God saved him and who exalts God and His Word both in the classroom and in his life. So in essence this study on prayer is a lifetime work in the making of one who has walked with God and truly learned from the Master. The Christian walk of this reviewer changed forever when he had him as a professor, when he began seminary studies twenty-five years ago.

With no lack of books on prayer, why should there be another one? *An Exposition of Prayer* differs from other prayer works in substantial ways. In addition to the important attributes of the author listed above (without which the work would not be nearly as good), two things among others set this work apart. First is the breadth of the work. Rosscup's original intent was to cover every prayer in the Bible, but he notes that only 61 of the 66 biblical books contain prayers. In addition, Psalms was vastly too big to include with the present work. He instead "deliberately chose to write expositions for 21 key, or representative, psalms." Perhaps the body of Christ will be the beneficiary of further work along the same lines in a second

Rosscup volume on prayers in the psalms. In keeping with the current format, it would be a rich and valuable tool to have.

The second distinctive in this prayer work is that it begins with a brief study of each individual book of the Bible, and proceeds to individual prayers in each. In other words, Rosscup studies the Bible books, establishes the setting, audience, and especially the context, and then examines the prayers. Such is vital in a solid, biblical understanding of prayer or any other biblical subject. Many godly individuals who have written on prayer have removed individual verses on prayer and built books and doctrines on them while completely oblivious to whether they are in an OT or NT setting, are in a group or individual, are to the obedient or disobedient. Some take biblical prayers and make straight application to themselves, whether relevant or not. For example, Daniel's prayer in Daniel 9 has nothing to do with building a church educational building or a new sanctuary. The context deals with Jerusalem, the destruction of God's temple, and the promised return that Daniel was reading in Jeremiah's prophecy, which concerned the number of years the nation would be in Babylonian exile. In *An Exposition of Prayer*, starting with the book of the Bible (such as Daniel) and leading up to the prayers it contains makes the prayers more understandable because they are viewed in light of their context. This is true throughout the entire work.

Others who are familiar with the Libronix system have noted that this work is a perfect match for the Libronix format. *An Exposition on Prayer* contains literally thousands of biblical cross-references that one can locate by moving the cursor and going directly to the corresponding Scriptures. Just a quick "heads up" for those who will be doing this: it is such a rich study by itself, even without checking every Bible verse noted; so plan to "be there a long time," and I mean that in the best sense of the words. Though this work is easily usable even when one is hurried, it contains so much valuable and worship-evoking—and at times convicting—information, that the reader will most likely want to come back and study the passage in more detail.

An individual, a pastor, or a group may use *An Exposition on Prayer* in many ways. With the Libonix Bible Software, once this component is installed, any verse on prayer that one comes across will bring up a link to Rosscup's book. Second, "the fine wine study" would take a person slowly through a particular book of the Bible—perhaps in a month or two—reading the prayers and related commentary with them. Sometimes Bible software makes it hard to tell what page one is on; many times, the chapter and verse divisions mark the pages instead of a page number. But one could study, for instance, Genesis, as an individual or in a group, and then carefully study each prayer that is there. As mentioned, working through the material from start to finish would take a while, but the trip would be delightful trip. Third, another means of using this work is studying a particular book of the Bible without focusing on the prayers in it (or perhaps even noticing that prayers are there). Once a prayer is noticed, almost a reflexive action will be to see what Dr. Rosscup wrote about that prayer in *An Exposition on Prayer*. Truly, if studied by one seeking a closer walk with the Lord and desiring to know more about

this often mysterious component of the Christian walk, the work will hopefully ignite “the Fuel to Flame Our Communication with God.”

Ronald F. Satta. *The Sacred Text: Biblical Authority in Nineteenth-Century America*. Princeton Theological Monograph Series. Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick, 2007. xv + 116 pp. \$16.00 (paper). Reviewed by Robert L. Thomas, Professor of New Testament.

The author of this work is senior pastor of Webster Bible Church of Webster, New York. He earned his Ph.D. at the University of Rochester. In this work on *The Sacred Text*, he builds on a foundation laid by John D. Woodbridge and Randall H. Balmer in their article “The Princetonians and Biblical Authority: An Assessment of the Ernest Sandeen Proposal” (in *Scripture and Truth*, eds. D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge [Baker, 1994]) by “offering a broader assessment of biblical authority in nineteenth-century America” (xii n. 10). The author intends his work to fill partially the void of “a detailed analysis of biblical authority in the nineteenth-century” (xiii).

By pointing to scholars of various backgrounds—including Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, and Congregationalists—who strongly held to that doctrine at the beginning of the nineteenth century and even earlier. Satta thoroughly eradicates Ernest R. Sandeen’s notion that biblical inerrancy was invented by Princeton theologians in the late nineteenth century. Satta’s book is of interest to this reviewer because of his recent article “The Nature of Truth: Postmodern or Propositional?” (*TMSJ* 18/1 [Spring 2007]:2-21), in which he reached conclusions similar to those of Satta. Satta’s work offers abundant documentation that demonstrates that biblical inerrancy was the dominant position of mainline denominations throughout the nineteenth century in this country. The position was held so stringently that many twenty-first century evangelicals, some of whom profess to be inerrantists, would never have passed muster in the nineteenth century. His discussion is extremely enlightening.

Satta organizes his book into four chapters. Chapter one traces the position that ties inerrancy to the original manuscript as it came from the hand of the author, showing that it was not a late nineteenth-century teaching originating at Princeton. Throughout the century, the mainline denominations “maintained that the Bible, in its original autographs, in every part, including matters of history and science, was divinely composed and protected from all error, right down to the very words” (1). Satta buttresses this fact with many quotations from primary sources.

Chapter two notes the growing criticism in support of a partial inspiration theory and how conservatives rebutted that position by harmonizing Scripture’s alleged discrepancies and inconsistencies. Nineteenth-century inerrantists harmonized Mark 15:25 and John 19:14 regarding the time of Jesus’ crucifixion

(26), varying reports of the inscription on the cross in the four Gospels (27), differing reports about the number of Israelites who died in the plague of Num 25:9 (28), and many other facets of the biblical record. They defended the Bible's accuracy in matters of history, geography, and geology.

Chapter three investigates the growing controversy over inerrancy that arose between 1860 and 1900 because of the rise of Darwinism, the encroachments of geology, the beginnings of liberal theology, and the challenges of text critical theories. Some less rigid theories of inspiration emerged during this period, but proponents of the high view held their ground. During this period, some viewed science as primary with Scripture becoming a secondary consideration. Some even viewed "Scripture as hopelessly riddled with errors" (45). Charles Hodge waged an ongoing battle with Darwinian evolution, though he wavered in admitting that theistic evolution was a possibility. Hodge's position on evolution itself remains somewhat vague, though Satta defends him strongly. A lower theory of inspiration represented a growing minority of scholars toward the close of the nineteenth century. In the face of opposition from a few scholars—e.g., Lessing, Herder, and Schleiermacher—the longstanding doctrine of biblical inerrancy remained firmly entrenched in the last decades of the century.

Chapter four details one principal debate that climaxed the issue, the heresy trial of Charles A. Briggs, who was defrocked by the Presbyterian church in 1893 because of his debunking of biblical inerrancy. "Briggs served as the archetype of the modern critical theory opposing the Princetonians and modern fundamentalism" (79), sowing the seeds that have more recently sprouted again in the likes of Ernest Sandeen. Satta takes the reader through various stages of Brigg's trial, through the final decision of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, which declared Briggs guilty of heresy.

The author has done a great service to church of Jesus Christ in his thorough treatment of nineteenth-century inerrancy. His work is highly commended by this reviewer, though a few suggestions for improvement are in order. This reviewer found terminology related to textual criticism a bit puzzling. Satta does not clarify what he means by "lower textual criticism" and "higher textual criticism" (cf. 4, 43 55, 61, 69, 71, 72, 89). The reviewer is quite familiar with "textual criticism," but a distinction between "lower" and "higher" is unclear to him. He would also suggest the use of primary instead of secondary sources in Satta's description of some opponents of inerrancy such as Lessing, Herder, and Schleiermacher.

Indexes of authors, subjects, and Scriptures would also be a great addition. All that being said, this work is one that the church has needed for a long time.

Stephen Sizer. *Zion's Christian Soldiers? The Bible, Israel and the Church*. Nottingham, England: InterVarsity, 2007. 199 pp. \$18.00 (paper). Reviewed by Michael J. Vlach, Assistant Professor of Theology.

While reading Stephen Sizer's *Zion's Christian Soldiers?*, the thought crossed this reviewer's mind, "Here we go again! Another book intended to save the world from the dispensationalists."

Much like Hank Hanegraaff's similar book, *Apocalypse Code*, also printed in 2007, Sizer argues that dispensational theology is not only wrong—it is dangerous! Even to the point of threatening the survival of our planet. For example, Sizer states, "The movement [dispensationalism] as a whole is nevertheless leading the West, and the church with it, into a confrontation with Islam." But wait, it gets worse: "Using biblical terminology to justify a pre-emptive global war against the 'axis of evil' merely reinforces stereotypes, fuels extremism, incites fundamentalism and increases the likelihood of nuclear war" (19).

So not only are those who are dispensationalists wrong in their theology, they are pushing the world towards global annihilation. But that is not all. After the statement above, Sizer goes on to declare: "It is not an understatement to say that what is at stake is our understanding of the gospel, the centrality of the cross. . . ." (19) Thus, in addition to threatening world peace, dispensationalists are also threatening the gospel. Can the stakes get any higher?

Sizer also informs the reader that belief in a secret rapture of the church is to blame for many of the world's problems: "Sadly, the mistaken idea of a secret rapture has generated a lot of bad theology. It is probably the reason why many Christians don't seem to care about climate change or about preserving diminishing supplies of natural resources. They are similarly not worried about the national debt, nuclear war, or world poverty, because they hope to be raptured to heaven and avoid suffering the consequences of the coming global holocaust" (136-37). Thus, just about everything wrong with the world can be blamed, at least partly, on the dispensationalists, according to Sizer. Those looking for an explanation or even a footnote to substantiate such a claim will be disappointed.

To be sure, Sizer deals with some important theological and hermeneutical issues. As an admitted "covenantalist" Sizer argues that the church is the fulfillment (not replacement) of Israel. He argues that the dispensational approach of a literal hermeneutic of the OT cannot work because the NT is the fulfillment of the Old Testament. Those interested in hermeneutics will want to note that Sizer believes that "Jesus and the apostles *reinterpreted* the Old Testament" (36, emphasis added).

Sizer argues strongly that nationalistic expectations concerning a kingdom for Israel in the OT have been replaced by universalistic expectations for all people who believe in Christ. Sizer appears to miss the point that nationalistic and universalistic implications for the kingdom is not an either/or situation—it is a both/and. God can and will fulfill his promises to national Israel while bringing believing Gentiles into His covenant and kingdom program. Interestingly, Sizer claims that the disciples were "confused" when they asked Jesus, "Lord, is it at this time that you are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). Sizer's claim is problematic, especially since the disciples had already received forty days of instruction about the kingdom from the risen Jesus (Acts 1:3). It should also be noted

that Jesus does not correct their understanding; instead, He says that they cannot know the timing of this restoration (Acts 1:7).

What Sizer promotes in his book is pretty standard fare from a covenantal/supersessionist perspective. But as this reviewer surveys various books and articles that critique dispensationalism, nothing within this book is especially helpful or insightful that has not been stated as well or better by others. Sadly, because of the extreme statements within it, this work contributes to the increased polarization between covenantalists and dispensationalists.

In the end, this reviewer finds it difficult to take this volume seriously when reckless statements accuse dispensationalism of contributing to about every imaginable evil in the world. It also seems that such books have no ability to distinguish statements from certain individuals like John Hagee (with whom I have serious theological problems as well) and the beliefs of dispensationalists as a whole. Unless someone is interested in tracking the battle over dispensationalism and covenant theology, this work has little usefulness. This reviewer cannot recommend it.

David L. Turner. *Matthew*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008. 828 pp. \$49.99 (cloth). Reviewed by James E. Rosscup, Professor of Bible Exposition.

This work rates as perhaps in the top three among exegetical efforts on Matthew so far. W. D. Davies and Dale Allison contributed the best detailed work (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, ICC, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark 1988, 3 vols.). And the much older detailed work by John Broadus (*Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, American Commentary Series, Valley Forge, Pa., 1988) was of explanatory quality to rank with Turner for second or third. Ratings are given in this reviewer's book, *Commentaries for Biblical Exposition* (The Woodlands, Tex.: Kress Publications, 2004).

Turner received his Th.D. at Grace Theological Seminary and completed course work for a Ph.D at Hebrew Union College. He is professor of New Testament and systematic theology at Grand Rapids Theological Seminary. In this work, he has furnished a vast panorama of bibliographic literature (cf. xiii-xvii; 693-762), including commentaries, journal articles, essays, and ancient writings. He has 51 pages of introduction, a lengthy commentary with a careful grammar/word study and synthesis, a comprehensive yet compact treatment, and insight into history of interpretation and details of exegesis of literary and theological concern.

In prophecy, he commits to a progressive dispensational approach. He sometimes accepts dispensational ideas and at other times favors different views on details. He thinks this Gospel narrates reliable words and works of Jesus, and opts

for a narrative-critical perspective rather than a source-critical approach. One is constantly aware that he regards the details as true.

Turner argues the possibility of the traditional Matthew as author and an early date, before A.D. 70. He treats the text verse by verse, handles most interpretive problems, and is usually but not always clear-cut as to his own view.. He uses good charts on Matthew's references to the Hebrew Bible (18-19), and Bible texts Matthew cites in his ten citations "that it might be fulfilled" (22). He has other helpful charts.

A good discussion resolves the problem of "fourteen" generations in the genealogy of Matthew 1 (cf. 25-27). He also treats various phenomena in the genealogy, e.g., mention of women, a comparison with the genealogy of Luke 3, and theological matters in the two genealogies. Later he argues as untenable a distinction between "kingdom of heaven" and "kingdom of God" (38-44); in his understanding, the phrases refer to the same reality. He cites, for example, Synoptic parallels and the Jewish custom of having "heaven" refer to "God." He differs from some dispensationalists in seeing the kingdom as already inaugurated, present in the dynamic rule of God, but future as to its full display on earth (43). He lays out a detailed outline of the book (cf. 47-51).

On most aspects a user will find a good grasp of things presented in a readable way, even though they are at times concise. In the use of Isa 7:14 in Matthew 1, Turner decides for a *typological* explanation rather than a *prediction* or *multiple fulfillment*. Not all will concur with his idea that a predictive view in Isaiah 7 really needs to be at tension with the historical context (71). Nor will they agree with his decision that Isa 7:14 should be rendered as "a young woman," not as "a virgin." Candidly, the present reviewer believes that the evidence rightly sifted points to an outright prediction fulfilled only in Matthew 1.

Turner devotes a careful discussion to the Matt 2:15 use of Hos 11:1 and the 2:23 link with the "prophets" and Jesus' being called a "Nazarene." Turner is also astute on Jesus' fulfilling all righteousness (3:15), and the Sermon on the Mount as giving personal ethics for the lives of Jesus' people then and in the present age. To him, the Sermon was delivered at one time in one place; he also holds that Jesus repeated some facets in this teaching in other venues at different times and places.

Though comments are sparse on divorce in 5:31-32, the commentator goes into detail on the topic in 19:12. He favors the view that "fornication" there covers a wide sweep of wrongs that violate fidelity to one's married partner. On "let the dead bury their own dead" (8:21-22), some will be surprised at his quick dismissal of the view that Jesus refers to eventual secondary burial of the bones of the deceased in an ossuary. Turner sees the Messianic Kingdom as having already begun (e.g., 3:2; 4:17; 10:7; 12:28; and chapter 13; 334, 345). In 13:23 he views fruit as an indispensable test of genuine discipleship, meaning of real salvation. However, he qualifies that the truly saved are at various stages in the maturing process and one cannot always fairly decide from lack of fruit that another is unsaved. Like most commentators, he forthrightly rejects the view of some (not all)

dispensationalists that the treasure refers to redemption of Israel and the pearl to redemption of those in the church. Instead, he sees these as picturing a real sacrifice for the sake of the kingdom in light of its value and the resulting joy. In the famous “rock” context (16:18), Turner follows many in saying Jesus means Peter is the rock, though apart from any acceptance of popery or papal succession.

It is not easy to grasp his view in 21:43 that the kingdom is taken from Israel and given to another nation, the apostles, who are a part of Israel. He does this while arguing against the “nation” referring to a transfer from Israel to the church. But since the apostles are key persons representing in effect the church in its earliest stage (cf. Eph 2:20), how is this essentially different really from just saying the transfer is to the church?

Turner in his brevity seems not to make a clear commitment on Matt 24:40-41. He leaves a reader uncertain about what his precise view is. Is the one Jesus says is “taken” an unsaved person removed from the earth in judgment, and the one “left” a believer kept safe on the earth to enter the earthly kingdom? Or is the one “taken” a child of God in the rapture, and the person “left” abandoned on earth to rejection in judgment? Turner does not deal with details to show how this problem is resolved.

No matter how careful a commentator is with space to which a publisher restricts him, readers will inevitably isolate instances where not enough is said. Or what is said falls short of clarity. All in all, Turner has fulfilled his assignment with a diligent awareness in many cases. His work should take its place among detailed evangelical works, which in most passages pretty consistently offer well-seasoned comment.

Wolfee, John. *The Expansion of Evangelicalism: The Age of Wilberforce, More, Chalmers and Finney*. A History of Evangelicalism: People Movements and Ideas in the English-Speaking World, Volume 2. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2007. 280 pp. (cloth). \$23.00; and David W. Bebbington. *The Dominance of Evangelicalism: The Age of Spurgeon and Moody*. A History of Evangelicalism: People Movements and Ideas in the English-Speaking World, Volume 3. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2005. 288 pp. \$23.00 (cloth)., \$23.00. Reviewed by Dennis M. Swanson, Director of the Seminary Library.

In 2001 the annual meeting of The Evangelical Theological Society had as its theme “Defining Evangelicalism’s Boundaries,” apparently driven by the problem of defining exactly how the term was to be understood. In the revised article on “Evangelicalism” in the *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Baker Books, 2001), the author stated, “The very nature of Evangelicalism never was a unified movement but a collection of emphases based on a common core of belief—a core that itself is now under discussion” (409).

The nature and definition of evangelicalism is certainly no clearer seven years later and is perhaps more muddled than ever. The emergence of the new “Evangelical Left,” the recent “Evangelical Climate Initiative” to combat so-called global warming, a leading evangelical pastor moderating a forum for the 2008 presidential candidates, the embracing of Open Theism, the New Perspective on Paul, and Federal Vision theology (among other sub-biblical systems) by evangelicals leaves one wondering how the evangelical movement has reached a point of weaving down a road, seemingly searching for the nearest ditch to crash into.

The best way to find out how a movement has reached a certain point is, of course, to study its history, i.e., the path it has taken over the years. To that end, this review of a new series of books, *The History of Evangelicalism*, under the editorial direction of David W. Bebbington and Mark A. Noll (being produced in five volumes) is undertaken. The first volume, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield, and the Wesleys*, by Mark Noll (InterVarsity Press, 2003) has already been released, and fourth and fifth volumes are planned for the future. This review will deal with the second and third volumes in the series.

In his volume, Wolfee, professor of religious history at the Open University in England, notes that all of the authors in the series, “take as its starting point David Bebbington’s definition of evangelicalism in terms of four ‘special marks’” (19). These defining marks are,

1. Conversionism, the belief that lives need to be changed;
2. Activism, the expression of the gospel in effort;
3. Biblicism, a particular regard for the Bible;
4. Crucicentrism, a stress on the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. (19-20)

Though not an inaccurate definition of evangelicalism, one might argue that it is somewhat incomplete, a historical definition without a sufficient emphasis on the theological definition.

The authors in this series face the daunting task of creating a narrative that is continually crisscrossing the Atlantic between Great Britain and the United States while enabling the reader to keep the people, places, and events together in a coherent whole. In this aspect of the task Wolfee achieves the goal with great skill. His writing style is clear, concise, and he is able to strike a balance between listing the necessary facts and figures without forfeiting excellent prose in the process.

The author lists an impressive and highly useful bibliography of primary and secondary sources, but with a notable absence of any reference to the works of Iain Murray, particularly his *Revival and Revivalism* (Banner of Truth, 1994)—even though Wolfee’s chapter 2 uses the same name—and *A Scottish Christian Heritage* (Banner of Truth, 2006), in which Murray has a long and well-written section on Thomas Chalmers. The book also omits Archibald Alexander (1772-1851), who was a notable figure in Calvinistic revivalism as well as the first professor at the new Princeton Theological Seminary, one of the most important evangelical institutions

in 19th-century America. A general apathy or even antipathy toward Calvinism and contributions of Calvinistic evangelicals by the author is a decided lack in this work.

A somewhat useful, if incomplete, index of subjects and persons is included. Although neither stated nor indicated, the index is clearly not meant to be exhaustive. For instance, it has only 9 page references for Charles G. Finney, who is mentioned in at least triple that number of pages.

The author's handling of Finney is uncritically favorable. Though the initial controversies about Finney's methods are discussed, Wolfee concludes that between Finney and his opponents (who met at New Lebanon in July 1827), "it was indeed apparent that their theological differences were not substantial" (74). This conclusion is fairly simplistic and again the author never details Finney's theology or even that of the opposing Calvinistic revivalists. He talks instead about methods and techniques. He states at one point that the rising dominance of Finney and his methods meant "the real loser in the process was Asahel Nettleton, whose conservative Calvinism and particularly low-key approach to revivalism were now decidedly out of fashion" (ibid).

Wolfee's strength is his handling of evangelicalism in Great Britain and his emphasis on the social action of Wilberforce and others. Of particular note is the section on "Politics: Freeing Slaves, Saving Nations" and the role that evangelicals and their influence had on ending the slave trade in England and ultimately in the United States. However, even here, Wolfee's emphasizes a sociological, political, and cultural impact without discussing the underlying, theologically distinctive features of evangelicalism.

In Bebbington's volume, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism*, the story of evangelicalism moves in a somewhat chronological manner. One problem in this series is that the works center on nebulous "ages" rather than on distinct chronological breakdowns. For this reason, some important events seem to fall through the cracks between the two volumes. One important omission is a discussion of the Layman's Prayer Revival of 1858, except for a mention of it (194) when Bebbington refers to it by the lesser-known title of "Businessman's Revival." This was a revival that even Charles Finney admitted, "put him in the shadows." This evangelical revival was one of the most unique and perhaps longest lasting of notable revivals.

Bebbington, professor of history at the University of Sterling in Scotland, has written extensively on evangelicalism, mainly in Great Britain. His writing style is, like Wolfee's, quite readable and engaging. He has included an extensive bibliography and useful subject-person index (as with the previous volume, it is apparently not designed to be complete). Here the author expands the discussion of his four "special marks" of an evangelical that Wolfee noted.

In discussing the first point, The Bible, he rightly notes that "allegiance to the Bible was one of the deepest convictions of evangelical Christians of all stripes" (26). However, he also states that the consequences of their position on the Bible, "could be intellectually restrictive" (23). This author does make an attempt to discuss the theological issues, but displays clear prejudice toward an errantist view

of the Bible. In his discussion of the theological controversies of the late 19th century he gives much space to the leading errantists and their views, and then essentially dismisses the extensive intellectual and literary efforts of A. A. Hodge and B. B. Warfield in defending the traditional inerrantist view by stating that they “produced a reasoned critique of the critical enterprise” (177).

As the sub-title notes, Bebbington’s main examples of evangelicalism are Charles H. Spurgeon in Great Britain and D. L. Moody in the United States. He has excellent overviews of both (Spurgeon, 40-45 and Moody, 45-51) and their influence both during and afterward. One significant critique would be in the author’s presentation and interpretation of the Downgrade Controversy of Spurgeon (1887-1894). The facts that the author presents in his summation of the controversy (260-61) are incorrect or misleading at several important points (see this reviewer’s “The Down Grade Controversy and Evangelical Boundaries,” *Faith and Mission* 20/2 [Spring 2003]:16-40, for a detailed review and analysis of the facts of the controversy and their effect on evangelicalism). His conclusion that Spurgeon’s views led to the emergence of a narrow fundamentalism is dubious at best.

Bebbington does have some excellent sections, including the chapter “Conservative Theological Trends” (184ff.), in which he particularly details the resurgence of premillennialism within evangelicalism. Although even here, he neglects important personalities, such as the Presbyterian Nathaniel West (1826-1906). He does have a good overview of the Keswick Movement, viewing it along with Wesleyan Holiness as a lead into the emerging Pentecostal Movement (207ff.).

Like Wolfie, Bebbington spends much time discussing the fourth of his “Special Marks” of evangelicalism, Activism. Here the author contributes an excellent section on “Race Relations” (227-33) and evangelicals during this time. He is caught seemingly in a conflict, though, as he speaks more or less favorably of Darwin’s view of evolution and the evangelicals who embraced it; but he finds exceptionally problematic the concomitant “Social Darwinism,” which some evangelicals also embraced, and its effect on both race relations and other social and economic issues.

Many of the omissions of individuals and events in these volumes can be accounted for by editorial constraints in terms of space (the volumes are all uniformly about 280 pages), like the initial volume by Mark Noll, but this series demonstrates a tendency to redefine evangelicalism more or less in terms of activism, particularly social activism, rather than as a theological movement.

The aforementioned article in the *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* states that, “Theologically it [evangelicalism] begins with a stress on the sovereignty of God, the transcendent, personal, infinite Being who created and rules over heaven and earth” (406). Bebbington’s “Special Marks” make no mention of any aspect of this point at all. The author in this series may not agree with this position, but the only intellectually honest manner to deal with it is to prove why this definition is incorrect or inconsequential. Neither volume does this (nor does Noll’s); instead,

the sovereignty of God and its results as defining features of evangelicalism are ignored.

Why and how evangelicalism is in the condition it currently finds itself is perhaps seen as much in what these volumes neglect as what they present. They are certainly important contributions to the literature, but are rather marked as much by their omissions as by their inclusions.