

REVIEWS

Timothy George, ed., *J. I. Packer and the Evangelical Future: The Impact of his Life and Thought* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009). Reviewed by Iain H. Murray.

This book will be of general interest, both because Dr Packer rightly has many admirers around the world and because anything that addresses the future of evangelicalism seriously has to be of importance. The twelve chapters, by different contributors, consist of material first given in honour of Jim Packer at Beeson Divinity School in 2006. A concluding chapter gives the subject's own "Reflections and Response." In this reviewer's opinion a worthy biography of Packer has yet to be written.

Though the authors of this book mean to "celebrate his life"—and include not a little interesting biography—this work is not intended to fill that need. In some respects the book is surprising. It contains the kind of high praise not usually expressed in a man's lifetime, such as "this will be known as the Packer Era because J. I. Packer has been the towering figure of this era" (139). The explanation for this perhaps over-the-top praise seems to lie in one of the main themes of the book, namely that Packer was right to seek to move contemporary evangelicals towards sympathy with Christian traditions other than their own. For doing this, his reputation has suffered in some circles, and Timothy George (and most of his fellow contributors) evidently intends to rectify that supposed injustice. Two of the contributors are Charles Colson and the late Richard John Neuhaus, the originators of the Evangelical and Catholics Together program (ECT). Speaking of ECT, Colson says, "I think now most people applaud it" (131). So little was Neuhaus concerned to placate any doubtful evangelicals that he gives us repeated references to John Paul II and Benedict XVI.

There is much in Packer that is not related to this area of controversy. No one will find a whisper of it in his greatest book, *Knowing God*. Many of us eagerly spread that book, content to leave aside the question how its "Puritan" standpoint can be consistent with some other later writings. Some of the contributors to the book we are reviewing may be under the misapprehension that Packer cannot be admired unless there is agreement on the controversy. The chapter by Mark Dever helps to show this is not so. It is therefore regrettable that this book should rather closely tie Packer's permanent usefulness to the churches with an issue on which we think he

is mistaken. What is the mistake? Not that a Roman Catholic may be a Christian—who in his senses would deny it?—but that the official Roman teaching is a safe guide to Christ for all to follow. Dr. Packer's position is that he differs with Rome on the doctrine of the church, and it is that which "makes anything like reunion impossible" (184). If that is the only discrepancy between Rome and Scripture, then continuing division may be deplored; but traditional Protestant and evangelical belief has been that Rome is false to Scripture on the way of salvation itself.

We are thankful for Packer's opposition to liberalism, yet what liberalism has done to the churches is far too little recognized in these pages. The damage has been done, not by "modernity" or "postmodernism," but by plain disbelief in the word of God. That is why the ecumenical agenda has proceeded—as Dr Lloyd-Jones said long ago—without any basic agreement on "What is a Christian?" The same omission exists in the ECT documents.

It is not the purpose here to summarize the material in this book. We hope many ministers and serious Christians will read it for themselves. There is one chapter, however, on which we need to dwell because of its serious inaccuracies; it is the contribution of Carl Trueman on "J. I. Packer: An English Nonconformist Perspective." The greater part of this chapter has to do with Packer's parting from Lloyd-Jones. The main issue here is simple: who departed from whom? Lloyd-Jones parted from Packer, says Trueman, by the address he gave at the Evangelical Alliance meeting of 1966. The facts are against any such interpretation. Packer and Lloyd-Jones continued to work together at the Puritan Conference in 1967, 68, 69, and would have done so in 1970 had it not been for the publication of *Growing into Union* (London: SPCK, May 1970). In this book Packer endorsed teaching that belongs to the Roman Catholic tradition and not to the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England.

The issue between Lloyd-Jones and Packer was not, as Trueman represents it, 'separatism versus the Church of England'; it was maintaining historic evangelical belief versus ecumenical alignment. Dr Trueman makes some points that are true and insightful, but his main case is simply wrong, and his reliance on the unworthy opinions of Dr Gaius Davies (who was no firsthand witness to the discussions of the 1960s) very regrettable. He reports: "Davies argues that Lloyd-Jones could not stand competition and could not bear not to be in overall control.... A split with Lloyd-Jones was always a likely outcome: after all, Packer was the only man within Lloyd-Jones's orbit who could pose a serious challenge to his leadership" (123). We would like to know of one evangelical minister present at that time who holds such an opinion and regret that Packer could let it stand without comment in his concluding chapter. It is false and has misled Dr Trueman to support a slander.

Trueman attacks Lloyd-Jones's thinking for offering an alternative to Packer's position which was "little more than an evangelical, anti-Roman form of the very doctrinal indifferentism he rightly saw as the poison of 1960s mainstream ecumenism" (122). He bases the charge on the grounds that Lloyd-Jones had nothing

to say on sacraments, church government, and such like. This is a complete misreading of the situation, as anyone could confirm who attended the Westminster Fellowship during the *years* when just such matters were discussed, at Dr Lloyd-Jones's direction. Certainly he did not believe those subjects were the issue in the 1960s. A much greater danger concerned him. But that he trivialized their importance is quite wrong. Part of his concern that Presbyterian denominations should belong (as they did) to the British Evangelical Council was that he was concerned that the convictions of these denominations would be found alongside men of Baptist and Independent persuasion. In other words, Lloyd-Jones's convictions on church issues were (as with Whitefield in the 18th century, and Spurgeon in the Downgrade Controversy) devoted to what was more fundamental.

Carl Trueman thinks Packer should have left the Church of England and taken on the leadership role among the men Lloyd-Jones had led. Given the beliefs Packer endorsed in 1970, that could never be. God had another and a wider ministry for his servant. If it is overstating it to say that Jim Packer became "the bishop of evangelicalism, at least in North America" (131), it is surely true that, under God, he has been the means of doing much lasting good. The best of us are inconsistent in measure; in differing from our friend, as I do, I believe I am adhering to the conviction that has played such a large part in his own ministry.

Geoffrey W. Grogan. *Psalms*. Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008. xi + 490 pp. \$25.00 (paper). Reviewed by William D. Barrick, Professor of Old Testament.

Geoffrey W. Grogan served as Principal Emeritus of Glasgow Bible College before it became International Christian College, Glasgow. Prior to that, he lectured full time for fourteen years at London Bible College. He is now retired, ministers as a part-time pastor in a Baptist Church and continues to teach part-time (International Christian College and Scottish Baptist College). His published books include *The Christ of the Bible and The Church's Faith* (1998) and *Prayer, Praise and Prophecy: A Theology of the Book of Psalms* (2001) in Christian Focus's Mentor series and two commentaries in the same publisher's Focus on the Bible Commentaries (*Mark: Good News from Jerusalem*, 2003; and *2 Corinthians: The Glories and Responsibilities of Christian Service*, 2007). In *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Zondervan 1986, 2nd ed. 2008) he contributed "Isaiah." In September of 2010 InterVarsity Press will publish *The Faith Once Entrusted to the Saints: Engaging with Issues and Trends in Evangelical Theology*.

The Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary series (J. Gordon McConville and Craig Bartholomew, eds.) combines theological exegesis and theological reflection in a paragraph-by-paragraph commentary on the biblical text. The *Psalms* commentary by Grogan apportions the material in the usual distribution

characteristic for the series: "Introduction" (1-39), "Exegesis" (41-229), "Theological Horizons of Psalms" (231-430), "Bibliography" (436-47), "Index of Names" (448-51), "Index of Subjects" (452-59), and "Index of Scripture References" (460-90). For *Psalms*, the author adds an appendix titled "Preparing a Sermon on a Psalm (Using Psalm 8 as an Example)" (431-35). Commentators engaged in this series represent a variety of theological traditions and perceptions regarding the work of theology and theological hermeneutics. The series focuses primarily on students, pastors, and other Christian leaders who are engaged in theological interpretation of Scripture.

In his "Introduction," Grogan briefly discusses the world of the Psalms (1-2) and affirms that George Adam Smith's *Historical Geography of the Holy Land* "has never been bettered" for understanding the geographic background (2). In his treatment of textual criticism (3-4) he expresses confidence in the Masoretic Text. Poetry and parallelism form the topics in "Sense Rhythms of the Psalms" (4-6). A series of sections deal with the variety of critical methodologies employed by scholars for the study of the Psalter: "Historical and Source Criticism" (6-10), "Psalm Genres and Form Criticism" (10-19), "Redaction Criticism" (19-21), "Canonical Criticism" (21-29), "Rhetorical or Literary Criticism" (29-31), and "Reader-Oriented Criticism" (31-32). Within the section on historical and source criticism, Grogan includes an examination of the psalm superscriptions (8-10). He concludes that the superscriptions "belong to the biblical text" (8), but fails to mention the work of James Thirtle (*The Titles of the Psalms: Their Nature and Meaning Explained*, Henry Frowde, 1904) and omits any reference in the entire volume to Bruce K. Waltke's "Superscripts, Postscripts, or Both," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 110/4 (1991):583-96. The author returns to the issue of the superscriptions in an insightful excursus on "The Davidic Psalms" (34-39), in which he supports the concept that David himself "updated" his psalms for use in Temple worship (37). Grogan maintains Davidic authorship for the Davidic psalms as a whole (39). Under the topic of "Rhetorical or Literary Criticism," he proposes a succinct topical summary of each of the five books of the Psalter (31) that many readers will find welcome and useful. Cautioning against getting swept up too much in the various critical methodologies, the author reminds readers that "the higher our view of biblical authority is, the more tentative we should be, lest we elevate some particular system of literary study to a position above the biblical text itself" (33).

The exegetical section of this volume bears some semblance to the type of commentary offered by Robert Davidson in *The Vitality of Worship: A Commentary on the Book of Psalms* (Eerdmans, 1998), a work which Grogan cites frequently. Grogan spends but a page or two on most individual psalms and sometimes three or four pages for the longer psalms (including Psalm 119). His comments cite the Hebrew text (see 62 concerning 16:2-4 and 209 concerning 132:1-9) and his footnotes demonstrate the extent of his research (see 42 n. 2, 65 n. 94, 99-100 n. 16, and 135 n. 12). Contrary to current practice in many commentaries on Psalms, he does not ignore the superscriptions in his comments. He often comments on

interpretive or translational problems (e.g., 49 n. 30 regarding 5:3, 73 n. 136 regarding 22:16, and 131 n. 167 regarding 71:15). Speaking to the governing tone of his commentary, he identifies one's desire for the living God as "an essential, indeed, *the* essential, ingredient" (42, emphasis his) in the reader's approach to the biblical text of the Psalter.

The primary contribution of *Psalms* comes in the theological portion of the volume. Grogan begins with "The Psalter's Key Theological Themes" (231-95) including "The Basic Convictions of the Psalmists" (232-73), "The Covenants and the Theological Significance of the Exile" (273-88), and "Yahweh as the God of the Future, the God Who Plans, the God of the Messiah and His Kingdom" (288-95). Then he moves to "The Contribution of the Psalter to Biblical Theology" (295-359). Here he examines the Psalter's "Warm Doctrine of God" (301-8), "Firm and Confident Doctrine of Historical Revelation" (308-19), "Heartfelt and Expanding Sense of Community" (319-26), "Profound Doctrine of Sin" (326-35), "Realistic Doctrine of Suffering" (335-41), "Responsive Doctrine of Prayer and Worship" (341-48), and "Unshakeable Doctrine of the Messiah" (348-59). Lastly, Grogan takes his readers on a survey of "The Psalter's Relevance to Present-Day Theological and Other Issues" (359-430), taking into account "God and Creation" (360-76), "Humanity and Sin" (376-87), "Christ's Person and Work" (387-96), "The Grace of God, the Work of the Holy Spirit, and the Christian Life" (396-406), "The Church" (406-17), "The Last Things" (417-24), and "Holy Scripture" (424-30). He demonstrates a full awareness of the issues of continuity and discontinuity between the biblical testaments and recognizes the role of intertextuality (OT use of the OT and NT use of the OT).

Throughout this commentary the author exhibits an affinity to conservative, evangelical commentators and theologians. His views are thoroughly evangelical. Both of these factors produce a volume that replaces the liberal theological product of Hans-Joachim Kraus's classic work, *Theology of the Psalms* (Augsburg, 1986). Grogan's theological treatise finds many similarities to Michael E. Travers, *Encountering God in the Psalms* (Kregel, 2003; see the review in *MSJ* 18/1 (Spring 2007):138-39) and James Luther Mays, *The Lord Reigns: A Theological Handbook to the Psalms* (Westminster John Knox, 2004), who share the same conservative and evangelical stance.

Grogan's commentary on Psalms provides an excellent resource for students, informed laymen, pastors, and teachers. Everyone who teaches or preaches from the Psalter will benefit from referring to this volume quickly and often. For this reviewer, *Psalms* is Grogan's best work yet.

John D. Hannah. *An Uncommon Union: Dallas Theological Seminary and American Evangelicalism*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009. 399 pp. \$24.99 (cloth).
Reviewed by J. Gregory Behle, Professor of Christian Education.

In 1927, a group of Los Angeles church leaders, concerned with the drift and foment within the American church scene, committed themselves to establishing an institution anchored on the fundamental truths that were being abandoned by a growing number of seminaries. Los Angeles Baptist Theological Seminary was established as a statement and vision against the rising tide of modernism and liberalism. Today, that fledgling Baptist school is The Master's College and Seminary.

The turbulent years of the twenties was to give birth to another academic institution. Founded in 1924, a mere three years prior to LABTS, the Evangelical Theological College in Dallas, Texas was also launched in the midst of the growing swell and storm within the American church. Today, that institution is known as Dallas Theological Seminary.

John D. Hannah is well-qualified to address a history of Dallas Theological Seminary. Scholastically, Hannah's doctoral research at the University of Texas (Dallas) resulted in his excellent dissertation, *The Social and Intellectual History of the Origins of the Evangelical Theological College*. This fine treatment of the social, cultural, and theological milieu that birthed Dallas Seminary provides the archival spadework behind the volume under consideration.

Furthermore, Hannah has been a participant-observer; both as a student at Dallas and as Distinguished Professor of Historical Theology for forty years—a significant percentage of the institution's history. As such, Hannah's insights by both archival and anecdotal insight are profound. His distinguished career as both a scholar and professor positions him well to guide the reader through Dallas' history.

Uncommon Union: Dallas Theological Seminary and American Evangelicalism is organized structurally around the commonly utilized thread of presidential leadership. Like most, institutional histories, Hannah begins by setting the stage for the institution's genesis—theologically, culturally, and socially. This is followed by development of the issues and challenges facing Dallas' five presidents. The text takes advantage of rich primary archival resources providing a refreshing scholarship given the secondary and tertiary sources commonly used in other Christian institutional histories.

Hannah does have the unenviable task of writing his history while gainfully employed by the same institution. This challenge is openly and clearly acknowledged in his introduction to the work (16). *Uncommon Union* must thread the fine line between historical honesty and accuracy with present administrative sensibilities, particularly in regards to the "living history" whose actors are still on, or near, the Dallas stage. This results in a subtle shift from a *reflective* history early in the work, to a more *descriptive* history in the more contemporary era. Hannah skillfully and masterfully avoids the trend to begin with humble origins, move to a period of institutional struggle and emergence, and then conclude with the institution as a paradigm of academic arrival, interestingly coinciding with the current administration. The histories of other institutions tell the wonderful tales of by-gone days to warm the hearts and recollections of *alma mater* to alums, or are written as public

relation pieces to be used by development offices in courting prospective donors. *Uncommon Union* is not hagiography. Hannah is transparent and honest—a daunting challenge for any historian reflecting on the institution with which he is so deeply associated.

In reviewing the work, several observations emerged. First, this reviewer would have recommended to the editor that the rich quantitative data provided would be better presented in tabular form rather than in the narrative. At times, descriptive statistical data breaks the flow of the fine discussion occurring in the narrative, particularly in the latter half of the work. Tables could present statistical information in a visually-comprehensible format that would be more meaningful to the reader without altering the narrative flow.

Second, the assumption might be that *Uncommon Union* would only interest individuals connected with Dallas. Hannah's unfolding of the turmoil and upheaval that birthed the seminary, as well as the issues and challenges that molded it, would be of interest to anyone concerned with the forces that have shaped the modern American church scene. As the subtitle suggests, the union between Dallas Theological Seminary and the shaping of American Evangelicalism is profound. The influence of the legions of "Dallas Men" (and later women) have left an indelible mark on evangelical thought and ministry.

Finally, readers may be surprised to find that Dallas Theological Seminary is not as monolithic as they thought; those assuming that Dallas is Arminian in theological orientation may be surprised to find out about its Presbyterian and Calvinistic roots. Readers may be surprised to find that their perceptions of Dallas are in fact wrong.

An Uncommon Union: Dallas Theological Seminary and American Evangelicalism is more than a mere institutional history: it is a *tour de force* of an institution that has both shaped, and been shaped, by American Evangelicalism. It is a window through which one can view and understand the American theological landscape. Its graduates serve influential positions of leadership worldwide, shaping a wide diversity of institutions and ministries. Dallas Theological Seminary's historical legacy and contribution mirror the evangelical soul, and, together, the two form an "uncommon union" as it has shaped American Evangelicalism.

Matthew C. Hoskinson, *Assurance of Salvation: Implications of a New Testament Theology of Hope*. Greenville, S.C.: BJU Press, 2010. \$22.95 (cloth). 228 pp.
Reviewed by Trevor Craigen, Retired Professor of Theology

After an introduction, six chapters, and a conclusion, one comes to the end of a very thorough examination of passages on hope in the NT. Current views have been critiqued. Tables and charts make their contribution to understanding what is being explained or outlined. An extensive set of instructive footnotes makes its mark

in that the bulk of the data which would be in the main text of a dissertation but which obviously became footnotes. At times, it seemed that the comment made in the footnote was only indirectly related to the subject matter, but the comment showed the author's awareness of the original languages and the movement of thought/argument in a biblical book/epistle, if not also the debates through the ages. The contemporary question of too many Christians is, "Do I know for sure that I will spend eternity with God?"

The history of assurance begins with the thoughts of Thomas Aquinas, followed by those of Martin Luther, of John Calvin, and of John Wesley. These four theologians were chosen because contemporary opinions regarding assurance grow out of the views held by these scholars (50). Disagreements among the scholars today result in three major views being identified, namely, Present Only View (POV), the Time of Conversion View (TofC), and the Composite View (CV), all of which headings or labels were original with the author (51). The major difference between the views is that the POV rejects the idea of present assurance of final salvation being possible. The other two views agree that it is possible (51). Only the objective promises of God form the basis for assurance, so says TofC. The believer's life style after conversion is rejected as a means of assurance. The CV, as its label suggests, synthesizes the other two views. The objective and subjective are combined, causing some debate with the other two (52).

Chapter Two then goes on to explain the three views in more detail. POV, as anticipated, holds to genuine believers falling from grace and not persevering in faith and obedience, and asserts that one cannot know whether or not he is part of the elect. TofC proclaims the objective work of Christ as the only basis for assurance (57). The linkage between faith and assurance is strong enough to declare that assurance is of the essence of saving faith, and saving faith on the other hand is necessarily antecedent to good works (62). Inserted at the end of Chapter Two (71) is a very helpful diagram showing how the three views relate to the objective and subjective "Means of Assurance" and the possibility or impossibility of having "Security of Final Salvation."

From this point on the author states his intention to evaluate the three views in the light of the biblical theology of hope and to pinpoint the one closest to Scripture. Four chapters examine "hope." "Abraham and Hope" which basically gives consideration to Paul's use of Abraham in Romans 4 and then in Hebrews 6 (ch. 3). "Hope" in the NT Historical Texts (ch. 4), is followed by "Hope in the Paul's Writings" (ch. 5) and closed off with "Hope in the General Epistles" (ch. 6). Seven tables on references to hope under various categories appear in each of the four chapters (74, 75, 101, 107-8, 135, 198-99, 206-7), as noted above, making their contribution to the clarity of what is being expressed. The lengthy footnotes are almost intimidating at first, but then one recognizes that the format allows for a swift reading of the material, and if need be, the reader can stop and wade through the information given in the notes.. Hoskinson well observes that Abraham's life proves that growth is fundamental to justifying faith. Constantly, points made from the text

are applied to one or more items in the different views. A comparative critique is conducted through these chapters as well. The study of hope in Chapter Four introduces the reader to five mundane references in Luke and Acts, two OT citations, and then the rest of the occurrences being treated under “Redemptive/Salvific Hope” and under the heading “Hope as a Cornerstone in Paul’s Defense.” The latter is a subset of the former heading, since it is a reference to his redemptive hope, although stated while defending himself before the authorities no less than four times (127). His hope for the resurrection was one of the grounds for his incarceration. His message is consistent with the Word of God: His hope for the future is based upon the Truth.

Note is made too of the Messiah having first to rise from the dead. God’s promises of the future provide hope. In the writings of Paul hope is to be found mentioned numerous times (134-68). A wealth of information on this topic fills these pages. The table of references shows 45 under five categories, which includes hope and the believer’s conversion, sanctification, and eschatological future. Hope as a divine gift and individual/mundane references are also noted. This is a ‘rich’ section and worthy of being read slowly and thoughtfully with Bible and Greek text at hand. Two broad statements succinctly summarize the teaching in the Pauline writings: “God is the originator of the believer’s hope,” and “The believer’s hope is inextricably tied to his perseverance in faith and obedience” (167).

The job would be left incomplete were the examination of hope in the General Epistles to be omitted. Fourteen references from Hebrews, 1 and 2 Peter, and 2 and 3 John receive attention.

The book’s conclusion reviews the contemporary views spelled out on its pages. An appendix on assurance as of the essence of saving faith closes off the book which is a pleasure to read. The final sentence of Chapter 6 is a worthy ending to this review: “[F]ar from being irreconcilable foes, the promises of God and the endurance of the Christian form a twofold means by which the believer may enjoy present assurance of his final salvation” (195).

Preach it!

John MacArthur. *Ashamed of the Gospel: When the Church Becomes like the World*. 3rd Edition. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2010. 304 pp. \$22.99 (cloth).
Reviewed by Trevor Craigen, Retired Professor of Theology

The title of this very recent publication could also be used to describe Dr. MacArthur’s deep concern at the shameful redefinition of both the gospel message and the ministry. He is certainly not ashamed of the gospel, but he is ashamed of the caricaturing taking place and the errant methodology being promoted. John MacArthur makes it quite clear that he does not write in anger, but with the prayer that the book would challenge the common way of thinking about the issues covered

in the book, so that the reader would go back to the Scriptures (34).

Having read a portion of the 1993 edition of his book, the author was moved to upgrade and update, but not to enlarge its contents by more than two additional chapters (11 and 12) and one more appendix (App. 2). A major reason for not just reissuing the book was to highlight the unchanging nature of its message (24). Presumably, it is the gospel message which is always relevant and beyond review and redefinition.

The reader will find his normal rate of reading will have to slow down, for very good reason, and that is to absorb the host of historical and biographical information as well as a multiplicity of exegetical and interpretive comments accompanying the many cross-references to appropriate passages of Scripture. The reader will find no text taken out of context to support a pretext. It is certainly not the writing of someone who has become an expert in some sphere of knowledge and is now using his *own* thoughts and proposals, his self-developed formula, in evaluation and measurement. It is not a question of "MacArthurism" versus other "isms" or theories either. Rather, such a critique as offered in *Ashamed of the Gospel*, is the end result of mastering the divinely inspired text. No! More correctly stated it is "the result of being mastered by the divinely inspired biblical text." "What does the Bible say?" points to the right source for critical data on the gospel message and the church's philosophy of ministry and relationship with the world around.

The reader will be introduced to a wide variety of issues within the evangelical world, e.g., post-modernism, the emerging church, pragmatism and its detrimental effect, adopting marketing strategy for ministry, user-friendly churches, the audience as the message-determinant, the Down-Grade Controversy in Spurgeon's time, worldliness which relegates God and His Word to a subordinate role in the church, the loss of interest in preaching, especially that which confronts the sinner and calls for repentance, and a biblical philosophy of ministry, *et. al.*

Such serious issues are covered in twelve chapters (220 pages) and four appendices (71 pages). Chapter titles prime the reader as to what will be discussed therein, e.g., "The User-Friendly Churches" (ch. 2), "The Sovereignty of God in Salvation" (ch. 8), or "Carried About by Every Wind" (ch. 11), and in the Appendices, "Spurgeon Speaks to Our Time" (App. 2) or "Charles Finney and American Evangelicalism" (App. 3). Memorable expressions occur here and there, and may even be added to a preacher's file of quotations or function mnemonically.

"The new philosophy is straightforward: The church is in competition against the world, and the world is very good at capturing people's attention and affections. The church, on the other hand, tends to be very poor at 'selling' its product. Evangelism should therefore be viewed as a marketing challenge..." (37).

"To be a Christian is to be a warrior. The good soldier of Jesus Christ must not expect to find ease in this world: it is a battlefield" (272).

"There has never been a time when biblical Christianity was not threatened with worldliness and false doctrine" (117).

“Ecclesiastics have altered the gospel, and if it had not been of God, it would have been stifled by falsehood long ago” (266).

Lest some think a book of this nature leaves one despondent and depressed at finding out how much is still wrong with so many evangelical churches, the final words of the book indicate the attitude and demeanor applicable to the man of God facing the reality of much turmoil over the issues identified above: “There are, thankfully, many knees that have not yet bowed to the Baal of pragmatism. May God bless them and make them fruitful. I for one have absolute confidence that no matter how many religious hucksters and marketeers may come and go, and no matter how much wood, hay, and stubble is going to burn up, the Lord is building *His* church, “and the gates of hell [margin] shall not prevail against it (Matt. 16:18)” (232).

Ashamed of the Gospel (3rd ed.) stands as a model of how fruitfully Scripture correctly interpreted can be brought to bear critically upon the church in the world. It yields too the type of questions a candidate for a pastorate should be asked, or what a candidate should ask of the elders and other church leaders interviewing him.

Kenneth A. Mathews. *Leviticus: Holy God, Holy People*. Preaching the Word. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2009. 288 pp. \$32.99 (cloth). Reviewed by William D. Barrick, Professor of Old Testament.

Kenneth A. Mathews is professor of OT at Beeson Divinity School of Samford University. Before going to Beeson Divinity School in 1989, he taught at Criswell College and was an adjunct professor at Dallas Baptist University. He is an ordained minister in the Southern Baptist Convention. As an acknowledged expert on the Dead Sea Scrolls, textual criticism, biblical Hebrew, and the literary study of the OT, Mathews co-authored *The Paleo-Hebrew Leviticus Scroll* (American Schools of Oriental Research, 1985) with David Noel Freedman. He also co-authored *Foundations for Biblical Interpretation: A Complete Library of Tools and Resources* (Baptist Sunday School Board, 1999) with David S. Dockery and Robert B. Sloan. Mathews serves as the associate general editor for the OT in the New American Commentary series for which he wrote the two Genesis volumes (Broadman & Holman, 1996, 2002).

Kent Hughes serves as the general editor for the Preaching the Word series of expository commentaries for both OT and NT. The series engages the biblical text as the authoritative Word of God. It provides readable expositions of the biblical text that include practical application. In the preface to this volume, Mathews observes that OT scholars tend to ignore the relationship of the text to the NT’s gospel (11). Throughout this volume on Leviticus, he carefully identifies and develops that relationship without ignoring the exegesis of the text within its own context. Students

in Mathews' doctor of ministry (D.Min.) seminars stimulated his enthusiasm for this commentary by agreeing that "if a person can preach from Leviticus effectively, a person can preach from anywhere in the Bible!" (13).

Leviticus presents a section-by-section commentary that sometimes provides a verse-by-verse treatment. Mathews covers the twenty-seven chapters of the Book of Leviticus in twenty-three expositions. The first exposition poses an introduction focusing on only the first verse of the book (15-21). The next five expositions cover Leviticus 1-7 (23-72). From that point on, each chapter of Leviticus receives its own exposition with the exception of the twelfth exposition treating Leviticus 13:1-15:33 (123-32), the fifteenth exposition (Lev 18:1-30 and 20:1-27; 155-65), and the seventeenth exposition (Lev 21:1-22:33; 177-87). Also, the author first expounds Lev 23:1-3 (189-98), then handles 23:4-44 in a second message (199-208).

The endnotes (249-63) reveal Mathews' careful exegesis and technical resources. He has not ignored any of the major commentaries or resources, but has paid closest attention to dependable evangelical commentators and scholars. The volume concludes with a "Scripture Index" (265-78), a "General Index" (279-83), and a very practical "Index of Sermon Illustrations" (284-87).

The author limits references to Hebrew in the body of his expositions, but will not shrink from using it when he deems it necessary (e.g., 29, 47, 62). Every page exudes his passion for preaching and his careful application of biblical truth to the modern hearer. The following examples demonstrate Mathews' skill in bringing the text to bear on the hearer or reader:

The difference between unintentional and willful sins is not so much the sin *per se* but the attitude of the offender toward his sin (53).

Our sin cannot be satisfied by any act of penance, sincere or not (59).

[T]he trend toward casual dress and laid-back behavior in our culture has also left its mark on the perception of how to handle the "holy" (61).

The overarching lesson is the importance of proper worship in the presence of God made possible through the gracious relationship God has with his people (123).

To confuse or reject the Creator's design is to deny the lordship of God (157).

Holy living before God and *honest living* before our neighbors are the two pillars upon which the whole of God's demands rest (167).

Mathews points out that the sabbaths in the Levitical system were not Israel's to do with as they wished. The Lord established the sabbaths for Himself, not for the people. Thus Scripture rarely refers to them as "your sabbath(s)" (meaning

Israel's), but overwhelming as “my sabbath(s)” (meaning the Lord's). “The convocations were focused on the worship of God—they are his special times” (190).

When his exposition encounters problematic texts in Leviticus, Mathews does not ignore or skip over the interpretive issue—he tackles it directly and provides a coherent and biblically faithful conclusion. Examples of such treatments include the issue of the meaning of “cutting off” (69-70), the matter of Aaron's silence after the deaths of Nadab and Abihu (96-97), the question regarding what God designed the levitical food laws to accomplish (103-7), and determining the meaning of “Azazel” in 16:8, 10 (138-39). The author also does not hesitate to explain (in simple terms) the occurrence of a sophisticated wordplay in Lev 7:35 (71) or a sound play in 9:24 (90-91). Repeatedly, Mathews takes note of significant aspects of teachings in Leviticus that many commentators ignore—e.g., the significance of the eighth day in Levitical law and the NT (84).

Although the volume appears to be relatively free of typos and other kinds of mistakes, there is one instance of mentioning “five special items” (76) with only four being identified (76-77). Matters of questionable or incomplete interpretation occur, but rarely. In his treatment of the purpose for the dietary laws, Mathews mentions the clean and unclean categories of animals in the time of Noah. He indicates that such an early classification must be due to “an intuitive awareness of what was appropriate for an offering presented to the Lord” (104). He fails to discuss the possibility that the categories of animals came through divine revelation either to Noah or to earlier generations.

Another issue arises in the author's discussion of the uncleanness or impurity of a woman after childbirth (114-16). Mathews contends that the issue involves the concept of perfection (114). It appears that he has not taken into account adequately that the same birthing conditions would have existed even in the woman's perfect, unfallen state. Multiplying and populating the earth must include giving birth as the divine means. How then could bearing children “reflect an unusual condition, not her typical healthy, whole state” (115)?

Limiting the function of the Urim and Thummim to answering mere yes/no questions (137) skips over a text like Judg 20:28 that seems to indicate a more detailed response from God. Actually, no one knows for certain how the Urim and Thummim were employed. God may have granted a detailed answer to a particular question in recognition of the Urim and Thummim's presence, rather than by using them like common lots.

Bible expositors will benefit greatly from this commentary. Pastors and teachers alike should place it on study shelves where they keep their most valued resources at hand—right alongside Allen P. Ross's *Holiness to the LORD: A Guide to the Exposition of the Book of Leviticus* (Baker, 2002), Mark Rooker's *Leviticus* (NAC, Broadman & Holman, 2000), and Gordon J. Wenham's *The Book of Leviticus* (NICOT, Eerdmans, 1979).

Rolland McCune. *A Systematic Theology of Biblical Christianity: Volume Two: The Doctrines of Man, Sin, Christ, and the Holy Spirit*. Detroit: Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009. 403 pp. \$21.95 (paper). Reviewed by Trevor Craigen, Retired Professor of Theology

After twenty-eight years of teaching theology at Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary, Rolland McCune published his theology notes, leaving behind a legacy of concise and instructive comments. This second volume covers Parts 5-8, i.e. "The Doctrine of Man," "The Doctrine of Sin," "The Doctrine of Christ," and "The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit." The author presents the origin of man without entering into extensive arguments of science and paleontology. No fuss, no bother, not a wasted word! He takes the biblical text at face value and teaches what it says. The *imago dei* is presented under Man's personal, spiritual, moral, and physical (?) resemblance to God (26-28). Note the author's question mark. Although he does not mention it specifically, McCune is obviously aware that the two terms, *tselem* and *demuth*, do point to an exact replica. In fact, a word study bears this out. However, that does not make it easier to explain. Hence the question mark.

He introduces the important consideration of Christ being the archetypal form God had in mind when He made man. The dots connect when it is remembered that Christ would need a body for the incarnation. An excursus in the book is on whether or not the image was lost in the Fall (29-30), but one wonders if this was so debatable that it warranted a special note. It is the author's judgment call. McCune dealt with it succinctly with three footnotes showing his awareness of what several other writers had concluded.

Chapter 14, "The Original State of Man," is just over four pages, with the material grouped under four categories, namely "Man's Moral Nature, Man's Mental Endowment, Man's Dominion Over Creation, and Man's Original Diet." If there was to be an excursus which would treat critically and biblically an area of knowledge which has become blurred today, that would be the arguments over theistic evolution and Fiat Creationism. Considering that fact that McCune is obviously a six-day young-earth creationist, he was obligated to react at the very least with those conservative evangelicals who have capitulated to science and have allowed it to change their interpretation of Scripture. The author in writing so succinctly and concisely and with clarity displays a mastery in summarization and in choosing what to focus on in place of lengthy arguments for and against the young earth as opposed to an old earth (3-10).

McCune opts in favor of traducianism over creationism and Federal Headship over against Seminalism. He presents arguments for and against each view, although he bills Federalism as being endorsed by all the arguments against the other views. He finds it problematical that Seminalism has to propose the "unindividualized" humankind all being in Adam. Unfortunately, David Turner's doctoral dissertation (Grace Theological Seminary, 1982) has been overlooked. It would be

interesting to see what McCune's reaction might be, especially on the gnostic aorist in the final clause of Rom 5:12.

Twenty short, one-sentence descriptions of the incarnation lay bare just how much material is available for study. Other than a footnote affirming that Jesus Christ was a genuine human and that He had come not in sinful flesh but rather in *the likeness* of ordinary, sinful humanity (102 n. 3), in *appearance as a man*, no systematic discussion follows up any one of these description. What follows is "An Exegetical Sketch of Philippians 2:5-8," in which different explanations of the "self-emptying" are briefly noted. The preferred definition is that He *voluntarily* set aside the unqualified exercise of His attributes and took the form of a servant. McCune qualified the relinquishing of His attributes by noting that He made use of His attributes during His life, His act was voluntary, and He was perfectly cognizant of His pre-incarnate state (107-9). Actually, the author adds one more which is that Christ depended on the power of the Holy Spirit during the *kenosis* period.

Nothing startling or *that* different occurs in the chapters on the virgin birth, the deity of Christ, and the humanity of Christ (115-38). It is standard fare and perfectly acceptable for the Bible student who avoids following a scholar with a reputation for re-doing and re-formatting everything. The brief discussion on the theanthropic person of Christ and the hypostatic union passes muster. The notes on impeccability brushed aside Canham's thought-provoking article in TMSJ 11 (2000), after citing only one part of his conclusions. It is worthy of more examination than it received (149). Canham's arguments treat peccability in the context of the decrees of God, the four kinds of humanity, and the *kenosis*, as well as carefully defining various terms, e.g., "ability"... Christ voluntarily set aside the unqualified exercise of His attributes and took the status of a slave.

McCune covers all the essentials in two chapters on the death of Christ and the meaning of His death. The particular vocabulary of redemption, propitiation, and reconciliation which goes with the atonement receives attention, as does the extent of the atonement. The entire obedience of Christ, both active and passive, are important aspects of His one indivisible life of obedience (199-204). Universality and limitation are two aspects in the atonement, which "being infinite, . . . made an *actual* (author's emphasis) provision for all and not just a hypothetical provision" (205). Charles Hodge and John Owen both provide statements in favor of a universal dimension because of the infinite value of Christ's sacrifice. It is fully sufficient for all the effects or all human beings (207), but then it is also clear that God's intent was to limit the strictly redemptive provisions to certain ones, the elect, those whom He enables to exercise faith. He comments upon the effectual call and the gifts of faith and repentance. Something obtains for the believer that does not obtain for the unbeliever, the *application* of the atonement's accomplishments and benefits (214). His reference to election and the effectual call is obviously very much involved in the *application*. If the application of the atonement is correlative with its accomplishments and provisions, and it is, then these entail both salvatory (sic) and non-salvatory factors, i.e., the restraining of sin and the general distribution

of God's benevolence. Before noting this, McCune had sketched out the universals to be reckoned with, namely the language of invitation, the love of God, the mandate to evangelize, the gospel message, objects of prayer, and [final] sanctification. Mark well that the author does not propose universal salvation. Far from it! This chapter on the atonement leaves the reader with no doubt that McCune has thought through the biblical statements of Scripture and sought to explain them without special pleading to make verses say what they do not say. The chapter closes with a very good précis of the atonement and the divine decrees (218-19). The reader will probably wish to review the material again thoughtfully.

The chapter on the resurrection of Christ and His ascension are standard fare, containing nothing provocative, unusual, or creative. Against those who propose a spiritual resurrection only, the bodily return of Christ is asserted.

The doctrine of the Holy Spirit takes up eight chapters, the last one of which overlaps with eschatology—with what small amount of prophecy could be incorporated in just seven pages. Scanning the pages on the doctrine of the Spirit will reveal that the essentials have been summarized adequately. The author holds to the indwelling of OT saints, but rightly retains baptism of the Spirit for NT church-age saints. In so doing, he gives Pentecost its significance in relation to the beginning of the church. He also makes a point of the Spirit and His activity under the dispensation of Conscience, describing it as the articulation of the Spirit with the conscience of man, an arrangement which would come to an end with the Flood (287). It is a pity that McCune could not have gone further and provided some material on the Spirit in relation to the other dispensations—a table would have been more than adequate. In this day and age when dispensationalism is not receiving the respect it deserves, some extra information is almost obligatory. A cross-reference to literature treating the dispensations exegetically would have been a nice touch, and who knows but that it might pull some earnest young student away from classic Reformed non-dispensational amillennialism. McCune chooses only to mention briefly the Spirit in the Tribulation Period and during the Messianic Kingdom.

All in all, this book deserves mention as a good introductory survey of Systematic Theology or as a primer on Christian doctrine. No reason rules out its being used as the foundation of mentoring in theology or in a discipleship setting. Now that the skeleton has been provided, let the erstwhile student “put on the flesh” from a deeper study of Scripture. That would be quite an exercise in learning.

William D. Mounce, *Basics of Biblical Greek Grammar*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009. 419 pp. \$49.99 (cloth). *Basics of Biblical Greek Workbook*. 223 pp. \$22.99 (paper). Reviewed by Thomas Halstead, Professor of Biblical Studies, The Master's College.

One does not need to look far today to note that there is a plethora of Greek grammars on the market, all with different purposes and goals of how to help a student become proficient in Greek. Some grammars emphasize the memorization of many charts and paradigms; others suggest reading the biblical text almost immediately; and still others are somewhere between.

William D. Mounce has published the third edition of his textbook, *Basics of Biblical Greek*, of which the first edition came in 1993. He is committed to keeping memorization to a minimum as he states in his preface, "Reduce the essentials to a minimum so the language can be learned and retained as easily as possible, so that the Word of God can be preached in all its power and conviction." His desire is to encourage the student to be excited about learning the language so that he or she might become more mature in Christ.

He also has kept the organization of his text clear and helpful by teaching nouns, adjectives and pronouns first in chapters 5-14, then teaching the verbs and participles in chapters 15-36. Oftentimes, switching back and forth between nouns and verbs has been quite confusing to the beginning student, and generally, little children learn nouns more easily than verbs when they are learning their language.

One of the key changes in the third edition is that it is more pleasing in appearance. It is larger in size than the second edition and now has margins on the side of the page in which to take notes. Mounce has made the text easier to read, and also easier to find things in the chapter with the titles in larger print. He also has introduced "The Professor," into his text, which is a cartoon character that appears in the margins. The purpose of "The Professor" is to add helpful thoughts or tidbits to the chapter material, such as numbers, days of the week, greeting one another, etc. All the chapters also have helpful overviews that precede each major section. The overview includes key thoughts for each chapter in that particular section. Furthermore, he has divided chapter 35 into two chapters in this edition, covering the non-indicative forms of $\delta\acute{\iota}\delta\omega\mu\iota$ in chapter 35 and the other three key $\mu\iota$ verbs in chapter 36. Finally, in the Lexicon, Mounce has noted in blue the words that are actually in the text to be memorized, versus all the words in the Lexicon that are mentioned, which include all words used ten times or more.

Probably the most helpful thing that could be added to this text would be an English lexicon for all words fifty times or more and the Greek definition(s) given. Currently, Mounce lists all words used ten times or more that give English definitions of Greek words. But giving Greek definitions of English words would be particularly valuable for the beginning student who perhaps has forgotten a particular word and does not know where to look for it.

In evaluating Mounce's workbook, one also finds much to commend, in particular, the sentences that are from the scriptures. He has twenty sentences in each lesson that move from elementary to more difficult. It would be helpful if he could leave more space for sentences 11-20. It is difficult to write the entire sentence in English in the space provided. Regarding the parsing, when he gets to verbs, he has chosen to parse in the following order: person, number, tense, voice,

mood. It appears from other textbooks that it is more common to parse the verbs tense, voice, mood, person, number.

Both Mounce's grammar and workbook have been and will continue to be valuable tools for any student desiring to study Greek. He has made it enjoyable to study and exciting to learn. They are both highly recommended by this writer.

John Piper. *Filling Up the Afflictions of Christ: The Cost of Bringing the Gospel to the Nations in the Lives of William Tyndale, Adoniram Judson, and John Paton* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2009). 126 pp. \$17.99 (paper). Reviewed by Irvin A. Busenitz, Professor of Bible and Old Testament.

This is the fifth book in the popular series entitled "The Swans are not Silent." The title of the collection is adapted from Eraclius' comments at the retirement of St. Augustine in A.D. 430. As the successor to the esteemed Augustine, Eraclius observed: "The cricket chirps, the swan is silent." Contending that the greatest voices of church history go on speaking, Piper contends, "if someone tells their story and gives them voice" (9). He powerfully bids his readers to drink from the reservoir of God's faithfulness—in this case by recounting the trials endured and the trails blazed by three men from previous centuries.

Piper introduces this trilogy with a treatise on the role of suffering in the lives of Christ and the Apostles and then illustrated in the lives of these three men. He contends, "Afflictions are not merely the *result* of missionary fruitfulness, but also the *means*" (9-10). He adds: "God designs that the suffering of his ambassadors is one essential means in the triumphant spread of the Good News among all the peoples of the world. . . . Suffering and death to save others is not only the *content* but it is also the *method* of our mission" (14, 15).

Utilizing Col 1:24 as the scriptural foundation of his thoughts, Piper explains that "Paul's sufferings fill up Christ's afflictions *not* by adding anything to their worth, but by extending them to the people they were meant to save" (22). "Christ has prepared a love offering for the world by suffering and dying for sinners. It is full and lacking in nothing—except one thing, a personal presentation by Christ himself to the nations of the world. God's answer to this lack is to call the people of Christ (people like Paul) to make a personal presentation to the afflictions of Christ to the world" (23).

The focus of Piper's first biography is William Tyndale. Born in 1494, Tyndale was an avid learner, becoming fluent in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, German, French, Spanish, Italian, and English. From his love for the natural power of language grew a passion to translate the Scriptures into English so that "a boy that driveth the plow shall know more of the Scripture than [the Pope] dost" (30). Thus Tyndale was driven to uncover what lay hidden in the Latin Vulgate and thereby liberate the life-saving gospel of salvation by grace through faith alone (40-42).

“Bible translation and Bible truth were inseparable for Tyndale, and in the end it was the truth—especially the truth of justification by faith alone—that ignited Britain with Reformed fire and then brought the death sentence to this Bible translator” (43).

Such passion led the British parliament in 1401 to make heresy punishable by burning at the stake. A few years later (1408), the Archbishop of Canterbury declared that translating the Scriptures into English or reading such translations were forbidden (43-44). Facing the heat of hatred, Tyndale fled in 1544 to the continent and went into hiding in Germany and the Netherlands.

Piper then turns his attention to the missionary endeavors of John G. Paton on the islands of New Hebrides. Known today as Vanuatu, this South Pacific country occupies a 450-mile stretch of islands between Hawaii and Australia. Known for their cannibalistic ways, the first missionaries were killed and eaten on November 20, 1839, only minutes after going ashore. Less than 20 years later (1858), Paton, together with his wife and infant son, landed on the island of Tanna. Within the year, his wife and son died of the fever, and by 1864, he was driven from the island.

Two years later, he and his second wife returned, this time to the island of Aniwa, where they labored together for the next 41 years. They learned the language, reduced it to writing, and translated the Scriptures. A hundred years later, over 90% of the Vanuatu population claimed to be Christian (56-58).

Paton went to New Hebrides against the wishes of his church elders. When told by one that he would be eaten by cannibals, he replied, “Mr. Dickson, you are advanced in years now, and ... soon to be laid in the grave, there to be eaten by worms; I confess to you, that if I can but live and die serving and honoring the Lord Jesus, it will make no difference to me whether I am eaten by Cannibals or by worms...” (58).

Piper attributed Paton’s great courage to his godly heritage (cf. Paton’s stirring tribute to his father, 70-72); his deep sense of divine calling—“Since none better qualified can be got, rise and offer yourself” (72); and his unshakeable confidence that the sovereign hand of a loving God controlled all adversities (74-78).

Lastly, Piper opens the biography of Adoniram Judson with the exclamation, “How few there are who die so hard” (85), noting that he was “a seed that fell into the ground and died again and again” (86).

After eighteen months of marriage, the 24-year old Judson sailed for India with his young wife. After a brief time with William Carey, they left for Burma—there to labor under the difficulties of discouragement, imprisonment, and diseases that would take the lives of his first two wives and seven of his thirteen children. Buoyed by the certainty of God’s sovereign providence in all of life, Judson remarked: “If I had not felt certain that every additional trial was ordered by infinite love and mercy, I could not have survived my accumulated sufferings” (87).

Judson entered Burma in 1813 and labored there until his death 38 years later. Though his nearly four decades were punctuated with numerous bouts of suffering and death, they were eventually rewarded with remarkable fruitfulness. Six years elapsed before there was a single convert, yet twenty years later thousands

were requesting tracts and copies of his Burmese Bible translation (96-97). Since that time, thousands of congregations have been established and hundreds of thousands have come to faith in Jesus Christ.

Ultimately, this is a book about missions and about the men who sacrificed their lives to proclaim the Good News, “to fill up what was lacking in the afflictions of Christ.” Each of these men gave their all. Though the length of their lives varied—Tyndale died at forty-two; Paton at eighty-two; Judson at sixty-one—the fruit of their lives continues on. Indeed, “the swans are not silent.”

R. R. Reno. *Genesis*. Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2010. 304 pp. \$32.99 (cloth). Reviewed by William D. Barrick, Professor of Old Testament.

Russell R. Reno is professor of theological ethics at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska. He authored *In the Ruins of the Church: Sustaining Faith in an Age of Diminished Christianity* (Brazos Press, 2002) and co-authored *Heroism and the Christian Life: Reclaiming Excellence* with Brian S. Hook (Westminster John Knox, 2000) and *Sanctified Vision: An Introduction to Early Christian Interpretation of the Bible* with John J. O’Keefe (Johns Hopkins, 2005). He also serves as the features editor for the magazine *First Things* (available online at <http://www.firstthings.com>), and the general editor for the Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible (BTCB) to which this volume belongs.

BTCB enlists systematic, historical, and moral theologians to provide guidance for pastors and academics in reading the Bible doctrinally. Authors for the volumes adhere to the presupposition that “dogma clarifies rather than obscures” (11). According to Reno, “the Nicene tradition, in all its diversity and controversy provides the proper basis for the interpretation of the Bible as Christian Scripture” (11-12). In an attempt to provide a more balanced perspective, Reno asks that readers not gain an erroneous impression, since the “Nicene tradition does not provide a set formula for the solution of exegetical problems” (12). The editors do not hold commentators for BTCB “to any particular hermeneutical theory that specifies how to define the plain sense of Scripture—or the role this plain sense should play in interpretation” (13). Reno decries the current state of affairs in seminaries and churches providing “theology without exegesis and exegesis without theology” (13). The series employs a range of Bible translations, because “Philological precision and stability is a consequence of, not a basis for, exegesis. Judgments about the meaning of a text fix its literal sense, not the other way around” (14).

With the purpose, nature, and assumptions of BTCB in mind, Reno proceeds to explain his approach in this commentary on Genesis. His method identifies “some of the telling verses in Genesis” and then focuses his comments on

those verses (21). He divides his comments into five main portions that demonstrate the promise-driven nature of the text: (1) Creation: Genesis 1–2 (29-76), (2) Fall: Genesis 3–4 (77-110), (3) Dead ends: Genesis 5–11 (111-35), (4) Scandal of particularity: Genesis 12–33 (137-251), and (5) Need for atonement: Genesis 34–50 (253-91). Within the first of these divisions, Reno comments on 1:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 10, 11, 26a, 26b, 28, 31; 2:2, 5, 7, 15, 17, 18, 20, 22, and 24. In the second he selects 3:1a, 1b, 2, 4, 6a, 6b, 7, 14, 21, 24; 4:3, 7, 8, 10, 12, 15, and 23. In the third he speaks to 5:1, 24; 6:2, 6, 8, 13, 14; 7:5, 9, 12; 8:16; 9:1, 9, 20, 22; 10:1; 11:4, 5, 10, and 31. Then, in the fourth he identifies and comments on 99 verses, portions of verses, or groups of verses.¹ In the fifth portion Reno comments on only 35 verses.² Comments vary in length. For example, the comment on 1:1 extends for about ten pages (29-39), whereas the note on 11:31 comprises a mere four lines (135).

Reno not only recognizes the fundamental significance of biblical teaching concerning creation (32-33), but indicates that the tension between science and theology has existed since the time of Augustine, who feared that scientists would laugh at his biblical view of creation (33). One cannot help but think that science in Augustine's day would be laughed at by modern scientists and, meanwhile, the Bible has not changed—indicating the fallacy of adapting biblical interpretation to current science. In 1:3 and 4, Reno adopts an allegorical interpretive approach to the text (46-48) and at 1:5 he denies any temporal meaning for either “the beginning” or “day” (48). His treatment of 2:15 moves too quickly to spiritualization (68-69). Providing a concise summary of the various approaches to the translation of the divine title YHWH, the commentator discusses the theological pluses and minuses to modern translations of the title (64-67). He warns that “changes in traditions of translations, changes supposedly made to achieve greater clarity, can actually generate new forms of obscurity” (66). At 2:18 Reno departs from the chronological flow of the creation account to declare that “the scriptural witness is structured by a movement from *very good* to *better still*” (73). However, the error of his approach resides in his drawing an excessive dichotomy between “very good” and “not good.” In point of fact, the “very good” actually follows the “not good” chronologically. Interestingly, although the chosen texts and discussions provide plenty of opportunity to discuss the issue of homosexuality (cf. 56 and 74-76), Reno ignores the implications of the text and fails to offer even a mention of the issue.

Within this theological commentary, readers will find a number of worthy discussions. For example, in his development of 3:1a Reno's discussion of free will

¹ 12:1a, 1b, 1-2, 3, 4, 7, 10, 13; 13:7, 10, 14, 16, 17; 14:2, 14a, 14b, 18, 24; 15:1, 4, 6, 8, 18; 16:1, 2a, 2b, 4, 6, 11; 17:2, 4, 5, 7, 11a, 11b, 13, 15; 18:1, 2, 4, 8, 12, 17-19, 23, 32; 19:2, 16, 24, 26, 31, 36; 20:2; 21:2, 10, 14, 27; 22:1, 2, 8, 9-10, 12, 14, 17; 23:2, 3, 6, 9; 24:1, 2, 6, 58, 67; 25:1, 9, 22, 23, 34; 26:5, 18; 27:5, 27, 38; 28:2, 12; 29:1, 11, 26; 30:1, 14, 25, 32; 31:13, 19; 32:7, 20, 24, 28, 32; and 33:4.

² 34:1; 35:2; 36:1; 37:1, 2, 9, 23, 27; 38:6; 39:2; 40:8; 41:14, 57; 42:3, 8, 9, 28; 43:1, 14, 18, 30; 44:2, 33; 45:2, 7, 13; 46:4, 8, 34; 47:21; 48:5; 49:2, 8; 50:15, and 25.

proves thought-provoking and insightful (77-85). From time to time, the commentator notes parallelisms or repetitions in regard to significant themes—e.g., Abraham hearkening to the voice of Sarah just as Adam had listened to Eve (165). Readers will find an engaging discourse on fearing God in the treatment of 22:12 (200-205). On the other hand, many comments tend to be shallow, or at least incomplete, theologically. Commenting that the fall of mankind allows God to begin formulating a redemptive strategy (97), Reno ignores the biblical witness that indicates the existence of a redemptive strategy in God's mind and purpose even before He created the world (Eph 1:4; 1 Pet 1:17-20). The commentator also omits any potential for divine revelation to Abel about sacrifice, assuming that "the impulse to sacrifice seems to follow from the sheer humanity of Cain and Abel" (97).

This reviewer read this commentary with interest and with benefit. It fails, however, to provide anything like an evangelical stance theologically, being heavily influenced by more liberal theologians. The volume presents a less than biblical theology approach due to its emphasis on philosophizing and human rationale. In addition, numerous typos and misspellings distract the reader—especially the nearly omnipresent "descendent" instead of "descendant." Hopefully, future volumes will present a cleaner text in this regard.

Kevin J. Vanhoozer, ed. *Theological Interpretation of the Old Testament: A Book-by-Book Survey*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008. 336 pp. \$19.99 (paper). Reviewed by William D. Barrick, Professor of Old Testament.

Vanhoozer is research professor of systematic theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois. His published books (sixteen he has either authored or edited) include *Is There a Meaning in This Text?* (Zondervan, 1998), *Remythologizing Theology: Divine Action, Passion, and Authorship* (Cambridge Studies in Christian Doctrine; Cambridge, 2010), and *Everyday Theology: How to Read Cultural Texts and Interpret Trends* (Baker, 2007) for which he, Charles A. Anderson, and Michael J. Sleasman are editors. The chapters in this volume originally appeared in *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, which Vanhoozer *et al.* edited (Baker, 2005). As such, this volume merely reorganizes the essays from the alphabetical arrangement in the *Dictionary* to the canonical order. Twenty-nine different authors contributed these essays. Among them are Craig G. Bartholomew ("Ecclesiastes," 179-85), Daniel I. Block ("Deuteronomy," 67-82), Richard S. Hess ("Kings," 119-23), Paul R. House ("Obadiah," 263-67; "Haggai," 295-99), Tremper Longman III ("Song of Songs," 186-93), J. G. McConville ("Joshua," 83-91; "Jeremiah," 211-20), Willem VanGemeren ("Joel," 251-56), John H. Walton ("Jonah," 268-75), Gordon J. Wenham ("Genesis," 29-41), and Albert Wolters ("Zechariah," 300-304). For a review of the *Dictionary*, see *MSJ* 19/1 (Spring 2008):139-41.

An introductory essay (“What Is Theological Interpretation of the Bible?,” 15-28) by Vanhoozer opens the volume. He begins by observing that theological interpretation does not impose “a theological system or confessional grid” (16) or “a general hermeneutic or theory of interpretation” (17) or “a form of merely historical, literary, or sociological criticism” (17) on the biblical text. Vanhoozer explains that the current volume provides examples of interpreters who bridge the gap between exegesis and theology (17-19).

Each chapter focuses on the message of each canonical book rather than on its historical background or the process of its composition (25). Each author discusses some of the history of the book’s interpretation, the book’s theological message, its relation to the canon as a whole, and the unique contribution it makes to God’s people (25). Every chapter concludes with a brief bibliography for further reading. A few of the authors failed to provide readers with good evangelical sources (e.g., Brian E. Kelly, “Samuel,” 118; Paul L. Redditt, “Esther,” 147; McConville, “Jeremiah,” 219-20) and a couple were overly skimpy (e.g., House, “Kings,” 123—omitting his own volume in NAC; Christian M. M. Brady, “Lamentations,” 225; and Thomas Renz for “Nahum,” 285, “Habakkuk,” 290, and “Zephaniah,” 294).

This handy compendium might provide a good textbook for a survey of the OT in an adult Bible fellowship or a church’s Bible institute program. Its essays are well written and informative. Block’s essay on Deuteronomy presents an excellent survey of the biblical book and its interpretive history (67-82). Murray D. Gow’s essay on Ruth (102-10) points readers to a superb study of prayer and blessing in the book (106). Richard L. Schultz contributes an excellent study of Isaiah (194-210) that includes a great focus on the messianic prophecies. Interestingly, Walton takes a skeptical approach to the book of Jonah. He concludes that the repentance of the Ninevites was inadequate, shallow, and uninformed (272). However, the nomination for the most disappointing chapter goes to Wolters’ on Zechariah (300-304), because he expends way too little on the message and theological significance of this book that makes such a magnificent contribution in these two areas for both the OT and NT. A Scripture index (313-26) and subject index (327-36) conclude the volume.

John Walton. *The Lost World of Genesis One: Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2009. 192 pages. \$16.00 (paper).

Reviewed by Trevor Craigen, Retired Professor of Theology

John Walton has put forward eighteen propositions in as many chapters in setting up a new alternative explanation of the creation account in Genesis One. They reveal that the author has given a lot of thought to his position, which obviously did not suddenly appear overnight. After reading the introduction and the first chapter on Proposition I, “Genesis 1 is Ancient Cosmology,” the “Summary and Conclusions,” as well as the “FAQs,” and taking note of the other seventeen

chapters' headings, it became obvious that a short review would not be a sufficient response. Looking through the seventeen other propositions confirmed this. This book begs for a critical review in a journal article which would tackle it proposition by proposition, if not line by line in places. Walton is proposing nothing less than a major overhaul of the literality of Genesis One. His label for this "newly created" theory is the *cosmic temple inauguration view*. Basically this means that the cosmos has been assigned the function of being God's temple, where he has taken up residence and has the world set up as His headquarters (162).

Supposedly in the ancient world the nations, including Israel, were much more attuned to functions of the cosmos than to its materiality. Genesis One proffers a record of functions and not of material creation. Sorry, but this reviewer is still unsure whether he understands it. In clear straightforward terminology, the historical narrative lays out what God actually did in six days of the creation week. Furthermore, it was the absolute beginning of everything!

Walton has succeeded in lifting Genesis One above the fray between science and theology (163), or so it appears. One cannot use Genesis to object to any mechanism offered by science since it is not an account of material origins, and in any case, science is in a constant state of flux. It provides, however, the best explanation of the data of the day (17). Nothing is gained by bringing God's revelation into accord with the science of the day. The theological key is to acknowledge when science proposes something deemed substantial, "Fine, that helps me see the handiwork of God." Relax theologian, our response to any proposal without fearing the discussion, is quite simply, "Yes, but there is no reason God could not have been involved in that process" (164). *Teleological evolution* crops up as a explanation of evolutionary processes having purpose and goal. Thus, evidence of design will be found. The upshot of all this is simply that neither Creationism nor Neo-Darwinism need relinquish any point they have made. Neo-Darwinists should no longer promote dysteleology as a corollary to the science, and should acknowledge its flaws and need of modification (167). On the other hand, Creationists can keep their theology of God's total involvement in creation, and keep their literal reading of Genesis 1. All they need to do is "to acknowledge that traditional interpretations or understandings of English words do not necessarily constitute the most faithful reading of the text" (167). The "material phase" of the heavens and the earth occurred, so one is informed, before "in the beginning" over long eras during the prehistoric period. The Bible, thus, yields nothing by which the age of the earth could be determined, and the biblical record really does not cover the original creation (93-99). The question of physical death present before the Fall of Man has been disconnected from the Fall of Man. That the resurrection overcomes physical, spiritual, and eternal death goes unmentioned. Further, the original creation had everything in abundance without suggesting that the created order was essentially subjected from the outset to death, scarcity of resources, and struggle to survive.

Much is made of having to read Genesis in a way that is true to the context of the original audience and author, and preserves and enhances the “theological vitality of the text” (Preface). No revelation was given to the Israelites to change what they were already understanding of the cosmos. Were the words of Moses merely echoing contemporary Israelite understanding? Or, did these words instruct Israelites on what they were to believe in contradistinction to other nations’ “origins” literature? The Genesis text uses plain language and can be understood by men of every age. It’s a timeless text. The order of events is clear, as is the time-span for God’s working in initial creation. So easily understood that anyone can see where the theories they have embraced are not in line with Moses’ inspired words. Walton, however, almost dialectically, remarks, “[I]t represents what the Israelites truly believed about how the world got to be how it is and how it works, though it is not presented as their own ideas, but as revelation from God” (15). But for what purpose was the revelation given? To give their point of view respectability and authority? Or was it to keep them deceived by the prevailing false views of origins? Walton comments that God was content for Israel to retain “the native ancient cosmic geography” (18). As for the location of the sun, the moon, and the stars, and as for the shape of the earth and the nature of the sky, none of these has any significance. If Israel alone of all the nations has received the divinely inspired literature on origins, then this revelation cannot contain false concepts, can it?

That is enough for now. There is enough material for this reviewer to function as a critic of the book. For optimum benefit, he would say, a thorough study of the biblical text is warranted before engaging with *The Lost World*. It will be a challenge not only in terms of grammar, syntax, and principles of hermeneutics, but also in terms of application to our day and how to relate science to the Bible or vice versa. No doubt others will pick up on this new perspective and extend the ideas of *The Lost World of Genesis One*. One last item: A Th.D. dissertation entitled “Genesis 1:1–2:3: A Textual and Exegetical Examination as an Objective Foundation for Apologetical and Theological Studies” by Bryan Murphy submitted to TMS in May, 2008, actually answered or countered much of Walton’s book in advance. Hopefully, Dr. Murphy will find time to have his dissertation published.

Paul D. Wegner. *Using Old Testament Hebrew in Preaching: A Guide for Students and Pastors*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2009. 166 pp. \$17.99 (paper). Reviewed by William D. Barrick, Professor of Old Testament.

Paul Wegner is professor of Old Testament at Phoenix Seminary. His books include *A Student’s Guide to Textual Criticism of the Bible* (InterVarsity, 2006), reviewed in *MSJ* 18/1 (Spring 2007):140-42, and *Bible Introduction: The Journey from Texts to Translations* (Baker, 1999, 2004). This brief volume seeks to remind seminarians and pastors of the benefits that accrue from utilizing Biblical Hebrew

in ministry. Wegner arranges the book around key questions that seminary graduates and active pastors might ask. Each chapter concludes with “Things to Consider” and “Further Reading” (e.g., 27-28, 66, 84-85).

Wegner first addresses the question, “How will knowing Biblical Hebrew help me in my ministry?” (13-28). His response includes the capriciousness of Bible translations (15-16) and an appeal to professionalism (17). In order to plan for success in the acquisition and usage of Biblical Hebrew, the minister must assess his motives (19-20), objectives regarding degree of fluency (20-22), and methods for learning Biblical Hebrew (23-27).

“What are the crucial tools that I should get?” comprises the second question that the author poses (29-66). Wegner identifies fourteen essential resources for the minister’s tool box (32-50): an English translation, a Hebrew Bible, guides to *BHS*, a parsing guide, a reading guide, a Hebrew-English lexicon, a Hebrew-English concordance, a beginning Hebrew grammar, a vocabulary list, a reference Hebrew grammar, a Hebrew syntax book, a Hebrew word study dictionary, a book on OT textual criticism, and a Septuagint. Focusing first on an English Bible version seems somewhat counter-productive to learning Biblical Hebrew. After all, being freed from the constraints of a translation entails devoting oneself to the biblical language. Although this reviewer agrees with most of the author’s recommendations regarding resource choices, the recommendation for a vocabulary list (44-45) should have included George M. Landes, *Building Your Biblical Hebrew Vocabulary* (SBL, 2001). Directing ministers to a Septuagint sends the wrong signal—it implies the insufficiency or inaccuracy of the Hebrew text. Recommending the quite outdated Brenton text (49-50) is also fraught with difficulties since individuals tend to canonize it and elevate it above better and more recent editions.

Following the fourteen essential tools, Wegner suggests the addition of resources dealing with OT background (50-55): a Bible encyclopedia, a Bible atlas, an OT introduction, an OT survey, an OT history, a chart book, and OT commentaries. Though the *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (Doubleday, 1992) might provide a scholarly Bible encyclopedia (50), evangelical ministers might prefer more conservative encyclopedias like *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Eerdmans, 1982) or *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Zondervan, 1995). Harrison’s OT introduction (51) is outdated, though still valuable. Hill and Walton’s *A Survey of the Old Testament* (Zondervan, 2000) is neither a survey (it is an OT introduction) nor the best edition of the volume (52)—see review in *MSJ* 21/1 (Spring 2010):117-19. As far as a reference recommending OT commentaries (54-55), the minister should obtain Jim Rosscup’s *Commentaries for Biblical Expositors* (Kress Christian Publications, 2003). Wegner provides his own commentary guide in Appendix A (123-33).

The survey of electronic resources and computer software (55-65) provides a helpful listing with prices and a comparison of features. The recommendations for “Further Reading” (66) should include Douglas Stuart, *Old Testament Exegesis: A*

Handbook for Students and Pastors, 4th ed. (Westminster John Knox, 2009)—see review in *MSJ* 21/1 (Spring 2010):129-31.

Wegner's third question is "What am I looking for and how do I find it?" (67-85). This chapter defines biblical exegesis (68-71) and identifies the steps involved in obtaining an understanding of the Hebrew Bible (72-84). The approach does not create confidence in Wegner's ability to exegete the text or to train ministers in exegesis. First, reliance upon liberal higher critical methodologies like source criticism (73), form criticism (74), rhetorical criticism (75), and redaction criticism (76) leads the minister away from the authority and integrity of Scripture into the morass of skeptical hermeneutics. Second, identifying Dorsey's *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament* (Baker, 2004) as a "helpful resource for determining literary structures" (72 n. 4), limits the literary research to but one literary device: chiasm—far too narrow to provide sound literary analysis. Thankfully, ministers may obtain some degree of help from the brief discussions of immediate context (76), textual criticism (77), lexical analysis (78-79), syntactical analysis (79), historical analysis (79-80), and theological analysis (80-83), and application (83-84). Appendixes B-E coordinate with some of these areas to provide worksheets and greater methodological detail (135-53).

Chapter Four examines the question, "How do I prepare an Old Testament sermon?" (87-112). The acronym "READ THE BOOK" (88) actually forces the order of the exegetical steps into an unnatural and irrational arrangement (88-89). Prayer should come first, not last. Ascertaining the original reading of the text cannot occur without first understanding the grammar and syntax of the text. A number of the headings for resources in the details for each exegetical step are unhappy. For example, placing the *Holman Christian Standard Bible* with translations like *The Message* and *New Living Translation* under "Other Popular Translations and Paraphrases" (93) implies that *HCSB* is a paraphrase. "Critical Commentaries on the Hebrew Text" (95) does not include any commentaries. The same misuse of "Commentaries" occurs repeatedly (97, 100, 102, 103, 107). In three places, Wegner identifies John MacArthur *et al.*, *Rediscovering Expository Preaching* (Word, 1992) as a helpful resource on expository preaching (105, 109, 110).

The final question of the volume is "How do I reap the benefits of all the labor of learning Hebrew?" (113-22). Wegner offers a number of helpful ideas for maintaining Hebrew translation skills (114-17) and Hebrew vocabulary (117-19), as well as how to keep using Hebrew in sermons (120-21). Author (155-60) and Scripture (161-64) indexes round out the volume.

While *Using Old Testament Hebrew in Preaching* does provide some encouragement and guidance to students and pastors for maintaining their Hebrew, it falls short of providing an accurate guide for exegesis. Obtain this volume and refer to it often, but use it wisely. It provides information that is usable, but does not rise to the level of a required seminary textbook.

Whitacre, Rodney A. *A Patristic Greek Reader*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2007. xxiv + 279 pp. \$29.95 (paper). Reviewed by Kelly T. Osborne, Associate Professor of New Testament.

Here is a true gem in a paperback binding and at a reasonable price! Someone might object that more than \$30, tax included, for a less than 300 page book is no bargain. Normally, this reviewer would agree with the critic of such commercial cost, but not in this case. Rodney A. Whitacre is Professor of Biblical Studies, specializing in New Testament, at Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry in Ambridge, Pennsylvania, has written and edited a work which provides for every student of the ancient Greek language (who has progressed beyond first year) direct, guided, and useful access to a goodly number of excerpts carefully culled from some of the leading lights in patristic Greek literary firmament. In so doing, Prof. Whitacre (hereafter RW) has rendered a profound service, yes, even a blessing, to all who wish or need to venture beyond the confines of the Greek NT in their effort to become acquainted with key figures in church history, the history of Christian doctrines, or the development of the Greek language.

After a Table of Contents (v-viii) offering a tantalizing glimpse of what is to come, a somewhat autobiographical Preface (ix-x) is followed by three pages of Abbreviations (xi-xiii). The abbreviations are absolutely indispensable for anyone not familiar with the typical scholarly and, of course, (Greek) grammatical usages, or secondary literature, such as grammars and lexicons, whose notations appear on virtually every page of the Greek texts. In a succinct Introduction RW has several sections describing the book's goals, the meaning of the word "Patristic," suggestions for how to approach reading the Fathers. He also explains how to use the notes which accompany each of the readings, and then offers suggestions for using the Reader—capitalized to distinguish from a reader of the book—and for bibliography leading to further readings in the Fathers (xv-xxiv).

Page one begins Part I, Greek Texts and Notes, with a one- to two-page introduction for each author or work, starting not surprisingly with the *Didache*. The fifteen introductions give a little historical background to the work and/or author, a summary of some of the content or themes of the whole work from which the excerpts are taken and a bibliographic entry of the specific edition used as the source. In the case of the *Didache*, for example, RW used a 2004 reprint of the 1891 edition J. B. Lightfoot's *The Apostolic Fathers* (4). A feature instructors will find particularly helpful ends each introduction, namely, an entry indicating the level of difficulty. For the *Didache*, it is listed as "Easy [1]" (4), which indeed it is as compared to Clement of Alexandria, specified as "Upper intermediate to advanced [3-5]" (100). Immediately after each author/work introduction comes the Greek text, filling about the top 1/4 to 1/3 of each page with a dividing line below the last line of Greek to separate it clearly from the notes which take up the rest of the page. The notes contain much useful information including at times the specific page and/or section number from standard NT and classical lexicons and grammars, such as

BDAG or Smyth's grammar for pre-Hellenistic Greek. The amount of information in the notes will be more or less useful depending on the expertise of the individual reader. This means that an advanced student or an instructor could read longer sections relatively quickly, while less experienced students or readers whose Greek has become "rusty" with disuse will depend heavily on all of the information, and may at times even need more. The overall effect is that much of the drudgery of constantly looking up words, either in a lexicon or a thesaurus at the back of the book has been eliminated. The downside to this feature is that any benefit one can derive from the constant discipline of looking words up the old-fashioned way is also removed. On the other hand, the best way to learn any language is to use it a lot, which the notes encourage by allowing one to read more of the text more quickly, without giving up understanding. In other words, the Reader is designed to "help increase their [i.e., the students'] fluency in reading Greek" (xv).

The readings begin chronologically with the *Didache* (A.D. 70-150; 5-24) and end with Symeon the New Theologian (A.D. 949-1022; 189-93), so covering the first millennium of Christianity, obviously with an eastern flavor, since Greek continued as a living language only in the eastern part of the Roman empire, as it metamorphosed into what we now refer to as the Byzantine empire. Universally known names are here, like Clement of Rome (25-33), Justin Martyr (69-78), Eusebius of Caesarea (109-15), Gregory of Nazianzus (139-55), and John Chrysostom (167-74), but less well known (to Protestant evangelicals perhaps) writers or works are also. The previously mentioned Symeon, Melito of Sardis (79-98), some of the Desert Fathers and Mothers (157-66) and Hesychios the Priest (175-186) fit into this latter category. Readings have been chosen for their inherent historical or theological interest, and writing as one who was trained dealing with the church fathers only in translation, this reviewer found it absolutely delightful to read Athanasius's treatment of the purpose of the Incarnation (121-24). Just as when reading Scripture in translation something significant is often lost, it is the same for these patristic works. RW cites no less a Christian literary figure (of more recent times) than C. S. Lewis to the effect that when he (Lewis) read the *De Incarnatione* of Athanasius, he immediately recognized it as a masterpiece, apparently on both a literary and theological level (117).

Part II is entitled Translations of All Texts and contains RW's own fairly literal translation of each of the excerpts (197-260). When one is faced with very challenging Greek constructions in places, these can prove very useful as a means of confirmation or correction of one's own translation.

Appendix A gives a vocabulary listing of all the Greek words occurring fifty times or more in the NT (261-68). This is because RW assumes readers know these words from their study of first-year Greek, but he recognizes that these can be forgotten! This additional feature can thus make the Reader a stand-alone textbook, although one does occasionally need to consult a lexicon in order to correct an error, e.g., the word *metiontes* (108), which though indicated to be from the verb *meteimi*

= I am among, is actually from *meteimi* = to go after (cf. LSJ, 1119, s.v., II.2.b, where the precise form found in Clement's *Miscellanies* is listed).

The next Appendix (B, 269-70) includes the most irregular principal-part forms for verbs appearing in Appendix A, while a third (Appendix C; 271) lists all of the excerpts in order of their level of difficulty, another feature particularly helpful for instructors or students working independently. A bibliography (273-79) divided into sections finishes the book and sets forth in one place all the Greek Resources cited, as well as the editions used for each section of Greek text.

Since this is a text designed to introduce the reader to the fathers of the Greek-speaking church and to help students of the language improve their Greek skills, this reviewer would like to give a standing ovation to the author-editor of the work. He has succeeded more than admirably on both counts. The caution to keep in mind is one that discerning, Bible-believing Christians must always carry with them in all aspects of life. Statements about theology or doctrines by these patristic writers must always be compared with and evaluated in the light of Scripture rightly interpreted. One cannot assume that the fathers have always properly understood the biblical texts, or even that because a writer is very good on, e.g., the Incarnation, he is therefore equally reliable on all aspects thereof or on other topics or passages of Scripture.

Apart from this caution and some minor quibbles about accuracy of parsing here and there, or formatting of the Greek font (cf. the first word on 67), it is a distinct pleasure for me to be able to commend this book to its intended audience in the strongest possible terms. Thank you, Prof. Whitacre, for bestowing this gift on the Greek-reading public, students, and instructors alike!

Ben Witherington, III. *We Have Seen His Glory: A Vision of Kingdom Worship*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010. 166 pp. (paper). Reviewed by Andrew V. Snider, Assistant Professor of Theology.

This is the latest offering from the Liturgical Studies Series which is facilitated by John D. Witvliet and the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship. Prominent NT scholar Ben Witherington III is concerned that there is no significant theological treatment of worship from the NT perspective. This book is his attempt to fill that gap with an eschatologically-oriented approach to worship, as the subtitle of the book demonstrates.

Chapter 1 is a meditation on John 4 and Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well. The author draws the conclusion that God is seeking eschatological worshipers, those who realize that worship is now possible anywhere, because the Spirit has been poured out on all kinds of people. Witherington also drives home the point that worship is "the ultimate ethical act" and is in fact "the ultimate

fulfillment of the Shema, the Great Commandment, and indeed the First and Second Commandments” (7-8).

Chapter 2 centers on a sermon by the author which relates the worship experiences of Isaiah, Ezekiel, and the apostle John in Revelation 4–5. The author makes several points related to the centrality of God and His glory in worship, rightly pointing out that true worship is a response to God’s initiative in revealing Himself and establishing relationship with His creatures.

The rest of the book follows this paradigm—meditations on key passages of Scripture and extrabiblical evidence with regard to worship: the Sabbath and Christian worship as a kind of work (chapter 3), the early church and its continuities and discontinuities with Judaism and the synagogue (chapter 4), Christian singing and praying from the perspective of Ephesians 5 and Colossians 3 (including a focus on the Christological hymn fragments in the NT, chapter 5), preaching and the rhetorical world of the NT (chapter 6), a further consideration of the issue of worship and work (chapter 7), and the final chapter, which seeks to draw much of this together under the rubric of Kingdom-oriented worship.

The final chapter, in which the author tries to tie the discussion together coherently, is by far the best chapter in the book. Here Witherington recapitulates and reemphasizes the best themes of the book: worship must be theocentric and Christocentric instead of anthropocentric; worship should have a forward-look, an eschatological element that looks forward to the “not yet” from the perspective in the “already”; and Witherington’s strong and unapologetic call for deeper, stronger preaching.

Also on a positive note, his discussion of the Christological benedictions and doxologies of the NT is helpful, for one of the difficulties of worship theology is demonstrating biblically the transition from OT to NT worship. His discussion of the Lord’s Prayer follows this naturally, although the implications Witherington draws for NT corporate worship sometimes feel a bit strained.

The rest of the book, unfortunately, does not cohere well in that it is often unclear how the material being presented or argued contributes to the author’s case for eschatological, Kingdom-oriented worship. For example, Witherington’s lengthy consideration of whether the earliest Christians were averse to purpose-built structures for worship may be timely in view of the house-church movement, but it does not fit comfortably in this book. Also, on the topic of preaching, the author spends 11 pages (87-98) making an impassioned case for his larger agenda in NT interpretation: rhetorical criticism (cf. his *New Testament Rhetoric* [Eugene, Ore.: Cascade, 2008]) with no clear connection to the matter at hand.

In addition, certain suggestions made by Witherington regarding worship are left unclear or undeveloped. His assertion near the beginning that “eschatological worship dwells no more in the past” (9) is both reiterated and softened at various points in the book. The author makes no extended attempt to show how he balances this assertion with the obvious emphasis on the historical realities of the faith that must permeate all Christian worship. In the end, his weighty conclusion is not only

questionable but potentially dangerous: “[A]lthough eschatological worship in the twenty-first century needs to remember the past, including the past works of Christ, it must be essentially a form of forward motion, not retrograde action. We must go boldly where we have not gone before. This means new liturgies, new hymns, new praises, new forms of worship, new openness to the Spirit, and new forms of church as well as renewed focus on the teaching and preaching office of the minister” (158). The body of Witherington’s book does not come anywhere close to justifying such a comprehensive and paradigm-shifting suggestion.

Other examples of unclear or undeveloped ideas could be cited, including his notion that God does not want to receive glory, for that would be self-centered (12-13, a notion that does not even sit well with the subtitle of the book). In this category would also be Witherington’s repeated use of the language of vision-catching: he is most anxious that the church “catch the vision” of Kingdom worship (see especially chapter 2), but there is little in the book to help the reader tell whether he or she has made progress in catching it.

To summarize, Witherington’s book contains an invigorating introduction and a variously profound conclusion, but the journey from the former to the latter is a bumpy one indeed, with many side excursions along the way. Though there are significant insights on a number of topics (some directly related to corporate worship, some apparently not), it does not receive this reviewer’s recommendation as a must-have on the topic of the theology or practice of worship.

Christopher J. H. Wright. *Knowing God the Father Through the Old Testament*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2007. 232 pp. \$15.00 (paper). Reviewed by William D. Barrick, Professor of Old Testament.

Writing reviews too often devolves into an academic exercise devoid of spiritual benefit. Reading *Knowing God the Father Through the Old Testament*, however, turned into a blessed journey of faith through the pages of the OT. Christopher J. H. Wright is the international ministry director of the Langham Partnership International/John Stott Ministries and was formerly principal of All Nations Christian College in Ware, England, where he also taught OT. His published writings include *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative* (InterVarsity, 2006), *Knowing the Holy Spirit through the Old Testament* (InterVarsity, 2006), *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God* (InterVarsity, 2004), *The Message of Ezekiel* (The Bible Speaks Today, InterVarsity, 2001), *Deuteronomy* (NIBC, Hendrickson, 1996), and *Knowing Jesus through the Old Testament* (InterVarsity, 1995).

This volume arose from Wright’s teaching ministries in India and Slovenia, for which he pursued a theme of knowing God in the OT (9-10). Since the OT seldom refers to God as Father, the trinitarian understanding obtains some of its content from “fatherly portraits and metaphors for God, even when he is not directly

called Father” (13). Wright makes the observation that the God whom Jesus knew “from his Bible as Yahweh was the God he knew in prayer as his Father” (17). Since NT believers pray to the Father, we too must become more aware of the Father’s character, attributes, role, and actions in the OT so as to enrich our own prayer lives.

Although the volume is well worth reading, its title leads the reader to expect more than it delivers. At least Chapters 1 and 4 deal directly with God as Father. In other chapters the topic is less evident, though sometimes present (e.g., 150). In the very first chapter (“Knowing God as a Father in Action,” 21-39), Wright lays out the OT teaching concerning God the Father as One Who carries (Deut 1:30-31; Isa 46:3-4), disciplines (Deut 8:2-5; Prov 3:11-12), pities (Ps 103:8-14; Isa 53:4-6, 12), and adopts (Pss 27:9-10; 68:4-6). Chapter 2 (“Knowing God Through Experience of His Grace,” 41-62) focuses on Deut 4:32-40 while considering the uniqueness of Israel’s experience relating to both revelation and redemption. God expected Israel to convey their experience both in teaching and in the writing of Scripture.

Looking at the divine judgments upon Pharaoh, Wright’s third chapter (“Knowing God Through Exposure to His Judgment,” 63-76) examines the meaning of the phrase “then you (or they) will know” in Exodus 7-11 (65). God proves to be sovereign and incomparable through these events. Chapter 4 (“Knowing God as the Father of His People,” 77-99) returns to the specific role of Yahweh as Father. He is Father of his son Israel (78-89) and he is Father of Israel’s king, including Messiah (89-98).

Since Wright emphasizes prayer in this series of studies, the fifth chapter (“Knowing God Through Engaging Him in Prayer,” 101-31) examines the intimacy both Abraham (102-20) and Moses (120-30) experienced with God through intercessory prayer. Wright points out that our lesson from a study of Abraham and Moses is that, “in the adventure of knowing God, there are depths of prayer that we have scarcely begun to paddle in” (131). Then Wright turns to “Knowing God Through Reflecting His Justice” (Chapter 6, 133-52). He focuses on Jer 9:23-24 and 22:13-17 as he gently attacks our all-too-often “limp evangelical pietism” (147) and declares that there is “no true knowledge of God without the exercise of justice and compassion” (151).

Chapter 7 (“Knowing God Through Returning to His Love,” 153-81) prospects the riches of Hosea. The prophet speaks of knowing God as Savior (13:4) and as Father (11:1-4). He also indicates that the knowledge of God can be lost through rebellion and the pursuit of idolatry (2:5, 8-9; 4:1-6). Israel can only be restored through repentance. Wright employs the context consistently to demonstrate that Hos 6:1-3 presents an inadequate statement of repentance (172-77). Israel had “faced their woundedness (Hos 6:2; cf. Hos 5:12-13) but not their waywardness” (173). True repentance requires confession of guilt (173-75) and radical ethical change (175-77).

The eighth chapter (“Knowing God in Expectation of His Victory,” 183-97) picks up the more than eighty times that the book of Ezekiel says “then you will

know” or “then they will know” followed by “that I am the LORD” or some other statement of who God is or what He has done (184). Wright limits this essay to a treatment of Ezekiel 38–39 about God and Magog. Rather than looking at the prophetic fulfillment in history or eschatological time, he elaborates the theological truths that the reader should obtain. Wright expounds Psalm 46 and Habakkuk in his final chapter (Chapt. 9, “Knowing God Through Trusting in His Sovereignty,” 199–222). Speaking of the current unrest in the Near East, he points out that Christian mission “has never depended on favorable circumstances, peace and tranquility” (222). Knowing God produces a sound faith exhibited in a healthy prayer life as well as the courage to continue the mission to make God known in the world.

Sometimes the content of this book could be strengthened by additional exegetical analysis or by recognizing the discontinuity of Israel and the church. However, its message is very clear and necessary. Christians too often neglect God the Father in their spiritual lives and doctrine. Revelation of God as Father arises first in the OT. Wright has at least opened the door to the study of God the Father in the OT. Each reader must pursue that knowledge in greater depth. Who is the God of the OT to whom Jesus prayed? He is the same Father to whom we now pray. *Knowing God the Father Through the Old Testament* forms the catalyst for a further examination of this significant aspect of OT theology and its impact upon NT theology.

Christopher J. H. Wright. *Knowing God the Father Through the Old Testament*. Downers Grove Ill.: InterVarsity, 2007. 232 pp. \$15.00 (paper). Reviewed by William D. Barrick, Professor of Old Testament.

Writing reviews too often devolves into an academic exercise devoid of spiritual benefit. Reading *Knowing God the Father Through the Old Testament*, however, turned into a blessed journey of faith through the pages of the OT. Christopher J. H. Wright is the international ministry director of the Langham Partnership International/John Stott Ministries and was formerly principal of All Nations Christian College in Ware, England, where he also taught OT. His published writings include *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (IVP, 2006), *Knowing the Holy Spirit through the Old Testament* (IVP, 2006), *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God* (IVP, 2004), *The Message of Ezekiel* (The Bible Speaks Today, IVP, 2001), *Deuteronomy* (NIBC, Hendrickson, 1996), and *Knowing Jesus through the Old Testament* (IVP, 1995).

This volume arose out of Wright's teaching ministries in India and Slovenia for which he pursued a theme of knowing God in the OT (9–10). Since the OT seldom refers to God as Father, the trinitarian understanding obtains some of its content from “fatherly portraits and metaphors for God, even when he is not directly called Father” (13). Wright makes the observation that the God whom Jesus knew

“from his Bible as Yahweh was the God he knew in prayer as his Father” (17). Since NT believers pray to the Father, we, too, must become more aware of the Father’s character, attributes, role, and actions in the OT in order to enrich our own prayer life.

Although the volume is well worth reading, its title leads the reader to expect more than it delivers. Chapters 1 and 4 at least deal directly with God as Father. In other chapters the topic is less evident, though sometimes present (e.g., 150). In the very first chapter (“Knowing God as a Father in Action,” 21–39), Wright lays out the OT teaching concerning God the Father as One Who carries (Deut 1:30–31; Isa 46:3–4), disciplines (Deut 8:2–5; Prov 3:11–12), pities (Ps 103:8–14; Isa 53:4–6, 12), and adopts (Pss 27:9–10; 68:4–6). Chapter 2 (“Knowing God Through Experience of His Grace,” 41–62) focuses on Deuteronomy 4:32–40 while considering the uniqueness of Israel’s experience relating to both revelation and redemption. God expected Israel to convey their experience both in teaching and in the writing of Scripture.

Looking at the divine judgments upon Pharaoh, Wright’s third chapter (“Knowing God Through Exposure to His Judgment,” 63–76) examines the meaning of the phrase “then you (or they) will know” in Exodus 7–11 (65). God proves to be sovereign and incomparable through these events. Chapter 4 (“Knowing God as the Father of His People,” 77–99) returns to the specific role of Yahweh as Father. He is Father of his son Israel (78–89) and he is Father of Israel’s king, including Messiah (89–98).

Since Wright emphasizes prayer in this series of studies, the fifth chapter (“Knowing God Through Engaging Him in Prayer,” 101–31) examines the intimacy both Abraham (102–20) and Moses (120–30) experienced with God through intercessory prayer. Wright points out that our lesson from a study of Abraham and Moses is that, “in the adventure of knowing God, there are depths of prayer that we have scarcely begun to paddle in” (131). Then Wright turns to “Knowing God Through Reflecting His Justice” (Chapt. 6, 133–52). He focuses on Jeremiah 9:23–24 and 22:13–17 as he gently attacks our all too often “limp evangelical pietism” (147) and declares that there is “no true knowledge of God without the exercise of justice and compassion” (151).

Chapter 7 (“Knowing God Through Returning to His Love,” 153–81) prospects the riches of Hosea. The prophet speaks of knowing God as Savior (13:4) and as Father (11:1–4). He also indicates that the knowledge of God can be lost through rebellion and the pursuit of idolatry (2:5, 8–9; 4:1–6). Israel can only be restored through repentance. Wright employs the context consistently to demonstrate that Hosea 6:1–3 presents an inadequate statement of repentance (172–77). Israel had “faced their woundedness (Hos 6:2; cf. Hos 5:12–13) but not their waywardness” (173). True repentance requires confession of guilt (173–75) and radical ethical change (175–77).

The eighth chapter (“Knowing God in Expectation of His Victory,” 183–97) picks up the more than eighty times that the book of Ezekiel says “then you will know” or “then they will know” followed by “that I am the LORD” or some

other statement of who God is or what He has done (184). Wright limits this essay to a treatment of Ezekiel 38–39 about God and Magog. Rather than looking at the prophetic fulfillment in history or eschatological time, he elaborates the theological truths that the reader should obtain. Wright expounds Psalm 46 and Habakkuk in his final chapter (Chapt. 9, “Knowing God Through Trusting in His Sovereignty,” 199–222). Speaking of the current unrest in the Near East, he points out that Christian mission “has never depended on favorable circumstances, peace and tranquility” (222). Knowing God produces a sound faith exhibited in a healthy prayer life as well as the courage to continue the mission to make God known in the world.

Sometimes the content of this book could be strengthened by additional exegetical analysis or by recognizing the discontinuity of Israel and the church. However, its message is very clear and necessary. Christians too often neglect God the Father in their spiritual lives and doctrine. Revelation of God as Father arises first in the OT. Wright has at least opened the door to the study of God the Father in the OT. Each reader must pursue that knowledge in greater depth. Who is the God of the OT to whom Jesus prayed? He is the same Father to whom we now pray. *Knowing God the Father Through the Old Testament* forms the catalyst for a further examination of this significant aspect of OT theology and its impact upon NT theology.

N. T. Wright. *Evil and the Justice of God*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2006. 176 pp. \$18.00 (cloth). Reviewed by Cliff McManis, TMS alumnus and Associate Professor of Theology, The Cornerstone Seminary.

The Right Reverend Dr. Tom Wright Lord Bishop of Durham, or more popularly known as N. T. Wright, wrote this concise theodicy after giving five lectures at Westminster Abbey on the topic in 2003 (10). Known for his massive technical and scholarly works on NT studies, this volume is on a more popular level, directed to the serious lay student, tackling the classic dilemma of the problem of evil from a fresh approach.

The catalyst for pursuing the topic of evil included the events of 9/11 (9, 16) as well as other recent natural disasters (9). The book almost reads like a personal polemic against President Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair, and their “immature” (28, 39, 99, 104) response to the terrorist attacks as they labeled specific countries an “axis of evil” (16). Their response with a declaration of war against the terrorists, according to Wright, was a “knee-jerk, unthinking, immature lashing out which gets us nowhere” (26). Wright wants to set the political record straight, and in that vein he formulates his proposed solution to the problem of evil in the vortex of an almost exclusively political, corporate, and social context (41, 98). For Wright, the problem of evil, and its solution, is primarily a political one.

In the first chapter Wright proposes the articulation of a “new” problem of evil (19). The original centuries-old syllogism for the problem of evil was intrinsically flawed, being metaphysical, abstract, and inane (17, 19). Wright’s new problem of evil that Christians need to grapple with is threefold: 1) we ignore evil when it doesn’t hit us in the face; 2) we are naively surprised by evil when it does; and 3) we react in immature and dangerous ways as a result (24). Bush and Blair are living effigies of those who have responded immaturely and dangerously to evil.

After supplanting the traditional conundrum of the problem of evil with his own contemporary and political rendition, Wright then proceeds to give a brief survey of how he thinks the OT relates to the issue (47-71). He informs the reader that the Bible is ambiguous on the matter (49, 74, 102). He avers that Scripture simply does not give complete answers as to what evil is, why it exists in the first place, how long it will last, why it is allowed to continue, and how long it will go on (44). He asserts, “The Bible simply doesn’t appear to want to say what God can say about evil” (45).

In chapter three, Wright moves to the NT, highlighting the Gospels (78-83) and the death of Christ (83-100). He says we need to reread the Gospels in a new way, accentuating the political overtones (79), to understand properly what God is trying to do with evil. As for the death of Christ and the meaning of the atonement, Wright champions the *Christus Victor* theme (95, 114), a recapitulation of the earlier *Ransom* theory. For Wright, Jesus’ death was not a penal substitution whereby He died as a substitute for sinners, incurring the penalty of the Father’s wrath in their stead. Rather, Jesus’ death was a confrontation with political (83), cosmic (102), and quasi-personal evil forces (81, 109) where He diffused evil, generically speaking, by exhausting it (89), wearing it down (102), and rendering it impotent. Jesus did not die for individual souls; rather, Wright claims, “Jesus died in a representative capacity for Israel,” a refrain he repeats frequently (90; cf. 85, 86, 88, 92, 93, 95). He further claims that the popular notion that Jesus died to rescue individual sinners, secure their forgiveness and present to them a future hope of heaven is actually a distortion of true biblical teaching that leaked into the church through the Enlightenment (77-78; cf. 117). He also goes on to say that Christ’s death did not secure a once-for-all justification, but rather Christ’s death merely “began the process of redemption” (98) which humans are to complete by “implementing the achievement of the cross” (102-03) through social justice and good works (104, 107).

In chapter four, Wright gives specifics as to how the church is to “implement the achievement of the cross” (102). He recommends a panoply of unexpected and even bizarre ideas. For example, we must follow suit with Desmond Tutu and usher in “community restoration and healing” (103). We must jettison capitalism which is “the exploitation of the poor by the rich” (104; cf. 23, 107, 123). We must use projection theory as taught by Carl Jung to quell non-personal organizational evil forces that are latent within various “companies, societies, legislative bodies, and even churches” (111-112). With John Lennon, we must “imagine” a future world without evil but rather one typified by community, beauty,

and healing (104, 114-115, 126). We must provide medical care, education, and work for the sick and the poor (122), and embrace “restorative justice” on a national level like New Zealand (124). We need to empower the United Nations and the International Criminal Court to resist war on an international level (125). And finally, we need to maximize the arts to make tangible the imaginations of a future world without evil (128).

In the final chapter, Wright explains how we will finally be delivered from evil on a personal and cosmic basis. The solution is “forgiveness” (132). The priorities of forgiveness that Wright wants implemented do not come from the Bible, but from three books: 1) Miroslav Volf’s *Exclusion and Embrace* (132); 2) L. Gregory Jones’ *Embodying Forgiveness* (134); and 3) Desmond Tutu’s *No Future Without Forgiveness* (134). Three keys of forgiveness that issue from these writings include the following: 1) we need to forgive ourselves (135, 163, 165); 2) God will be able to someday in the future forgive Himself for being an angry God for so long all throughout human history (136); and 3) we need to forgive criminals and terrorist nations (148-49).

N. T. Wright’s, *Evil and the Justice of God*, is commended on the back cover by J. P. Moreland, praising it, suggesting “it should be the first work consulted” on the problem of evil because of its “distinctively biblical approach.” This reviewer could not disagree more. Wright’s argumentation is religious, but not biblical. In fact, his approach undermines many core biblical doctrines including the following: biblical sufficiency (45) and perspicuity (101); the true meaning of the atonement, justification and imputation (95); the holy character of God (136); the immutability of God (136); the personhood of Satan (111); the reality of eternal hell (116); the implications of the curse at Adam’s fall (127); and biblical repentance (163), to name a few. As opposed to giving a strictly “biblical approach,” Wright’s work reads more like a primer on liberation theology and even toys with socialistic notions. To say this is disappointing coming from one of the most influential and popular Christian theologians of today is an understatement. Those who desire a truly biblical treatment of the problem of evil would do well to consult John Frame’s *Apologetics to the Glory of God*, Jay Adam’s *The Grand Demonstration*, and Randy Alcorn’s recent popular work, *If God is Good*.

Davis A. Young and Ralph F. Stearley. *The Bible, Rocks and Time: Geological Evidence for the Age of the Earth*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2008. 509 pp. \$30 (paper). Reviewed by Trevor Craigen, Retired Professor of Theology.

This book has to be an example of the truncated or selective attention paid to the biblical account on the part of those scientists who are also evangelical believers, but who struggle to integrate biblical truth with their world of science. Their earnestness in dealing with the intriguing subject of the age of the earth is not

being questioned, but their approach to the biblical text is troublesome. Occasionally, they remind YEC (Young Earth Creationists) to be more precise in their statements, e.g., Adam was not created *ex nihilo*—he was made in part from previously created material (188).

Two chapters in “Part Two: Biblical Perspectives” noticeably totaled only 47 pages out of 495 pages of text, less than ten percent of the main text. Somehow, it seems to be too small a contribution from the biblical text. It was acknowledged that “from a biblical perspective, the issue of the antiquity of the earth boils down to the interpretation of Genesis 1” (169). At the least an exegetical study of Genesis 1–2 should have been either included or referred to. A few pages earlier it was concluded that the interpretation of Genesis 1 is particularly challenging and thus believers must study this crucial passage with humility and with an openness to new insights not seen before (166). From what source will the insights come? From a dual revelation theory? All the more reason to have the scriptural description of the six days of creation stand as the ruling paradigm by which the theories and conclusions of humans with regard to origins are critiqued.

Every word of the Genesis account is important and nothing can be omitted from consideration. Plenary verbal inspiration will not dictate otherwise. Furthermore, this is the only eyewitness account of the six days of creation. It is an inspired account too. What is wrong with the biblical account and teaching on creation that precludes it from being the ruling paradigm?

Challenges to the old earth position are made on biblical, scientific and philosophical grounds. With the biblical perspectives already treated, the authors go on to deal with each of the other two elements in the chapters following: eight chapters make up “Part Three: Geological Perspectives.” Here are attempts to refute arguments for a young earth and present the evidence for the “great” antiquity of the Earth (165, note the adjective). The final two chapters making up “Part Four: Philosophical Perspectives” wherein uniformitarianism, catastrophism, and empiricism are presented, and in the closing chapter, creationism, evangelism, and apologetics.

This reviewer does not purport to have sufficient knowledge of science to be able to interact with the chapters not dealing with the Bible. Skewed interpretation, so it is advised, is brought about by presuppositions, many times the interpreter being unaware of them exerting any influence upon his thinking. The solution is for each Christian to become hermeneutically self-conscious, realizing what is influencing his/her thinking as he/she studies the text (166). Appeals to be objective and wary of presuppositional bias when interpreting the creation account have not produced unified and harmonious understanding of the text. Far from it!

The authors’ basic reaction to the traditional view of six 24-hour days is formularized:

- by classifying Genesis as an historical genre in its own right, seeing the account laden with symbolic numbers, repetitive structures, allusions to

- ANE concepts, anthropomorphic and metaphorical elements, as well as the literary convention of seven days (178).
- by noting the non-committal nature of the Bible about the age of the earth which then gives freedom to evaluate first the geological clues on its age (169).
 - by accepting without apparent demur the *supposed* overwhelming and credible evidence for the antiquity of the earth (173).
 - by proposing the simplistic “maxim” that God made everything, and then stressing that such is the point of Genesis 1—a conclusion that even children after reading Genesis 1 can easily grasp.
 - by pushing aside, then, the sequence of events in Genesis 1 as being irrelevant or of little significance, in fact it is merely a list of seven days, or for the purposes of emphasizing that God had created it all (178, 202).
 - by noting that the different proposals for interpreting the Genesis account do not mean that biblical inerrancy is being flouted (181-82).
 - by touting the genealogies as having gaps in them making them inadequate at helping estimate an age or a span of time (168).
 - by advocating that Scripture is a record of the deeds of God in history, and so its message concerns God’s redemptive plan and acts, and calling for the believer to understand the intent of the biblical text—“as readers approach Genesis 1 they need to ask what God and the human author intended to teach, and that means that both the redemptive thrust of the Bible and the ancient Near Eastern context in which it is embedded must be taken into account’ (179, 182, 210),
 - by drawing insights from biblical scholars to show that Genesis 1 is “saturated with features” [?] making it highly unlikely that the author was addressing the scientific questions of his contemporaries and that he did not teach a young earth or was even interested therein (210).
 - By focusing on *bara* not always signifying “instantaneous,” thus allowing for it together with divine fiat to indicate the inevitability of the event and not the immediate suddenness of its fulfilment, i.e., the “Let there be . . . and it was so” could mean that sooner or later what God called into being was accomplished (187-92).

Full and satisfying responses can be given readily to each one of the bullet points above, each point indicating a questionable area. A thorough analysis which coincidentally responds to all these points would be Bryan Murphy’s Th.D. dissertation at TMS, “Genesis 1:1–2:3: A Textual and Exegetical Examination as an Objective Foundation for Apologetical and Theological Studies.” Bryan offers probably one of the most in-depth studies of the Hebrew and LXX texts of the Genesis account done to date. Hopefully, this will be put into print in the near future—this book under review demonstrates the need for it.

This reviewer took time to peruse swiftly two or so chapters in the next section, “Part Three: Geological Perspectives,” looking for references to YEC literature. What a pleasant surprise to find quite a frequent mention of YEC writings, the most recognizable names today being John Whitcomb and Henry Morris, John Morris, Stephen Austin, Duane Gish, Gary Parker, Larry Vardiman, and Walter Brown. Flood geologists, such as ICR researchers, it was specifically noted, because they worked in the field are geologically well informed (229). For the most part, criticisms of their conclusions and work were irenic, and at times a little patronizing. Obviously, their conclusions were not going to be accepted, but at least they were noticed. YEC were also featured in the preceding chapter, “Antiquity of the Earth: Twentieth Century to the Present” (ch. 5, 132-64).

To recommend *The Bible, Rocks and Time* without a proviso cannot be done, because the book has enough questionable areas, as indicated by the bullet points above. If one needs to know every bit of information on the Old Earth position, then by all means he should read the book to find out what others holding that position are saying. Search YEC literature for a response to and refutation of the points made in the book favoring an old earth position. Further, take the time to read beforehand as important preparation, *Coming to Grips with Genesis* (Master Books, 2009) and Kurt P. Wise, *Faith, Form, and Time* (B & H Publishers, 2002). This reviewer remembered John Woodbridge’s book *Biblical Authority: A Critique of the Rogers/McKim Proposal* (Zondervan, 1982), which well addressed the problem of “accommodation” (Woodbridge, 19-30).

The authors failed to stake out a position on Genesis 1. Instead they proved to their own satisfaction that the Bible does *not* teach the Earth to be only a few thousand years old, neither does it deal with the scientific subjects of the day (210). A passing comment indicates that Young and Stearley favor the Framework theory and the Analogical-Day theory.

A closing question: Why may the Genesis account be seen to demolish “the crude cosmogonies” of pagan nations (105), yet it could not be taken as presenting exactly what God did in bringing the world into being in six days? It may not be couched in scientific language but its description is faultless. Surely, detailed scientific terminology, hypotheses, and theories will come about as man “subdues” the Earth.

One wonders whether time and energy would be well spent responding fully to the science part of this book, if not the biblical perspective section. It could be done by cross-referencing material already in print. Perhaps, something along the lines of “Resources to refute/correct/challenge . . .” would suffice. In any event, this book could be used in a graduate seminar on creation-science to show how *scientifico-exegesis* puts a stumbling block into the way of literal, historical, grammatical interpretation of the biblical record. It will provoke a serious discussion of the relationship of biblical truth to science. Issues affecting inerrancy, infallibility, and inspiration, and general and special revelation will also come into play. Read alertly and cautiously!