

## REVIEWS

Richard C. Barcellos. *Better Than the Beginning: Creation in Biblical Perspective*. Palmdale, CA: Reformed Baptist Academic Press, 2013. 173 pp. (paper) \$16.00.

Reviewed by William D. Barrick, Professor of Old Testament.

Barcellos serves as pastor of Grace Reformed Baptist Church in Palmdale, CA. His published writings include *The Family Tree of Reformed Biblical Theology: Geerhardus Vos and John Owen, Their Methods of and Contributions to the Articulation of Redemptive History* (Reformed Baptist Academic Press, 2010), *The Lord's Supper as a Means of Grace: More Than a Memory* (Christian Focus, forthcoming), and *In Defense of the Decalogue: A Critique of New Covenant Theology* (Winepress Publishing, 2001). In his critique he itemizes some of the positive characteristics of New Covenant Theology: a high view of Scripture, respect for divine sovereignty, diligence to comprehend biblical covenants, engaging the issues of continuity and discontinuity between OT and NT, an insistence that theology be grounded in exegesis, and an endeavor to fathom the implications of “the redemptive-historical effects of Christ’s death” (*Defense*, 13) for NT theology. *Better Than the Beginning* exhibits these same characteristics.

Barcellos delves into the theological necessity for and implications of God’s instant creation of all things in accord with the Genesis 1 account. Many theologians, including some young earth creationists, miss or neglect these theological matters. This volume focuses the reader’s attention on such concepts as a “Son-tilted” (31) creation as part of the trinitarian implications of biblical creationism (Chapters 2–3; 15–39). These two chapters comprise some of the best that this volume has to offer its readers. Next, the author turns to the revelatory function of creation (Chapters 4–5; 41–67). Readers will be left wondering why Barcellos has not developed the Trinitarian implications more fully and asking why he did not seek to interact with other evangelical statements of the nature and purpose of natural revelation. For the latter topic, he could have entered into an examination of Richard L. Mayhue’s essay in *Coming to Grips with Genesis: Biblical Authority and the Age of the Earth* (“Is Nature the 67th Book of the Bible?” Master Books, 2008. 105–29).

In his treatment of both the image of God in man and the supposed existence of a covenant of works with Adam, Barcellos gives no indication of being aware of the views of a fellow Reformed theologian, Anthony A. Hoekema. Hoekema has much to offer with regard to the definition and the implications of the image of God. He also argues against a covenant of works (*Created in God's Image*. Eerdmans, 1986. 118–21). Failing to exegete the context, Barcellos appeals to Isa 24:5–6 as biblical support for a covenant of works (115–16). Isaiah speaks of the same covenant and the same element of curse as that found in Deuteronomy 27–29 (as well as Lev 26), not the curse of Genesis 3. Notably, the Hebrew word for “curse” in Isaiah 24:6 (כָּלָה, *’ālâ*) occurs in Deuteronomy 29–30 six times, but not once in Genesis 1–11. Gary V. Smith (*Isaiah 1–39*, NAC. B&H, 2007:416–18) lays out strong arguments for the covenant being the Mosaic. Other commentators identify the covenant as the Noahic, not an Adamic, covenant. Barcellos neither exegetes the text nor does he respond to the commentators. Inadequate exegesis also leads Barcellos to adhere to replacement theology in which the church is the “fulfillment of the eschatological Israel” (154). With a strong set of arguments against replacement theology available in Michael J. Vlach’s *Has the Church Replaced Israel?: A Theological Evaluation* (B&H, 2010), Barcellos should have at least supported his view with substantial argumentation or given an answer to the detailed arguments and exegetical analysis offered by Vlach.

Unfortunately, this volume fails to represent very much that might be categorized as personal research, either academically or exegetically. At times it is nothing more than an exposition of the works of other scholars and much that appears to be borrowing from those works. For example, Chapters 5–6 (55–78) depend heavily upon Phillip E. Johnson’s *Defeating Darwinism by Opening Minds* (IVP, 1997). Chapter 7 (79–88) leans upon Robert L. Reymond’s *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith* (Thomas Nelson, 1998), and Chapter 9 (105–21) refers repeatedly to G. K. Beale’s *The Temple and the Church’s Mission* (IVP, 2004). To be fair, we all would do well to give proper attribution for our fruitful concepts when we have plucked them from another author’s orchard. However, we must also show diligence to advance the concept on our own and to demonstrate principles of sound exegetical research—viz., a detailed analysis of the biblical text itself.

Despite any shortcomings in this volume, this reviewer still found *Better Than the Beginning* a good read. Barcellos writes about much with which we agree (e.g., young earth creationism and trinitarian participation in creation). Readers who desire a simplified approach without much depth will benefit from this book. Some readers will find it more profitable to go directly to the major sources upon which Barcellos leans so heavily.

Daniel I. Block. *Deuteronomy*. New International Application Commentary. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012. 890 pp. (cloth) \$39.99.

Reviewed by Michael A. Grisanti, Professor of Old Testament.

Daniel Block is Gunther E. Knoedler Professor of Old Testament at Wheaton College. Having taught at various institutions, Dr. Block has influenced numerous

students through his teaching and writing ministry. This volume is part of a well-known series, the NIV Application Commentary. Each volume in this series seeks to intentionally connect the interpretation of the original meaning of Scripture with its contemporary application. Every section or passage is treated according to three headings. First, “Original Meaning” considers the meaning of the passage in its original context. Second, “Bridging Contexts” seeks to build a bridge between the ancient setting and the contemporary context, focusing on *timely* as well as *timeless* aspects of the passage. Finally, “Contemporary Significance” focuses on how the passage clearly applies to the modern audience.

Block sets forth three purposes that guided his writing of this commentary (15):

- Understanding the text
- Integrate the theological message of Deuteronomy with the rest of the OT
- Provide preliminary guidance on the relevance of the message of biblical texts for today

He reminds his readers that he writes as one under and not above the inerrant Scriptures:

While the Word of God is authoritative and reliable, our comments on the Scriptures are always in soft lead pencil, subject to correction, modification, and even erasure (16).

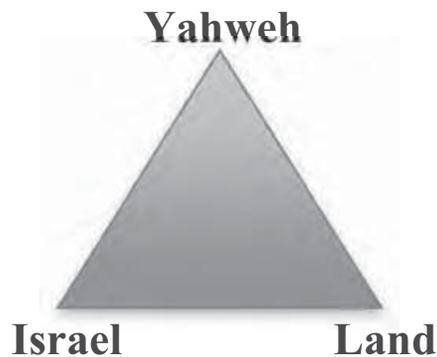
Block arranges the majority of the book according to Moses’ three addresses/sermons: 1:1–4:43; 4:44–29:1; and 29:2–30:20. The last section (31:1–34:12) focuses on issues relating to the death of Moses and transition of national leadership to Joshua. Although he provides an outline for the entire book of Deuteronomy (43–48), the commentary is not arranged according to that outline, but is divided up into numerous pericopes or sections. Each section is arranged according to the three headings mentioned above.

Although Block regards Moses as the “author” of Deuteronomy (or the bulk of the book), the “present narrative stitching” (30) was added later. The book reached its present form by the time of King David (31–33).

Out of numerous helpful observations that Block makes in his commentary, here are just a few highlights. Block refers to the covenant customarily called the Mosaic Covenant as the “Israelite Covenant” (59n2). This correctly affirms that the nation of Israel, and not Moses, was the covenant partner for this covenant.

One of the strongly debated theological points in Deuteronomy and Joshua deals with the issue of the genocide of the Canaanites demanded by Yahweh as part of Israel’s taking possession of the land of promise. Block provides several truths that seek to explain the divinely mandated dispossession and/or extermination of the Canaanites (98–99). When discussing the genocide of the Canaanites presented in Deut 7 (*herem*), Block asserts that the primary focus of this divinely mandated conduct is “not ethnic elimination, but ethical scrupulosity” (206). The character of God serves as the important issue. In his discussion of Deuteronomy 20, he offers ten

points that together explain the justification for God's demand of the eviction or extermination of all Canaanites from the land of promise (482–86). He emphasizes that the genocide requirement by Yahweh was not an act of malice, but is in full accord with his righteous character. He also explains the theology behind the warfare against the Canaanites as well as God's demand for Israel's loyalty—the Promised Land is a stewardship from God that is part of His relationship with them as a people (making use of a triangle image) (218):



Also, in his introduction to the specific stipulations section (12:1–26:15), Block compares the structure of that section to Exod 20:22–23:19, suggesting that both have an ABA structure (Principles of worship, casuistic and apodictic laws, principles of worship, 301–2). Unlike several scholars, Block does not arrange these specific stipulations according to the Ten Commandments.

In addition to Block's numerous helpful observations, there are several inconsistencies and interpretive concerns. His outline for the book (43) is not followed consistently, failing to match the outline for chapter 5 (152–57). In his book outline 4:44–5:1a is the first section of Moses' second address and 5:1b begins a large section (5:1b–26:19). He merges these two sections into one pericope for his commentary. Notably he rejects the distinction between the Abrahamic and Israelite covenants as unconditional and conditional respectively (134). He mistakenly refers to 5:22 as the reference for the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> commandments; while, according to his view, it is 5:21 (160). Block also follows the traditional Catholic arrangement of the Ten Commandments—regard in verses 7–10 as one commandment and divides verse 21 into two commandments—based on discourse linguistic grounds (161). He does not justify it in the commentary but points to an essay he wrote (“Reading the Decalogue Right to Left,” in *How I Love Your Torah, O Lord: Studies in the Book of Deuteronomy* [Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2011], 56-60).

Block seems to regard the Ten Commandments as normative for today, including the Sabbath (172–74). In his discussion of the “Bridging Contexts” section for Deuteronomy 12, Block explains the normative significance of the slaughtering regulations. He connects the ban on eating blood back to Gen 9:4, suggesting that the decision at the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15:20 shows that the early church leaders “recognized the permanence and supra-Israelite validity of the ban on blood, binding Gentile Christians to this ordinance” (320). Based on that, he correctly concludes that the sanctity of all life transcends the Torah of Deuteronomy and ethnic Israel. In light

of that, Block infers that the ban on blood continues into the current time. However, he never spells out how this is to be practiced in a church setting. Also, several scholars (e.g., John Polhill, *Acts*, NAC [Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995], 331, and several others) don't view Acts 15:20 as establishing a permanent ban on blood. These scholars view the statement by the Jerusalem Council on meat with blood as one of four recommendations that would guide Gentile Christians who associate with Jewish Christians in order to avoid unnecessary offense.

Also, in relationship to animals, Block makes the statement that "Christians need to be in the forefront of efforts to ensure the ethical treatment of animals from birth to death" (322). Though it seems evident from Deuteronomy that animals are to be treated ethically, it does not follow that Christians need to be promoting and pursuing ethical treatment for animals as a concentrated goal. Block's recommendation in this regard is unclear at best.

Finally, Block identifies the church as the "eschatological new Israel of God" (41, 397, 588, 620, 640). Based on other writings by Block, he does not embrace covenant theology, but he does see the church as somehow functioning as Israel in the current time frame.

Regardless of these concerns, Block's commentary provides many great insights in the meaning and theology of the book of Deuteronomy. His high view of God and understanding of the Mosaic Law as God's grace gift to Israel contributes to his understanding of Deuteronomy. Block writes his commentary with clarity and humility. His commentary should occupy the shelves in libraries of all biblical scholars.

Dave Brunn. *One Bible, Many Versions: Are All Translations Created Equal?* Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013. 205 pp. (paper) \$16.00.

Reviewed by William D. Barrick, Professor of Old Testament.

Dave Brunn spent twenty years as a missionary among the Lamogai people of Papua New Guinea. He worked in Bible translation, literacy training, and church planting with New Tribes Mission. In 1996 he and his translation team completed the Lamogai New Testament. Now he serves as Dean of Academics for the Missionary Training Center (New Tribes Mission USA) in Missouri. *One Bible, Many Versions* arose out of his involvement in Bible translation ministries and disunity in the Christian church over translation methodologies. He offers this volume as a means to begin a more civil dialogue regarding Bible translation. With that in mind, Brunn focuses on the similarities between Bible versions. As he puts it, "Rather than describing dissimilar Bible versions as mutually contradictory, I aim to demonstrate that they are often mutually complementary—even mutually dependent" (17).

In the opening chapter of *One Bible, Many Versions* ("Unity and Division: Two Opposite Byproducts of God's Word," 19–36) Brunn utilizes ten different tables of comparisons to demonstrate that the *New American Standard Bible* (NASB) contains many examples of thought-for-thought translation as opposed to word-for-word translation. The most extensive of these tables runs for six pages (24–29) with over

ninety specific examples from both the Old Testament (OT) and New Testament (NT). The word-for-word (or, essentially literal) comparisons appear in the *King James Version* (KJV), *New King James Version* (NKJV), *English Standard Version* (ESV), *New International Version* (NIV), and *Holman Christian Standard Bible* (HCSB). Readers might be surprised that the NASB, which has long been considered one of the leading literal or word-for-word English versions would exhibit so many examples of thought-for-thought translation. In reality, the same type of table can be produced showing thought-for-thought translation in the KJV, NKJV, ESV, NIV, and HCSB versions. (The author does not limit this volume's analyses to these six English versions, although this chapter focuses on them alone.) Shorter tables prove that literal versions other than NASB also display instances of thought-for-thought translation (30–33). Brunn reminds readers that his tables are nowhere near exhaustive and represent only a fraction of the evidence (24, 30). The results of such studies reveal, “that not only are literal versions not always literal, but sometimes the notably nonliteral versions are more literal than the so-called literal ones” (31).

Chapter Two (“Form and Meaning: Innocent Bystanders at the Center of the Debate,” 37–60) takes a closer look at the process of translation. Brunn describes the difficulties involved in dealing with biblical language idioms and figures of speech and the fact that there can rarely be a direct transfer of wording from one language to another. Figures and tables help the readers to understand the translation process and how the various English versions (both literal and non-literal) have handled specific examples. Brunn's analysis shows, among other things, that “the NIV translators found creative ways to communicate the meaning while including some aspects of the literal figure of speech” (55). This result is of interest because of the common perception that the NIV tends to be more dynamic than literal overall.

Next, Brunn turns to the issue of translation philosophies in Chapter Three (“Ideal and Real: Where Theory Meets Practice,” 61–70). Regardless of the intent and purpose of individual Bible translation projects, translators fluctuate in their treatments of specific words and phrases and intentionally vary the degree of literalness they seek. Brunn describes how the most literal of Bible translations possesses two ranges: “The ideal range represents the stated objectives of the translators. The real range represents the translation choices that the translators have made in each context” (66).

Since the tension between competing translation philosophies tends to rest on the treatment of individual words, Brunn takes a closer look at words in their meaning in Chapter Four (“What Is a Word?: More, and Less, Than Meets the Eye,” 71–84). The question comes down to whether it is possible to have word-for-word correspondence between a Greek or Hebrew word and an English word. One of the most revered of literal translations, the KJV, for example, translates the Greek noun *charis* with eight different English words: “benefit,” “favour,” “gift,” “grace,” “joy,” “liberality,” “pleasure,” and “thanks” (73). The KJV translators found that even the word for “word” (*logos*) needed twenty-four different English nouns to translate it accurately (74). Context is the big gorilla in the room—context determines the meaning of any word's meaning and results in multiple translations even within a single literal version. In addition to potential word-for-word correspondence, translators must take into account the inflections represented by Greek and Hebrew forms whereby one

word represents multiple concepts due to prefixes and suffixes. Therefore, counting the words in the Greek or Hebrew and trying to match the count in the English (or any language) can never result in a faithfully accurate rendering. Unfortunately, Brunn does not mention the matter of inflection itself in his discussion (81–83). Inflection is such a major part of all three biblical languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek), that it plays a major role in determining meaning and the necessity of additional words to express the meaning of a single form in the biblical text.

The subsequent chapters of *One Bible, Many Versions* pursue aspects of Bible translation that continue to make a case for a more eclectic approach to the process. Chapter Five (“Criteria for Adjustment: Intentionality Safeguards the Message,” 85–98) examines four key constraints that require translators to “reflect less of the original form” (85).

Chapter Six (“Divine Inspiration: Do Not Judge the ‘Logos’ by Its Cover,” 99–132) takes a closer look at whether the doctrine of the inspiration of Scriptures determines translational philosophy or methodology. One of the most often overlooked evidences in this discussion involves how the Scripture writers themselves translated the Scriptures—especially, how NT writers translated texts from the Hebrew OT into Greek. The questions that Brunn directs toward English translators (101) might equally be addressed to the NT writers. He takes up this very matter in Chapter Eight.

Since Brunn is an experienced overseas Bible translator, he reminds his readers that these issues are not just about which English version they might be using in their American churches or in their private reading. “The Babel Factor: God Speaks in Languages Other Than English” (Chapter 7; 133–46) reveals the significance of the issue to missionary and national Bible translators. Other languages can present challenges far beyond anything posed by English. Thus, Bible translators cannot develop a translation philosophy based solely upon their familiarity with English versions and their handling of the original languages of the Bible.

The history of Bible translation provides additional information to help modern day Christians understand both the difficulties of Bible translation and the necessity for Bible translation. Chapter 8 (“First-Century Translators: Setting Precedents for Future Translators,” 147–58), in this reviewer’s mind, sits as one of the most significant contributions that Brunn offers in this volume. It deals with how the Scripture writers themselves translated from Aramaic and Hebrew into Greek. The topic is deserving of a much longer, book-length examination.

In Chapter Nine (“The Pursuit of Faithfulness: In the Eye of the Beholder,” 159–86) Brunn looks at the controversy concerning Bible translation philosophy that swirled around *Young’s Literal Translation* in the latter part of the nineteenth century. He uses the controversy as a springboard to move the discussion on to areas of methodological balance, injection of interpretation, gender forms, and naturalness of expression. The final chapter (“The Heart of Unity: Embracing God’s Principle of Interdependence,” 187–93) reviews the significant points made by previous chapters and brings the volume to a close.

Without a doubt, *One Bible, Many Versions* places the conversation regarding Bible translation at a new and higher level of sanity and balance. Too often the debate has consisted of one philosophy posturing against another as though the practitioners in each have produced translations that consistently reflect their philosophy. While

demonizing the opposite viewpoint, both continue to turn to their opponents' practices whenever it suits them—or, perhaps more accurately, the context of Scripture compels them. It is time for the posturing and hypocrisy to stop and for a sensibly eclectic process to be recognized as that which most accurately represents the original biblical text.

Also, we need to recognize that the English version wars do not accurately represent the settings and challenges of non-English Bible translation work around the world. There are still too many languages into which the Word of God must be translated for the church to get bogged down in battling over English versions. As the apostle Paul reminds us, “faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ” (NASB). Evangelism depends upon God’s Word in a language the recipients can understand, so the church must make Bible translation ministries a priority.

Mark S. Gignilliat. *A Brief History of Old Testament Criticism: From Benedict Spinoza to Brevard Childs*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012. 186 pp. (paper) \$16.99.

Reviewed by Kyle C. Dunham, Associate Professor of Old Testament, Virginia Beach Theological Seminary.

Occasionally one discovers a book that fills a genuine gap in Old Testament studies. *A Brief History of Old Testament Criticism* is just such a book. Written primarily for students, yet not overly technical in its presentation, the book targets those interested in the history of biblical scholarship, especially in the challenges and approaches to OT interpretation in the modern era. The author cites his own unfamiliarity during his postgraduate studies with the leading lights of OT scholarship as an impetus behind the book. While both author and title concede brevity of scope (12–13, 169), the book offers an accessible and useful guide to noteworthy post-Enlightenment figures in the field while addressing the factors influencing their intellectual environments. Seminary students and graduates in particular should welcome its arrival.

Mark S. Gignilliat is the Associate Professor of Divinity in Old Testament at the Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, Alabama. Gignilliat pursued his doctoral studies under Christopher Seitz at the University of St. Andrews, Scotland, writing his dissertation on Paul’s theological interpretation of Isaiah in 2 Corinthians (2005; published as *Paul and Isaiah’s Servants: Paul’s Theological Reading of Isaiah 40–66 in 2 Corinthians 5:14–6:10* [London: T & T Clark, 2007]). The author has written also on Barth’s theological usage of Isaiah (*Karl Barth and the Fifth Gospel: Barth’s Theological Exegesis of Isaiah* [Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009]). In addition, he has authored several journal articles on topics related to the theological interpretation of Scripture. The shadow of Brevard Childs, as refracted through Christopher Seitz, looms large in Gignilliat’s work.

Following a short introduction, the book comprises seven chapters, each treating a prominent scholar in the history of modern OT interpretation: (1) Benedict Spinoza (1632–1677); (2) Wilhelm M. L. de Wette (1780–1849); (3) Julius Wellhausen

(1844–1918); (4) Hermann Gunkel (1862–1932); (5) Gerhard von Rad (1901–1971); (6) William F. Albright (1891–1971); and (7) Brevard Childs (1923–2007). Each chapter ends with a brief bibliography for further reading. Gignilliat concludes the book with a postscript addressing some ancillary yet significant matters not discussed in his treatment, such as the work of prominent theological conservatives to counter-vail the tide of historical criticism and the role of creedal commitments vis-à-vis higher criticism, particularly in assessing the nature of Scripture.

Chapter One, entitled “Modernity’s Changing Tide and the Dislocation of Scripture from Revelation” (15–36), surveys the life and intellectual framework of Benedict Spinoza, the Dutch philosopher and precursor to critical methodologies. Although the reader might question Gignilliat’s selection of Spinoza as his starting point (e.g., both the *Dictionary of Biblical Criticism and Interpretation* [ed. Stanley E. Porter (Routledge, 2007)] and *Historical Handbook of Major Biblical Interpreters* [ed. Donald K. McKim (InterVarsity, 1998)] omit separate treatment of Spinoza), the author justifies his commencement here by underscoring Spinoza’s open and relentless efforts to undermine the integrity and authenticity of the Pentateuch, efforts which proved highly influential to succeeding generations. Gignilliat traces how Spinoza rigorously applies Cartesian epistemology to the study of Scripture by appropriation of the “natural light of reason” as the decisive rule or guide to biblical interpretation (27). For Spinoza, reason becomes the ultimate arbiter over what he posits as the dubious claims of the Bible (29).

Chapter Two (“History Becomes Religion”) (37–56) focuses on Wilhelm M. L. de Wette, higher critic and founder of modern biblical criticism. Gignilliat recounts de Wette’s publication of *Beiträge zur Einleitung in das Alte Testament (Contributions to the Introduction of the Old Testament)* as a watershed event in the history of OT interpretation, with its argument that the Pentateuch is late in origin and that the biblical text offers no reliable data on the formation of the nation of Israel. De Wette thus created a rift between approaches to the canonical history of Israel as compared with the empirical history of the nation. Proper engagement of the OT, according to de Wette, must involve critical retrieval of Israel’s history of religion (55).

Chapter Three (“Israel’s History and Literary Sources”) (57–77) treats well-known higher critic Julius Wellhausen (who remains simultaneously, as Smend elsewhere notes, “the most venerated and the most attacked H[ebrew] B[ible] scholar of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries” [*Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*, 2:630]). As Gignilliat attests, Wellhausen was a man of contrasts: a disciplined, unpretentious, and practical scholar of Scripture on the one hand, and, as rumor has it, something of a sardonic gadfly on the other, fond of swimming on Sunday mornings so as to meet the pious worshipers of Göttingen on their way to church (58). Gignilliat outlines Wellhausen’s thought primarily through interaction with the latter’s *Prolegomena to the History of Israel*. Wellhausen breaks new critical ground here in positing the alleged P source as postexilic in origin, using source criticism as a means of reconstructing the history of Israel. With the exacting application of his source-critical approach, Wellhausen left a permanent stamp on subsequent OT studies; his name became synonymous with his thoroughgoing literary-critical method (76).

Chapter Four (“The Search for Israel’s Religious Experience”) (79–100) surveys German form critic and history-of-religions scholar Hermann Gunkel. Gignilliat argues that “Gunkel’s significance in twentieth-century Old Testament studies cannot

be overstated” (79). Through his form critical work in the Psalms and his ANE comparative work in Genesis, Gunkel set a new trajectory for OT studies. He sought to move scholarship beyond the canonical shape of the Psalms, for example, to focus on the oral, pre-literary stage so as to reconstruct the moods and experiences of Israel’s worship patterns. Furthermore, by means of his religious-comparative approach in Genesis, Gunkel sought to collocate Israel’s religion within the broader religious movements of her day with a view to reconstructing the religious sentiments that permeate her outlook. Scripture thus becomes, for Gunkel, not only a source for religious reconstruction but a window to shared religious experiences with ancient Israel (98–99).

Chapter Five (“The Old Testament’s Living Traditions”) (101–22) analyzes the life and work of Gerhard von Rad. Of all the scholars presented, von Rad has perhaps the most interesting personal history, with his experiences in Germany countering the rise of National Socialism, serving the Confessing Church through extensive lecturing and preaching, and, ultimately, fighting as a conscripted German soldier and being captured by the Allies during World War II. Gignilliat outlines von Rad’s tradition-historical approach by which he applies form criticism comprehensively to the text of the OT as a means of recovering Israel’s religious history (111). Gignilliat notes von Rad’s *Old Testament Theology* as a “high-water mark” for the discipline in the twentieth century, with its attention to Israel’s own assertions about Yahweh (retrieved by von Rad through tradition-historical criticism) as the locus of OT theology (117–18).

Chapter Six (“Digging Deeply into Israel’s History”) (123–43) surveys American archaeologist and philologist, William F. Albright. Albright, a meteoric scholar, established a legacy of students and scholarship which sought more or less to confirm the historicity of the Bible externally through archaeology and an investigation of ANE contexts in opposition to the Alt-Noth school, which focused instead on critical analysis of the biblical text (131). Albright sought, in fact, to render biblical history a scientific discipline through the appropriation of historical-positivist methods in archaeology (135). Although, as Gignilliat notes, much of the thinking behind Albright’s approach has fallen out of academic favor, his legacy continues through the work of the many students whom he trained.

Chapter 7 (“Confessional and Critical”) (145–68) presents Brevard Childs, OT theologian and leading pioneer of the canonical approach. Gignilliat explains the nature of Childs’s privileging of the final form of the text as the locus for theological formulation while seeking to remain at the same time appreciative of the findings of historical criticism—a tension frequently noted in assessing Childs. As Gignilliat summarizes: “Childs is critically appreciative of critical approaches to Old Testament interpretation, while in the final analysis he finds critical approaches anemic when attending to the theological character of the Old Testament as Scripture” (157). Still, Gignilliat values Childs’s contribution to the field and hails his approach as nothing short of a paradigm shift in OT studies (145).

In his concluding chapter Gignilliat touches briefly upon the contribution of conservative OT scholars in counteracting the claims of historical criticism (169–76). He highlights, for example, the work of Hengstenberg, F. Delitzsch, W. H. Green, and Vos, as well as of evangelicals Archer, Harrison, and Sailhamer, as notable

voices of dissent to the prevailing tide of higher criticism. He notes, too, the question over the role of faith in one's epistemology as a matter of continuing and crucial import in biblical studies. This is worked out particularly for Gignilliat in how one assesses the nature of Scripture as the product of divine and human authorship.

In conclusion, I'll note a few strengths and weaknesses of the work. The principal strength is that Gignilliat has accomplished a feat not often realized in books on higher criticism, namely, to humanize these scholars by sketching their lives and ideas in a way that makes them appear real-to-life. Meanwhile, Gignilliat introduces the reader to major intellectual movements in biblical studies over recent centuries in a comprehensible way that beginning students will appreciate.

The book has a few weaknesses, however. Occasional misspellings (e.g., "Chili" rather than "Chile," 124) and infelicities of style might distract some readers. In addition, some might question the omission of many other significant OT scholars from Astruc to Eichrodt (although the author seeks to forestall this criticism). Along these lines, the book may perhaps be pardoned, given its brevity, for tending to oversimplify the very complex history of OT criticism. As to its larger significance, I would recommend the book to anyone seeking a useful introduction to the historical progression of modern OT criticism. I will, in fact, be using the book in future OT Introduction courses.

Andreas J. Köstenberger and David A. Croteau, eds. *Which Bible Translation Should I Choose?: A Comparison of 4 Major Recent Versions*. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2012. x + 204 pp. (paper) \$14.99.

Reviewed by William D. Barrick, Professor of Old Testament.

Publishers have prepared a number of books over the past twelve to fifteen years detailing the differences between modern English versions. In this issue of *MSJ* readers will also find a review for one of the most recent titles on the topic of Bible translation (see pp. 255-58): Dave Brunn, *One Bible, Many Versions: Are All Translations Created Equal?* (IVP Academic, 2013). Others include Leland Ryken, *Understanding English Bible Translation: The Case for an Essentially Literal Approach* (Crossway, 2009); Robert L. Thomas, *How to Choose a Bible Version*, rev. ed. (Mentor, 2004); Leland Ryken, *The Word of God in English: Criteria for Excellence in Bible Translation* (Crossway, 2002); Roy E. Beacham and Kevin T. Bauder, eds., *One Bible Only?: Examining Exclusive Claims for the King James Bible* (Kregel, 2001); Bruce M. Metzger, *The Bible in Translation: Ancient and English Versions* (Baker Academic, 2001); Paul D. Wegner, *The Journey from Texts to Translations: The Origin and Development of the Bible* (Baker Academic, 1999, 2005); and many more.

In this volume Köstenberger and Croteau first offer "A Short History of Bible Translation" (4-23) in order to provide an informed perspective for dealing with differences between versions. They summarize the early translations of the OT and the entire Bible in non-English languages (4-6) prior to tackling the history of Bible translation in the English language (6-21). Volumes by Metzger and Wegner (see above) cover this history in greater detail, since that is their primary purpose. The

first proper chapter of the volume (“Translation Comparison,” 24–39) consists of a parallel presentation of sixteen biblical passages giving the text for the ESV, NIV, HCSB, and NLT for each (Exod 2:5–6; Ps 1:1; Ezek 18:5–9, 21–24; Matt 5:1–3; Mark 1:40–45; 16:9–20; Luke 17:3; John 1:3–4, 14, 18; 2:25–3:1; 1 Cor 2:1, 13; Gal 5:2–6; Col 2:8–15; 1 Thess 1:3; 1 Tim 2:12; Jude 4–5; and, Rev 3:20). The editors display these passages in parallel paragraphs one after the other, rather than horizontally in parallel vertical columns across two pages as in *The Parallel Four Translation New Testament* (Back to the Bible, 1975) and other such parallel editions. In this reviewer’s opinion, the latter format offers a more conducive arrangement for comparative reading of the texts. The typesetting gymnastics required to accomplish it for publication probably made it less so in the eyes of the editors and/or publisher. Sometimes the parameters for a text seem awkward. For example, why not include at least verse 2 along with Psalm 1:1?

The following chapters consist of key translation personnel presenting their defense of one of the four versions: Wayne Grudem for the ESV (40–77), Douglas Moo for the NIV (78–116), Ray Clendenen for the HCSB (117–56), and Philip Comfort for the NLT (157–85). The original presentations by Grudem, Moo, and Clendenen took place as part of the Fall 2011 *Liberty University Biblical Studies Symposium on Bible Translation* (3). Each contributor explains the principles and philosophy of his particular version and discusses each of the sixteen texts presented in the “Translation Comparison” chapter. In addition, the editors allowed each contributor to select a seventeenth “wild card” text by which they might each offer yet another example of their own individual choice. Grudem selected Rom 3:25 (65–66), Moo chose not to present a wild card, Clendenen opted for 1 John 3:3 (149–51), and Comfort picked John 1:34 (175–76). All readers will find these four contributions very informative and helpful for gaining greater insight into the way translation committees make their decisions.

From time to time in the four contributors’ chapters, the editors provide readers with QR (Quick Response) codes to scan with a mobile device in order to access video clips of the contributor’s presentation addressing the biblical text under discussion (e.g., 51, 89, 147). The editors also identify the URLs where these video clips are available online and where the full-length video of the symposium has been made available (3). Such media-sensitive elements make this volume all the more valuable to readers who take advantage of the benefits.

Grudem, in his defense of the ESV reading in 1 Kings 2:10, champions preservation of cultural integrity in the biblical text (46–47). During my involvement in a number of translation projects in Bangladesh, our team applied the same principle time and time again. One of our national translators pointed out that no one would ever dream of rewriting the classical works of laureate poet Rabindranath Tagore in order to remove the text from its cultural and geographical setting—its setting is integral to its meaning. So, he reasoned, we must preserve the cultural and geographical setting of Scripture, since its ancient Near Eastern setting is also integral to its meaning. To do otherwise would be like converting Jack London’s *The Call of the Wild* into a novel of the Sahara in order to share the story with the Bedouin—it would lose much of its message (including its meaning) in the conversion. We might make the same observation regarding any dynamic equivalent of John Steinbeck’s *The Grapes*

of *Wrath*, if one were to attempt taking it out of its historical setting in the American dust bowl years of the Depression and sharecroppers. If these two literary classics cannot be understood apart from their cultural, historical, and geographical settings, why would anyone want to attempt to divorce the Bible from its backgrounds?

When Moo argues for change in a version's language to maintain accuracy and readability (79), he also strikes a chord. However, we must keep in mind that significant language changes are what truly matter to one's understanding of the biblical text. An oft-used example occurs in the KJV's "gay clothing" in James 2:3. The NIV has done a very good job of making regular revisions—something the other translations would do well to imitate. Consider how the NASB failed for nearly fifty years to correct Ps 14:4 ("Lord" should have been "LORD"—a confusion of divine names). In this age of computer databases, such long-standing errors test the reader's tolerance.

In the HCSB essay, Clendenen explains what that translation's team means by "optimal equivalence" (117–21). Whether or not one agrees with individual decisions within the text of HCSB, their philosophical approach offers a more realistic and balanced approach to Bible translation than the standard explanations of formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence.

The fourth and final essay does not offer a defense of the NLT's translation principles to the same extent as the previous three essays provide for their respective versions. Instead, Comfort focuses on the textual critical issues (157–58), reminding readers that translations can only be as accurate as their original language base. The task of determining which textual critical reading to follow arises in text after text to challenge even the most scholarly translators. Each translation committee should establish standards by which to make such decisions. Unfortunately, individual translators involved in a project sometimes ignore the standards set by the guiding committee and their supervising editors sometimes miss those inconsistencies in the mass of details with which they must deal. Differences in textual critical choices occur because scholars hold to different philosophies or methods of textual criticism (see chart in Wegner's *A Student's Guide to Textual Criticism of the Bible*, IVP Academic, 2006, p. 31, Table 1.1). In an age when even evangelical scholars sometimes feel free to alter the original text just because they find a particular text incomprehensible, Bible translators need to beware of basing textual decisions on their ignorance rather than preserving the text until more clarifying evidence can be discovered.

Köstenberger established Biblical Foundations ([www.biblicalfoundations.org](http://www.biblicalfoundations.org)) and functions as Senior Research Professor of New Testament and Biblical Theology at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, NC. He has authored numerous books on a variety of biblical and theological topics that include the following: *Excellence: The Character of God and the Pursuit of Scholarly Virtue* (Crossway, 2011) and *John* (BECNT; Baker Academic, 2004). He and Richard Patterson wrote *Invitation to Biblical Interpretation: Exploring the Hermeneutical Triad of History, Literature, and Theology* (Invitation to Theological Studies; Kregel Academic, 2011) and he joined with L. Scott Kellum and Charles L. Quarles in writing *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown: An Introduction to the New Testament* (B&H Academic, 2009). Köstenberger also serves as the editor of *JETS* and as Director of Acquisitions for B&H Academic.

Croteau serves as Professor of New Testament and Greek at Columbia International University Seminary and School of Ministry in Columbia, SC. He has published *You Mean I Don't Have to Tithe?: A Deconstruction of Tithing and a Reconstruction of Post-Tithe Giving* (McMaster Theological Studies; Wipf & Stock, 2010) and co-authored *Perspectives on Tithing: Four Views* with Scott Preissler, Ken Hemphill, Bobby Eklund, Reggie Kidd, and Gary North (Perspectives; B&H Academic, 2011) and *Learn to Read New Testament Greek—Workbook: Supplemental Exercises for Greek Grammar Students* with Ben Gutierrez and Cara L. Murphy (B&H Academic, 2009).

Everyone who desires to make a good choice of an English version for pulpit, pew, and/or personal use needs to read *Which Bible Translation Should I Use?* and digest its contents. This volume might cause some of its readers to select a version outside these four, based upon the knowledge they gain within its pages, so it serves a broader selection than just these four versions.

John MacArthur. *One Perfect Life: The Complete Story of Jesus*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2012. 516 pp. (cloth) \$29.99.

Reviewed by Gregory H. Harris, Professor of Bible Exposition.

In *One Perfect Life*, John MacArthur offers this as part of the rationale for his new book:

Through twenty-five years of preaching these four [gospel] accounts, I have always started with the text being preached, paragraph by paragraph, and blended in parallel accounts from the other gospels. My aim was to pull together the full story known and show how each part of Matthew's gospel, for example, fit perfectly with the record in Mark or Luke; or, in the case of John, to demonstrate where his history fits and how it perfectly supplements the synoptic gospels. These four separate records can be reasonably harmonized, and any alleged discrepancies exist only in the minds of unbelieving critics, and not in the actual texts themselves. When all the details from the accounts are known, the full story is clear and divine authorship affirmed (14).

Using Matthew's gospel as the base text, making "the details from the accounts known" is one of the major driving forces behind this work:

When *The MacArthur Study Bible* was first published in 1997, we included "A Harmony of the Gospels" in outline form set in separate column, side by side, as harmonies have generally been arranged in the past. This volume, on the other hand, takes those separate accounts and blends them into one continuous narrative. All the details from the four gospels have been included without repeating exact parallel statements (14).

*One Perfect Life* can be read almost in the way one would read a book or a novel. However, what differs here is that all the text is blended Scripture verses from the holy Word of God. Each section develops some aspect of the life of Jesus and its eternal importance and does so in a very readable format. Footnotes from *The MacArthur Study Bible* are placed at appropriate places that may require a little more explanation than the text gives.

The book divides into eleven major sections with each section having subsequent subheadings whose total number is 215. The first sections contain passages that lead up to Jesus' first advent and early ministry: Part I: "Anticipating the Lord Jesus Christ" (subheadings 1–7), Part II: "The Beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ" (subheadings 8–21), and Part III: "The Beginning of Jesus' Ministry" (subheadings 22–27).

The Passover becomes the dividing point in much of the book for the life of Jesus: Part IV: "From Passover AD 27 to Passover AD 28" (subheadings 28–43). Part V: "From Passover AD 28 to Passover AD 29" (subheadings 44–76), and Part VI: "From Passover AD 29 to Passover AD 30" (subheadings 77–135). As would be expected, the final Passover where Jesus will die has its own major divisions: Part VII: "The Final Journey to Jerusalem for Passover AD 30" (subheadings 136–43), Part VIII: "The Passion Week of Messiah AD 30" (subheadings 144–65), and Part IX: "The Upper Room on the Night Before His Death" (subheadings 166–80). *One Perfect Life* concludes with Part X: "The Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension" (subheadings 181–209), and Part XI: "New Testament Reflections on the Gospel of Jesus Christ" (subheadings 210–15).

Just a couple of side notes to be aware of: first, due to the nature and size of the study, the footnotes are in a very small font. For some elderly people or others with vision impairments, a magnifying glass may prove helpful. Second, the book is only available in the *New King James Version*.

*One Perfect Life* has multiple uses. First, this could be used as a daily devotional for those wanting a greater knowledge and deeper appreciation of the life and work of Jesus the Messiah. Each subheading is of the appropriate size to cover in one reading if so desired, or multiple sections can be read. Secondly, this book could be used as a Sunday School class or group Bible study. Using the format from the book, with a subheading covered every week; this would be a three to four year study—but well worth it.

Finally, I think one of the greatest uses of *One Perfect Life* is that of an extended gospel tract for someone who is unsaved. This would be a good book to hand to someone you know who is not saved but curious about Jesus, or to give to someone who may even have no outer showing of any interest in Jesus. Many people have been saved over the centuries by reading the Word of God, and this presents Jesus in a high and exalted manner and very readable manner. MacArthur, in his Introduction, acknowledges this intentional evangelistic use:

For unbelievers, the full vision of the Lord Jesus is the supreme means by which they are saved. John said this about His gospel and the three that came before: "These things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name." (John 20:31). May God use it to that end (15).

Appropriately, the final subheading of *One Perfect Life* (#215) is entitled, “Today Is the Day of Salvation.” May this wonderfully helpful book be so used by the Lord, and may those already saved who read it “grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Pet 3:18).

Eugene H. Merrill, Mark F. Rooker, Michael A. Grisanti. *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament*. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2011. xv + 606 pp. (cloth) \$44.99.

Reviewed by Irvin A. Busenitz, Vice President for Academic Administration, Professor of Bible and Old Testament.

The volume is a collaborative effort, written by men who have distinguished themselves in the study of the Hebrew Scriptures. Dr. Merrill teaches at both Dallas Theological Seminary and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, while Dr. Rooker serves at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary and Dr. Grisanti at The Master's Seminary. The goal of these authors is to fill a “unique and necessary” niche for graduate-level theological education (561) and make an extensive contribution to this most important area of OT studies.

The book is divided into seven parts. The opening section focuses on the world of the OT, providing “the geographical, historical, and cultural context in which they originated” (7). Part 2 deals with the text of the OT: its canonicity, transmission, and textual criticism, while Part 3 provides an overview of the various approaches to OT study and the issues that dominate contemporary OT scholarship. Parts 4–7 fall under the category of “special introduction,” the study of matters relative to each OT book such as authorship, date, genre, etc.

Prior to the opening chapter, the book introduces a timeline of biblical and world history. Within the biblical timeline, they provide two options: an “earlier dating system,” highlighting a fifteenth century BC Exodus and a “later dating system” that embraces a thirteenth century BC Exodus. Later, the writers make it clear that they embrace the early date (194–207).

The authors begin by laying a foundation for understanding the OT (13–52). After providing an in-depth overview of the OT world (13–16), Merrill gives an excellent glimpse into its historical milieu (17–40). Grisanti's treatment of ANE literature (53–71) is most helpful in understanding their cultural and religious practices such as myths, legends, the Gilgamesh Epic, and the Hammurabi Code, highlighting their relationship to the biblical record.

The writers give considerable attention to the composition of the OT (77–92), and in doing so openly tackle some difficult issues. One of those matters is the apparent evidence of later textual “Scribal or Editorial Updating” (83–89). Two texts discussed: the account of Moses' death (Deut 34:5–12) and the place name “Dan” (Gen 14:14; Judg 18:29). Grisanti concludes that “within the canonical process, and subsequent to the initial writing of a biblical book or books, a God-chosen individual under superintendence of the Holy Spirit could adjust, revise, or update pre-existing

biblical material in order to make a given Scripture passage understandable to succeeding generations. Those revisions, which occurred within the compositional history of the OT, are also inspired and inerrant” (85). To arrive at this conclusion, he places a distinction between “autograph,”—that which comes directly from an author’s hand or mouth, and “autographa,”—that which “refers to the final form of the OT” (85). While Grisanti does mention opposing viewpoints, such as Leon Wood, H. C. Leupold, and Gleason Archer (87), he does not detail their position; rather, the discussion is given almost exclusively to defending his position. He concludes that God “saw fit to employ inspired redactors to integrate into the sacred text necessary linguistic, geographic, and other alterations to guarantee ongoing understanding of His Word by the generations of His people throughout the thousand years of OT transmission” (91).

Merrill’s discussion on canonicity is also helpful and complete. He reviews the historical debates in church history and surveys the various canons that emerged, including the Jewish, LXX, Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Protestant canons. He concludes that “it is impossible from the modern vantage point to discern the currents at work in the ancient world to achieve canonical consensus. But it is theologically imperative that the modern church recognize that the consensus was God-driven and that the OT Scriptures that we hold in our hands is the very Word of God fully and in all its parts” (107). Rooker follows with a helpful overview of the transmission and textual criticism of the OT (108–21), focusing on the early versions of the text together with the development, practice and process of textual criticism.

Chapters Eight and Nine give a survey of how scholars have approached OT study from the eighteenth century to the present. Various methods, such as form, canonical, historical, literary and narrative criticism, ignited by the Enlightenment mentality, are noted. Though somewhat brief, Merrill provides a good review and analysis of the well-known Documentary Hypothesis, showing how it led to form criticism and redaction criticism (among others). Grisanti then follows with an overview of diachronic and synchronic methodologies, concluding that “observations made by proponents of these methodologies as well as the methodologies themselves offer little assistance to the evangelical interpreter” (162).

The bulk of this volume (parts 4–7) is given to Special Introduction—a treatment of the OT books individually. Attention is focused on specifics such as title, canonicity, composition, genres, structure, and key interpretive issues. Grisanti discusses the authorship of Genesis and the nature of creation (theistic evolution, old-earth creationism, young-earth creationism), capped by a helpful overview of its theological message. He has an excellent treatment of the date of the Exodus, concluding that the interpretations of 1 Kings 6:1, Judges 11:26, and archaeological evidence point to an early date (194–207). Discussion of Joseph’s arrival in Egypt is treated earlier by Merrill, who contends that Joseph arrived in Egypt before the Hyksos (1720–1570 BC): “If anything is clear, it is that the Israelite patriarchs lived and labored in a native Egyptian environment” (24).

In Numbers 1 and 26, four different options are discussed regarding the large census numbers. Grisanti concludes that “until there arises a solution that has fewer problems than it creates, it is best to maintain a face-value understanding of large numbers in the OT and, at the same time, make sure that students understand the problems that face this view” (246). Regarding Moses’ farewell sermon, Merrill

notes briefly the correspondences between Deuteronomy and the Hittite Suzerain-Vassal Treaty form (258–59).

Rooker contends for the unity of Isaiah and Jeremiah, with Isaiah being authored between 739–700 BC by the prophet himself (367–71) and Jeremiah between 627–582 BC (380). His excursus on Isaiah 7:14 concludes that the verse is either a prophecy of Jesus' birth to Mary, without any fulfillment in Isaiah's day or a prophecy that sees an immediate fulfillment as well as a later fulfillment in time of Christ (377–78). He points to the "language strata" employed throughout the book and the "occurrence of 14 historical dates attached to the beginning of many of the oracles and prophecies" as important unifying factors (395–96). On the interpretation of Ezekiel 40–48, Rooker outlines three possible explanations. He asserts that "when the nation of Israel returned to Palestine following Cyrus's decree (539 BC) the transformation described in Ezekiel 40–48 did not take place" (403), but fails to provide any conclusion.

Merrill strongly defends the sixth century BC date of Daniel (405–7). After reviewing the arguments for a second century date, he concludes that the issue is "fundamentally not one about the languages, Weltanschauung, or historical reliability of Daniel but its extensive incorporation of predictive prophecy" (407).

Turning to the Minor Prophets, Rooker contends that Hosea "is essentially the work of a single person" (416) living in the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC and that the account of his marriage to Gomer is not an allegory but actually occurred as written (417). Grisanti deals with a number of issues in Joel. He suggests that "no one can be sure of the date when Joel was written" (424), and argues that "several features support the idea that Joel ... had literal locusts in mind" (425). On Joel 2:28–32 and the Day of Pentecost, Grisanti highlights the various views and concludes that Peter's words in Acts 2:16 present "an initial fulfillment of the Joel passage without precluding or minimizing a yet future and more exhaustive fulfillment in events associated with the return of Christ" (426). Though brief, Rooker has a helpful excursus on the presence of Israel's legal prescriptions in Amos (437–38) centuries before the end of the OT period (contra the position argued by source critical scholars). He suggests that evidence for the date of Obadiah "seems to be more heavily weighted toward the position that the book was written in response to and shortly after the Babylonian exile of 586 BC" (440). Merrill dates Malachi around 475 BC (490–91).

Following Rooker's overview of the nature of Hebrew poetry and wisdom literature (495–99), Grisanti suggests the book of Job is of unknown authorship (500–502) and depicts "a patriarchal setting (and perhaps pre-Abrahamic)" (500). He enumerates the various types of Psalms (515–18), pausing to give an expanded treatment of the Imprecatory Psalms—their nature, purpose, and whether believers can pray them today (518–21). Rooker delves into the authorship of Proverbs and concludes that "it is fair to claim that Solomon was the author of Proverbs 1–29. Perhaps later, contributions of other wisdom teachers such as Agur and Lemuel were added to the Solomonic collection..., thus giving the book its final form" (529). Ecclesiastes is attributed to Solomonic authorship (540) too, as is the Song of Songs (547–48).

Authoring a volume of this magnitude is a significant undertaking. Its breadth and depth is noteworthy, often delving into issues that others often leave untouched. In the Epilogue, Merrill observes:

While matters like text criticism, canonicity, and historical and cultural backgrounds receive scattered attention in some works of this nature, few if any devote entire chapters to comprehensive and cohesive explorations of these very important introductory issues (561).

That is what makes this volume so remarkable and so valuable. Because of its breadth, however, it left this reviewer occasionally wishing for greater depth. There were sections that seemed a bit too brief, such as the relationship of the Hammurabi Code to the Decalogue or the various interpretations of Daniel. The authors, I'm certain, were aware of this and thus conclude each chapter with study questions and recommended resources for further study. While intended for graduate-level inquiry, it is written in a manner the studious pastor and layperson will find useful as well. As such, this evangelical work is certain to become a standard for both pastor and seminary student.

Candida Moss. *Ancient Christian Martyrdom: Diverse Practices, Theologies, and Traditions*. Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012. xiv + 256 pp. (cloth) \$40.00.

Candida Moss. *The Myth of Persecution: How Early Christians Invented a Story of Martyrdom*. San Francisco: HarperOne, 2013. 308 pp. (cloth) \$25.99.

Reviewed by Dennis M. Swanson, Vice President for Libraries and Educational Assessment.

Often, one of the first “apologetic” arguments Christians are exposed to are the martyrdom narratives in the early church, that is, the death of early Christians for their faith. Perhaps the most readily recognized in anecdotal apologetics is Christianity must be true (especially details regarding the resurrection and the life of Christ) since people assuredly would not die for what they knew to be false or for a false cause. As Candida Moss states,

For much of the Christian era, martyrdom was viewed as particular to Christianity and as an indication of Christianity’s unique possession of religious truth. If Christians alone were prepared to die for their beliefs, it was thought, then there must be something special about Christianity (*Ancient Christian Martyrdom*, 23).

Moss, a graduate from Oxford and doctorate from Yale University, is Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity at Notre Dame. She is also the author of another book on the subject of martyrdom, *The Other Christs: Imitating Jesus in Ancient Christian Ideologies of Martyrdom* (Oxford, 2010).

The two titles reviewed here cover the same material. *Ancient Christian Martyrdom* (ACM) is the more detailed and “scholarly” contribution and is part of the

Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library. Moss has extensive notations and is painstakingly detailed in *ACM*, while *The Myth of Persecution (MP)* is the same material presented in a more popular writing style. *ACM* contains a near-exhaustive bibliography (205–30); however, the bibliographic support for *MP*, while present, must be culled from the notes (263–95) and not in a separate listing, which even in this more “popular” format must be counted as a negative. Both works have very helpful indexes.

As Moss demonstrates, the study of the subject of martyrdom is complex, even in terms of definition. “Originally, *martyrs* referred to the testimony or witness presented by an individual in a trial setting” (*ACM*, 2). However, by the time of Polycarp (AD 69–155), “the meaning of this term had been transformed from a material witness to an executed Christian” (*ACM*, 3). Moss states,

As a history of ideologies of martyrdom, this book will utilize a functional definition of martyrdom that incorporates texts whose protagonists are memorialized as martyrs, even if the texts do not use *martyrs* in a technical sense (*ACM*, 5).

Moss presents her study of martyrdom geographically more for convenience and organization, although she notes the variation of accounts and ideology in the differing regions. “The arrangement of this book [*ACM*] into discrete geographically and sociohistorically grounded ideologies is an attempt to do justice to regional variations of Christianity and should not be taken too literally” (20).

Moss notes, correctly in our view, that while martyrdom accounts were stories that served both an inspirational and apologetic purpose, “Martyrs were ordinary people—slaves, women, and children—as well as bishops and soldiers who had risen above the constraints of their circumstances to display exceptional courage” (*MP*, 19). However, the downside, especially in modern history, is that those same stories in some circles produce an “us vs. them” mentality.

It is this idea, the idea that Christians are always persecuted, that authenticates modern Christian appropriations of martyrdom. It provides the interpretative lens through which to view all kinds of Christian experiences in the world as a struggle between “us” and “them” (*MP*, 13).

Moss begins *MP* by arguing that the “Age of Martyrs” (Christianity before Constantine) is largely an exaggeration. She also makes the important distinction between “prosecution” and “persecution” (*MP*, 14; *ACM*, 9–12) “although prejudice against Christianity was fairly widespread, the prosecution of Christians was rare, and the persecution of Christians was limited to no more than a handful of years” (*MP*, 14). She notes that,

Before Decius, the prosecution of Christians was occasional and prompted by local officials, petty jealousies, and regional concerns. That Christians saw themselves as persecuted and interpreted prosecution in this way is understandable, but it does not mean that the Romans were persecuting them. This interpretation does not match up with the political and social realities: Christians

were ridiculed and viewed with contempt, and they were even sometimes executed, but there weren't the subjects of continual persecution (*ibid.*).

Part of the problem that Moss notes is that modern sensibilities are offended by the harshness of governmental penalties in the ancient world (*MP*, 164–79). For example, Nero accused Christians of causing the great fire of Rome in AD 64, and subsequently burned many Christians alive. “The fact that Nero would have had Christians burned alive, however, was perfectly in keeping not just with Nero’s own penchant for cruelty, but also with the general principles of Roman punishment” (*MP*, 165; see also *ACM*, 77–79). As a comparison, during the American Revolutionary War, George Washington ordered 25 to 50 lashes for soldiers failing to use the proper latrine and execution of soldiers, often with a level of cruelty, for non-treasonous, lesser offenses, was not uncommon.

Moss’ discussion of the “Cultural Contexts: The Good Death and the Self-Conscious Sufferer” (*ACM*, 23–48) is important. “Martyrdom was viewed as particular to Christianity and as an indication of Christianity’s unique possession of religious truth” (*ACM*, 23). She particularly discusses the death of Socrates (*ACM*, 33–37). She notes, “Socrates’s dying on principle in many ways stands [according to his biographers] as guarantor of the truth of his message. His nonchalant and at times joyful approach to death earned him admiration from many quarters, not least from the early Christians” (*ACM*, 35).

In short, unlike some misguided believers in the Ante-Nicene era (*ACM*, 149–55), martyrdom is neither desirable nor to be sought after. More important, while martyrs serve as examples of faithful steadfastness they should not be viewed, biblically speaking, as a category of believers who are somehow spiritually superior (cf. *MP*, 19). Because he avoided a martyr’s death, Myles Coverdale (c. 1488–1569), even though he assisted William Tyndale (c. 1494–1536), produced the first complete English translation of the Bible and worked on two others (The Matthews and Great Bibles), is often viewed in a disparaging manner in comparison to Tyndale. Moss’ discussion of the “Avoidance of Martyrdom” (*ACM*, 155–59) is singularly helpful on this point. In terms of a Biblical example, the apostle Paul is a model in this regard. In Acts 22:24, when faced with a punishment that nearly always resulted in death he exerted his rights to avoid that possibility (compare μάστιξιν ἀνετάζεσθαι “examine by scourging” in Acts 22:24 and ἐκέλευον ῥαβδίξειν “beaten with rods” in Acts 16:22, the latter, while painful, rarely resulted in death or disabling injury, while the former almost always did); but at the end of his life when his death was inevitable he was confident that the Lord would “bring me safely into His heavenly kingdom” (2 Tim 4:18).

These two works are important contributions to the study of martyrdom and the apologetics of the early church. Her observations and conclusions regarding the *non-inspired* texts of the church fathers on this subject will run counter at an emotive level to the popular evangelical understanding of martyrdom; but they are recommended as significant studies and a corrective. The entire concept of martyrdom is difficult, as Moss notes, “it is, perhaps, a cultural script that glorifies comfort and the pursuit of long life at any costs that reads martyrdom as unintelligible” (*MP*, 166).

Her questioning of the historiography of the Biblical accounts and, by implication, the uniqueness of Christ's vicarious and propitiuous death, should not distract from her underlying arguments and observations. Her thorough examination of the history and realities of martyrdom in the early church requires thoughtful consideration. An evangelical, biblically-based examination of martyrdom is clearly a need in the modern church, which is seeing persecution and killing of Christians (in the broadest sense of that term) rising in many regions and perhaps Moss' work will inspire such an undertaking.

James H. Moorhead. *Princeton Seminary in American Culture and Religion*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2012. xxii + 548 pp (cloth) \$60.00.

Reviewed by Dennis M. Swanson, Vice President for Libraries and Educational Assessment.

Begun in 1812, Princeton Theological Seminary is the second oldest seminary in America. Its two libraries (the Speer Library and the Henry Luce III Library) represent the largest theological library collection in the United States, and the second largest in the world (only the Vatican Library has more extensive holdings). Under the leadership of four successive "principals;" Archibald Alexander (1772–1851); Charles Hodge (1797–1878); Archibald Alexander Hodge (1823–86); and Benjamin B. Warfield (1851–1921), the "Princeton Theology" was developed and taught to successive generations of (mainly) Presbyterian and evangelical pastors and educators. While that theology ceased to be the driving force at Princeton after 1929, Princeton, to this day, remains a key institution for theological education and discussion.

To commemorate the bicentennial of Princeton, the author, himself the Mary McIntosh Bridge Professor of Church History at Princeton Theological Seminary, has produced a history that is detailed without being pedantic and immensely readable without falling into a shallow press piece.

This volume has an excellent person/subject index (510–48) and the notations are exceptionally thorough. However, one could wish that a separate bibliography had been included. In such a well-researched work, that David C. Calhoun's two volumes: *Princeton Seminary: Faith and Learning, 1812–1868* (Banner of Truth, 1994) and *Princeton Seminary: The Majestic Testimony, 1869–1929* (Banner of Truth, 1996) should go unreferenced and unmentioned is rather inexplicable, especially given the fact that Moorhead spends about three-fourths of his work covering the period of 1812 to 1936.

Moorhead details the creation of Princeton and the various dynamics that led to the creation of the school with a board and faculty "separate from the college [The College of New Jersey, later Princeton University]" (26) and with an educational model that would not "follow the divinity school route that Harvard and Yale later pursued" (ibid). The creation of Princeton Seminary under Archibald Alexander and Samuel Miller also coincided with major changes at the College of New Jersey (which had experienced both a suspicious fire, student riots, and general unrest from

1802–1807), where Samuel Smith was ousted as president and replaced by Ashbel Green.

The establishment of Princeton sought to provide “learned men” to fill an expanding number of churches as the United States was beginning a major westward expansion (27). The Presbyterian Church established a plan for the seminary that sought to balance the often-competing interests of revivalism, piety, theological fidelity, and scholarship. Moorhead states,

Whatever else the Princetonians were, they first and foremost saw themselves as expositors of God’s Word. But there were never simply men of one book, even a sacred book. Scholars of many books and subjects, they hoped to train their students broadly and believed, as [Archibald] Alexander put it, “there is scarcely any branch of knowledge which may not be made subservient to theology” (xix–xx).

Moorhead arranges the chronological history around the key personalities, mainly the seminary principals. After the chapter on Alexander and Miller (28–62), his chapter “Learning and Piety” (63–98) examines the initial growth and success of the seminary “plan.” Some issues in seminary education seemingly do not change from century to century. Moorhead notes the complaint of Samuel Miller, who in the 1830s lamented that students often came to seminary and discovered,

“the miserable scantiness of their literary and scientific acquisitions” and had the sinking realization that they were not prepared to “enter with intelligence on several departments of theological study” (89).

Those students, instead of applying themselves to “more and deeper studies” (ibid) simply went back to their public ministries without completing their studies; there were then, as there are today, many churches all too willing to take on under-prepared preachers and pastors.

One of the most informative sections of this work are the chapters dealing with the events that would eventually lead to the events of 1929, the so-called “re-organization of Princeton Seminary.” In “Hints of Change and Missionary Visions” (282–310), “Curriculum, Conflict, and the Seminary’s Mission” (311–39), and “The Fundamentalist Controversy and Reorganization” (340–69), Moorhead deftly presents and explains the multiple issues that were converging in the decades prior to the reorganization. The three streams of leadership at the seminary: faculty governance, organizational leadership by the board, and the Presbyterian Church’s denominational direction; which had been, by and large, in confluence for the first 100 years began to diverge. Additionally, advancing pedagogical philosophy in higher education began to impact Princeton (312–20).

The first significant change was made in 1902. That year, a “president” appointed by the board (322) replaced the seminary “principal” (a senior faculty member chosen by the faculty). This bifurcated the operations, transferring operational and leadership duties away from the faculty to a separate administration (although in the immediate years after the change the president still regularly taught courses). The

first president, Frances L. Patton, had been maneuvered out as president of Princeton University in a “palace coup” (321) engineered by Woodrow Wilson, who would be named the new university president, then would be elected governor of New Jersey, and later, President of the United States. With Warfield’s death in 1921, faculty dominance in seminary policy and practice quickly began to erode.

“Student petitions” made directly to the board of directors also served to alter the academic landscape in the new century. In 1903 students successfully petitioned for the addition of “English Bible” courses (323) into the curriculum. In 1909 a rather pointed petition complained about professors, “slovenly, dull, and uninspiring” classroom teaching (327). This second petition coincided with a drop in enrollment and led the board to recommend to the faculty several changes. However, Warfield’s power and influence was such that, “the board backed off, adopting rather modest recommendations” (328). Warfield advocated, defending to the end of his life, a rigidly proscribed curriculum with essentially no electives. If one wanted to study specialized subjects in the elective offerings, a student could only do so, “through a fourth year of education after the required work was completed” (321).

The details of the final reorganization of Princeton in 1929 are largely bound up in the lives of Charles R. Erdman (1866–1960) and J. Gresham Machen (1881–1937). Erdman’s appointment to the faculty in 1905 was not welcome. Moorhead states in particular, “Warfield acted as if the courses of the new professor affronted the integrity of the seminary program” (326). Until his death in 1921 Warfield refused to approve any student majoring in his department of Systematic Theology to pursue a minor in Erdman’s courses. Machen, and particularly his seminal book, *Christianity and Liberalism* (1923), and his ecclesiological views are thoroughly discussed (350–69). In 1923 Machen was called to preach at the First Presbyterian Church in Princeton in a “supply” or interim role when the church was without a pastor (362) and after that he was then followed by Erdman, who ultimately was called to be regular pastor, serving for the next ten years. The personal animosity between the two would carry on beyond the Westminster-Princeton split to the issue of missionary work (395–97), where Erdman was the chairman of the board of foreign missions and Machen was finalizing creation of a new missions board (which siphoned off scarce money from existing denominational work). It was this action, not theology, which led to Machen’s defrocking and ultimately to the formation of a new Presbyterian denomination (396).

The reorganization of Princeton in 1929 led to Machen and several others leaving (although they were all invited to remain) Princeton and forming Westminster Theological Seminary. It was really not a “conservative” vs. “liberal” split, as Moorhead notes, “to a man, they were conservative” (309), although he perhaps is viewing that 1929 spectrum through a 2012 lens. Not all who theologically agreed with Machen joined him in departing. Geerhardus Vos, Caspar Wistar Hodge Jr., and William Park Armstrong, all remained at Princeton.

Given the detail Moorhead dedicates to the years of 1812–1935, the remainder of this work, covering 1935 to 2004 seems a bit skimpy in comparison. However, the final chapters are informative and a fascinating read. As he noted earlier, “at its

founding the seminary's leaders perceived themselves as standing between the extremes of radical Enlightenment and unlettered piety" (281). Moorhead's narrative shows that the fulcrum of that balance perhaps shifted to the left in the last 50 years.

The work is highly recommended at several levels. Evangelicals and conservatives who lament the "loss" of Princeton with the reorganization will be enlightened and perhaps warned about the dynamics of that era. The issues in seminary education that Princeton has dealt with throughout its history are largely unchanged today and anyone interested in seminary or theological education will benefit from this work. Moorhead writes history with a panache that is both interesting and even-handed, undergirded with a model of scholarly research.

James Carleton Paget and Joachim Schaper (eds). *The New Cambridge History of the Bible From the Beginnings to 600*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013. xxvi + 979 pp. (cloth) \$190.00.

Richard Marsden and E. Ann Matter (eds). *The New Cambridge History of the Bible From 600 to 1450*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012. xxii + 1045 pp. (cloth) \$190.00.

Reviewed by Dennis M. Swanson, Vice President for Libraries and Educational Assessment.

The original *Cambridge History of the Bible* (CHB, three volumes, 1963–70) has long been the standard reference work on the history of the Bible from the initial writing and collection of individual manuscript pieces, through the 1960s, when the great explosion of Bible translations that has marked the last 50 years was igniting. The creation of this new edition was driven by the "considerable advances in scholarship made in almost all biblical disciplines during the previous forty years and respond to the new scholarly concerns of the twenty-first century" (2:xv). A broader and more inclusive editorial policy is also noted,

The volumes respond to shifts in scholarly methods of study of the Old and New Testaments, look closely at specialized forms of interpretation and address the new concerns of the twenty-first century. Attention is paid to biblical studies in eastern Christian, Jewish and Islamic contexts, rendering the series of interest to students of all Abrahamic faiths (1:ii).

As planned, the series will expand the original three volumes to four:

- *From the Beginnings to 600* (edited by James Carleton Paget and Joachim Schaper)
- *From 600 to 1450* (edited by Richard Marsden and E. Ann Matter)
- *From 1450 to 1750* (edited by Euan Cameron)
- *From 1750 to the Present* (edited by John Riches)

The volumes under consideration in this review (Volumes 1 & 2) are the first offering in the series. Volumes 3 & 4 are due for release in 2014–15. As one would

expect from any Cambridge series work, the research is extensive. Each volume has a near-exhaustive bibliography (1:871–912; 2:874–983) and are thoroughly indexed (1:913–79; 2:984–1045).

The Volume One editors, James Carelton Paget, Senior Lecturer in New Testament Studies at the University of Cambridge and Joachim Schaper, Professor of Hebrew and Semitic Studies at the University of Aberdeen, note that since the original *CHB* the field of Biblical studies “has witnessed a considerable number of discoveries of texts and artifacts relevant to the study of the Old and New Testaments and an often remarkable shift in scholarly methodology and opinion” (1:xii). Volume One is divided into five parts: “Languages, Writing Systems and Book Production” (3–82); “The Hebrew Bible and Old Testaments” (83–388); “The New Testament” (389–504); “Biblical Versions Other Than the Hebrew and The Greek” (505–48); and “The Reception of the Bible in the Post-New Testament Period” (549–870). The book contains a total of 37 chapters bringing together a notable collection of scholars specializing diverse fields of Old and New Testament background, introduction, and development.

Happily, the editors also retained chapters on several key individuals, “a decision was made, perhaps rather unfashionably, to retain the policy of *CHB* of devoting some chapters to individual exegetes of significance” (xiv). Along with chapters on Origin (605–28), Jerome (653–75), and Augustine (676–96); a chapter on Eusebius of Caesarea (629–62) was added. However, the individual chapter on Theodore of Mopsusetia was not retained and the discussion on his contribution was subsumed into the chapters on exegesis. This new edition also enlarges the discussion of the Septuagint beyond the “fragmentary way” (xiii), which the original edition presented the material, “reflecting, in particular, the fact that since 1970 the study of the Septuagint for its own sake, and not simply as a text-critical tool for the original Hebrew, has become much more the standard” (ibid).

The writing quality amongst the chapters is more uneven than one might expect. The opening sentence of the first chapter, “The languages of the Old Testament are Hebrew and Aramaic,” (Kahn, 3) is clearly not going to remind anyone of Charles Dickens or Herman Melville. Fortunately though, aside from this tediously pedantic first chapter, there are many well-written and stimulating contributions. Paget’s “The Interpretation of the Bible in the Second Century” (549–83) is a valuable overview. In particular, his discussion of development of biblical interpretation in the second century (562–72) is especially helpful.

There are some other particularly notable chapters. Bogaret’s discussion of the Latin Bible (505–26), although perhaps a bit brief, is a helpful contribution and a good reminder that the Latin is an important field of study, especially in the context of New Testament translation. Of particular interest is Graumann’s chapter, “The Bible in doctrinal development and Christian Councils” (798–821). Of interest is his discussion of the debate between Origen and Heracleides (ca. AD 244). Graumann concludes that,

The debate is almost entirely concerned with scriptural interpretation. The Bible is the unquestionable norm against which any teaching is measured and from which the answers to any disputed question are expected (800).

He notes that the dialogue between Origen and Heracleides, “may illustrate the kind of reasoning we can expect at other, formal, synods” (ibid). His overview of the Christological controversies (800ff) and the interpretative methodology of Athanasius is informative. His discussion on how the Nicene Creed slowly began to supersede Scripture as the theological standard is fascinating (812ff). In discussing the machinations of Cyril against Nestorius, he notes, “for his [Nestorius’] theology was measured against the Nicene Creed as the norm of orthodoxy—not scripture” (814). One other notable section is Edwards’ “Figurative readings: their scope and justification” (714–33), especially his discussion of allegory (720–22) and “Origen’s hermeneutic” (723–26).

The Volume Two editors are noted biblical and medieval scholars. Marsden is Emeritus Professor of Old English at the University of Nottingham and Matter is the William R. Kenan Jr. Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. The work is arranged in five parts: “Texts and Versions” (19–308); “Format and Transmission” (309–484); “The Bible Interpreted” (485–658); “The Bible in Use” (659–754); and “The Bible Transformed” (755–873). A total of 44 chapters by individual scholars within those parts present a depth of material on the Bible in the medieval era, a period the editors call a “diverse and complex period of history” (xv). Marsden’s Introduction (1–16), where he notes that when the era begins, “Christendom still enjoyed a broad measure of political and spiritual unity, and Islam had yet to appear. Byzantium was leading the Christian society in the East, while the evangelization of the West continued apace, which much of northern and western Europe still in the process of conversion” (1). By the end of this era, every aspect of the entire world, politically, theologically, culturally, and socially had changed. In terms of technology, the revolution enabled by Johannes Gutenberg (1395–1468) was about to change the world even further.

The strength of the second volume is also the source of its weakness. While there are new and more detailed discussions of the Bible in the several languages (Ethiopic, Armenian, Georgian, along with the Scandinavian and Slavonic languages), it seems to come at the expense of the discussion of the Latin texts and particularly the English. Marsden notes, “large parts of the Bible have been available in the English language continuously for more than 1100 years, a record unparalleled by any of the other language communities of western Christianity” (217). While this “unparalleled” record has its foundation established in this period, his chapter on “The Bible in English” (217–38) is one of the shortest, and in many ways, least satisfying parts of this volume. Hopefully the forthcoming volume edited by Cameron will backtrack and enlarge the discussion of the English versions.

One chapter of particular note is “The Use of the Bible in Preaching” (2:680–92) by Siegfried Wenzel. He notes that both preaching styles and format of the sermon (*sermo*) and homily (*homilia*) “underwent some significant changes and developments” in this period (682). The homily was often a more discernable and perhaps more formidable “biblical exegesis” than the sermon, which was often only “loosely built upon a scriptural verse” (ibid). Wenzel’s entire chapter and particularly his discussion of Wycliffe, or more familiarly to American readers, Wyclif (688ff), is stimulating reading.

These volumes represent the best modern research on the history of the Bible, some of the most varied and stimulating essays on the subject, and open avenues of

future research into areas not covered in the original edition. It will be interesting to see if Volume Four gives any attention to the rise and impact of “Study Bibles” which have now witnessed enormous range and influence.

This set is a must-have for any seminary or research library, training school, or scholar; although the sheer cost of the entire set (nearly \$800) may be prohibitive for the individual. These volumes are most highly recommended, and we are eagerly anticipating the release of the last two volumes.

Carl R. Trueman, *The Creedal Imperative*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2012. 197 pp. \$16.99 (paper).

Reviewed by Eric J. Lehner, Academic Dean and Professor of Theology, Virginia Beach Theological Seminary, Virginia Beach, VA.

Those familiar with the writings of Carl Trueman have come to expect work that is concise, bold, relevant, and compelling. *The Creedal Imperative* does not disappoint. Trueman, who serves as Professor of Church History at Westminster Theological Seminary, ranks among the best of those who engage critical issues in terms accessible to a larger audience. With a special eye directed toward church leadership, the book seeks to deliver a straightforward challenge to those who claim to have “no creed but the Bible.”

The thesis of the book is clearly articulated from the outset: the use of creeds by the church is demonstrably biblical, logical, practical, necessary, and ultimately inevitable. The argument is advanced in six chapters that are paired to advance three basic sub-arguments: an ideological argument (chapters 1 and 2), an argument from history (chapters 3 and 4), and an argument from practice (chapters 5 and 6). The structure is sensible and facilitates a natural flow to the overall argument. Trueman takes pains to keep his readers focused, frequently reviewing the main points of previous discussions, and establishing the relevance of tangential discussions to the point being made. The style is clear and accessible, appropriate to the broad audience he is targeting. Also appropriate is the tenor of the book: Trueman shelves much of his characteristic wit in favor of driving home the seriousness of the issue at hand.

Chapter One, “The Cultural Case against Creeds and Confessions,” maintains that cultural forces are largely responsible for the current decline in the stature of creeds. Trueman’s take on culture is much in the same stream as D. A. Carson (e.g. *The Gagging of God; The Intolerance of Tolerance*) and David Wells (e.g. *No Place for Truth; The Courage to Be Protestant*): society has little regard for the past, places great confidence in technology, and cherishes its addiction to consumerism. Furthermore, and with no small assistance from the secular academy, the culture has learned to distrust language, dismiss the universality of human nature, question every manifestation of authority, find refuge in mysticism and/or pragmatism, and avoid exclusivism at all costs. In these terms, Trueman effectively demonstrates that the use of confessions and creeds is not well suited to churches preoccupied with cultural relevance. Not a new critique, but devastating nonetheless.

Chapter Two is the watershed of the argument. Whereas Chapter One explains the forces arrayed against creedalism, Chapter Two, “The Foundations of Creedalism,” outlines the *Imperative* proper. Trueman reasons from Scripture that verbal language is reliable and necessary, that human nature is a universal, and that “sound doctrine” is at the center of the church’s identity and mission. Together with Chapter One, this chapter offers a robust justification, not only for creedalism, but for the discipline of systematic theology in general. Although the argument is directed primarily to the church, the case is relevant for those in the academy who have more intellectual reasons for “no creed but the Bible.” If Trueman’s case is sound, those who assume the unity of Scripture should view biblical exegesis and systematic theology as natural companions. Notions of one discipline being an imposition upon the other are foreign to the message of the Pastoral Epistles. Recognizing, maintaining, and perpetuating “the form of sound doctrine” is the biblical mandate for those who handle the text.

Chapters Three and Four make an historical argument for the thesis of the book. These chapters, which engage the ecumenical creeds of the early church and several of the great Protestant confessions respectively, support the ideological argument of Chapters One and Two. This historical survey highlights the church’s instinct to clarify, summarize, and organize those teachings of the Bible essential to the existence, unity, and purity of the church. From these we can see that confessions—at least in the classical sense—are not only statements of consensus that unite, but also statements of conviction that divide. Trueman’s historical treatment in some respects a model for demonstrating the relevance of church history for theology and ministry. Yet in one respect—his selection of Protestant creeds—is less than satisfying. To be fair, Trueman anticipates this critique.

In the introduction, he recognizes the limitation of his selection, explains the choice to remain within his domain of expertise, and acknowledges other Protestant traditions. Additionally, he is careful to select hallmark confessions representing Anglicans, Lutherans, Presbyterians, and Baptists. Furthermore, he explains that this selection of creeds is sufficient to validate the principle of the argument, and that this fact should render the book sufficiently applicable to other traditions. This caveat, though carefully stated at the outset, still admits an unfortunate gap between the argument and a substantial portion of the American audience, for the selection only draws immediate ties to European Protestant traditions. To be sure, the denominational counterparts of these traditions in America have been well served by their respective creeds. Nevertheless, it is probably not too daring to suppose that the readers who stand to benefit the most from Trueman’s book are Americans from other traditions—traditions energized by 19<sup>th</sup> century American populism, the Second Great Awakening, Keswick theology, the bible conference movement of the late nineteenth century, and much of twentieth-century fundamentalism. Traditions from this stream have frequently embraced a “no creed but the Bible” outlook, only to fill the subsequent vacuum with “fundamentals” or doctrinal statements. A brief sub-section addressed to this segment of American evangelicalism would have made the historical argument as equally direct as the one presented to traditions rooted in the European creeds.

The final two chapters close out the book with an appeal to the practical. Chapter Five, "Confession as Praise," establishes the propriety of creeds for public worship while refuting the complaint that creeds encourage dead formalism and supplant the priority of Scripture. The final chapter, "On the Usefulness of Creeds and Confessions," lists the many ways in which creeds assist the church in its duty to hold sound doctrine. Trueman's concluding remarks are compelling: creedalism is really unavoidable at the end of the day. Those holding to "no creed but the Bible" inevitably form and summarize beliefs about what the Bible teaches. The only difference is that these beliefs are undisclosed, and thus made immune to scrutiny.

In short, *The Creedal Imperative* is an excellent book, and highly recommended on several counts. First, the book clearly communicates an important subject with substantial content. Second, the work has significant value for the ministerial student. The book is not intended as an academic project, as is evident in its style, its direct appeal to church leadership, and its minimal documentation and back matter. Nevertheless, it serves as a model for clear and cogent argumentation that is seamlessly conversant in biblical and systematic theology, church history, and ministerial practice. Third, the book squarely addresses relevant cultural, philosophical, and hermeneutical issues, periodically challenging accepted norms when found to be in contradiction to Scriptural principle. Finally, and most important, Trueman clearly succeeds in executing the objective of the book: to show that creeds uphold rather than diminish the principle of *sola Scriptura*, and that they are both biblically and practically necessary for the health of the church.

C. Richard Wells and Ray Van Neste, eds. *Forgotten Songs: Reclaiming the Psalms for Christian Worship*. Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2012. xiv + 242 pp (paper) \$19.99.

Reviewed by William D. Barrick, Professor of Old Testament.

Recently, scholars have turned again to the Book of Psalms in pursuit of producing more commentaries, general studies, and topical studies for the benefit of individual believers and congregations. *Forgotten Songs* seeks to reclaim the Psalms primarily for the church's public worship. C. Richard Wells and Ray Van Neste edited this particular volume, working together with the following contributors: John D. Witvliet, C. John Collins, Craig A. Blasing, Douglas Bond, Ray Ortlund Jr., James H. Grant Jr., Leland Ryken, Calvin Seerveld, James Richard Joiner, Randall Bush, Chad Davis, Justin Wainscott, and J. Michael Garrett. Both editors also contributed essays to the volume. Wells is the founding president of John Witherspoon College, Rapid City, SD where he also serves as Professor of Humanities. Van Neste is Professor of Biblical Studies and Director of the R. C. Ryan Center for Biblical Studies at Union University, Jackson, TN. Both men are experienced pastors and writers, which elevates this volume above the purely academic.

*Forgotten Songs* includes essays on a variety of topics having a bearing on the Psalms. It deals with topics such as formative speech, praise, apostolic/NT preaching, prayer, poetry, congregational and private worship, psalm singing, and pastoral care.

The editors divide the work into two collections of essays: “Biblical and Historical Foundations” (7–89) and “Practice” (91–201). Van Neste provides the “Preface” (xiii–xiv) and “Introduction” (1–5), and Wells the “Conclusion” (203–6). End materials include three appendices (“A Modern-Day Psalmist Looks at the Psalms: An Interview with Marty Goetz,” 207–12; “Songs to Be Sung: Examples of New Metered Psalms for Singing by Randall Bush, Chad Davis, and Justin Wainscott,” 213–21; and, an annotated “Resources for the Recovery of the Psalms in the Life of the Church,” 223–35). Name and Scripture indexes conclude the volume (236–42).

Witvliet’s essay “Words to Grow Into: The Psalms as Formative Speech,” 7–16), stresses the way that constant oral repetition of the psalms in public and private worship forms speech habits. He adopts Ambrose’s characterization of the biblical psalms as a “gymnasium of the soul” (10). Repetition of even the imprecatory psalms can train believers to turn vengeance over to God, where it belongs (13). Witvliet insightfully asks, “Are you allowing the psalms—and other words that echo the psalms—to train people to say to God what they would never say on their own?” (14). Although his essays do not fall into the “Practice” section of the volume, the reader can immediately see the practicality of Witvliet’s instruction.

In “Always Alleluia: Reclaiming the True Purpose of the Psalms in the Old Testament Context” (17–34), Collins argues that current devotionals and sermons too often look at the Psalter as a collection of private prayers, rather than as a hymnbook for corporate worship (18). In addition to being songs of worship, the psalms function as Scripture because they “instill in the people of God a proper grasp of the world’s true story” (27). He insists that the Psalter serves contemporary Christians in much the same way as it served the people of ancient Israel—by shaping our “inner life to love God and to treasure what He treasures” (33).

In his essay (“Ancient Songs and Apostolic Preaching: How the New Testament Laid Claim to the Psalms,” 35–50), Van Neste provides a brief but superb survey of the way Jesus and the apostles used the psalms. He suggests that the psalms’ prominence at Pentecost in Peter’s sermon might indicate that early Christians were “working back through the Scriptures in the light of their new Christocentric understanding, even in the upper room” (44). What Van Neste does not make clear is whether he sees Jesus’ teaching on the Emmaus road (Luke 24:44–49) as the actual content of their understanding or as illustrations of a new methodology of interpreting the psalms. This reviewer would argue that the NT writers and speakers conveyed Jesus’ own commentary, rather than applying His method to psalm texts about which He had not spoken.

Blaising (“Prepared for Prayer: The Psalms in Early Christian Worship,” 51–63) presents a survey of the manner in which early church fathers (John Chrysostom, Basil, Augustine, Didymus, Justin Martyr, Origen, and Athanasius) taught Christians how to pray the psalms. “The psalms provided the format in which they would learn the language of prayer” (53). This is but the first of several essays covering the topic of prayer and praying the psalms.

“Biblical Poetry in a Postbiblical, Postpoetry World” (65–79) by Bond, proposes that our modern American society has cast off poetry as either expression or art (66). However, the depth and gravity of a postpoetry world such as he describes does not compute with the continued popularity of music and the widespread use of iTunes and other such media. Later, Bond does admit, “a groundswell of new interest

in psalmody and hymnody has arisen” (77). Readers will learn much from his description of the timeless nature of the poetic psalms and the development of versified psalters over the past five hundred years.

Several of the essays illustrate their methodology by applying it to a specific psalm: Ortlund’s “Delighting in Doctrine: Word and Worship in Psalm 1” (81–89), Ryken’s “Reclaiming the Psalms for Private Worship” (125–38; Ps 23), Seerveld’s “Why We Need to Learn to Cry in Church” (139–57; Ps 130), and two essays by Wells, “The Cry of the Heart and the Cure of the Soul: Interpreting the Psalms for Pastoral Care” (167–87; Ps 137) and “The Psalm of the Cross as the Psalm of Christ” (189–201; Ps 22).

Two of the essays in the practical section handle psalm singing and psalm praying: Grant’s “How I Introduced Psalm Singing to My Church . . . without Getting Fired!” (91–107) and Wells’ “Reclaiming the Psalms in Pastoral Prayer: A True Story” (109–23). Both men allow the readers to glimpse their personal challenges, mistakes, and successes in accomplishing these two practices in their churches. Their step-by-step guidance will prove invaluable to those desiring to implement psalm singing or psalm praying in the services of their own congregations.

Ministers and lay people alike are finding themselves drawn back into the Psalms in the midst of the trials and challenges of the modern secular societies within which we live. Publishers offer a number of new books looking at the Book of Psalms, studying individual psalms, and practicing the psalms in private and public worship. *Forgotten Psalms* presents a series of essays worthy of our attention.