

REVIEWS

David Berlinski, *The Devil's Delusion, Atheism and Its Scientific Pretensions*. New York: Crown Forum, 2008. 237 pp. \$23.95. Reviewed by F. David Farnell, Professor of New Testament.

Berlinski has a Ph.D. from Princeton University and has taught mathematics and philosophy at universities in the United States and France. He is a senior fellow at the Discovery Institute in Seattle and lives in Paris.

Though not a theist by any stretch of the imagination, Berlinski's task in the book is more toward freedom of thought in exposing the scientific fallacies and pretensions of atheism that has been recently seen in such authors as Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, Daniel Dennett, and Christopher Hitchens. Berlinski is a secular Jew, who admits he knows no Hebrew, nor has Judaism had any impact on his thinking. However, with a delightful wit and acerbic manner, Berlinski exposes the false assertions of scientism masquerading in universities as proof against traditional religious belief. Among his conclusions regarding today's militant atheism in science, he demonstrates the following: science has not even come close to disproving God's existence, the bankruptcy of quantum physics to explain the origin of the universe, secularism has caused more damage, destruction, and death than religion ever has (e.g., Hitler and Darwin). He also highlights the oppression of scientific "orthodoxy" that rigorously tries to destroy anything that would suggest a higher power. His conclusion is that scientific atheism is a frivolous exercise in intellectual contempt. This book is a spin-off from the movie *Expelled* by Ben Stein. It is incisive, witty, and boldly bares the hypocrisy of the orthodox, atheistic scientific community by exposing its false claims. It is a thought-provoking book that every Christian who believes in creation should read.

Darrell L. Bock and Mitch Glaser, eds. *To the Jew First: The Case for Jewish Evangelism in Scripture and History*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008. 347 pages. \$17.74. Reviewed by Trevor Craigen, Professor of Theology.

The editors have brought together twelve other writers, from nine seminaries and three mission organizations, in producing this book on Jewish evangelism. The material is divided into three parts, i.e., "Bible" comprising

chapters 1-8, "Theology" chapters 6-10, and "Mission" chapters 11-14. The reader is reminded by Mitch Glaser in his introduction that the second of the two conferences sourced some of the chapters in the book. The theme of these two conferences was "To the Jew First in the New Millennium," the first one in New York City and the second in Palm Beach, Florida, A.D. 2000. The Christian reader or the Gentile believer, Glaser notes, should be broken-hearted at the state of Jewish evangelism and should accord it high priority in his outreach agenda today.

A nice touch is the introductory abstracts given at the beginning of each part, providing an overview, a panoramic sweep, of what is treated in the chapters to follow (22-23; 100-101; 218-19). Perhaps it was designed to encourage a selection of individual chapters for reading—and the layout of the chapters does not demand sequential reading.

Walt Kaiser in his foreword observed that "to the Jew first" is more than some slogan or cute way for Paul to introduce his message to Jewish and Gentile believers in Rome. The phrase he called the "two-step," i.e., like Paul's "two-step," first going to the Jews and then to the Gentiles just as it is displayed in Acts (40). Kaiser further declared, "[A] church cut off from Israel is a church that merely floats in the air with no past, no grounding, and no promises on which to build her present or the future" (7). Well said! His contribution is chapter 2, "Jewish Evangelism in the New Millennium in Light of Israel's Future (Romans 9–11)," wherein he points out that it is impossible to read and interpret the letter to the Romans without grappling with the main issue, namely the Jewish people in relation to God.

In chapter 6, Blaising tackles the theological question of the future of Israel and introduces the reader to two-covenant theology, which is incisively critiqued and set aside since it is a repudiation of NT Christianity. He sets forth the implications of a non-supersessionist evangelical theology in the areas of the doctrines of God, Man, Christ, as well as the doctrines of the church and the last things. (112-21). His treatment is undoubtedly a superior and more mature understanding of these doctrines than supersessionism can put forward.

The work also pays attention to the distorted understanding of Jesus' denunciation of Jewish leaders as being a critique of Judaism as a whole. Such misinterpretation apparently led into Christian anti-Semitism. "The Holocaust and the Sacred Romance," is the title of chapter 7, and it presents a reminder of the most dreadful period in Israel's history to this day. Whatever the effects may have been, the Holocaust cannot be allowed to stop the straightforward preaching of the gospel. The reader is reminded that both indifference toward and rejection of Jewish missions, have resulted from the Holocaust. The barriers to be crossed in the presentation of the gospel to the Jew and the biblical realities which cannot be ignored are well presented in chapter 7. The barriers are emotional, intellectual, and volitional. Obviously, they deserve attention and reflection. The truths of total depravity, of life and death, and of time and eternity can never be overlooked. The final reality is the eschatological one which points attention to the time of Jacob's trouble and to the Day of the Lord.

Richard Pratt introduces a Reformed perspective in chapter 9 with an alternative to both dispensationalism and replacement theology—it is not convincing.

Arnold Fruchtenbaum presents the “dispensational perspective” in chapter 10. That key phrase, “to the Jew first,” points to an ongoing priority, which is not a matter of preference but of procedure.

In his chapter on the ongoing importance of messianic prophecy, Michael Rydelnik, starting with Justin Martyr, identifies various men from different ages (patristic, medieval, and modern) who used messianic prophecy in their writings when speaking to the Jew. The chapters dealing with the history of missions to the Jews present much pertinent and interesting information.

Of course, a call for a renewed commitment to Jewish missions rings out loud and clear in the closing chapters. Every chapter is instructive and at times one’s interest is piqued to dig further and study a theme more extensively. *To the Jew First* is worth having on the shelf alongside the other books on missions and evangelism.

Paul Copan and William Lane Craig. *Creation out of Nothing: A Biblical, Philosophical, and Scientific Exploration*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004. 280 pp. \$19.99 (paper). Reviewed by William D. Barrick, Professor of Old Testament.

Creation out of Nothing systematically examines the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* from the biblical, philosophical, and scientific perspectives. The authors develop a strong cumulative case for the doctrine while taking care to respond to the critics of that viewpoint. Dealing with the biblical witness, Copan and Craig declare that “there simply is no other plausible and consistent way to read the biblical text” (29). In their chapter on the OT’s witness (29-70) they discuss the relationship of Genesis 1 to the Ancient Near Eastern (ANE) cosmogonies, the relationship of Gen 1:1 to the rest of the passage, the meaning of the Hebrew verb *bārā’*, the issue of “double creation,” and the testimony of OT texts outside Gen 1:1–2:3. This reviewer seldom disagreed. However, when the authors discuss *bārā’*, they emphasize “*the utter absence of preexisting material in connection with it*” (51, emphasis in the original), ignoring the contextual information provided by 2:7, 21, and 22 to the meaning of *bārā’* in 1:27. Later, however, they mention that man was not created *ex nihilo* (98). In their attempt to explain the grammatical construction of Gen 1:2, they fail to identify it as a disjunctive clause (42) and erroneously classify the conjunction *waw* at the start of that verse as a “*wāw-consecutive*” (64). These two weaknesses, however, do not diminish the effect of their overall argumentation from the OT.

The discussion of the NT’s witness (71-91) covers John 1:3, Rom 4:17, Heb 11:3, miscellaneous passages supporting creation *ex nihilo*, and the apparent problem text in 2 Pet 3:5. For each text Copan and Craig mention the various viewpoints or interpretations and present the evidence for the view they believe to be the most

consistent with sound hermeneutics.

Extrabiblical witnesses (93-145) includes brief surveys of pertinent citations in Jewish sources (2 Maccabees, Jubilees, 2 Enoch, Joseph and Asenath, 2 Baruch, Josephus, Dead Sea Scrolls, 3 Maccabees, Philo of Alexandria, Rabban Gamaliel II, Hellenistic synagogal prayers, and Medieval Jewish exegetes), as well as Christian sources among the church fathers (Odes of Solomon, Clement of Rome, *The Shepherd of Hermes*, the *Didache*, Polycarp, Aristides, Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, Tatian, Theophilus of Antioch, Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Pseudo-Justin, Athanasius, and Augustine). Unfortunately, they do not mention the significant contributions of Origen or Ephrem the Syrian.

The fourth chapter ("Understanding the Notion of *Creatio ex Nihilo*," 147-65) enters the realm of logical and philosophical discussion of *creation originans* and *creation continuans* as they relate to a proper understanding of both creation and conservation (preservation). Chapter 5 ("*Creatio ex Nihilo* and Abstract Objects," 167-95) pursues a topic derived from Platonism. This philosophical discussion compares absolute creationism with modified Platonism, nominalism, fictionalism, and conceptualism. Chapter 6 ("Philosophical Arguments for *Creatio ex Nihilo*," 197-217) continue the philosophical treatment of creation from nothing.

Copan and Craig present the scientific evidence (219-48) as empirical confirmation of the philosophical argument. Topics include the expansion of the universe and the thermodynamics of the universe. After the examination of the various cosmogonic theories and their models (big bang, steady state, oscillating, vacuum fluctuation, chaotic inflationary, quantum gravity, and ekpyrotic), the authors conclude that all of them failed to avoid the absolute beginning of the universe (240). No matter which model one might adopt, both expansion and thermodynamics imply a beginning for the universe (248).

Lastly, the authors discuss "Naturalistic Alternatives to *Creatio ex Nihilo*" (249-66). They compare naturalistic with supernaturalistic alternatives, concluding that the only plausible view is a personal, divine cause. The biggest problem with the entire presentation within this volume is that Copan and Craig totally ignore the issue of millions and billions of years in contrast to thousands of years for the age of the universe. Indeed, the implication of their discussion is that the age of the universe does not matter, just its beginning. Though providing excellent information in support of the biblical doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*, they offer no solution to the question "When?"

Paul Copan is the Pledger Family Chair of Philosophy and Ethics at Palm Beach Atlantic University (2005-present) and was a writer and researcher with Ravi Zacharias International Ministries from 1998 until 2003. His many published writings include *When God Goes to Starbucks: A Guide to Everyday Apologetics* (Baker, 2008), *True for You, But Not for Me: Overcoming Objections to Christian Faith* (Bethany House, 1998), *Loving Wisdom: Christian Philosophy of Religion* (Chalice Press, 2007), and *The Rationality of Theism* (Routledge, 2003; co-authored with Paul K. Moser). William Lane Craig is research professor of philosophy at Talbot School of Theology (1994-present) and has published over 50 books for

which he was either author, co-author, contributor, or editor. Among his works are *Hard Questions, Real Answers* (Crossway, 2003), *Time and Eternity: Exploring God's Relationship to Time* (Crossway, 2001), *The Only Wise God: The Compatibility of Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom* (Wipf & Stock, 2000), *The Son Rises* (Wipf & Stock, 2001), and *Cosmological Argument from Plato to Leibniz* (Wipf & Stock, 2001).

Allan Coppedge. *The God Who Is Triune: Revisioning the Christian Doctrine of God*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2007. 345 pp. \$27.00 (paper). Reviewed by Cliff McManis. TMS alumnus and Associate Professor of Theology, The Cornerstone Seminary.

Coppedge is Beeson Professor of Theology at Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky. He writes from a Wesleyan/Methodist perspective (11, 284) and is a staunch Arminian (193, 197, 252). His work represents the recent growing renewed interest in trinitarian studies from an Eastern emphasis as opposed to the Western's bent toward the oneness of God's essence (15).

The author's goal in this book is multi-faceted: (1) he seeks to establish a Christological starting point as the basis for the rest of his theology (237, 251); (2) he purposes to study the Trinity from a scriptural basis as opposed to a philosophical one (149); (3) he attempts to view God first in His triune nature as the paradigm from which to explicate the doctrine of God (19, 113); (4) he wants to present a mediating position between open theism and classical theism (17); (5) in keeping with the subtitle, he tries to "revision," or "redefine" some of God's key attributes like sovereignty (210, 300, 314), foreknowledge (197-99; 314-16), and foreordination (197-99; 314-15); (6) and he wants to debunk the long-accepted classical view of God, the Trinity, and election (16, 272, 276, 297, 305).

This book has strengths and weaknesses. First are the strengths. Coppedge undertakes one of the most challenging tasks imaginable—trying to define and explain the nature and work of the eternal, triune God of the universe in a way that is reverent, comprehensible, practical, relevant, and in keeping with Scripture. Here he does an admirable job. He has a high view of Scripture (149, 191) and of God (131). He's not a rationalist, but reserves room for mystery where Scripture is silent about God's being (139, 196, 231, 319). His exposition of God's transcendence is noteworthy, thoroughly biblical, and free of any dualism, naturalism, Platonism, or deistic tendencies (237-61). He is not an esoteric, ivory-tower theologian, but a schooled believer who is concerned about the church, Christ's body on earth (19, 283-88).

The strongest contribution of this work is its explanation of *perichoresis* and its implications relative to the ontological and economic Trinity. He takes his lead here from the works of T. F. Torrance (14). *Perichoresis* refers to the shared life among the three Persons of the Trinity, who eternally, mutually, and equally

coinhere or interpenetrate one another in all ways, at all times in perfect love and holiness (179-81). The doctrine of *perichoresis* is clearly taught in many passages like Matt 11:27; John 1:1,18; 10:30-38; 14:7 (28-29,180). *Perichoresis*, then, becomes paradigmatic for Coppedge's hermeneutic in explicating the doctrine of God. He proposes that God should first be understood as a triune person, as revealed in Scripture, prior to investigating the relative and absolute attributes of God. Augustine and Aquinas (and many in the Western church who followed suit) had it backwards—they began a study of the nature of God irrespective of His triune nature, and began with isolated studies of His oneness, which in turn bequeathed an unbalanced view of God (16, 207, 211). This is a welcomed corrective on the part of Coppedge. Many systematic theologies begin the study of God's nature with the relative and absolute attributes, relegating God's triune nature to a mere aside or sub-point (296). Coppedge contends God's triune nature is primary and every other attribute should be defined in that context (195, 211, 233).

Other strengths of the author include the following: (1) several charts and visual aids, some original, that effectively illustrate trinitarian truths and implications (112-65); (2) in his apologetics and epistemology, he is presuppositional (149, 191, 282); (3) he affirms historical-grammatical hermeneutics (55); he rejects subordinationism within the Trinity (134); (4) he rejects process theology (205); (5) and he gives an exhaustive outline of all relevant NT trinitarian passages (50-51).

But the work has many weaknesses. First, in ascending order of importance, an inordinate number of simple typos, usually elision (seventeen in all or one every twenty pages), characterize the work.

Second, Coppedge is at times theologically naïve. He asserts that Islam derives all of its doctrine and practice "from a single source: the Scriptures of Israel" (241, 265). That is overly simplistic and inaccurate. He is also too sympathetic to open theism. He wants to improve it by modifying it, rather than exposing it and rejecting it as a heretical system of thought (17, 311-26). Additionally, he misrepresents the historic definition of God's "impassibility" (176, 211). He is also ignorant of Calvin and unwittingly likens his trinitarian views to those of Aquinas (16, 320). Letham, in *The Holy Trinity* (P&R, 2004), has painstakingly shown that Calvin and his predecessors were not akin in this regard. Letham shows Calvin was biblically driven in his theology, whereas Aquinas pursued philosophical arguments and syllogisms about the divine essence (252-68).

Third, his historical analysis of the doctrine of the Trinity is scant and non-determinative (79-110)

Fourth, although Coppedge gives evidence of being conversant with a vast array of theologians and current trinitarian works, he has a proclivity for taking cues from those who lean toward liberal, higher critical hermeneutics, like Pannenberg, Kasper, and Gunton (14-15, 83), while at the same time he postures himself as the nemesis of reliable conservative scholars such as Frame, Feinberg and others (296, 320).

Fifth, exegesis in the book is frequently flawed and imprecise. Coppedge is a theological and dogmatic exegete more than an exegetical and expository one.

This becomes most evident when he tries to explain the meaning of “foreknowledge,” “foreordination,” and “sovereignty.” Instead of giving a survey of such words from biblical occurrences, he simply assigns a preferred, strained meaning to the words in keeping with his loyalty to Arminian theology. He limits God’s “foreknowledge” to omniscience, divorcing it from God’s “foreordination” (314-15), and offers “middle knowledge” as a panacea (197). As a result, he says that God foresees what He did not foreordain. For Coppedge, foreordination has nothing to do with election, for he jettisons election altogether, often confusing it with determinism or fatalism (207, 210-11, 234, 251). He redefines “sovereignty” by bending over backwards to preserve ultimate human free will, alleging that, “God...limits himself by human freedom...God limits his own choices by permitting persons to make free choices” (308). The author is driven to preserve human freedom and God’s love so much that one could aver that Coppedge holds to universalism (296). He never gives a reference to the reality of hell and in his exhaustive study of God’s attributes, he never mentions “wrath” as a part of God’s nature, but instead says God’s love is primary and paramount (166-90).

In conclusion, for this reviewer, the book’s weaknesses outweigh the strengths. The author’s Arminian propensity is all-embracing and infects his whole theology in an unbalanced manner. It could be a helpful book if the reader is keenly aware of the faults beforehand. But as an introductory and comprehensive study of the biblical doctrine of the Trinity, this book is not recommended. Rather, students should first be directed to Robert Letham’s unrivaled work, *The Holy Trinity* (P&R, 2004), as well as other standard works by James White, Millard Erickson, and John Feinberg.

John A. D’Elia. *A Place at the Table: George Eldon Ladd and the Rehabilitation of Evangelical Scholarship in America*. New York: Oxford, 2008. \$45.00. 271 pp. William Varner, Professor of Biblical Studies, The Master’s College

George Eldon Ladd was one of the foremost evangelical NT scholars in twentieth-century America. He almost single-handedly pioneered the “now and not yet” view of eschatology which currently is probably the dominant view among a majority of evangelical scholars. Whatever one thinks of his approach to the NT teaching about kingdom of God, he must acknowledge the huge role he played in defining evangelicalism through his teaching and literary works. And yet this acclaimed scholar, during what some considered the pinnacle of his career, considered himself a failure for not fulfilling his own promise. During this period he descended further and further into depression and alcoholism and became more and more alienated from his immediate family. What can one make of such a complex career?

John A. D’Elia, currently minister of the American Church in London and graduate of Fuller Seminary where Ladd taught, has authored the most insightful and

interesting biography of an academic that this reviewer has ever read. D'Elia's volume, a revision of his doctoral dissertation at University of Stirling under David Bebbington, is a thoroughly researched work that does justice to Ladd's great contributions while not engaging in the hero-worship that marks that type of biography termed a "hagiography." D'Elia thoroughly mines the large amount of historical archives at Fuller Seminary and utilizes Ladd's extensive personal correspondence to bring insight into the heart and mind of this troubled giant. Personal interviews with many of Ladd's former colleagues and students add a familiar touch to the plethora of official historical sources.

Ladd's early life in New England as a self-described "freak" growing up in the home of a family that often moved and suffered poverty is thoroughly traced. D'Elia looks for keys to Ladd's persona throughout his emergence as a promising Bible college student, young pastor, and eventually as an academic at Gordon College and finally at Fuller. He traces Ladd's painful, almost decade-long struggle to get into a doctoral program, which finally culminated in a doctorate from Harvard in 1949. When all his doctoral dreams were fulfilled and the invitation came to be part of the Fuller faculty that was being built in the late forties and early fifties, one would think that the young man who had been so teased would find fulfillment as he approached middle age. The theme of D'Elia's biography, reflected in the title and subtitle of the book, is that Ladd desperately desired to earn "a place at the table" of mainstream scholarship in America and Europe. Furthermore, he desired to do this while maintaining a more open evangelicalism than what he had experienced during the first forty years of his life. His career is traced through that upward effort that, in Ladd's own opinion, ended in abject failure.

Ladd's conflict within the evangelical fold is traced primarily through his efforts to rehabilitate evangelical scholarship by overthrowing what he considered to be the repression caused by Dispensationalism. His early works, *Crucial Questions about the Kingdom of God* and *The Blessed Hope*, were internal polemical works directed against the Dispensationalism associated with Dallas Seminary. Ladd's debates with John Walvoord, President of Dallas at the time, are thoroughly explored. Ladd also desperately desired to secure that place at the table, however, not by simply tilting against dispensationalists, but by convincing critics outside the evangelical fold that an evangelical scholar could do critically acclaimed, scholarly work. When Harper and Row finally published his *magnum opus* in 1964 titled *Jesus and the Kingdom*, he was confident that his place at that table was secured. The book describes, however, his deep emotional pain when a critical scholar, Norman Perrin, savaged Ladd's book in a scholarly journal in 1965. D'Elia makes a strong case that Perrin's review, despite positive reviews both within and without evangelicalism, was the turning point in Ladd's life and career. After that crushing experience, even though he published five more acclaimed volumes before his physical decline in the late seventies, D'Elia portrays Ladd as a defeated man who was just going through the motions.

Along the way, D'Elia offers insights into Ladd's involvement in the struggles of Fuller Seminary as the school was finding its identity in the fifties and

sixties. For professors in theological education, the description of those battles is a familiar one, since many institutions slowly shake off the restraints which they perceive as holding them back. The fundamentalism of the founder Charles Fuller and the similar influence of Harold Ockenga were the losers in this battle at Fuller. Though Ladd was one of those progressives who won out in the end, he never enjoyed the fruits of that victory because of his perceived failures outside the school in the world of scholarship. Compounding all of this is the sad story of his alcoholism and depression, which the author traces through many personal interviews, as well as the disciplinary actions against him because of his drinking.

Much is here from which to learn, whatever be the reader's denominational identity. One missing element, however, in the author's thorough analysis of each of Ladd's volumes is his overlooking of the second edition of *Jesus and the Kingdom*, re-titled by his new publisher Eerdmans as *The Presence of the Future*. In this second edition (1974) and in the likewise unmentioned volume *The Pattern of NT Truth* (1968), Ladd responds to Perrin's critical review. The impression left by these omissions is that Ladd retreated after the perceived defeat of his life-long project. On the contrary, though he never wrote again for a secular publisher like Harper and Row, he did in these books offer one last salvo against the critical rejection of his ideas.

One of the endearing things about Ladd was his whole-hearted commitment to world evangelization. He believed, as he felt Matt 24:14 clearly taught, that when the gospel is proclaimed throughout the world, then Jesus would return bodily. At the end of this very significant book, this reviewer was filled with a combination of appreciation and sadness for George Eldon Ladd. As an undergraduate in the late 1960s, I read *Crucial Questions* and *The Blessed Hope*. Little did I know that at that same time across the country the author was going through torment because he sincerely believed that he had not earned that "place at the table" which he so earnestly desired.

Perhaps another lesson emerges here, and it is not one that D'Elia suggests. At the end of the day, Christians answer to the Lord and not to men. Can one really expect that those in the liberal establishment will ever accept evangelicals? In consideration of the legacy of Ladd's life and career, Paul's statement in Gal 1:10 keeps ringing in my ears: "Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God?"

John Goldingay. *Old Testament Theology, Volume 1: Israel's Gospel*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2003. 940 pp. \$45.00 (cloth).

John Goldingay. *Old Testament Theology, Volume 2: Israel's Faith*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2006. 891 pp. \$45.00 (cloth). Reviewed by William D. Barrick, Professor of Old Testament.

These two are the first of three volumes Goldingay is producing on OT theology. He intends the first volume as a theological commentary on the OT story

regarding God's relationship with the world and Israel and the second volume as a more traditional OT theology dealing with "the Old Testament's faith and hope, or how things are and will be, or who God is and who we are" (1:28). Volume three will use the Psalms and the Torah to consider "people's relationship with God and their lifestyle, their worship and their ethics, their spirituality and their community life" (*ibid.*).

Hundreds of pages of reading impressed this reviewer with the immense scope of Goldingay's purpose and the huge task in which he has engaged. The results are voluminous (over 1800 pages in the first two volumes alone) and overwhelming. Reading the volumes is not a task for the faint of heart. It is as though the author has distilled every thought he ever had on the OT and poured it out into these bound vessels. His presuppositions include an affirmation of "the entire trustworthiness and authority of Scripture" and a "conviction that one hundred percent of the Old Testament has theological significance" (1:19). Unfortunately, his self-imposed limits include a belief that the OT "lacks a 'positive' picture of life after death or a stress on the Messiah" (1:21; on the former, see 2:631-44). He purposefully avoids paying much attention to the NT use of the OT (1:25). In fact, Goldingay identifies clearly what he will *not* focus on: (1) the OT as a witness to Christ, (2) the OT pointing to Christ, (3) the OT as prophesying or predicting Jesus, (4) the OT revealed in the NT, (5) the OT as foreshadowing the NT, and (6) the OT as law succeeded by gospel (1:26-27).

Volume one's structure relates the OT narrative to how God began (creation, 1:42-130), how God started over (from Eden to Babel, 1:131-92), how God promised (Israel's ancestors, 1:193-287), how God delivered (the Exodus, 1:288-368), how God sealed (Sinai, 1:369-450), how God gave (the land, 1:451-528), how God accommodated (from Joshua to Solomon, 1:529-612), how God wrestled (from Solomon to the Exile, 1:613-95), how God preserved (exile and restoration, 1:696-788), and how God sent (the coming of Jesus, 1:789-858). A postscript on OT theology and history (1:859-83) discusses the question of whether the writers of the OT were writing factually or imaginatively. The second volume explores major theological themes: God (2:21-172), Israel (2:173-253), sin (2:254-349), renewal (2:350-516), humanity (2:517-646), the world (2:647-731), and the nations (2:732-833).

In such a large amount of material, many sound observations and conclusions come to the attention of readers determined enough to read through it. One exhibit is Goldingay's valuable comparison between the events of Genesis 6 and 11 when he points out that the "climax of the first came with heavenly beings refusing to acknowledge the line that divides heaven and earth. The climax of the second comes with human beings refusing to acknowledge the line that divides earth and heaven" (1:190). Readers must unpack and carefully read all the supporting information, but the author's statement that "Creation is only the First Testament of the First Testament of the First Testament" (1:290) has profound, positive implications with regard to covenant in the OT and soteriology. His ten models of the peoplehood of Israel (1:437-50) provide a comprehensive examination of the

identity and nature of God's people. Readers desiring to get a grasp of the OT's view of warfare will learn much from Goldingay's treatment of war's nature and rationale in the OT (1:474-85). Looking at significant biblical personalities, the author develops the respective roles of both men (1:588-96) and women (1:596-606) as revealed by OT historical narratives. Developing the OT narrative into the NT's presentation of the person and work of Jesus (1:789-858) provides a basis for a biblical theology as opposed to sticking with the OT alone.

Goldingay offers an insightful analysis of Yhwh's love as seen in His fatherly dedication (2:108-10). The references and implications increase the reader's awareness of the pervasive concept of God as Father in the OT. In yet another analysis, the author guides the reader through a balanced and careful consideration of Yhwh's hostility or wrath (2:135-56). Several such topical studies in the second volume of *Old Testament Theology* represent a fairly comprehensive description drawn from the OT. For example, Goldingay provides a descriptive catalog of consequences resulting from sin (2:278-310). He even has a brief (though somewhat anemic) examination of the millennium and its possible significance to the OT (2:513-14). Occasional pleasant surprises occur, like his strong defense of "spattering" ("sprinkling") in Isa 52:15 (2:745) and his mention of the necessity of the reparation offering (*āšām*) for the servant of Yhwh in Isa 53:10 (2:414). However, his detailed examination of the OT's teaching on death depicts an unnecessarily hopeless situation for OT saints (2:631-44).

With regard to creation, Goldingay holds to the concept of intelligent design (1:49), but is crystal clear in his rejection of the historical accuracy of all creation references throughout the OT. He considers the OT creation accounts "divinely inspired but humanly created imaginative parables" (1:879) without foundation in actual historical fact. "God did not actually create the world over a six-day period. . . . God did not create the first human being by taking some dirt and shaping it into something that had the external form of a man" (1:877).

Goldingay's view of God Himself is somewhat unclear and a matter of concern for the reader with a Bible-based theology. For example, a divine plan for His creation appears to be a "scary" thought to the author (1:60). He is unsurprised that God should desire "a day off" at the end of creation because of the struggle and risk involved in that work (1:62; later, he appears to contradict this observation, 1:128). Declaring that "In the beginning, God defeated other dynamic forces in bringing the world into being" (1:64), Goldingay implies some form of eternal dualism. He repeatedly indicates that God exercised victorious power at creation over some anti-God entities (1:67-69). As to the process of creation, he is firmly committed to the evolutionary hypothesis: "God did not bring the animal world into being by a series of transcendent, supernatural acts but by an immanent process involving trial and error. Species came into being and became extinct through 'chance' mutations and the survival of the fittest" (1:115). Consistent with such an approach, the author states that both OT and NT present "the world as by its nature subject to decay and death from the beginning" (1:147-48) apart from the Fall. By placing the writing of Genesis 1 after the events of 721 and 587 B.C. (1:88),

Goldingay reveals an affinity for the documentary hypothesis that partitions the Pentateuch into various documents by a variety of editors rather than adhering to Mosaic authorship (cf. 1:381-82; 2:461).

Bibliographies and author indexes reveal much about the company a man keeps and the books he allows to influence his thinking. Very rarely do evangelicals grace Goldingay's bibliography (1:884-905; 2:835-52), and he virtually ignores them in the body of his writing as represented in the author indexes (1:906-9; 2:853-57). Liberal and higher critical theologians dominate his references. With such limited exposure, the result is practically guaranteed to be non-evangelical. Diligent readers with a sound theological foundation may read these massive volumes with some benefit from their wealth of OT information, but they will need to be alert to the presence of theological error that can be both disappointing and frustrating.

John Goldingay. *Psalms: Volume 2, Psalms 42–89*. Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007. 744 pp. \$44.99 (cloth). Reviewed by William D. Barrick, Professor of Old Testament.

Baker published the first Psalms volume in 2006 (see review in *TMSJ* 18/2 [Fall 2007]:251-54). A number of determinative stances commend these volumes to the evangelical pastor and seminarian. Goldingay focuses on individual psalms rather than attempting to develop any supposed theological implications from the order and arrangement of the Book of Psalms and finds redactional matters too speculative to merit inclusion (11). In the text-critical realm he notes modern proposals for emending the Hebrew text, but rarely follows them (12). Each psalm's commentary includes Goldingay's own translation (with technical matters limited to footnotes), interpretation (footnoted for sources and technical matters), and theological implications.

This volume commences by treating Psalms 42 and 43 as essentially one psalm (19-34)—a view supported by the refrain repeated through both psalms. Besides the refrain, Goldingay identifies the presence and the significance of a variety of literary devices: repetition, rhetorical question, parallelism, hyperbole, metaphor, imagery, tricolon, and balancing clauses. Throughout the commentary he makes similar observations when they impact interpretation (e.g., 245, 271).

Everywhere Goldingay displays a knack for making helpful associations for the modern reader. For example, he compares the theme of God's presence in Jerusalem in Psalms 42–43 to the movie *James' Journey to Jerusalem* about "the decision of a Zulu village to send their prospective pastor on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to prepare him for his ministry" (34). Employing such contemporary associations helps him explain the implications of the biblical text to the present. In his interpretation of Ps 44:12 ("You sell your people for no value") he explains that the concept is like putting them up for sale "on eBay for a few cents, with no reserve" (43). The analogy with which this reviewer identifies is the description of

the psalmist's throat in 69:3 being "dry like that of a professor who has just given a two-hour lecture" (340).

Goldingay also remains alert to examples that help the reader avoid misusing a psalm's text. For example, he points out that the lectionary of his own church obscures the significance of 44:1-8 by prescribing the use of these versions in isolation certain occasions (41).

Hebrew verbs provide a challenge for both the translator and the interpreter. Much debate surrounds the employment of the perfect (*qatal*) and imperfect (*yiqtol*) forms of the verb. Goldingay is aware of the debate and seeks to provide a principled treatment of each verb form in an attempt to preserve any particular significance in their distinction. For 44:9-16 he contrasts his treatment of the verbs with ancient and modern translations that fail to alternate their translations "without obvious principle" (42). Such comments aid the reader who is aware of the Hebrew and desires to wrestle with the grammatical issues of the text (see also 184 and 197).

This reviewer noted in his review of Goldingay's first volume on Psalms that the imprecatory psalms suffered neglect. In this second volume the commentary offers more explanation of this type of psalm. The "Theological Implications" for Psalm 54 deal briefly with the concept of imprecation (162), but at Psalm 58 (another imprecatory psalm) he describes how to pray for justice on behalf of the saints. Indeed, the psalm awakens readers to the wickedness that exists in the world and "challenges us to look for the terminating of that wickedness with passion, not (e.g.) to be unfeeling about the necessity for evil to be put down" (209; cf. 223). With insightfulness he comments that Christ might pray Psalm 58 on behalf of oppressed people (*ibid.*).

From time to time the author's commentary is weak and malnourished. Only a dozen full lines of text explain 45:14-17 (62). The same psalm's "Theological Implications" are equally lacking (63) and the same section concluding Psalm 52 consists of only eight lines (148; cp. 253, 263). Disconcertingly, Goldingay's comments sometimes reflect unbiblical concepts—such as his declaration that the misinterpretation and misapplication of 46:10 (Heb. 46:11) "may be inspired by the Holy Spirit, even though it does make the words mean something the psalmist did not say" (73). By changing "a brother" (Hebrew *āh*) to "Huh!" in 49:6 (Heb. 49:7), Goldingay obscures the real issue of the entire psalm (that one person cannot redeem another). In addition, he believes that the "idea of an afterlife (beyond the boring one lived in Sheol) is a nice idea, but until Jesus died and rose again, it was an idea that lacked a basis" (107).

With little foundation in the text of Psalm 55 itself, Goldingay imagines the psalm as "the lament of a woman who has been raped" (166; cf. 179-80). He shows a propensity for the documentary hypothesis in his introduction to Psalm 78 (483) and fails to mention any association with the concept of new birth or regeneration in Psalm 87 (640-41).

Despite examples of dubious exegesis and exposition, seminarians and pastors alike will benefit substantially from Goldingay's commentary on Psalms. No commentary is perfect and more good than bad is found in these volumes on an OT

book that will not be exhausted by a dozen more exegetical commentaries should they be written and published in the years ahead.

Richard S. Hess. *Song of Songs*. Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005. 285 pp. \$29.99 (cloth). Reviewed by William D. Barrick, Professor of Old Testament.

The commentary series of which this volume is a part targets primarily the needs of “scholars, ministers, seminary students, and Bible study leaders” with clergy and seminary students most in mind (8). It is confined to Psalms (3 vols. by John Goldingay), Proverbs (by Tremper Longman III), Song of Songs (by Richard S. Hess), Job, and Ecclesiastes. Hess is Earl S. Kalland Professor of Old Testament and Semitic Studies at Denver Seminary (1997-present).

Preachers characteristically ignore or avoid one Bible book in the pulpit—the Song of Songs (also known as the Song of Solomon or Canticles). The number of good commentaries available today should encourage more attention for this unique and beautiful poetic book. Like the other volumes in this series, Hess’s commentary is purposely more exegetical than expositional. Compared with other good commentaries, this one is generally lengthier, more up-to-date, and more detailed and scholarly. An exception would be Tremper Longman’s commentary in the New International Commentary on the OT (Eerdmans 2001), which excels in the area of literary analysis. G. Lloyd Carr’s commentary in the Tyndale OT Commentaries series (IVP 1984) tends to be more evangelical, but is less detailed. Duane A. Garrett’s well-written commentary in the New American Commentary series (Broadman, 1993) inclines to the expositional rather than exegetical, though founded on solid exegetical grounds. One of this reviewer’s favorite evangelical treatments of the Song of Songs is *A Song for Lovers: Lessons for Lovers in the Song of Solomon* by S. Craig Glickman (IVP, 1976), whose exegesis rivals Carr’s and whose treatment of implications goes beyond Hess’s. Pastors and seminarians alike have many good commentaries on the Song from which to choose. The current commentary should be considered among the best on the text, even though Hess is weak on Solomonic authorship, overly enamored with liberal scholarship on the Song, and his theological implications normally fall short of sound application.

Hess opens his commentary by declaring that “this song offers the hope that couples today . . . may see in their love that which is beautiful and good, from the good God” (11). In his brief introduction (17-36) to the Song of Songs, he refrains from identifying Solomon as its author. As he discusses the contents and nature of the book, he observes that “the female voice in the Song accounts for 53 percent of the text, while the male voice accounts for 34 percent” (19). This statistic indicates a stronger feminine element in the Song of Songs than in any other biblical book, placing it in a class with Ruth and Esther, which contain smaller amounts of text in a female voice. As far as Hess is concerned, the Song consists of two primary

characters, refusing to take the three character view that depicts a love triangle (24). Aware of many abuses of this book, he includes two helpful pages about “How (Not) to Read the Song” (34-35).

Following his seven-part outline of the song (35-36), the author separates the commentary into seven sections. Each section commences with his English translation from the Hebrew text with technical footnotes dealing with matters of Hebrew grammar, text, and translation. Next, he explains the interpretation of the text. Lastly, he engages in a brief presentation of theological implications. In this third section the author attempts to find some sort of spiritual lesson connected to the NT’s depiction of the relationship between Christ and the church. For 5:10-16 Hess associates the male’s strength with protection and security, using it as an analogy for the love of Christ for His church in Rom 5:6-8 (191). At the same time, the author relates the mutual respect of the two lovers in the text to the marriage relationship between two Christians (*ibid.*).

The author’s reluctance to identify Solomon as the author of this song fits with his treatment of the direct reference to Solomon in 3:6-11, which he takes as a common bride and groom envisioning themselves as king and queen on their wedding day (123-24). Hess does not avoid the sexual connotations in the text, but he refuses to associate sexual overtones with parts of the text that other commentators make into more explicit references. Such texts include 5:4 (161 n. i, 172) where he disagrees with Longman and 5:14 (164 n. f, 185) where he disagrees with Longman and Goulder. Likewise, Hess emphatically denies that the two lovers in the Song engaged in erotic sexual encounters outside of marriage (237). On 8:6 (“Its flames are flames of fire, / A flame of the LORD”), he concludes that “flame” is a compound with “Yah,” the shortened form of “Yahweh,” placing its single occurrence in the Song at the climax of the book (240).

This volume concludes with a substantial bibliography (253-69) and indexes (subject, 271; author, 273-76; and Scripture and other ancient writings, 277-85). The target audience will appreciate these aids that make the book user-friendly.

Steve Jeffery, Michael Ovey, and Andrew Sach. *Pierced for Our Transgressions: Rediscovering the Glory of Penal Substitution*. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2007. 373 pp. \$19.99 (paper). Reviewed by William D. Barrick, Professor of Old Testament.

All three authors of *Pierced for Our Transgressions* are associated with Oak Hill Theological College (London). Jeffery is a student preparing for ministry, Ovey is Principal and Lecturer in Doctrine and Apologetics, and Sach is a graduate. Disturbed at criticism of penal substitution by avowed evangelicals, these three men collaborated on this book with the goal of presenting the biblical teaching. In their first chapter (“Introduction,” 21-32), they identify both the opponents and the advocates of the doctrine. This section provides a treasure trove of resources and

describes their role in the debate over the atonement.

This two-part volume first lays out the biblical case for penal substitution and then outlines every available objection, confronting the claims head on. Chapter 2 (“Searching the Scriptures: The Biblical Foundations of Penal Substitution,” 33-99) establishes the biblical basis for penal substitution. Key OT passages examined include Exodus 12 (the Passover), Leviticus 16 (the Day of Atonement), and Isa 52:13–53:12. The treatment consists of careful interpretation with an eye on the Hebrew text. For the NT, texts in Mark, John, and Romans precede the handling of Gal 3:10-13, 1 Pet 2:21-25 and 3:18. The authors even interact with the New Perspective viewpoint regarding the Galatian texts (90-93).

Chapter 3 (“Assembling the Pieces: The Theological Framework for Penal Substitution,” 100-48) sets the doctrine within the framework of Christian theology, tying it to major biblical themes and demonstrating its centrality. Jeffery, Ovey, and Sach commence with creation and its implications for the doctrine of penal substitution (105-10). Then they develop the implications from “decreation,” especially in regard to the denial of divine goodness and truthfulness (110-17). That topic leads logically into a discussion of the consequences of sin (118-24), including the nature of death, the “second death,” and God’s wrath. Following a brief examination of the implications of truth, goodness, justice, and salvation (124-26), the authors explore the implications of the relationships within the Trinity (126-32), then wrap up the chapter with a presentation of the issues of redemption itself (132-48) as unfolded in the gift of the incarnate Son, His victory, the doctrines of reconciliation and ransom, and the believer’s union with Christ. Throughout this chapter, penal substitution coheres perfectly with the various biblical topics and doctrines.

Next, the authors focus on pastoral application of the doctrine and its implications for key issues in Christian living (Chapter 4, “Exploring the Implications: The Pastoral Importance of Penal Substitution,” 149-60). God’s love, truthfulness, and justice, as revealed in penal substitution, produce assurance, confidence, and passion in the believer’s life. In addition, a proper biblical understanding of the doctrine creates honesty and realism with regard to sin’s character and danger.

The final chapter in Part One (“Surveying the Heritage: The Historical Pedigree of Penal Substitution,” 161-204) develops documented evidence of adherence to the doctrine by key figures throughout the history of the church. Twenty different individuals, from Justin Martyr (ca. A.D. 100-165) to J. I. Packer (b. 1926), reveal the broad acceptance and fervent defense of penal substitution by prominent church leaders and theologians. The survey concludes with brief statements about the stances of the UCCF (Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship) and the Evangelical Alliance (200-203).

Part Two proceeds to answer the objections of the critics of penal substitution. A brief “Introduction to the Debate” occupies Chapter 6 (205-7). Chapters 7 through 12 classify the various objections under six headings: “Penal Substitution and the Bible” (208-17), “Penal Substitution and Culture” (218-25),

“Penal Substitution and Violence” (226-39), “Penal Substitution and Justice” (240-78), “Penal Substitution and Our Understanding of God” (279-306), and “Penal Substitution and the Christian Life” (307-24). Insofar as possible, the authors present these objections in the words of their various spokespersons. They refrain from caricaturing these opponents of penal substitution, exercising fairness and accuracy in their representations. Recent critics are given priority of place in stating the objections. Jeffery, Ovey, and Sach have succeeded admirably in being objective and avoiding *ad hominem* argumentation. Yet, they have not shirked honest confrontation. In Chapter 13 (“A Final Word,” 325-28), the authors challenge what they term “The Vague Objection” and “The Emotional Objection.”

An appendix (“A Personal Note to Preachers,” 329-36), an informative bibliography (337-51), and helpful indexes (351-73) conclude the volume. The appendix pleads with preachers to select their illustrations with care, being diligent not to extend them beyond the biblical truth regarding penal substitution. The authors list seven wisdom-filled guidelines for the choice and use of illustrations (334-35).

Pierced for Our Transgressions deserves the attentive reading of every pastor, preacher, teacher, and seminarian. In the present debate it belongs at the top of everyone’s reading list.

Timothy Paul Jones. *Misquoting Truth: A Guide to the Fallacies of Bart Ehrman’s Misquoting Jesus*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2007. 175 pp. \$15.00 (paper). Reviewed by Kelly Osborne, Associate Professor of New Testament.

Timothy Jones (hereafter, TJ), senior pastor at First Baptist Church of Rolling Hills, Tulsa, OK, has written a book which, as the title states, responds directly and specifically to Bart D. Ehrman’s (hereafter BE) New York Times Bestseller, *Misquoting Jesus: The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why* (New York: Harper-Collins, 2005). BE chairs the Department of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina, and his book gives the impression that very early on in church history scribes introduced wholesale and major changes into Christian theology as they copied manuscripts of the NT text. He claims that such changes, along with the disappearance of the autograph manuscripts of NT writings, make it impossible for a thinking person to accept the idea that the original texts were ever inerrant or even inspired by God. Furthermore, BE relates enough of his own journey to and then away from what he calls “a bona fide born-again experience” (3), that he thinks he can justify, at least to his own satisfaction, a view of NT texts which treats them as not a whit more authoritative or divine than any other piece of literature in the world (BE, 14-15, 216-18). The misleading impressions and conclusions set forth in BE’s book manifest his hostility to biblical Christianity. TJ has therefore done the reading public in general and Bible-believing Christians in particular a real service by grappling with the issues raised thereby.

After a short introduction in which TJ sets the stage for the reader with important background information concerning BE and his published works, the main section of the book is divided into two parts, the first entitled "Why the [New Testament] Texts Can Be Trusted" (27-77), the second "Why the Lost Christianities Were Lost" (79-137). TJ's Concluding Reflections (138-46) are followed by an appendix on the value of Papias's testimony (147-48), personal acknowledgments and autobiographical details (149-52), as well as endnotes (153-69), subject, name, and scripture indexes (170-76).

In the four chapters comprising Part One, TJ focuses on how the text of the NT was preserved and transmitted up until the time of the earliest printed editions. His style makes a technical subject readily understandable. A number of text boxes use bold print and offer brief but helpful definitions of terms like "codex" or "uncial" (e.g., 32, 36, 45). Relevant historical background, such as perceptions of Christian practice from both a pagan and a Christian writer of the 2nd century (38), are interspersed in the discussion (21, 35, 46, 47). These text boxes catch the eye and pique the curiosity.

Where it is appropriate, TJ agrees with BE (31), but he also notes clearly the inconsistency or inadequacy of the latter's argument (e.g., 32, 43, 44, 47, 72-73, 77). The strength of TJ's discussion lies in chapters 3 and 4 (55-76), where he examines in detail numerous passages in the NT where significant textual variants occur. Contrary to misleading impressions and faulty conclusions given by BE, TJ offers more convincing explanations which give due weight to a broader spectrum of evidence, and he thus shows that no basic doctrine is affected by such scribal changes (54, 70).

At times TJ's language softens the impact of the conclusions he draws. At key points, he writes "from my perspective," "[p]ersonally, I suspect," "[u]nless I miss my guess," "[n]ot that I can tell" (e.g., 54, 62, 64, 77). Of course, TJ seeks to write irenically and in an informal style, but the kind of deliberate hostility to and tendentious argument against biblical Christianity consistently demonstrated by BE require a clarity that identifies the latter's position for what it truly is: distortion of the evidence.

Part Two (79-137) outlines why the early church came to regard the books of the NT, and not other writings, as canonical. TJ reviews the material well in many respects, but unfortunately falls into line with much contemporary evangelical scholarship on the Synoptic Gospels, accepting Markan priority and allowing for a dating of Luke as late as A.D. 85 (85, 112). This does not vitiate his entire argument, but TJ leaves open the possibility that "the *focus* of certain stories about Jesus changed from one context to another" (94, emphasis in the original). Although TJ maintains that "a shift in focus of a story because of a change in context, historical circumstances or eschatological expectation is very different ... from ... disregarding the actual historical events," he eventually concedes that BE is "unarguably correct that traditions were molded and remolded in light of varying cultural and contextual circumstances" (162 n. 27). On this matter of the origin, transmission and final version of the Synoptic Gospels, then, the difference between the position

proposed by TJ and that of BE suddenly becomes one of degree not kind, thus undercutting the critique of BE's position.

TJ's treatment of how the NT canon came to be (chapter 8), including the early church's rejection of the Gospel of Peter and other apocryphal writings (127-37), should be helpful to those who may know little or nothing about the process. But his Concluding Reflections disappoint, because he declares that the message of the good news concerning the person and work of Jesus Christ, i.e., the gospel, is to be accepted for pragmatic reasons ("it simply works," (138-39). But surely it should be accepted primarily because it is true (Eph 1:13; 1 Thess 2:3-5; John 20:30-31, 21:24)!

Furthermore, it seems to this reviewer that TJ is far too gentle, saying that BE "poses no ultimate threat to Christian faith," but rather "an opportunity for us [believers in Christ] to ask difficult questions—questions like, What do I really mean when I say that the Bible is God's Word?" (143) True enough, BE's twisting of the evidence, whether textual or historical, will not overturn biblical Christianity. Even if only some believers are misled by the views BE propounds, however, are not such views to be shown for what they really are, namely, deception, and then vigorously opposed like any false teaching (cf. Titus 1:7-16, in connection with Judaizing heresy)?

For those who do not wish to wade through another item in BE's growing list of publications hostile to biblical Christianity, TJ's book should prove beneficial, if read with cautions like those noted here.

R. Albert Mohler, Jr. *Atheism Remix: A Christian Confronts the New Atheists*. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2008. 108 pp. \$15.99 (cloth). Reviewed by Richard L. Mayhue, Professor of Pastoral Ministry and Theology; Senior Vice President and Dean.

Dr. Mohler's primer on the "new atheism" originated with his four-part, W.H. Griffith-Thomas Lectures delivered at Dallas Theological Seminary in early 2008. The reviewer fully agrees with superlative endorsements offered by Drs. David S. Dockery, D.A. Carson, and Daniel Akin. Mohler presents his timely analysis concisely, clearly, and compellingly. This highly recommended work evidences wide reading and deep thinking by the current President of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.

Mohler's clear-cut proposition comes midway through the book (66). "Atheism is not a new challenge, but the New Atheists are perceived as presenting a new and powerful refutation of theism. Their challenge deserves and demands a cogent Christian response." His conclusion/challenge appears near the end: "Evangelical Christians simply cannot surrender biblical authority, propositional revelation, and biblical theism in order to meet the various challenges presented to us in the twenty-first century" (102).

This well-crafted volume progresses as it originated, i.e., in four parts/chapters. Chapter One explores the history of atheism from the Enlightenment period (18th century) through the twenty-first century. Two broad movements fill out this section, (1) atheism (15-28) and (2) secularism (28-37). The central chapter (Two) on new atheism follows. The author first identifies four chief proponents (R. Dawkins, 39-43; D. Dennet, 43-47; S. Harris, 48-52; and C. Hitchens, 52-54). He concludes by articulating eight principles that differentiate older forms of atheism from the “new atheism” (54-63).

Chapter Three unfolds with brief summaries of two responses/challenges to Richard Dawkins by well-respected thinkers from an evangelical perspective: first, Alister McGrath (65-77), and second, Alvin Plantiga (77-85). This section contrasts with the following chapter (Four) in which Mohler reacts to responses to “new atheism” from two liberal theologians, namely Tina Beattie (90-95) and John F. Haught (95-102).

The author concludes (102-8) with summary thoughts about new atheists and about liberal theologians who are, by their rejection of biblical authority, defined as “practical” atheists, although not self-confessed, practicing atheists. Mohler ends with this striking thought, “Atheists are certainly right about one very important thing—it’s atheism or biblical theism. There is nothing in between” (108).

Dr. Mohler provides the reader with a crucial reminder. “In the end, evangelical Christians must remember that the burden of our concern is not merely to refute atheism or to argue for the intellectual credibility of theism in any generic or minimal form. Instead, our task is to present, to teach, to explain, and to defend *Christian* theism” (84). *Atheism Remix* serves as an excellent introductory piece for a much larger, much needed volume which this reviewer challenges the author to undertake. That way, the God of the Bible will have both the first and the last word (cf. Pss 10:4; 14:1; 53:1).

Terry Mortensen and Thane H. Ury, eds. *Coming to Grips with Genesis: Biblical Authority and the Age of the Earth*. Green Forest, Ariz.: Master Books, 2008. 478 pp. \$16.99 (paper). Reviewed by Michael J. Vlach, Assistant Professor of Theology.

The early chapters of Genesis continue to be a battleground in the debate over the age of the earth. The case for six-day creation, a global flood, and a young earth finds a great ally with *Coming to Grips with Genesis: Biblical Authority and the Age of the Earth*. The editors, Terry Mortenson and Thane H. Ury, have assembled fourteen formidable theological scholars to defend a young-earth view and critique contemporary old-earth interpretations of the book of Genesis.

This defense of a literal view of Genesis 1–11, which is also a tribute to the life and ministry of early earth advocate, John C. Whitcomb, is not intended to be a scientific presentation for a young earth. Instead, this book admittedly comple-

ments young earth science books by focusing on a correct exegetical and theological understanding of Genesis. As such, it is intended to be a stand-alone text for seminary and Bible college professors and students, pastors, missionaries, and all interested in what the Bible really says about creation.

Readers should appreciate the two forewords. The first is by Henry M. Morris, who penned his words shortly before his death. This reviewer is glad that Dr. Morris was able to see the fruit of this outstanding book before he left this earth to enter the presence of His Lord. Both editors acknowledge the great influence of both Morris and Whitcomb on their views of Genesis. The second review is by John MacArthur, who also heartily commends this book.

Coming to Grips with Genesis consists of fourteen chapters followed by two appendices. The first appendix, by Paul J. Scharf, is a biographical tribute to John C. Whitcomb. In regard to the chapters, James R. Mook addresses what the early church fathers really believed about the six days of creation. In separate sections, Trevor C. Craigen and Terry Mortensen tackle the topic of deep time in Genesis. Richard L. Mayhue addresses why nature should not be considered the 67th book of the Bible. William D. Barrick discusses the geological implications of Noah's flood. Travis R. Freeman examines the issue of genealogical gaps in Genesis 5 and 11. Ron Minton shows the reader what the apostolic witness states regarding creation and the flood. David W. Hall, Todd S. Beall, Steven W. Boyd, Robert V. McCabe, James Stambaugh, and Thane H. Ury also offer helpful chapters on various exegetical, theological, and historical matters related to Genesis 1–11.

The message of the fourteen chapters is clear—Genesis and the rest of Scripture teaches a sudden, six-day creation of this earth, which is only thousands, not millions of years old. This position was the view of the apostolic witness and the church for nearly 1,800 years. The church of today, to its peril, has largely rejected the teaching of the Bible on creationism, caving in to Enlightenment thinking and dubious science. The solution is to go back to what Genesis actually teaches, with a boldness resting on the assurance that God's Word is true.

In addition to the excellent chapters, one of the most interesting sections of the book is the Epilogue. Here the editors express their appreciation for and concerns with the Intelligent Design Movement. For those who appreciate the IDM and movies like *Expelled* but still find something missing, this section is helpful and, in this reviewer's opinion, quite balanced.

The reader should also appreciate that *Coming to Grips with Genesis* also offers a Recommended Resources section that lists books, Web articles, DVDs, and periodicals that will allow further study of issues related to creation and the flood. Also, the work has an "Affirmations and Denials" document in the appendix. The reader may want to note that this document is also on-line with instructions at the end explaining how other theologically trained people around the world can "sign" the document as a testimony to the church and a call for the church to have a truly biblical worldview in this evolutionized world. The URL for that document is AnswersinGenesis.org/go/Affirmations.

This book is unparalleled in offering a compelling, scholarly, and recent

defense of young-earth creationism from a biblical perspective. The greatest strength of the book is its unapologetic commitment to what Genesis actually teaches about origins. As the editors declare, "The authors of this book are convinced that no properly interpreted scientific facts will ultimately contradict a straightforward reading of Genesis" (427).

For those interested in issues related to creation and Genesis 1–11, *Coming to Grips with Genesis* is a must have. Seminaries and Bible colleges would do well to get this book into the hands of their students quickly.

Roger E. Olson. *Arminian Theology: Myths and Realities*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2006). 250 pp. \$25.00 (cloth). Reviewed by Andrew V. Snider, Assistant Professor of Theology.

Calvinists and Arminians are not famous for having fair, balanced dialogue about the real issues that separate them. In light of this, Roger Olson perceives the need for a straightforward presentation of classical Arminianism's true distinctives, and has written this book to meet that need. In doing so he shows by example that cordial, even edifying, critical interaction is possible between these two traditions.

As the title suggests, Olson's strategy is to debunk key myths propagated by classical Arminianism's detractors. Each chapter is devoted to one of these myths. Olson begins each chapter by citing those who have popularized the myth; then he proceeds to show that it is not something that "true" Arminians would affirm. Olson's goal is to show that "true Arminianism," far from being outside the pale of Christian orthodoxy, is in fact located within the evangelical stream of Reformation theology.

Before addressing his list of ten myths, Olson provides a helpful and rather extensive introduction to Arminianism. After tracing the history of his tradition from Arminius to the present day, Olson sets out to define clearly what he will be defending in the book. He calls this "true" or "classical" Arminianism, which he distinguishes from liberalism, semi-Pelagianism, Socinianism, and open theism.

Olson deals with myths such as "The Heart of Arminianism is Free Will" (Myth 4) and "Arminians Do Not Believe in Predestination" (Myth 8) as he seeks to disprove thoroughly Myth 3, "Arminianism is Not an Orthodox Evangelical Option." In each chapter, to establish a consistent testimony that disproves the myth under consideration, Olson adduces evidence from the writings of Arminius himself, as well as luminaries of that tradition such as Simon Episcopius, John Wesley, Richard Watson, William Burt Pope, John Miley, J. Orton Wiley, and Thomas Oden. Olson does not shy away from key embarrassments to the Arminian tradition, such as the theological errors of Charles Finney. He rather admits these weaknesses and proceeds to demonstrate that they are not representative of the classical Arminian tradition as a whole.

Olson frequently expresses his frustration with how Calvinists have

misrepresented Arminian doctrinal formulations. But he generally keeps his tone cordial as he seeks to set an example for Calvinist-Arminian dialogue. He ends the book by suggesting ground rules for these polemics, emphasizing the responsibility of each side to listen to and understand the other carefully and charitably.

The book seems to hit most of the major distinctives of Arminian theology and does not seem to shy away from any of them save one—eternal security or perseverance of the saints. Olson skirts this issue a few times, but does not devote a chapter to it as might be expected.

Since this is not a highly technical book, it is valuable as a resource for almost anyone who wants to know what Arminians believe. However, the book will be limited as a polemical resource, since Olson does not engage in detailed argumentation against Calvinist doctrine. Olson's fairly consistent irenic tone and his call for cordiality and patience should be heeded by Calvinists and Arminians, and those particularly narrow Calvinists. Those who regard classical Arminianism as heresy should receive Olson's rebuke and acknowledge that Arminians are fellow members of the body of Christ. Overall, Olson's book is highly recommended for those who want to understand the Arminian-Calvinist controversy better.

Eric C. Redmond. *Where Are All the Brothers?* Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2008. 103 pp. \$9.99 (cloth). Reviewed by Gregory H. Harris, Professor of Bible Exposition.

Eric Redmond has written a purposely easy-to-read evangelistic and apologetic book in an attempt to reach people who are not saved and/or actively involved in a church. He has the chapters arranged so that each one can be read in a brief period of time; for instance, his introduction is entitled "What You Will Gain If You Give Me Ten Minutes a Day of Your Life for Each of The Next Nine Days" (13). His desire is to keep people from putting down the book with any such excuse that it would take too long in their busy schedules to read anything.

Although his target audience is predominantly the black male population (such as Day 5 "Doesn't Islam Offer More for Black Men?"), much within the book will be helpful to use with anyone who has legitimate questions about true Christianity. Redmond challenges the readers to investigate for themselves the claims of Christ and walks them through in simple but helpful language the key truths to consider. As before, the limited size of the chapters is purposeful; it is not an overkill of information but rather setting a forth the simple case of Jesus Christ as the Savior of those who will receive him.

Redmond sets up his chapter titles in the forms of a question that deals with common issues raised by many against Christianity (Day 1: "Isn't the Church Full of Hypocrites?") and, even more to the point, the person and work of Jesus Christ (Day 8: "Jesus Never Claimed to Be God, Did He?"). This will not be a book for those who have read deeper apologetics books since that is not the author's target

area. However, it may very well be a book that can be given to those who would not read a theology book; it is a good book “to continue the conversation” with the lost. In fact, this may be the best use of the book in that it can break the ice and lead to witnessing opportunities that may be awkward for some. The author’s hope is that once the reader begins to consider the biblical truths in the book, he will continue to read it instead of casting it away because he cannot understand it.

Each chapter concludes with follow-up questions entitled “Things to Consider,” to lead the reader to examine more deeply some of the material presented in that chapter. He also lists three books at the end of each chapter to point a reader to deeper sources if a longer and more profound answer is desired. *Where Are All the Brothers?* also contains two appendices: “The Fulfillment of the Old Testament Prophecies about Christ in the New Testament” (83) and an answer to the charge that “The Church Does Not Welcome Homosexuals” (89). Both appendices walk the reader through a biblical rationale on what the Bible says about such matters and why. Redmond does not duck or dodge the issues; he presents his argument in a straightforward and winsome manner.

For *The Master's Seminary Journal* audience, this may not be the book for you as a student of God’s Word; you are not the ones the author is after. However, this may be a small, “non-threatening” book to give an unsaved family member or associate who will not be put off by its size or presentation. As before, although Redmond targets the predominantly black, male, American audience, many of the same questions are asked by unbelievers of all ethnicities. Of course, because of the person and work of Jesus Christ, the same answers apply to all, regardless of “the people, tongue, tribe, and nation.”

Thomas A. Robinson. *Mastering New Testament Greek: Essential Tools for Students*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2007. ix + 230 pp. \$19.95 (paper with CD-ROM). Reviewed by Paul W. Felix, Assistant Professor of New Testament.

Thomas A. Robinson is Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Lethbridge in Alberta, British Columbia. Although he specializes in Judaism and Christianity in the Greco-Roman era, it is clear that he has a secondary interest in assisting students to become proficient in NT Greek. His previous contributions to this area have been *Greek Verb Endings: A Reverse Index* (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen, 1989) and two editions of *Mastering Greek Vocabulary* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1990; 2d ed., 1991).

Robinson’s latest work is the “third edition” of the previous books which focused on Greek vocabulary. He seeks to broaden the scope in three ways. First, *Mastering New Testament Greek (MNTG)* includes a revision of the material from *Greek Verb Endings: A Reverse Index*. Second, “the section dealing with Prepositions and Cases, provides an intuitive visual model that illustrates the correlation between the various Greek prepositions and the cases these prepositions

employ in establishing relationships between nouns or pronouns” (3). Third, *MNTG* contains a Mini Greek/English Cognate Dictionary (4 double-column pages) that presents a list of sorted Greek roots which are related to English cognate words. The book also includes a CD-ROM entitled “Greek Tools,” which is formatted for Windows and Mac OS X.

After an Introduction and Instructions, Section 1, “Identical Greek/English Words,” provides a list of Greek words which have been transliterated to create words in the English language (i.e., ἀήρ, “air”). A large portion of the book is Section 2 (11-113), “Cognate Groups.” Instead of following the pattern of traditional vocabulary books which list words by their frequency of occurrence, the list provided in these pages is based on the frequency of the occurrence of the cognate root. Each cognate group provides the following general information: (1) the Greek root; (2) the frequency of that root in the NT; (3) the general meaning of the that root; (4) English words derived from (or suggestive of) the Greek root. The entry also lists words sharing the root and some aids for learning these words. Section 3, “Explanation of Greek Prefixes and Suffixes,” is designed to show how the meaning of a root can be altered by either a prefix or suffix. Section 3 is complemented by Section 4, “Identical Greek/English Prefixes and Suffixes.” A sample entry is ἀντι-, whose English equivalent is “anti-,” and has a general meaning of “against/opposition” as illustrated by the word “*Antichrist*.” “Derived English Words” is the subject of Section 5. The chapter offers a brief explanation of many of the “Memory Aid” words given in the cognate group entries in Section 3. The final two sections are Section 6, “Mini Greek/English Cognate Dictionary,” and Section 7, “Prepositions and Cases.”

MNTG has two appendices (Appendix 1, “Grimm’s Law”; Appendix 2, “Common Pronouns, Adjectives, and Adverbs”) and three indices (Index 1, “Words Occurring 10-19 Times”; Index 2, “Greek Word Endings”; Index 3, “Cognate Group Terms”). The material on the endings of Greek words is significant (151-93). Robinson has compiled this index to aid the reader of Greek to identify the ending of a puzzling word. The endings are listed in reverse alphabetical order.

“Greek Tools” consists of six programs: (1) Alphabet (several aids related to recognizing, pronouncing, and writing the Greek alphabet including diphthongs); (2) Greek Speak (pronounces selected Greek words); (3) Vocabulary (allows the user to learn the most common Greek words, which are also indexed to the lessons in three first-year grammars); (4) Verb Decoder (identifying and reviewing Greek verb forms); (5) Word Deconstruction (offers a quick guide to determine the ending of most Greek words); (6) GIG: Greek Internet Grammar (links to a basic first-year grammar that is still under construction). Several of these programs will be of benefit to beginning students of Greek. The software installs without any problems.

The majority of the material in *MNTG* can be found in Robinson’s earlier contributions on learning NT Greek. Readers of his work should be grateful he has combined his previous material, but it does not warrant the misleading title of the book. This volume does not provide the essential tools for the mastery of NT Greek. Yet, if one is convinced that the optimal way to learn the vocabulary of the NT is by

focusing on the frequency of the occurrence of the cognate root rather than on the frequency of the individual word, then *MNTG* is a valuable book. Robinson has demonstrated that more than one way exists to gain a working knowledge of the vocabulary of the NT and that his material can aid those who have learned words classified according to their frequency.

The major challenge of this helpful work is integrating it into the overall plan to make Greek a useful tool for interpreting the NT. Several of its features, especially the software, are designed for first-year Greek students. Typically, students who are just learning the language are not interested in acquiring large amounts of vocabulary. Other parts of the book (i.e., amassing vocabulary by learning words classified according to their root) are geared toward second-year students of Greek. Such individuals desire to learn large amounts of Greek vocabulary rapidly and are not interested in the elementary rudiments of the Greek language. In light of this challenge, purchasers of this reasonably priced book will have to determine how *MGNT* can best serve them in the goal of using Greek to interpret the NT.

Philip Satterthwaite and Gordon McConville. *Exploring the Old Testament, Volume 2: A Guide to the Historical Books*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2007. xvi + 295 pp. \$29.00 (cloth). Reviewed by Keith Essex, Associate Professor of Bible Exposition.

This is the fourth and final volume released in the *Exploring the Old Testament (EOT)* series edited by Gordon McConville. All of the volumes were written by British OT scholars “to help the beginning student understand the writings of the Old Testament” (xi). *EOT* is a companion series to *Exploring the New Testament* which was written by British NT scholars for the same purpose (see *TMSJ*, 2004, 132-34). As its NT counterpart, *EOT* seeks to engage the reader by interspersing interactive panels with the main narrative. *EOT* also incorporates canonical and rhetorical criticism along with the traditional historical interpretive approach to the OT text.

The second volume of *EOT, A Guide to the Historical Books* is a joint writing venture of Philip Satterthwaite and McConville. Satterthwaite, a professor of OT at the Biblical Graduate School of Theology in Singapore, planned the volume, wrote the first seven chapters, and edited all the chapters into their present form. McConville, Senior Lecturer in OT at the University of Gloucestershire, Cheltenham, England, wrote chapters 8-11 (xv). In the first chapter, Satterthwaite introduces the reader to the OT histories, the books which follow the Pentateuch in the English Bible (1-28). The main burden of the chapter is to describe the present approaches to the histories as literary texts and historical documents. Satterthwaite concludes, “Our interpretation of the Histories begin with the assumption of literary unity. . . . Usually, having investigated contrary viewpoints, we conclude that our

initial, working assumption of literary unity may be allowed to stand” (25). The author is also cautious of undo skepticism concerning the historical accuracy of the books, although he asks pointed questions of the critical approach (17) rather than declaring a beginning premise of inerrancy or even the general historical trustworthiness of the OT text. However, when the individual OT books are discussed, the authors usually conclude that they are historically based, except for Esther. The second chapter overviews the history of the Ancient Near East from 1550 to 63 B.C. since it is the context of the histories (29-40).

The central part of the volume is devoted to an introduction to the individual OT books (41-198, 220-90). The strength of chapters 3-6 and 8-11 is the discussion of the structure of each book. The authors clearly show the reader the literary unity of the texts. This discussion will be of immense help to exegetes and expositors of Scripture, not just the beginning reader. The two weaknesses of these chapters are both historical. First, Satterthwaite opts for a late dating for the conquest and about 160 years for the period of the Judges (101). Second, McConville expresses serious reservations concerning the historicity of the events recorded in Esther. He views the genre of the book as comedy, a fictional work that might get the local color right, and thus give an appearance of historical accuracy, but whose narration of its central events, a plot to kill all Jews, foiled by the actions of a queen, and the slaughter of 75,000 Jewish enemies, is improbable (239-42). In chapter seven, Satterthwaite introduces the reader to the contemporary discussion of the “Deuteronomistic History,” i.e., Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings (199-219). He questions the assumptions of a Deuteronomistic History, noting that the Former Prophets have significant echoes of all of the Pentateuch, not just Deuteronomy. He concludes, “The points in favour of our position are not necessarily stronger than those underlying the consensus position: all we claim is that they are no weaker” (217). The volume ends with a subject index (291-95).

In the estimation of the present reviewer, *A Guide to the Historical Books* is the most beneficial of the four volumes in *EOT*. Volume 1, *A Guide to the Pentateuch* (2003) by Gordon Wenham is a valuable roadmap to the structure of the Pentateuch, but doubts about the historicity of the text at points mar the presentation. Volume 3, *A Guide to the Psalms & Wisdom Literature* (2003) by Ernest Lucas, raises questions concerning the Solomonic authorship of Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs and gives the reader little support for the traditional position. In volume 4, *A Guide to the Prophets* (2002), McConville concedes much to the non-evangelical scholarship on these books, especially Isaiah and Daniel. As with their NT counterparts, *EOT* are valuable in orienting the beginning OT student to the issues he will face in his continuing studies. However, the answers supplied are not always reliable. Volume 2 comes the closest to giving the reader the best answers.

Kenton L. Sparks. *God's Word in Human Words*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008. 415 pp. \$26.99 (paper). Reviewed by Jason Sexton, TMS alumnus and Ph.D.

candidate at The University of St. Andrews, Scotland.

Kenton L. Sparks is Professor of Biblical Studies, Special Assistant to the Provost of Eastern University, and has written the latest book seeking to reframe the debate on biblical inerrancy. Because of its vastness in scope and broadness in scholarly engagement, Peter Enns referred to it as “*Inspiration and Incarnation on steroids*” (cf. opening remarks on recent debate on “Is the Bible Ever Wrong” at Duke Divinity School, 22 Oct 2008 [<http://socraticclubtwoviews.blogspot.com/2008/09/is-bible-ever-wrong-conversation-with.html>], accessed 17 Jan. 09]). Written by an evangelical to a scholarly evangelical audience, Sparks makes a case for believing historical-criticism that he hopes will benefit the church, giving it a “biblically informed worldview” (18-20, 328, 356).

With a strong aversion to “Cartesian” philosophies, Sparks moves to integrate faith and historical-criticism which, he asserts, offers the very best in Christian scholarship (170, 183, 366, 373). Accordingly, instead of being a case of disobedience, he suggests that the cause of Adam’s fall in Genesis was a misplaced desire for certain God-like knowledge (49, 52).

Favorably noting advances in critical scholarship, Sparks’s framework is arguing that historical-criticism will aid the study of the Bible through the academic expertise of intellectually gifted scholars (58, 70). Early in the book, while interacting with postmodern epistemology, Sparks identifies himself as a “practical realist” (42-44, 263), suggesting an appropriate definition of historical-criticism as “reading texts contextually” (72). He then makes a case for distancing himself from the standard evangelical view of inerrancy while still remaining theologically orthodox. He does this by seeking to uphold God’s inerrancy and that “God does not err in Scripture,” while yet paradoxically finding errors in the Bible attributed to the human authors (139, 227).

Sparks’s position seems very similar to that offered by John Goldingay (*Models for Scripture* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994] 282-83) who argues that the Bible can be “adequately factual” but not “inerrantly factual.” Cf. also Telford Work’s recent treatment of the subject (*Living and Active* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002] 81) along with that of John Webster, who gave a similar notion that the Bible’s authority “does not lie within itself, any more than the sacraments have inherent effectiveness, but in its testimony to the authority of the one who appoints Scripture as his servant” (“Scripture, Authority of,” in *Dictionary of Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005] 726). This notion would also be allowed by Denis O. Lamoureux (“Lessons from the Heavens: On Scripture, Science and Inerrancy” in *The Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* 60/1 [June 2008]:13), who identifies “incidental statements” in the Bible regarding things such as the cosmology of the universe, to which “biblical inerrancy cannot extend.”

Serving in the broader academic arena can be good for evangelicals, breeding rigorous scholarship in an exacting context. But one wonders if Sparks himself is really willing to be tested there. Specifically, with serious engagement of

postmodern epistemological issues, the question begging to be posed to historical critics is whether or not their discipline can be performed with any confident relevancy at all (cf. S. M. Baugh's reference to Wayne Meeks's 2004 presidential address to the Studioreum Novi Testamenti Societas, cited in Baugh's Aug. 2008 review of *God's Word in Human Words* [<http://www.reformation21.org/shelf-life/review-gods-word-in-human-words.php> (accessed 4 Nov. 2008)]). Can one really depend on critical scholarship, all the while seeking to be dislodged from constraints by modernist philosophy? And does a postmodern or nonfoundational historical-criticism really exist? Or is "reading texts contextually" from a tamed, practical realism (with little criteria to determine this and no description of how this might work) simply unrealistic? Furthermore, with seeming absence of little if any argumentation advanced from recent critical scholarship, this book easily could have been written ten years ago. This matter could have been improved on had he paused to consider the work of Francis Watson, *Text and Truth* (London: T & T Clark, 1997) and Christopher R. Seitz, *Figured Out* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001) in more than a meager footnote. What if historical-criticism becomes passé even in the broader academic arena as a modern, rationalistic, Cartesian edifice built by 19th- and 20th-century German scholarship? Does Sparks have a backup plan?

The latter portion of the book is spent trying to synthesize criticism with theology (203). This point is noteworthy, for theology seems to be the only means by which any sort of critical methodology might be redeemed for biblical studies (e.g., Daniel Treier, *Introducing Theological Interpretation of Scripture* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008]). Sparks observes that not all criticism is healthy and helpful when speaking of that which acknowledges Scripture's authority "in word but not in deed" (23, 356). However, he neither identifies unhealthy criticism nor seems to apply this observation in any practical way. This is seen in the critical comment he makes about conjectures of NT authors who purportedly viewed extracanonical works as "inspired Scripture" (125-26). And Sparks gives no merit whatever for what he calls "speculative" harmonizations from evangelical scholars (164). Whatever bearing these observations and others may have on one's ethical deeds escapes this reviewer.

Sparks employs "accommodation" for understanding differences between divine and human accounts in Scripture (202-3, 230), though never explaining how to determine which is which or what might identify an accommodation. It seems, however, that whenever normal interpretation yields something unexplainable or an error, "accommodation" is that "theological explanation for the presence of human errors in Scripture" (256). So then would a literal hermeneutic guide Sparks's process for determination? This is doubtful, but if so, then in the "inerrant" parts about the "inerrant God" (wherever they may be), does Scripture speak univocally of Him, allowing the reader to judge Him empirically to be either in error or sufficiently errorless? (327). If so, problems have quickly moved from the doctrine of Scripture to epistemology, theology proper, and the doctrines of man and sin that the spurious "practical realist" reading of Scripture cannot avoid. One also wonders what Sparks's "practical realist" reading of Scripture looks like, and what criteria

might be for determining where an error isn't? A better position seems to be that Scripture is both human and divine—where one ends and the other begins is impossible to discern, for they are inseparable.

This does not seem to be the last word of the third-wave of the inerrancy debate, the first response to which has been given by Greg Beale, professor of NT at Wheaton College (*The Erosion of Inerrancy in Evangelicalism: Responding to New Challenges to Biblical Authority* [Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2008]). Many of Sparks's challenges are countered by methodology employed in Beale's recent work. This reviewer is also aware of at least one other two-volume work forthcoming that will seek to offer a constructive evangelical Scripture principle in light of recent criticism against the standard evangelical view (i.e., that of the Evangelical Theological Society).

In conclusion, Sparks does not offer much for evangelicals to consider regarding how historical-criticism might be merged with an evangelical Scripture principle that does not balk at the Bible's inerrant authority throughout. And while seeking to integrate theology with historical-criticism, he pays little attention to new developments in the interdisciplinary engagement between Scripture and theology, which seems to be the most hopeful location for his agenda. Sparks offers no helpful interlocution for evangelical scholars and pastors, and his agenda barely endures on its own terms, contributing very little if anything helpful to the inerrancy discussion.

Alexander Strauch. *Love or Die: Christ's Wake-Up Call to the Church*. Littleton, Colo.: Lewis & Roth, 2008. 112 pp. \$9.99 (paper). Reviewed by Irvin A. Busenitz, Professor of Bible and Old Testament.

This small volume is another valuable contribution to the healthy function of ministry in the local church. Pastor of Littleton Bible Chapel for more than thirty years, Strauch has written widely on the topic of love, especially as it applies to fostering a church environment of loving leadership and loving community among the saints. This volume is a continuation of that theme, with the hope that "my efforts awaken Christians to the need for our personal lives and our local churches to be marked by the love of Jesus Christ" (2).

Beginning with the premise, "Love is essential to everything we do in Christian life and ministry" (2), Strauch divides the brief treatise into two sections. Part One, *The Problem of Lost Love*, is based on Revelation 2:4. Part Two, *How to Cultivate Love*, is born out of Hebrews 10:24. The book closes with a five-lesson Study Guide, a Scripture Index, and a list of the Fifty Key Texts on Love, providing a treasure-trove of practical resources for personal or group study and discussion.

With his usual insightfulness, Strauch corrects a number of misconceptions about love. For example, noting that love does not require compromise or the equivocation of truth, he writes, "Churches today need to understand that hatred of evil and falsehood is not a contradiction of love, but an essential part of genuine

Christian love (1 Cor. 13:6). Love abhors ‘what is evil’ and clings ‘to what is good’ (Rom. 12:9)” (8).

Strauch lays a strong foundation for the love requirement: “The one quality ... that should beautify every believer and every church, regardless of giftedness or personality, is love” (11). He points out that the first and second great commandments are love for God and neighbor (Matt 22:37-39). He adds that true discipleship requires denying self and loving God above all others (Matt 10:37-38) and that God’s very nature and essence is love (1 John 4:8, 16). “Love for God and neighbor lies at the very heart of genuine spiritual life. Thus, Revelation 2:4 is a wake-up call to all churches: love or die!” (19).

Focusing on the remedy in the second half of the book, the author employs Heb 10:24 to launch a discussion of how to cultivate love. He advocates six things that will revive genuine love and renew spiritual health:

1. Study love—“By saturating your mind with biblical love, you will know what God requires of you and you will grow in love. You will also be able to guard yourself from the loss of love” (31; cf. his Fifty Key Texts on Love in Appendix B).
2. Pray for love—“If ever we are to love as Christ loved, we must pray for the Holy Spirit’s enablement” (33; cf. Eph 3:14-19; 1 Thess 3:12; Phil 1:9).
3. Teach love—“In an age of biblical illiteracy, believers need to know the truth about love.... Believers need to be taught that the Christian life is to be characterized by Christ’s total, self-giving love” (42, 43).
4. Model love—“Since imitating others is a fundamental way in which we learn, it is important that we not only teach what the Bible says about love but that we model it. This is why the apostles modeled Christ’s love and why Paul calls all believers to ‘be imitators of God’ and live a life of love like his Son, Jesus Christ (Eph. 5:1-2)” (51).
5. Guard love—“Cultivating love in the church must include the negative aspect of guarding against and warning about the dangers that threaten our love for God and our neighbor.... In this world, which is hostile to Christ, plenty of contenders vie for our love. That is why the Bible says ‘Keep yourselves in the love of God’ (Jude 21)” (57).
6. Practice love—“We must be practitioners of love, not theorists” (65; cf. 1 John 3:16b; Rom 12:9).

Jesus does not say that the Ephesian church had no love; rather, they had abandoned the love they once had—their first love. In *Love or Die*, Strauch not only calls on Christians to reexamine the true condition of our love for God but also provides helpful steps that will revive, nurture, and motivate both ourselves and others to love “in deed and in truth.”

Frank Thielman. *Theology of the New Testament: A Canonical and Synthetic Approach*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005. 798 pp. \$39.99 (cloth). Reviewed by Keith Essex, Associate Professor of Bible Exposition.

Frank Thielman, Presbyterian Professor of Divinity at Beeson Divinity School, Samford University, Birmingham, Alabama, has written the second of three major NT theologies that have been published so far in the first decade of the twenty-first century. The NT theology of I. Howard Marshall was published in 2004 (see *TMSJ*, 2007, 261-63). In 2008, the NT theology of Thomas Schreiner was released by Baker. Thielman's work lies in the middle of the three works both historically and methodologically. He does not begin with the theological story of each NT book before isolating the book's theological themes like Marshall, nor does he give as detailed a theological synthesis of the entire NT as Schreiner attempts. Therefore, Thielman's NT theology is a valuable bridge between Marshall and Schreiner while at the same time being an excellent work in its own right. Thielman expresses his desire for his volume: "I hope that the book will serve the needs of serious students of the New Testament for a brief theological orientation to each New Testament text. I also hope to make a persuasive argument that although each text is rooted in its own cultural world, all twenty-seven texts, when read sympathetically, are theologically unified" (9).

Before embarking on his theological description, the author poses and answers two basic questions in the study of the theology of the NT in his first chapter (19-42). The first problem posed is the blend of dogmatics and historical concerns. Thielman answers the attacks of Gabler, Wrede, and Raisanen and avers that one can be a Christian believer committed to the NT canon as God's revelation and at the same time successfully listen to the texts as a secular historian. The second problem arises from the diversity of the NT texts. Thielman argues that underlying the obvious diversity is a basic theological unity implicit in the nature of Scripture as God's Word. He states, "It is necessary for the diversity of the canon to stand as a witness both to the nearness and to the otherness of God, who, despite his infinite wisdom, has met us where we are through His Word" (40).

In chapters two through thirty-three, the writer describes his understanding of the theology of the NT (43-677). The NT canon is divided into three sections of material; the Gospels and Acts, the Pauline Letters, and the Non-Pauline Letters and the Revelation of John. Each major canonical part is approached in the same way. First, an introductory chapter orients the reader to the leading question that affects the theological description of the section, the problem of a fourfold gospel for the Gospels and Acts, the coherence and center of Paul's theology for the Pauline epistles, and "early Catholicism" for the rest of the NT. Second, the individual NT books in each section are discussed in a roughly chronological order for that part. Thus, Mark begins the first section, First Thessalonians the second, and James the third. Third, each section concludes with a synthetic chapter where the various texts are placed in conversation with each other so that the overall theological emphases might emerge. Finally, in chapter thirty-four, the volume concludes with the

author's delineation of the theological unity of the NT, which comes from his previous syntheses (679-725). A bibliography of works cited (727-62), a Scripture and Apocrypha index (763-86), an index of other ancient literature (787-90), and a subject index (791-98) bring the book to completion.

Thielman is to be commended for his thoroughly orthodox and evangelical contribution to the study of NT theology. He has produced a book that will not only introduce the reader to the discipline of NT theology, but also enhance his understanding of the NT text itself. His conclusion that Jesus Christ is central to the theological vision of the NT (725) is supported by the NT and heartily agreed to by all Christian believers. The one weakness in Thielman's NT theology is his insistence that the church is the restored Israel. He admits that the NT affirms that God will eventually prove faithful to his promises to ethnic Israel even though he believes it also teaches that the church is the restored Israel of prophetic expectation. He declares, "Paul never explains how these two understandings of the prophetic promises fit together, but his easy movement from one to the other shows that he does not believe them to be incompatible" (710). However, the NT never explicitly states that the church is the restored Israel even though there are many analogies in the NT between the church and Israel. Despite this weakness, *Theology of the New Testament* is a book well worth reading.

Richard Weikart, *From Darwin to Hitler, Evolutionary Ethics, Eugenics, and Racism in Germany*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004. 312 pp. \$27.95.
Reviewed by F. David Farnell, Professor of New Testament.

Weikart's book is a must read under the main idea that "Ideas Have Consequences." Weickert traces the devastating impact that evolution had on the rise of evolutionary genetics (eugenics) that led to a virulent racism in Germany (and the United States) that eventually led to devastating devaluing of human life and the elimination of evolutionary "inferior" people in the Holocaust. The book is a well-documented, frightening exploration of how tenuous evolutionary thought became dogmatic presupposition in the scientific community in Europe, leading to the massive liquidation (killing) of millions based on evolutionary principles of what is inferior and what is superior. The book goes beyond Hitler's era to cast grave suspicions on the present scientific community throughout the world that so dogmatically holds to such principles. The future could be very dark if these ideas spawned by false science take hold as they once did in Germany. The fruition of this kind of thinking today is evolutionary biology and the relativization of ethics where right and wrong are merely culturally determined. No absolutes exist. What is right today could become passé tomorrow. The book's implications for the world's future are chilling.