

S O U T H E A S T E R N

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Book Reviews

Daniel I. Block. *For the Glory of God: Recovering a Biblical Theology of Worship*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014. xix + 410 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-0801026980. \$34.99 (Hardback).

Daniel Block stands among the finest evangelical Old Testament scholars in our day, and this work on worship reflects his stature, his scholarship, and his heart for the church's faithfulness. The book's topical arrangement makes for a somewhat abrupt read at points, with no obvious strategy for the order after the first few subjects. But all of them are full of exegetical work and reflect the author's deep and careful reading of the Old Testament in particular. And here lies the great strength of the book: giving the OT its full weight in discussions of Christian worship.

Block begins at the outset with the most poignant (if still respectful) polemic, aimed at those who would seem to resist the authority and importance of what he calls the "First Testament"—including John Piper, David Peterson, and D.A. Carson to varying degrees. It was a relief and joy to hear him dispute the caricatures that tend to denigrate both the nature and practice of worship in the OT. And from a scholar who knows the OT as deeply and widely as Block, I hope such critique will have a lasting effect.

One cannot fault the bravery of the author. Not only do we find a wide and direct array of subjects—daily life as worship, family life and work, preaching, prayer, music, sacred space—but he takes minority positions on many subjects. He argues for an enjoyment of Sabbath rest principles for Christian treatments of Sundays; the importance and goodness of the tithe; and the importance of theological architecture. And all comes with patient and direct interaction with the whole Bible, rather than just the final quarter.

Two faults, however, cannot be entirely ignored. First is the near silence of ecclesial tradition and reflection. What role should the reflections of the church have when mounting theology of any sort—and more pointedly about something the church has been doing for a very long time? One can agree with the Bible as the "primary" source for such theology without ruling out the years of wisdom (and its opposite). Most striking here though is the suggestion that, since we find no reference to the Holy Spirit receiving

worship in the NT, we therefore should (apparently) not do so in our own worship. Common liturgical acts like the Doxology or the Gloria Patri are thus disputed. Of course almost all Trinitarian theology moves beyond a simple repetition of NT statements, and so we would expect that to be the case for Trinitarian doxologies. An enormous amount of historical and theological work has been done in liturgics and Trinitarian theology. And at least some acknowledgment of this would have helped the tone of the book. We could say much the same for nearly every part of the work: it provides much of the biblical material necessary for the discussion, but then offers the impression that it is sufficient to have recounted that material and drawn various lessons from it.

More disappointing is the almost complete silence of any form of sacramental theology. The wonderful emphasis on the “First Testament” mentioned above could have led directly to a full discussion of sacramental theology—by whatever name desired. Such sacramental or ritual action was at the heart of what we read as appropriate worship in the OT, even if we grant that such never came at the exclusion of concern for faith and faithfulness. Block admits as much himself, disputing the old external vs. internal caricature of OT vs. NT worship. But the sacrifices are not even treated in the section on “ordinances,” reserved rather for later discussions of offerings. Some rituals of Leviticus emerge in discussions of feasts and ethics, but are never explored for their power as ritual practices that shape a community. These are rather basic parts of OT worship and sacramental theology, underlying many (Lutheran, Anglican, some Presbyterian) views on worship generally. But their role seems dismissed almost at the start by statements of “fulfilment” or a NT “hesitation” to use cultic terms for corporate worship. Of course this forgets that the apostles and early Jerusalem Christians—and perhaps others who could—continued to worship using the same cultic activities in the temple well after Pentecost. Perhaps the power of ritual to shape the community was assumed in the first century Christian community, as Block rightly suggests for other matters. In any case, the consequence is that his (self-confessedly) Anabaptist approach to the “ordinances” of the Christian church—or to liturgy in general—feels unconvincing simply because it lacks the weight of so many centuries of the church’s reflections, and lacks discussion on the divine approval for rituals as shaping a worshipping community.

In the end, however, I have not seen another work on Christian worship from an evangelical perspective that has so much exegetical patience and authority undergirding it, and certainly none that has offered a full voice to the OT. Block has drunk deeply from the wells of OT studies, and here offers some wonderful and useful reflections on the central activity of the Christian community: worshipping God.

Joshua Moon
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Haddon W. Robinson. *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*. 3d ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014. xi + 244 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-0801049125. \$22.99 (Hardback).

When a book is on its third edition, with the editions spanning a period of thirty-four years, one should take note. If this same book is on the topic of preaching—a discipline in which some can be given to trendiness—one should particularly pay attention. The book concerned is *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Preaching* by Haddon W. Robinson, the Distinguished Professor of Preaching and senior director of the Doctor of Ministry Program at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.

In chapter one, Robinson makes his case for expository preaching. He defines expository preaching as “the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through the preacher, applies to the hearers” (p. 12). In short, the passage should drive the message and not vice versa.

In chapter two, Robinson stresses that every sermon should be focused around one big idea: “a sermon should be a bullet, not buckshot” (p. 17). He argues that not only do the “experts in both communication theory and preaching” tell us that a sermon should have one central unifying idea, this claim also finds biblical support. He notes that the sermons of the Old Testament prophets, as well as those found in Acts, stick to this one “big idea” principle.

Chapter three turns to an overview of the “tools of the trade.” Robinson teaches students the tools that can be effective in helping prepare to preach. This chapter also introduces the first three of ten stages in the development of expository messages: selecting a

passage, studying the passage, and discovering the exegetical idea. Chapter four examines how to analyze a particular text. Robinson uses three questions to frame this fourth stage in the preparation process: (1) What does this mean? (2) Is it true? and (3) What difference does it make? These questions help move the text into a sermon. Chapter five adds formulating the homiletical idea and determining the sermon's purpose as the fifth and sixth stage in Robinson's paradigm. He advises the preacher to come up with a single sentence to summarize the exegetical idea and to make sure the purpose and goal of each sermon is clear.

Building upon the determination of a sermon's purpose, chapter six moves to deciding how to accomplish this purpose and then offers an explanation of how to outline the sermon. Robinson advises preachers to decide whether they are primarily explaining or convincing. He contends that after this decision is made, the preacher should determine the most logical argument shape and then proceed to outline the sermon. Chapter seven explains how to fill in the sermon outline, and chapter eight elaborates on the final step, preparing the introduction and conclusion. Robinson proposes that in preparation, one should add various kinds of supporting materials to make the sermon stronger (i.e., graphics, illustrations, videos, quotes, etc.). He stresses that illustrations should be honest, detailed, and personal.

Moving from preparation to delivery, chapter nine guides readers in how to convey their exegetical thought in an attractive verbal manner. Robinson instructs preachers to have a clear style with strong transitions and simple words and sentences, even when conveying the most complex of topics. Finally, Robinson turns to the physical delivery of a sermon, advocating that this will often determine if people listen intently to the message or not. He meticulously covers details, which include dressing in a non-distracting manner, grooming appropriately, using gestures to draw in the attention of the audience, and making sure one's voice changes in pitch, speed, and intensity (a diagram of the human anatomy associated with vocals is even included).

The changes from the second to third edition appear to be subtle: footnotes are updated, the font and page format is different, and more student exercises are given (these are in the back of the book rather than dispersed at the end of the related chapters as in the second edition). More experienced preachers will likely find the step-by-step process a bit too rigid, but his ten step approach is

likely aimed at the student whose inexperience in the discipline requires more structure in training.

Occasionally, some of the arguments need more substance, or at least nuancing. For instance, it is not difficult to provide examples from the Bible that support the claim that each message should have a “big idea.” However, one does not have to look hard for examples from the OT (e.g., the Proverbs) and the NT (e.g., the Sermon on the Mount) where the author/preacher jumps from topic to topic. Certainly, one can draw very broad themes from any section of scripture (e.g., Proverbs = Wisdom; Sermon on the Mount = Kingdom Living), but I am not sure if this accomplishes the purpose of honing in on a particular theme for a sermon. As much as having one major theme may make good sense heuristically, at times biblical texts are making multiple major points. Thus, it seems prudent for expositors to be free to draw out multiple “big ideas.”

Despite a few potential limitations, this volume stands as a classic among preaching textbooks. Thirty-five years since its initial publication, it remains a quality introduction to preaching that is worthy for consideration when training new preachers

Josh D. Chatraw
Lynchburg, Virginia

Robert Kimball Shinkoskey. *The American Kings: Growth in Presidential Power from George Washington to Barack Obama*. Eugene, OR: Resource Publications (Wipf and Stock), 2014. xii + 428 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-1625641946. \$48.00 (Paperback).

Robert Shinkoskey is an independent scholar about whom little can be discovered either at his Facebook page or the Wipf and Stock website. The Utah resident, nonetheless, previously authored two other books with Resource Publications imprints, *Do My Prophets No Harm: Revelation and Religious Liberty in the Bible* (2011) and *Biblical Captivity: Aggression and Oppression in the Ancient World* (2012). Both of the earlier volumes hold relevance for Shinkoskey’s most recent project; he is apparently a theist who regards scriptural principles—particularly those rooted in the Law—as foundational for religious liberty. At the same time, he plainly endorses an open canon and a continuing line of prophets from the ancient world to the present.

In *The American Kings*, Shinkoskey boldly dons the prophetic mantle to offer an extended jeremiad that focuses on the sins of the American presidents—especially from Andrew Jackson on—who strayed from the constitutional ideals of the Founding Fathers and ruled as despotic tyrants. At some points in the book, the author sounds like Glenn Beck or members of the Tea Party; at others, he echoes New Left radicals from the late 1960s and early 1970s. Shinkoskey's assumption of seemingly contradictory postures allows him to be thoroughly bipartisan in his denunciation of the imperial presidency. He aims his oracular venom chiefly at Andrew Jackson, Abraham Lincoln, Teddy Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt, Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama. To a slightly lesser degree, he targets Harry Truman, Dwight Eisenhower, Ronald Reagan, George H. W. Bush, and Bill Clinton. All of these chief executives are found wanting in comparison to our first six presidents, largely because many leaders from Jackson on exploited religion, contributed to the expansive growth of the federal government, encouraged "idolatry" in the presidency, and fostered corruption.

Perhaps the greatest merit of this unusual book is that it puts the administration of the current occupant of the White House in historical perspective. In this narrative, Barack Obama has simply followed his predecessors in utilizing executive orders and agreements, memoranda, impoundments, and other extra-constitutional means to circumvent the legislative branch. Shinkoskey rightfully sounds a necessary alarm about the recurrent abuses of presidential power since the early nineteenth century, although his cynical and ceaseless grouching eventually becomes irksome. Moreover, he seems uncomfortable even with presidential prerogatives like vetoes and pardons, even though the Constitution clearly allows for them.

Unfortunately, *The American Kings* suffers from some manifest weaknesses. First, Shinkoskey depends almost totally on secondary sources, including suspect ones like Wikipedia. Furthermore, his footnote citations are bunched and lack publishing details, making it difficult to tell exactly where some of his direct quotations originated. Second, the author unloads a barrage of historical material, but does not always process it well. For example, he ends virtually all the sections on individual presidents very abruptly, providing no substantive conclusions. Even worse, the volume closes in a similarly terse manner with a story about a Marine who was discharged

from the military over critical remarks that he had posted about Obama in social media. Shinkoskey provides no epilogue or closing chapter to bring together all the loose threads.

To make matters worse, Shinkoskey's manuscript evidently was not copyedited. As a result, there are numerous errors relating to spelling, verb tense, and verb-subject agreement; this reviewer circled close to twenty such mechanical and stylistic mistakes, most of which would have been eliminated with careful proofing. Moreover, the book contains some factual blunders, including the placement of Texas's admission to the Union during John Tyler's presidency when it actually occurred in the Polk administration (p. 68), and a reference to Lyndon Johnson as a senator in 1937 when he had recently been elected to his first term in the House of Representatives (p. 271). In addition, Shinkoskey omits important items from the last several decades of presidential history such as the McCarthy hearings, the Cuban missile crisis, the Camp David accords, the Panama Canal treaty, and the dismantling of the Berlin Wall.

In the final analysis, the role of a prophet can be lonely and certainly risky. Nevertheless, Shinkoskey willingly charts a prophetic trajectory through the complex and often messy annals of the American presidency. Although he makes some noteworthy points about the abuse of executive power in Washington, he ultimately falters because his assertions are not fully grounded on the sure word of biblical revelation.

James A. Patterson
Jackson, Tennessee

J.P. Moreland, Chad Meister, and Khaldoun Sweis, eds. *Debating Christian Theism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013. v + 554 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-0199755431. \$35.00 (Paperback).

This is a collection of essays examining Christian theism. The book has two unique strengths. The first is its range of topics. Its twenty topics include God's existence, miracles, science and Christianity, the Incarnation, Jesus' resurrection, and religious diversity. The second is its methodology. Two authors defend opposing positions on each topic. Overall, the essays are well written.

The book is divided into two parts. Part one deals with God's existence and human nature. Contributors include Paul Copan,

Louise Anthony, Richard Gale, Chad Meister, Stewart Goetz, and Kevin Corcoran. Copan and Anthony debate whether morality supports theism. Copan contends it does. For instance, consider the atheist that believes the world is nothing more than a collection of moving atoms. Copan maintains this person has no plausible way to explain how moral values emerge from valueless atoms. By contrast, Anthony contends atheists have no problem here. Regardless of God's existence, she argues something such as murder is wrong simply because it inflicts pain on other people. Gale and Meister debate whether evil disproves theism. Gale argues it does. He contends that traditional explanations regarding why God may allow evil fail. For instance, consider the famous free will theodicy. Gale maintains it doesn't explain particularly horrendous evils such as the Holocaust. Even if God is concerned with creating free creatures, Gale thinks that an all-powerful and all-good God would block people from exercising their freedom in such terrible ways. By contrast, Meister contends that evil does not disprove theism. He argues that an important reason why God allows evil entails helping creatures develop moral maturity. Just like children mature morally by being allowed to face the consequences of their bad decisions, so, too, in order to help adults mature morally, Meister argues they need to face the consequences that result from their decisions, even if this involves bringing about terrible evils. Goetz and Corcoran debate whether humans have a soul. Goetz contends they do. He argues that one reason to believe people have a soul is that such a belief is a part of commonsense. Both now and in the past, Goetz contends most people have found it natural to believe they have a soul. By contrast, Corcoran argues against souls. For instance, some have maintained the idea that people have a soul is supported by the biblical point that people are made in God's image. Just like God is a spirit, some believe being made in God's image entails that people have a spiritual component, a soul. Corcoran disagrees. Being made in God's image just involves the capacity to reflect God's attributes. For instance, it involves a person's ability to reflect God's love through performing loving acts.

Part two of the book assesses specific Christian beliefs. Contributors include Stephen Patterson, Craig Evans, Gary Habermas, James Crossley, Jerry Walls, and Keith Parsons. Patterson and Evans debate whether the Jesus of the Christian faith was historically real. Patterson contends He was not. The Jesus of the Christian faith is a Jesus with superhuman powers. He performed miracles

such as raising the dead. However, Patterson contends that just like it is implausible to believe in superheroes like Superman, so, too, it is implausible to believe that this superhuman Jesus was historically real. By contrast, Evans contends the Jesus of the Christian faith was historically real. Regarding Jesus' ability to perform miracles, Evans argues that it was Christ's ability to perform such deeds that accounts for his immense popularity throughout Israel. Habermas and Crossley debate Christ's resurrection. Habermas argues this happened. For instance, he contends the fact that Jesus appeared to many people after his death is best explained by believing that Christ rose again. By contrast, Crossley counters this point by citing recent literature on bereavement visions. This literature shows that, in many cultures, people have visions of loved ones after they die, even though these deceased have not risen again. In turn, he contends that the appearances of Jesus after His crucifixion may have been an instance of such visions. Walls and Parsons debate the plausibility of Heaven and Hell. Walls defends both. For instance, Walls argues that insofar as people have a desire for perfect happiness that can't be satisfied in this life, it is plausible to believe there is a Heaven in the afterlife where people can be perfectly happy. By contrast, Parsons contends that Christians believe implausible things about Heaven, such as the idea that if Hitler were to have repented and believed shortly before dying then he would have spent eternity in paradise.

The editors have done an excellent job bringing together a first-rate group of thinkers. Scholars will want to use this book as a starting point for further discussion on these issues. Though the purpose of this book is to present opposing views on each topic covered and not simply to present a defense of evangelical positions, nonetheless Christian laity will find the book profitable as an introduction to some of the scholarly debates on topics of importance to them.

Allen Gehring
Owensboro, Kentucky

Rainer Albertz, James D. Nogalski, and Jakob Wöhrle, eds. *Perspectives on the Formation of the Book of the Twelve: Methodological Foundations, Redactional Processes, Historical Insights*. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 433. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2012. x + 414 pp. Hardback. ISBN: 978-3110283761. \$182.00 (Hardback).

Rainer Albertz, James Nogalski, and Jakob Wöhrle, all three accomplished scholars in their disciplines and areas, have marshaled an array of up-to-date and well-articulated essays on the formation of the Book of the Twelve. The volume, the contents of which originally stemmed from an international conference concerning the formation of the Book of the Twelve in 2011 at Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster, contains twenty-four essays, each assigned to one of four areas: Methodological Issues, Editorial Issues, Historical Issues, and Issues Concerning the Canon.

A collection of essays can seldom boast of uniform quality across the board although each is helpful in its own way. Other than the three editors' contributions, the volume contains essays from noted scholars such as Jörg Jeremias, Aaron Schart, Marvin Sweeney, and Mark Biddle, besides a few others. In a review of this size, there is not space to summarize each essay. Instead, I will summarize notable essays and leave room for a few brief comments at the end.

Wöhrle opens the volume with an essay that addresses methodological issues related to research on the Book of the Twelve. This essay (and others) could serve to introduce a less advanced audience to research trends and methods not only in the Book of the Twelve but also in Old Testament studies in general. He commences with a brief word about intertextuality before moving on to methodological considerations related to redaction analyses and composition criticism. His interest is to show how the two methodological procedures can act as a control on results. Wöhrle tests his methodology through the case of the grace formula in the Book of the Twelve with perhaps mixed results.

In another essay related to methodology entitled "Synchronic and Diachronic Concerns in Reading the Book of the Twelve Prophets," Sweeney skillfully lays out four methodological issues related to study on the Twelve—which one could again extend to Old Testament studies in general—that are almost worth the price of the book. (I say "almost" because the book retails from its

publisher for a mind-boggling \$182.) His first point concerns the steps in analysis; whether redaction criticism should occur at the end of analysis or at the beginning. Concerning this step, he concludes, "The final form of the text must be critically analyzed first to understand fully the organization, conceptualization, and concerns of the text as a whole. Only then may the text be probed for evidence of earlier levels of composition that must be reconstructed as well as the settings from which those levels of composition would have derived" (p. 22). A second point ventures into the integration of literary criticism and textual criticism, an issue that the essay by Russell Fuller also broaches. Recent research has argued that these two areas are related and the inter-relationship has implications for methodology (see Fuller's essay in the volume for a bibliography). His third point deals with the "disappearing redactor" whereby "Scholars must now reckon with the possibility that a coherent text in fact is a redactional text and a discontinuous or gapped text may we be the work of an original author" (p. 23). His final point aptly brings in the role of later communities in the reception of these ancient texts.

The second portion of Sweeney's essay argues that the LXX order of the Book of the Twelve is the earlier order. While this portion of Sweeney's essay lacks explicit analysis (he summarizes from his earlier research and analyses), he does point to a rather significant conclusion, "Analysis of both the final forms of the Book of the Twelve and its constituent prophetic books points to a very different model for reading the Book of the Twelve as a whole and for reconstructing its compositional history" (p. 25).

A final statement from Sweeney segues nicely into the thrust of Albertz's essay. Concerning a text's connection to a setting and occasion, Sweeney writes, "The differing sequences of books and the underlying concerns that come to expression in these sequences demand consideration of the socio-religious, historical, and political settings that would have produced each" (p. 29). In other words, sequence reveals message and purpose, which in turn plausibly discloses the setting and occasion of their composition. Similarly, Albertz desires to utilize "insights into the formation of a biblical corpus ... to reconstruct the political, social, and theological history of ancient Israel" (p. 303). While Albertz is quick and careful to recognize the limits of such pursuits, he wants to execute redaction criticism in order to discern the setting and occasion for such literary layers, and then use the results to establish a relative

chronology. Once a relative chronology materializes, the analyses yield historical background with a higher degree of probability.

This discussion of methodology reveals the trajectory of recent research in Old Testament scholarship in German-speaking Europe, at least, if not the majority of higher education universities and institutions. In my opinion, scholars perform redactional and compositional analyses with a high degree of probability because of the adequacy of language. However, once methodology moves beyond linguistic signs, which, by design, convey information through convention, a diminishing certainty will result.

Another important contributor, Paul Redditt, utilizes redaction criticism—one could correctly call some of his argumentation composition criticism—to argue his case. Like so many redaction analyses, one is hard pressed to follow all of Redditt's evidence because of the plethora of associations drawn between words and verses in addition to connections between passages, editorial hands, and putative settings. However, this is another example of the type of scholarship—with its positive results and negative excesses—arising from this cadre of Old Testament Studies.

In summary, this volume is very important because it reveals the positive methodological advances in the field and yields a number of significant findings for the formation of The Book of the Twelve. Notwithstanding differences between essays—a situation that is difficult to ameliorate—and an uneasiness on the part of this reviewer to follow the contributors in many of their conclusions, I highly recommend this volume for any reader who desires to learn more about the state of Old Testament studies or for an advanced reader to engage recent findings dealing with the formation of the Book of the Twelve.

Tracy McKenzie
Wake Forest, North Carolina

Kathryn Joyce. *The Child Catchers: Rescue, Trafficking, and the New Gospel of Adoption*. New York: Public Affairs, 2013. xvii + 332 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-1586489427. \$26.99 (Hardback).

Adoption among evangelicals has become popular in recent years with much time, money, and effort being spent in the process. Kathryn Joyce, a journalist from New York City, who has written pieces in publications such as the *Atlantic* and *Harvard Divinity Bulletin*, writes about this development in *The Child Catchers*. Joyce argues

evangelicals, albeit with “altruistic” motives, are harming the very people they are trying to help. She believes because of the evangelical adoption movement, birth mothers and adopted children have become cogs in a multi-million dollar economic scheme that has led certain evangelicals to “adopt” illegal and cruel methods to secure children.

Joyce’s work is divided into eight themed chapters, each having special tales to substantiate her claims. She uses these stories, some of them horrifying miscarriages of justice, to personify what she believes is common in the evangelical world of adoption. In short, Joyce seems concerned that evangelicals have taken a theology of adoption to its extreme and allowed for abuses to occur—some of them unthinkable. She believes that not only has the evangelical community’s support of adoption led adoption agencies to bribe, falsify records, and improperly identify actual orphans; child trafficking, forced adoptions, and willingly separating biological parents from their children have occurred. Some birth parents and adoptive children have even been deceived into believing that adoptions are temporary.

Interestingly, Joyce does not argue with all of the theology behind Christian adoption, especially when she interacts with Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission’s Russell Moore (then a professor at Southern Seminary). Joyce does not oppose Christians adopting either. Joyce’s desire is to expose the corruption in the world of adoption, particularly international adoption among Christians. Sadly, some of what she says is true. Certain Christian international adoption agencies’ methods have been called into question.

The Child Catchers helps explain the underbelly of adoption and the adoption process. It is well written and easily readable, although, at some points, sensationalistic. Joyce is not a fan of conservative evangelicals, and her biases are reflected throughout the book, which weakens her overall thesis. However, even with these concerns, because of the evangelical movement’s economic and political force, and the truthfulness in some of her assessments, a serious reading and examination of what she states is needed, especially by those evangelicals interested in adopting. A lot of money is being spent on adoptions, which can lead to all sorts of unintended consequences. More importantly, children could be harmed in the process, the exact opposite of evangelicals’ intent.

Another question arises that Joyce does not ask. Many of the countries where international adoptions are occurring have a Chris-

tian presence. It has been asked whether it is missiologically appropriate to “extract” these children from their people group when local churches of that people group have Christian orphanages that could provide spiritual and physical care, particularly if more money were given. The money spent on one adopted child could help many more. Some of these children could come to faith in Christ and be leaders of their indigenous local church. Perhaps this is an insensitive question, and one that does not get to the root of the problem, but it should be investigated carefully.

Evangelicals understand the beauty of adoption; they realize that they are adopted spiritually. They are God’s children because of God’s choice. Evangelicals also recognize that the Bible commands them to take care of orphans and widows, an edict everyone would do well to heed. As emotional as the adoption process is, if evangelicals are going to adopt or promote adoption—as they should—let them do so with the utmost integrity. Let them do so in a way that meets the highest ethical standards, even if it means that for some the adoption process will take longer or not happen at all. When people like Joyce investigate the process, they should be able to see that evangelicals’ methods stand up to the highest critical rigor.

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Adonis Vidu. *Atonement, Law, and Justice: The Cross in Historical and Cultural Contexts*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014. xviii + 286 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-0801039195. \$24.99 (Paperback).

Adonis Vidu, associate professor of theology at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, has produced in his most recent monograph an ambitious and complex study of the relationship between atonement, legal theory, and ethics. In *Atonement, Law, and Justice*, Vidu attempts to demonstrate that atonement theories throughout the history of doctrine are intricately connected to the contemporaneous philosophies of law and ethics. The outline of the book is straightforward; Vidu sets out to describe legal philosophy, atonement theory, and their relationship in each of the periods of church history. In each of these—Patristic, medieval, Reformation, modern, and postmodern—Vidu uses representative theologians as examples for his point. The book ends with a chap-

ter that appeals to the notion of divine simplicity to explain some of the so-called tension identified in different periods of atonement theory's history, the tension between God's love and his justice.

A straightforward summary of *Atonement* is not possible in a short review. Vidu's argument, that the shifts throughout church history in atonement theory are related to shifts in legal philosophy, is simple enough. But each chapter is a complex web of at least three narratives—the story of how philosophers and theologians have shifted in their understanding of law and justice, the story of how they have understood atonement, and the story of how they have understood ethics and morality. Each of these stories is told using two or three primary examples (e.g. Vidu's employment of Kant, Schleiermacher, and Ritschl in the chapter on modernity), but in the midst of these dominant figures Vidu scatters a myriad of other thinkers, some well-known, some not. Additionally, the epistemological and cultural shift from pre-modernity to modernity to post-modernity plays a role in Vidu's tapestry. What this means for the potential reader is that some working knowledge of intellectual and theological history is needed in order to follow the argument of each chapter. This is not a criticism, but instead is an acknowledgement that what Vidu has produced is not to be approached lightly.

The threads with which Vidu weaves his tapestry—law, atonement, ethics, epistemology—can be summarized as follows. First, with respect to law, it moves from a restrictive guardrail, something to which God is not beholden (Patristic), to a punitive but morally formative measure in which human law ideally reflects natural (or divine) law (medieval), to the will of the people (modern), to coercive and violent (postmodern). With this movement comes a similar vacillation in understanding justice, one that moves from seeing justice as rehabilitation to punishment and back again. Epistemologically, the trajectory is well known—from divine revelation to reason and empiricism to relativism. With respect to atonement theories, the various thinkers throughout church and intellectual history have moved accordingly, from the "classic" theory that emphasizes Christ's victory over the powers and the subsequent freedom of man; to Anselm's satisfaction theory and the Calvinist and Lutheran Reformation theories, each of which is influenced by the medieval "legal turn" towards a positive view of law; to Schleiermacher and Ritschl's emphasis on the mystical and rehabilitating example of Jesus; and finally to the postmodern eschewing of any

sort of violence on the part of God, along with its emphasis on the victimhood of Jesus.

Vidu wants to show that, while “penal substitution” as such has not been *the* atonement theory throughout church history, the idea of punishment is included in most of the positions he surveys through the Reformation period. It wanes sharply in modernity and is virtually non-existent in postmodern theories. This is an important argument for those who wish to dismiss any penal element of the atonement as a late medieval aberration, having its seeds in Anselm’s thought but flowering with Calvin. On the contrary, according to Vidu: punishment, although nuanced differently, was included in most atonement theories until modernity and postmodernity. Further, Vidu shows that modernity and postmodernity are influenced by their view of law and justice in rejecting any penal element in the atonement. Just as important, Vidu in the final chapter clearly argues for simplicity as the properly theological and traditional way to understand the relationship between God’s love and justice. They are not in tension, only pacified with one another in the cross. God, in his unified divine agency and in simplicity, works in love and justice to bring about atonement through the cross of Jesus Christ.

Atonement, Law, and Justice is an important work in its demonstration that punishment regularly occurs in atonement theories from the earliest period of theology through the Reformation, in its articulation of the relationship between legal and atonement theories, and in its call for a return to divine simplicity as the theological linchpin that shows God’s love and justice as working together, not in tension. While the details of particular figures in intellectual and theological history can be overwhelming, and while I would have preferred to see a longer and more sustained biblical argument for simplicity and its relationship to atonement, this book should be commended to any reader who wishes to grasp the complexities of the history of this vital Christian doctrine more fully.

Matthew Y. Emerson
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Peter J. Morden. *Communion with Christ and His People: The Spirituality of C. H. Spurgeon*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2013. xv + 318 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-1625646255. \$39.00 (Paperback).

Charles Spurgeon is one of those towering figures with whom many scholars are generally familiar. However, Peter Morden is among the few who could rightly be considered an expert on Spurgeon's life and thought. Fittingly, Morden serves as the vice principle of Spurgeon's College, London, where he teaches courses in church history and spirituality. *Communion with Christ and His People: The Spirituality of C. H. Spurgeon* is a revision of Morden's doctoral thesis, which was first published in 2010 by the Centre for Baptist History and Heritage at Regent's Park College, Oxford University. However, because the book was not widely available outside Europe, Pickwick has published a North American edition of Morden's monograph. Historians and theologians should be grateful.

Morden divides his book into eleven chapters. Following an initial introductory chapter that frames the study, most of the remaining chapters examine particular facets of Spurgeon's spirituality. A brief concluding chapter summarizes Morden's findings. Morden suggests that spirituality was a central theme in Spurgeon's life that ties together many strands in Spurgeon's thought. His thesis is that "communion with Christ and his people' is the integrating theme which ties together and makes sense of the different, and sometimes seemingly contradictory, aspects of Spurgeon's life and work" (p. 15). Simply put, Spurgeon's spirituality assumed a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and was focused upon cultivating a deeper relationship with the Savior and other believers.

Following the work of David Bebbington, Morden frames Spurgeon as an evangelical who emphasized the four key distinctives of biblicism, conversionism, crucicentrism (cross-centeredness), and activism. Spurgeon's evangelicalism thus emerges as the primary grid through which Morden interprets Spurgeon's spiritual life. Spurgeon's Calvinism, though shaped by the Puritans whom he loved, was filtered through evangelical sensibilities. Morden rightly argues it is too simplistic to consider Spurgeon a neo-Puritan. Spurgeon's Baptist ecclesiology, though firm when it comes to basic Baptist distinctives, was also characterized by an evangelical catholicity. For example, Spurgeon affirmed open communion and networked widely with other (mostly Reformed)

evangelicals. His Pastor's College, though focused on training Baptists, included other Calvinistic evangelicals and was led by a Congregationalist.

Spiritual disciplines such as prayer and Scripture meditation reflected Spurgeon's evangelical sensibilities, serving the ultimate purpose of communion with Christ. Weighing in on the "Baptist sacramentalism" debate, Morden demonstrates that Spurgeon rejected any hint of sacramentalism in baptism, but affirmed a Reformed sacramental view of the real spiritual presence of Christ in the Eucharist; the latter particularly furthered one's communion with Christ and his church. The Reformed understanding of progressive sanctification shaped Spurgeon's view of holiness, though he tried to repackage this view in ways that connected with the common working classes to whom he was primarily ministering. Spurgeon was quintessentially evangelical in the way he related his spirituality to Christian activism; evangelism and mercy initiatives were central to his ministry (especially his famous orphanages). Spurgeon suffered much during his adult life, and he believed that suffering was a key means the Holy Spirit used to draw God's people closer to Jesus Christ.

Morden makes a persuasive case that Spurgeon's spirituality was focused upon communion with Christ and his people. He also demonstrates that Spurgeon's Victorian evangelicalism was central to understanding his views of Calvinism and Baptist ecclesiology. The result is a sweeping, integrative study of Spurgeon's spirituality that corrects simplistic depictions of the famed preacher and raises questions that should provide a springboard for additional studies in Spurgeon's spirituality. For example, assuming Morden's paradigm, how did Spurgeon understand revival and spiritual awakening? What role did crucicentrism in particular play in Spurgeon's piety? Did Spurgeon practice other spiritual disciplines such as fasting and silence/solitude and, if so, were they also closely related to communion with Christ and his people? What role did corporate worship play in Spurgeon's spirituality? Morden has provided significant fodder for other scholars.

Communion with Christ and His People makes a signal contribution to both Baptist Studies and the history of spirituality. Almost as important, Morden provides a model for how scholars can study the spirituality of other evangelical figures. Morden's book is one of several major studies of Spurgeon's thought that have appeared in the past half-dozen years. This reviewer hopes we are witnessing

the beginning of a “Spurgeon Renaissance” among scholars that will culminate in a critical biography (there is currently not a good one) and a comprehensive study of Spurgeon theology (again, there is no such work at present). If either is to be written, the author(s) will need to make generous use of Morden’s fine study of Spurgeon’s spirituality. Highly recommended.

Nathan A. Finn
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Tom Thatcher and Catrin H. Williams, eds. *Engaging with C.H. Dodd on the Gospel of John: Sixty Years of Tradition and Interpretation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. x + 297 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-1107035669. \$99.00 (Hardback).

C.H. Dodd’s two *magna opera*, namely *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* and *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel*, were written in the twentieth century but in the history of Johannine scholarship, they are considered classic and pioneering studies. The volume under review, *Engaging with C.H. Dodd on the Gospel of John*, is a collection of insightful essays from fifteen scholars who provide critical and appreciative assessments of Dodd’s scholarly contributions.

In the introductory chapter, “The Semiotics of History,” Tom Thatcher laments the lack of a methodological introduction in Dodd’s two works and attempts to fill the gap by outlining Dodd’s understanding of the character and development of the Johannine tradition. Thatcher also claims that Dodd’s view on the historical traditions in the Fourth Gospel is ambivalent: While Dodd successfully shows that John’s witness from oral tradition is not only independent from that of the Synoptics but also preserves some historical data, Dodd rarely gets to definitive conclusions regarding the authenticity of such data.

The six essays in Part I of the volume reflect on Dodd’s context and method. Alan Culpepper’s appreciative essay views Dodd’s organic approach to John as an important step toward narrative criticism. Craig Koester contextualizes Dodd’s view of history by comparing Dodd with Bultmann in terms of their backgrounds and life stories. He also outlines the congregational theology that informed Dodd’s reading of the historical tradition embedded in the gospel. He stresses Dodd’s claim that the “attested facts” of Jesus’ life have real content and formative influence on consequent tradition. Jan van der Watt, writing on symbolism in John’s Gospel, is

critical of Dodd for his lack of a consistent methodological approach to symbols. For him, Dodd fits the Hellenistic philosophical framework into the text to arrive at a meaning of a symbol rather than allowing contextual dynamics to give rise to meaning.

Referring to Jesus' teaching regarding the master-servant relationship in John 13:16 and 15:20, Gilbert van Belle and David R. M. Godecharle raise some issues on how Dodd interprets Jesus' statement, arguing that a case can be made for its Matthean dependence. In "John and the Rabbis Revisited," Catrin H. Williams is critical of the way Dodd handled his rabbinic sources and traditions, pointing out that the rabbinic texts Dodd cites are later texts that underwent considerable development after John wrote his Gospel. Finally in this section, Jaime Clark-Soles attempts to provide an alternative to the limitations of Dodd's representative approach to character by applying a personality viewpoint to Nicodemus.

The six studies in Part II of the volume continue the conversation with Dodd on matters of history and tradition in John's Gospel. Urban C. von Wahlde opens the section by proposing a more accurate explanation for the presence and background of realized eschatology in John and shows how the Johannine tradition tolerated and incorporated differing theological outlooks. Using Pilate's repetitive statement in John 18:38b and 19:4, 6 as a test case, Helen Mardaga argues against Dodd, claiming that it is impossible to separate the historical tradition from John's own theological thinking. For her, the multiple repetitions in John betray its oral origins; John is an "oral-derived text" or a text that shows oral features.

In discussing Johannine historicity, Paul N. Anderson focuses on how Raymond Brown carried forward and favorably developed Dodd's approach that views the various dispersed incidents in the Synoptics, unified in John, to reflect expansions of historical traditions related to the ministry of Jesus. These expansions find echoes in other traditions but are not reliant upon them. Anderson further develops this approach to John's historicity in terms of John's dialogical autonomy and offers a bi-optic perspective that acknowledges John and Mark as independent traditions. John Ashton reflects on Dodd's footnote on John 5:19-20a that deals with a hidden parable of the Son as Apprentice. Claiming that Dodd never really dealt with the question of John's justification for speaking of Jesus' direct vision of God, Ashton argues that the evangelist's description of Jesus watching and imitating the works of the Father is better explained in terms of his familiarity with a strong apocalyptic tradition of visionary ascent.

Wendy S. North revisits Dodd's argument that John wrote his account of the anointing in John 12:1-8 based on available oral tradition and that the evangelist was independent of Mark or Luke. She argues for the alternative position that John knew and relied on the synoptic accounts to compose the anointing episode for his own theological and narrative purposes. In "Eucharist and Passover," the final essay of the section, Michael Theobald re-examines Dodd's observations on the Passion and Easter narratives in the Fourth Gospel and argues that Dodd's uncertainty over whether the pre-Johannine Passion and Easter narratives contained the institution of the Eucharist or not has to be abandoned. Since the Jewish Christian festival of Passover is the locus or *Sitz im Leben* of pre-gospel Passion and Easter narratives, it is safe to say that there was an original version of such narratives that did not have the cult etiology.

John Painter's essay entitled "The Fourth Gospel and the Founder of Christianity" forms the third and final part. Assessing the value of historical tradition in Dodd's works and its contribution to the "Jesus quest," Painter emphasizes Dodd's conviction that the historical traditions regarding Jesus have been theologically transformed and interpreted in light of the Easter faith. In other words, Dodd's work on the Fourth Gospel has allowed the theological and the historical of the Jesus traditions to be seen as intimately intertwined.

Sixty years is certainly a good distance in time for evaluating the significance, the weaknesses, and the strengths of Dodd's works on John. These essays show an honest and critical engagement with Dodd's scholarship. They obviously have the advantage of hindsight and of recent studies on John's Gospel. Scholars and students of the Fourth Gospel will certainly benefit from studying this important volume as they read Dodd and it may even spur them on to take the insights and the scholarship of Dodd in varying directions. Indeed, it would be intriguing to know how Dodd himself would have responded to his critics.

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Aaron Menikoff. *Politics and Piety: Baptist Social Reform in America, 1770-1860*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2014. xi + 230 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-1625641892. \$27.00 (Paperback).

Historians writing about social reform in America have tended either to ignore or mischaracterize the efforts of evangelicals in general and Baptists in particular. Oftentimes, those scholars who have bothered to acknowledge Christian involvement in the notable social reform movements in American history have dismissed those efforts as either counterproductive or overly-spiritual. Christian social reform efforts, they assert, advocated only minor reforms based on middle-class values, and thus actually undermined those who sought to institute the revolutionary changes necessary to produce a truly just and equitable society. If Christian social reformers were not primarily motivated by this desire to maintain the status quo, then at best it could be said they were driven by a perfectionist mindset that erroneously believed sin could be completely eradicated not only in the life of an individual, but in society as a whole.

As for Baptists, it is generally asserted that they abstained from most social reform efforts, being interested not in promoting Protestant ethics or achieving perfection, but rather in focusing exclusively on the eternal state of the souls of their fellow man. While it may be true that Baptists have prioritized evangelism and that the perfectionist strain influenced many American Protestants, a few scholars have challenged these broader stereotypes and have sought to provide a fuller, more accurate picture of the attempts made by Christians to improve American society. Beth Barton Schweiger, for instance, has taken the reform efforts of evangelicals seriously in a couple of recently published books. Likewise, Keith Harper demonstrated in his 1996 book, *The Quality of Mercy*, that Southern Baptists were notable participants in the Social Gospel movement of the early 20th century.

The recent effort to reexamine the role played by evangelicals in American social reform movements has received a significant boost from Aaron Menikoff's monograph, *Politics and Piety*, which provides a sweeping overview of Baptist efforts to improve American society from the country's founding to the Civil War. Menikoff convincingly demonstrates that while Baptists placed a premium on conversions, they did not limit their concerns to spiritual matters.

He asserts that Baptists were social reformers who did not shy away from direct action or political lobbying. Although they did not fully or blindly embrace the antebellum social reform movement, and they diligently avoided overt political partisanship, they did not limit their efforts to improve society to proclamations from the pulpit or personal efforts at evangelization.

In the course of examining the anti-slavery crusade, the temperance movement, the question of mail delivery on the Sabbath, and anti-poverty efforts, Menikoff not only highlights the role played in these matters by American evangelicals, but Baptists in particular. In these instances and others, Menikoff shows that Baptists, both in the North and the South, were active participants in the effort to improve the lives of individual Americans and society as a whole. He is to be applauded, if for no other reason, for highlighting these labors and providing both Baptist and American historians with the general details of such efforts.

Although *Politics and Piety* is a significant contribution to the literature on Baptists and antebellum social reform in America, it is not the final word on the matter. There is more work to be done. While Menikoff has thankfully dispelled the notion advocated by Rufus Spain and others that Baptists were not social reformers, there is still the question of the extent of Baptist involvement in the movement. In the course of identifying Baptist advocates of social reform, Menikoff repeatedly cites many of the same individuals, churches, associations, and newspapers. While Menikoff is careful to identify Baptist reformers in both the North and the South, he does not adequately address the extent to which these individuals, churches, associations and newspapers are representative of Baptists as a whole in America. For instance, in an attempt to prove Baptist political activism, Menikoff cites a resolution passed by the Elkhorn Baptist Association of Kentucky supporting the War of 1812 (p. 61). One wonders, however, how large, influential, and representative this association was amongst Kentucky Baptists. In addition, does Menikoff not undermine his broader argument when he remarks that the Elkhorn Baptist Association rarely addressed matter of politics? By leaving these and related questions unanswered, Menikoff invites critics to question whether the instances of Baptist social reform and political activism he uncovered were typical or mere aberrations. These and other questions remain to be answered, but Menikoff is to be commended for this ground-

breaking effort and for prompting a conversation on this important historical topic.

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Francis Watson. *Gospel Writing: A Canonical Perspective*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013. xiii + 665 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-0802840547. \$48.00 (Paperback).

Francis Watson has written an ambitious and impressive work that seeks to undermine the prevailing position on the construction of the gospels and to replace it with a new paradigm.

In Part I, Watson blames Augustine for a trajectory which eventually led to a post-enlightenment, misguided approach to gospel origins. While criticizing Augustine's harmonization of the gospels, he casts Origen as the star: "As Origen recognized but Augustine did not, the apparent contradiction [between the canonical gospels] ... compels the reader to seek the truth in a different place to that of sheer factuality" (p. 14). According to Watson, Augustine's source-critical hypothesis and his quest to harmonize the gospels led to a "violent dismemberment" of each gospel. Also, by detaching gospel truth from the narratives and forcing the gospels into one individual account, Augustine anticipated the rise of modern source criticism. Once later enlightenment critics demolished the possibility of harmonization, the assault on the canon soon followed, along with modern source criticism and the emergence of "Q," with Q overcoming the canonical gospels in providing the purest access to the historical Jesus.

Watson opens part II by explaining the inadequacies of the Q hypothesis. In what shapes up to be a particularly strong section, he carefully demonstrates occasions when Luke and Matthew run parallel, not simply in the so called "minor agreements" but more importantly at both the broader and more specific structures of their non-Markan material (i.e. the sermons on the mount/plain at the same point in Jesus' ministry, the genealogies towards the beginning of the gospels, the birth narratives, and the Easter narratives).

His critique of Q is then followed by a defense of his proposal—a variation of the Farrer-Goulder-Goodacre theory—with Luke as the interpreter of Matthew. Yet, unlike his anti-Q predecessors, Watson argues for the use of a Sayings Collection, which he proposes is a close descendent to the *Gospel of Thomas*. Watson

then discusses pre-canonical sources for the Gospel of John and argues that Papyrus Egerton 2 is used by John. This in turn is followed by a case that the Gospels of John, Thomas and Peter interact with the same traditions, but reinterpret them differently. This leads to a point that Watson repeats throughout this volume: “gospels ... can and should initially be read as though the distinction between canonical and noncanonical did not exist. Early Christian gospel literature does not display one or another of two distinct sets of attributes, foreshadowing either canonical recognition or apocryphal marginalization” (p. 406).

Watson opens Part III by rejecting the notion that the fourfold gospels were basically complete by the end of the first century and widely recognized by the middle to end of the second century. Instead, according to Watson, two distinct phases should be recognized. First, the early pre-canonical phase was the stage in which all the gospels “proliferate unchecked” (p. 413) Second, the canonical phase—starting in the mid to late second century but extending into the fourth century—was when the four gospel entity was produced based on decisions external to the gospels themselves. This “fictive” fourfold gospel produced the severing of “the historical and literary ties that bind Matthew and Thomas, John and Peter, realigning Matthew with John on one side of the great divide, Thomas with Peter on the other” (p. 415).

After surveying the evidence for the gospel canon from the church fathers, both east and west, he turns to Origen, who again serves as a model for approaching the gospels. Watson reads Origen as not casting all non-canonical gospels as heresy, while at the same time affirming the fourfold gospels—but only because this was the church’s historical decision. Furthermore, unlike Augustine and others, Origen came to affirm that the gospels should be harmonized on the spiritual rather than the empirical plane. The last chapter in Part III surveys visual arts in order to argue that the fourfold tradition was not so much defended by claims to apostolicity or chronological priority but instead by its association with the four heavenly creatures.

Watson displays an incredible depth and wide range of knowledge. At times, it is perhaps too wide ranging; one wonders if sections could have been streamlined, as they occasionally seemed only tangentially related to the main point (e.g. parts of chapters 10 and 11). Watson boldly takes on several major scholarly paradigms and is a force to be reckoned with, even if his proposals do not

ultimately win the day. It will have to suffice for now to show where a few of the scholarly fault lines exist and leave it to more exhaustive treatments to interact more substantially.

(1) Many will meet the argument against the existence of Q and the two-source hypothesis with resistance, though there are a mounting number of scholars questioning Q.

(2) The argument that a hypothetical Sayings Source was a close descendent to the *Gospel of Thomas* and a source for the canonical gospels goes against the trend of scholarship and Watson makes himself vulnerable at this crucial point in his argument by not engaging in depth with recent treatments of *Thomas*.

(3) The argument that Papyrus Egerton 2 was a source for the Gospel of John instead of the reverse will also turn heads of those within the scholarly consensus.

(4) The case that the four gospel canon was arbitrarily made in the fourth century challenges the notion that the four gospels set themselves apart and were received as authoritative writings early on in the canonical process, which was at the very least the view of many second century writers—and still of many scholars today.

Each of these points will stir up dissenters, which, along with Watson's learned insights, makes *Gospel Writing* a fascinating read and one which deserves a careful consideration by all serious scholars of gospel literature.

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J. V. Fesko. *The Theology of the Westminster Standards: Historical Context and Theological Insights*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2014. 441 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-1433533112. \$21.17 (Paperback).

This monograph by J. V. Fesko stands as a strong contribution to the study of the Westminster Standards and a valuable model for students of confessional statements to emulate. Fesko, academic dean at Westminster Seminary California and a professor of historical theology, establishes two goals at the beginning of his text that set his study apart from most commentaries on confessional standards. He first insists that responsible study of confessional statements must take the original historical context of the document as seriously as biblical scholars weigh the original historical context of

scripture. Fesko states, “It is often said that the three most important words in real estate are location, location, location. A similar maxim is true for good historical theology—context, context, context” (p. 25). His introductory chapter communicates to the reader the importance of understanding that confessional documents are a mix of timeless truths and contextually conditioned beliefs that have been superseded. Examples given by Fesko include the seventeenth-century belief in ghosts and dogmatic assertions that the pope was antichrist. Fesko’s insistence on approaching the Westminster Standards as products of their age as well as bearers of biblical truths provides greater clarity for understanding their purpose and final form.

Second, Fesko reveals that the seventeenth century and Reformed theological contexts of the Westminster Standards are richly complex. Specialists in Reformed theology or the early modern period are generally among the few who truly appreciate the diversity of sixteenth and seventeenth century Reformed theology. Fesko effectively communicates this diversity to a wider audience. While many students of the confession assume the direct dominance of John Calvin’s influence on the Westminster divines, Fesko notes, “Calvin, though influential, was but one among a host of theological contributors in the early modern period” (p. 56). Fesko compiled a chart listing the names of prominent Reformed theologians cited by the Westminster divines and the frequency with which they are cited (pp. 55-58). This list and the subsequent citations of early modern treatises in each chapter demonstrate the variety of Reformed traditions from England and the continent that flowed like streams into the creation of the Westminster Standards. The divines themselves are transformed from two-dimensional autodidacts to real believers who had differing convictions based on their unique theological influences, biblical interpretations, and personal experiences.

The bulk of Fesko’s text consists of actual engagement with the process of composing the Westminster Standards. The organization of the book owes to systematic theology the identification of major theological themes in the Standards as objects for study. However, the contents of each chapter reveal Fesko’s emphasis on historical theology, since the Standards were formed as the product of debate and careful deliberation. Studying the original draft of Thomas Jefferson’s Declaration of Independence in comparison to the final product signed by the Second Continental Congress pro-

vides deeper insight into the nuances of what the delegates wanted to communicate. In the same fashion, Fesko's study of the Westminster Standards in utero opens the door to understanding why the Westminster divines wrote what they wrote and, just as importantly and possibly more so, why they chose to reject certain ideas they could have included.

While it is impossible to cover all the interesting theological concepts Fesko addresses in a short review, some of the most interesting discussion covers God and the decrees, justification, church order and eschatology. The section on church order is particularly fascinating given the sharp and often polarizing convictions held on these issues by seventeenth century Reformed Christians. One weakness of the work is the lack of discussion in this section on the opinions held by representatives of the English Separatist and Independent movements in regard to the proper nature of church order and magisterial influence endorsed in the Westminster Standards. One could argue that the English Separatist influence may not have been influential enough among the Westminster divines to treat in detail, but the appearance of Henry Ainsworth's name among Fesko's list of Reformed scholars who influenced the Westminster divines makes one wonder if Ainsworth's debates with his fellow separatists over issues of church order should have been mentioned.

The Theology of the Westminster Standards is a great resource for understanding the content and historical context of these pivotal Christian confessional documents. Readers without some basic theological training may find some of the analysis difficult to navigate, but the book is a useful guide for college students, ministers, and others with a basic foundation in Christian theology and history. Fesko has rendered a great service for church and academy by giving us a deeper understanding of the Westminster Standards, their historical context, and their enduring legacy.

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Steve Wilkens and Don Thorsen, eds. *Twelve Great Books that Changed the University, and Why Christians Should Care*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2014. xvi + 200 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-1620327395. \$25.00 (Paperback).

Steve Wilkens and Don Thorsen, the editors of *Twelve Great Books that Changed the University*, serve at Azusa Pacific University. Wilkens is Professor of Philosophy and Ethics and Faith Integration Fellow for Faculty Development, while Thorsen is Professor of Theology and Chair of Graduate Theology and Ethics. Each of the twelve chapters is written by a faculty member of Azusa Pacific University, reflecting his or her area of expertise, while the foreword is written by the provost of the school.

Wilkens provides a helpful introduction in which he gives the rationale for the book, discusses the relationship of Christianity to the university, and explains the selection process for choosing the representative great books. Each chapter represents a discipline within the academy, and is devoted to a great book considered to be the seminal work that shaped that discipline. As to the process of choosing the twelve greatest of the great books, Wilkins admits there are no criteria that would not be controversial. The editors decided to use the original definition of “classic.” A classic book is a book that has been used almost universally in the classroom. Other criteria were whether or not a book has stood the test of time, and whether or not a book was pivotal in the emergence of their respective disciplines.

Chapter one covers Philosophy, and discusses Plato’s *Republic*. Chapter two deals with Theology and has Augustine’s *Confessions* as its subject. Each successive chapter addresses a pivotal work of that respective academic discipline: Drama—Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*; Literature—Cervantes’s *Don Quixote*; Physics—Francis Bacon’s *Novum Organum*; Politics—Locke’s *The Second Treatise of Government*; Economics—Smith’s *The Wealth of Nations*; History—Gibbon’s *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*; Biology—Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species*; Psychology—Freud’s *The Interpretation of Dreams*; Sociology—Weber’s *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*; and Education—Dewey’s *Democracy and Education*.

All of the contributors follow the same format for their respective chapters. Each chapter begins with a brief introduction of the representative book which gives the author’s biography and the historical context in which book arose. An overview follows which

summarizes the book. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the impact the book has had on the university in general and its academic discipline in particular, and why Christians should see the book as significant.

Often a multi-authored book of this type is uneven, with some chapters notably better than others. However, each chapter demonstrates a consistent level of clarity and readability; perhaps it is because the editors required the authors to follow a uniform outline. Wilkens correctly notes that some may disagree with the books selected. Even the choice of academic disciplines is open to criticism. Where is the discussion about Mathematics? How can Newton's *Principia Mathematica* be left out?

Quibbles aside, *Twelve Books that Changed the University* serves as a very good primer for anyone interested in the development of Western intellectual thought. It would make a good introductory textbook for any course on the history of ideas or as a secondary source in a great books curriculum.

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David R. Nienhuis and Robert W. Wall. *Reading the Epistles of James, Peter, John & Jude as Scripture: The Shaping & Shape of a Canonical Corpus*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013. xviii + 318 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-0802865915. \$30.00 (Paperback).

David Nienhuis and Robert Wall, both of Seattle Pacific University, have given the academy and the church much to ponder in their latest foray into canonical readings of the New Testament. This is the authors' first monograph together, but each has contributed to the growing body of literature on a canonical approach to the NT. In this book they hope both to help the church and academy regain an interest in the Catholic Epistles and, more prominently in this volume, to spur readers to study the CEs together as a canonical collection (pp. xv–xvi).

After an introduction to the state of CE research and to the canonical approach, chapter one argues for a specific reconstruction of the CE corpus' canonical moment, relying on historical critical conclusions about dating and manuscript evidence of circulation to determine when and why these seven letters began to be read together. Chapter two then draws theological conclusions from the previous chapter, as well as from the order of the seven-letter CE

collection and its relationship to both Acts and Hebrews. The authors' conclusion after these initial chapters is that the CE corpus, in its agreement with the Rule of Faith, provides readers of the NT with an apostolic eyewitness account of the gospel of Jesus Christ that balances out any incorrect fideistic readings of the Pauline collection. In other words, James, Peter, John, and Jude are *eyewitnesses* to Jesus' life and work, unlike Paul, and their letters balance out Paul's emphasis on faith with their own emphasis on faith that produces good works.

In a brief introduction to Part II of the book, Nienhuis and Wall argue that the Rule of Faith can help readers draw out theological themes in the CE, and the rest of the book proceeds with examining each letter in detail. Each book is treated in view of its historical authorship, canonical authorship and placement, literary structure and emphases, and theological themes in congruence with the Rule of Faith. The final chapter and epilogue summarize the conclusions of first two chapters and synthesize the theological themes discerned in the book-by-book analysis, again using the Rule of Faith as an outline.

There are many aspects to commend, more to question, and much to criticize in *Reading the Epistles*. On the positive side, the authors have ably demonstrated the importance of a canonical, intertextual reading of the NT. While this approach has found many advocates in OT studies, its appropriation by NT scholars has been scant. Wall and Nienhuis, along with Eugene Lemcio, have been among the few proponents of Childs' canonical approach to take his method to NT studies. And even then, the CE corpus is a neglected component in NT studies and in the canonical approach. Therefore the work of *Reading the Epistles* is a welcome call to read the CEs and to read them canonically. In reading this way, the authors also make a number of important intertextual and theological observations, among which this reviewer found the connections between the CEs and Acts to be the most stimulating. Nienhuis and Wall's use of Tertullian's Rule of Faith, and especially the way they break it into five parts—Creator God, Christ Jesus, the Community of the Spirit, Christian Discipleship, and Consummation of the New Creation—in order to read the CEs theologically, was also a welcome approach to a canonical reading. Finally, I became increasingly convinced of the validity of Nienhuis and Wall's argument that the CEs are collected and organized as apostolic *eyewitness* testimony to Christ and to his gospel.

While these positive aspects of the book certainly make it worth the reader's while, there are too many questions and points of criticism for me to recommend it wholesale. The most pressing question is the authors' view of Scripture. Throughout they refer to the CEs and the other books of Bible as Scripture, God's word, and testimony to Christ used by the Spirit. While appreciating their emphasis on the formational qualities of Scripture and its importance for transforming individual believers and the church into the image of Christ, and while agreeing that the Spirit guides the church in the canonization process, I was at pains to find any reference or allusion to divine inspiration. It seems as though the authors want to clearly affirm the Spirit's illumination of the church and its choice of particular books as Christian Scripture while at the same time they want to avoid any talk of the Spirit's inspiration of those same Scriptures. This is odd at best, and deeply problematic at worst. One wonders how, if the canon is simply a matter of the church's choice, Nienhuis and Wall could answer critics like Bart Ehrman with any substantive argument. "Spirit illumined choice" is in Ehrman's argument simply another term for "power." Another important question is whether or not Wall and Nienhuis have demonstrated that the CEs are included to *balance out* Paul. This is a refrain throughout the book, but I remain unconvinced that this is the main theological thread and canonical purpose of the CE collection.

More devastating in my mind is the major critique that must be leveled against *Reading the Epistles*. Throughout the book, Wall and Nienhuis argue that a canonical reading places priority not on the historical reconstruction of the supposed author but instead on the historical moment of canonization. This is problematic for a number of reasons. First, identifying this canonical moment is notoriously difficult, and at times the authors seem to strain the amount of manuscript evidence towards their reconstruction of the CE corpus' canonization. D. C. Parker is not listed in the index of modern authors, and that is because he is not mentioned in the book—and yet this expert on NT manuscripts offers alternative evidence to what Nienhuis and Wall use in their reconstruction. Further, while the authors (rightly) decry modern biblical criticism's insistence on getting behind the text to reconstruct the author, they in effect take the same approach in attempting to reconstruct the canonical moment. They have simply moved the historical critical method back a step, from author to canonical ecclesial redactor. It

is unclear to me how these methods are any different except in name and in reading books together instead of apart.

Wall and Nienhuis also fail to account for the early church's approach to canonicity. Throughout the book they want to argue that the letters of James, Peter, John, and Jude are included, and included together, because they are witnesses to apostolic testimony. On the face of it this sounds right, but the authors take late dates for the authorship of these books and so deny the actual apostolic authenticity of their authors. It is unclear to this reviewer how the authors can affirm the early church's belief that apostolicity of authorship was one of the primary criteria of canonicity while also denying that actual apostles (or those closely associated with them) authored these letters. In the end, it seems to me that Wall and Nienhuis have not escaped the trap of modernity in their reading as much as they had hoped. For these reasons, I can only recommend *Reading the Epistles* as an example of the canonical approach; I cannot, however, recommend it for anyone seeking to understand the canonical approach's proper theological or historical foundations.

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Richard Bauckham, James R. Davila, Alexander Panayotov, eds.
Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: More Noncanonical Scriptures Volume I. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013. 808 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-0802827395. \$90.00 (Hardback).

The disciplines of biblical scholarship, Jewish studies, ancient history (and others!) benefitted tremendously from the two volume collection *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* edited by James H. Charlesworth (Garden City: Doubleday, 1983–1986). It has now been supplemented by *More Noncanonical Scriptures Volume I*.

Charlesworth opens this substantial follow-up work with a foreword on the importance of such a collection. He notes that “Scholars will debate the criteria for inclusion [However, the collection] does mirror the unparalleled influence of the Bible on Western culture and thought” (p. xv). As the editors note:

The Old Testament pseudepigrapha are an important and much neglected part of the biblical tradition. The earliest of them were written down at the same time and in the same geographic area as the Hebrew Bible, and some are even cited therein. They continued to be composed and copied

throughout antiquity and the Middle Ages and, indeed, new pseudepigrapha are still being written in the modern era. The corpus being published in these two volumes adds a great many texts to those already known from earlier collections, most notably those of Sparks and Charlesworth, and together with them provides the reader with virtually all known surviving pseudepigrapha written before the rise of Islam. Some of these compositions provide us with fascinating background material to the New Testament. Others are a rich source of information on the reception history of the Hebrew Bible by Jews, Christians, and pagans through late antiquity. They frequently give us different perspectives from those found in writings of the same period which later acquired an authoritative status in Judaism (the rabbinic literature) and Christianity (the patristic literature). Together they present us with the sacred legends and spiritual reflections of numerous long-dead authors whose works were lost, neglected, or suppressed for many centuries. By making these documents available in excellent English translations and authoritative but accessible introductions we aim both to promote more scholarly study of them and to bring them to the attention of the vast lay audience who appreciate such treasures (p. xxxviii).

The volume's content is divided into two parts. The first consists of texts ordered according to biblical chronology. It contains "Adam: Octipartite/Septipartite (Grant Macaskill with Eamon Greenwood, pp. 3–21); "The Life of Adam and Eve (Coptic Fragments)" (Simon I. Gathercole, pp. 22–25); "The Book of the Covenant" (James VanderKam, pp. 28–32); "The Apocryphon of Seth" (Alexander Toepel, pp. 33–39); "The Book of Noah" (Martha Himmelfarb, pp. 40–46); "The Apocryphon of Eber" (James VanderKam, pp. 47–52); "The Dispute over Abraham" (Richard Bauckham, pp. 53–58); "The Inquiry of Abraham" (a possible allusion to the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, Richard Bauckham, pp. 59–63); "The Story of Melchizedek with the Melchizedek Legend from the *Chronicon Paschale*" (Pierluigi Piovanelli, pp. 64–84); "The Syriac History of Joseph" (Kristian S. Heal, pp. 85–120); "Aramaic Levi" (James R. Davila, pp. 121–142); "Midrash Vayissa'u" (Martha Himmelfarb, pp. 143–159); "The Testament of Job" (Coptic fragments, Gesa Schenke, pp. 160–175); "The Tiburtine Sibyl (Greek)" (Rieuwerd Buitenwerf, pp. 176–188); "The Eighth Book of Moses" (Todd E. Klutz, pp. 189–235); "The Balaam Text from Tell Deir

‘Alla’ (Edward M. Cook, pp. 236–243); “Eldad and Modad” (Richard Bauckham, pp. 244–256); “Songs of David” (G. W. Lorein and E. Van Staaldoune-Sulman, pp. 257–271); “The Aramaic Song of the Lamb” (The Dialogue between David and Goliath, C. T. R. Hayward, pp. 272–286); “Exorcistic Psalms of David and Solomon” (Gideon Bohak, pp. 287–297); “The Selenodromion of David and Solomon” (Pablo A. Torijano, pp. 298–305); “The Hygro-mancy of Solomon” (Pablo A. Torijano, pp. 305–325); “Questions of the Queen of Sheba and Answers by King Solomon” (Vahan S. Hovhannessian with Sebastian P. Brock, pp. 326–345); “The Nine and a Half Tribes” (Richard Bauckham, pp. 346–359); “The Heartless Rich Man and the Precious Stone” (William Adler, pp. 360–366); “Jeremiah’s Prophecy to Pashhur” (Darell D. Hannah, pp. 367–379); “The Apocryphon of Ezekiel” (Benjamin G. Wright, pp. 380–392); “The Treatise of the Vessels (Massekhet Kelim)” (James R. Davila, pp. 393–409); “The Seventh Vision of Daniel” (Sergio La Porta, pp. 410–434); “A Danielic Pseudepigraphon Paraphrased by Papias” (Basil Lourié, pp. 435–441); “The Relics of Zechariah and the Boy Buried at His Feet” (William Adler, pp. 442–447); “*S’fer Zerubbabel: The Prophetic Vision of Zerubbabel ben Shealtiel*” (John C. Reeves, pp. 448–466); “Fifth Ezra” (Theodore A. Bergren, pp. 467–482); “Sixth Ezra” (Theodore A. Bergren, pp. 483–497) and “The Latin Version of Ezra” (Richard Bauckham, pp. 498–528).

The smaller second part of the volume consists of thematic texts. It contains: “The Cave of Treasures” (Alexander Toepel, pp. 531–584); “*Palea Historica* (Old Testament History)” (William Adler, pp. 585–672); “Quotations from Lost Books in the Hebrew Bible” (James R. Davila, pp. 673–698) and “Hebrew Visions of Hell and Paradise” (Helen Spurling, pp. 699–713). Not included in the table of contents are “The Greatness of Moses” (*Gedulat Moshe*, pp. 714–725), “Legend ‘Hear, O Israel’” (*Haggadat Shema Yisra’el*, pp. 726–728); “History of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi” (*Ma’aseh De-Rabbi Yehoshua’ ben Levi*) and “Legend of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi (‘*Aggadat De-Rabbi Yehoshua’ ben Levi*) Aramaic Recension” (pp. 729–734); “Order of Gan Eden” (*Seder Gan Eden*, pp. 735–737); “Tractate on Gehinnom” (*Masseket Gehinnom*, pp. 738–741); “In What Manner is the Punishment of the Grave?” (*Ketsad Din Ha-Qever*, pp. 742–745); “Treatise on the Work of Creation” (*Baraita De-Ma’aseh Bereshit*, pp. 748–750); and “David Apocalypse” (pp. 751–753). Presumably the translations and annotation are those of the editors.

The collection closes with an index of modern authors (pp. 754–762) and of Scripture and other ancient texts (pp. 763–808).

For each text, an introduction, a new translation, bibliography (subdivided into editions and studies) and, at times extensive footnotes, are offered. In some texts, extensive parallels from a broad range of ancient literature are noted. However, the structure of the introductions and the extent of notes and parallels vary. Finally, a second volume is in preparation, but no date is given on when it may be expected.

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