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Book Reviews

Patrick Gray. *Opening Paul's Letters: A Reader's Guide to Genre and Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012. x + 176 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-0801039225. \$20.00 (Paperback).

There is no shortage of books on Paul and his letters, and introductions to interpreting his letters are just as plentiful. Far less common, however, are accessible books for beginning students that faithfully capture the complexities of issues in plain language that doesn't leave students in the dust. Patrick Gray's offering is one of these rare finds. Here, he introduces an interpretation of Paul that focuses on the literary genre of Paul's letters, comparing them to typical letters from ancient Greece and Rome. He writes as a seasoned scholar who is also an expert teacher, and this text will prove highly useful for undergraduates and seminary students, along with informal courses on biblical interpretation in churches.

In an introduction, Gray discusses the importance of genre. Modern readers must understand that they're reading someone else's mail. Each letter is an occasional document addressing a church situation rather than a systematic theological treatise in which Paul addresses abstract theological issues.

Gray's first full chapter discusses Paul's historical contexts, the Jewish and Roman worlds he inhabited. His chapter unfolds more fully the varieties of letter genre in the ancient world. His discussion is clear and complete with the provision of many examples. He then identifies each of Paul's letters according to the types of letter he has discussed.

In chapter 3, Gray explores how Paul writes his letters. He goes through the various parts of a letter, comparing them constantly with contemporary Greco-Roman letters. The conventions of first-century letter writing are important to keep in mind rather than reading the letters in terms of the chapter and verse divisions added over a millennium later (pp. 67-68). This chapter includes an insightful and helpful discussion of the usefulness of ancient rhetoric in interpreting Paul (pp. 84-89). Gray notes that there are indeed elements in Paul's letters that resonate strongly with the sorts of rhetoric spoken of in ancient handbooks. Rhetoric, however, was applied to speeches and not necessarily to letters. Further, scholars often vary widely as to labeling this or that passage according to the conventions of ancient rhetoric. Gray notes that students ought to

exercise caution when it appears that an interpreter has spent far more time than Paul in the precise organization of an individual letter (p. 89).

Gray discusses the audiences of Paul's letters in chapter 4. He treats each letter, briefly discussing the situation Paul addressed. While some letters have more information available about the occasion that elicited Paul's letter, this is not the case with all thirteen Pauline letters. Gray advises caution when little information is available, while also stressing that each letter must be interpreted, so far as is possible, within the historical context of its original situation (p. 115).

Chapter 5 focuses on Paul's use of the Old Testament. Gray covers the field very well, overviewing the basic approaches currently in use by scholars. He notes that Paul's exhortations and instructions to his churches were thoroughly shaped and saturated by Scripture. For Paul, "reading the Old Testament and writing letters are not fundamentally separate activities" (p. 135). In a final chapter, Gray discusses pseudonymity and does so in a way that is fair to each position. He does not finally weigh in on the issue, only presenting the logic and series of arguments employed by each side. The volume closes with an epilogue and two appendices.

At the close of each chapter Gray includes discussion questions and a bibliography. As I indicated above, this text is ideal for undergraduate and seminary courses on hermeneutics.

Timothy Gombis
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Khaldoun A. Sweis and Chad V. Meister. *Christian Apologetics: An Anthology of Primary Sources*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012. 553 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-0310325338. \$44.99 (Hardback).

Among professional philosophers of religion, an increasingly popular criticism of apologetics is that it lacks intellectual integrity—that Christian apologists are interested in defending a particular set of received views rather than the critical pursuit of wisdom. The apologist has, in my view, two equally valid replies to this complaint. On one hand, acquiescence: The apologist never claimed to be a philosopher *per se*; philosophical reasoning is but one implement in a manifold of apologetic tools. On the other, a rigorous and purely philosophical inquiry happens to coalesce with tenets of the Christian faith (thus showing the 'apologetics v. philosophy' paradigm is rooted in a false dichotomy). A comprehensive apologetic can take each of these forms at various points—the former

perhaps in arguing for the historicity of Christ's bodily resurrection; the latter, for instance, in arguing for the existence of an uncaused Cause. In *Christian Apologetics*, Sweis and Meister present a collection of essays that exemplify each of these approaches across a wide range of subjects and historical epochs.

The text is divided by theme ("The Incarnation," "Christianity and Science," etc.) into eleven major parts, the first of which is addressed to the history and goals of the field. (The highlight of this initial section is Plantinga's *Advice to Christian Philosophers*, wherein he situates the aims of the Christian philosopher *qua* apologist within an overview of the Twentieth Century's relevant philosophical trends. This lecture is, in my view, a must-read for anyone interested in apologetics.) So the volume is easily navigable, and its very method of organization presents an instructive schematization of the field surveyed.

The second part of the anthology, from a purely philosophical standpoint, is perhaps its most impressive. It covers cosmological, teleological, ontological and moral arguments for God's existence (among others) from antiquity to the present. In terms of quality and scope, this is the most worthwhile array of such essays that I've seen presented in a single volume. Moreover, the entries here range from the novice-friendly (e.g., C.S. Lewis's "God and the Moral Law") to the almost inscrutably subtle (e.g., Plantinga's "A Recent Modal Ontological Argument"). Accordingly, it promises to engage beginners and veterans alike.

Part Eight is equally philosophical in tone, presenting two separate arguments (Aquinas and Descartes) for substance dualism, and a third (Moreland) that moves from substance dualism to theism. I'm not totally clear on the positive apologetic value of Descartes' argument on this particular point, since it's long been established that its conclusion is predicated upon an important equivocation (*viz.* that between epistemic possibility and possibility *per se*). That said, this stream of inquiry undoubtedly contains an important yet oft-overlooked cluster of arguments that point to a Divine Mind having pre-existed the physical universe.

Part Nine deals with the problem of evil. Its introduction offers a helpful taxonomy, delineating the various kinds of argument from evil and distinguishing among the varieties of theistic reply. The major strands of theistic approaches to the problem of evil are represented as well as can be expected in five entries on the subject.

Other sections present support for specifically Christian doctrines, such as the veracity and authority of Christian Scripture, the doctrine of the Trinity, the incarnation of Christ, Christ's bodily

resurrection, miracles more generally, Christianity and science, and Christianity and culture. Overall, the editors draw from a pool of contributions that is historically diverse (ancient to the present) and suitably ecumenical (Calvin to Ratzinger). In short, as a comprehensive introduction to every important theme in Christian apologetics that ranges from basic arguments to cutting edge philosophy, this is a formidable collection.

From my perspective, the volume has only two drawbacks. First, aside from original contributions, most of its entries can be found online free of charge. That said, I found a new hardcover online for as little as \$15.00 (which strikes me as quite sensible for a textbook of this size). Second, apart from respective contributors' standard presentations of (and replies to) objections to their own arguments, the anthology contains nothing in the way of arguments *against* Christianity or against theism in general—not even a non-theistic presentation of the argument from evil. Since an overview of apologetics at any level should involve the hearing of non-theistic interlocutors, you will need supplementary texts.

Scott Coley

West Lafayette, Indiana

Thomas B. Dozeman, Thomas Römer, and Konrad Schmid. *Pentateuch, Hexateuch, or Enneateuch? Identifying Literary Works in Genesis through Kings*. SBL, Ancient Israel and Its Literature. 8. Leiden: Brill, 2012. x + 313 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-9004202504. \$166.00 (Hardback).

Anyone interested in current research on the Pentateuch and Former Prophets will find great value in this work. Since the collapse of the Documentary Hypothesis' dominance, one may justifiably say that the field has splintered.¹ If there is a discernible trend in the field, it seems that editors Dozeman, Römer, and Schmid have appropriately represented the discipline. One of the volume's contributors (Michael Konkel) even goes so far as to state that a consensus concerning the covered topic was within reach (p. 169).

¹ See Christoph Berner's comment regarding the status of the Documentary Hypothesis on p. 213 of the work. Among many other statements with possibly similar sentiment, see Reinhard Kratz, *The Composition of the Narrative Books of the Old Testament*, trans. John Bowden (New York: T&T Clark, 2005), 249, who advocates abandoning the "straight jacket of the source hypothesis" for a modified fragmentary or supplementary approach.

Whether or not this is true, the fact that a scholar asserts it, demonstrates a growing tendency.

The title indicates the key investigation of the book, namely, what kind of literary unity, if any, exists between a so-called Pentateuch, Hexateuch, or Enneateuch and how one might discern such unity. The volume itself stems from papers presented during a two-year partnership between the Pentateuch and Former Prophets sections of the Society of Biblical Literature. It has two sections: First, four scholars present foundational methodological concerns when identifying the content and boundaries of different literary works. Second, seven other scholars analyze various biblical texts and related matters in order to demonstrate their own versions of the relationship between a Tetrateuch, Pentateuch, Hexateuch, or Enneateuch.

Positively, the editors and contributors to *Pentateuch, Hexateuch, or Enneateuch: Identifying Literary Works in Genesis through Kings* have done the reader a superb service. The authors each begin their work by indicating their own version of the history of research in the Pentateuch and Former Prophets and their variously putative sources, traditions, texts, and redactional profiles. This feature alone makes the volume useful to the student or young scholar seeking to go through the various theories and research efforts in the modern history of interpretation of the material. Because these brief reviews occur one after the other in these essays, the reader can easily discern areas of agreement in scholarship and other points at which there is disagreement.

Konrad Schmid opens up the book with a review of the “history of scholarship that led to the separation of the Pentateuch from the Deuteronomistic History in biblical studies” (p. 11). Thomas Römer also considers various proposals regarding the Pentateuch, Hexateuch, and Enneateuch, discussing the relationships between different passages and how scholars have used them to posit a resulting literary work. In a related article, Erhard Blum asks how one can recognize where a literary work begins and where it ends. Then David Carr attempts an “empirical” study into the relationship of the Former Prophets to the Pentateuch, doing so by analyzing the relationship between Chronicles and Samuel-Kings, and how unique material there may have been harmonized to the Pentateuch.

The remaining essays are case studies, “in which authors explore the literary relationship between the Pentateuch and the Former Prophets through the interpretation of specific texts” (p. 5). Susan Boorer attempts to discern the presence of an original priestly source in Joshua. Christoph Levin considers the development of

the Pentateuch and Former Prophets by investigating the manner in which the complexes were broken into books. Cynthia Edenburg's helpful essay compares structuring elements between Genesis 2 and Genesis 3–4. Michael Konkel examines the intercessions of Moses in Exodus 32–34 and their relationship to other passages in Genesis–Kings. Thomas Dozeman examines the beginning and end of the book of Joshua from a text critical and literary critical analysis. Christoph Berner examines the motif of forced labor that exists in the Exodus account and Solomon's reign in 1 Kings. Finally, Felipe Blanco Wißmann examines the literary features of the judgment formulas in 1 and 2 Kings in comparison to other biblical and non-biblical texts.

While the volume is extremely helpful in understanding the current status of Old Testament scholarship and how the guild arrived here, at times the vast number of proposals, counter-proposals, and varying hypotheses compel a rather dismal picture of the discipline. No doubt this picture stems from the consistent method of taking any thematic or linguistic shifts in texts as signs of redactional strata. Such need not be the case. Moreover, the oft-presumptive association between posited redactional strata and particular sociocultural environments bear too much weight in the case studies. Notwithstanding these critical observations, for anyone who desires to understand current research into the Pentateuch, the Former Prophets, and textual studies in Old Testament scholarship, the book should be at the top of the reading list.

Tracy McKenzie
Wake Forest, North Carolina

I. Howard Marshall, Volker Rabens, and Cornelis Bennema, eds.
The Spirit and Christ in the New Testament and Christian Theology: Essays in Honor of Max Turner. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012.
387 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-0802867537. \$60.00 (Paperback).

Max Turner, respected New Testament scholar and longtime professor at London School of Theology, is honored in this 2012 *Festschrift*. Turner's research program has focused on Christology and pneumatology, and especially on their intersection, and the essays in this volume largely engage the biblical data (mostly Luke-Acts and John) on these topics. Turner is also an ordained Baptist minister, and so much of his scholarship and some of the essays in this volume are oriented towards church life.

The volume contains essays from some of the most important New Testament scholars in the English-speaking world, including James D. G. Dunn, Joel B. Green, D. A. Carson, and Richard Bauckham, as well as chapters from John R. Levinson, Christopher Tilling, and Robert Wall, among others. This collection of scholars in one volume alone makes the book worth the price. But the content of the essays is itself worthy of recommendation. Many of the chapters engage Turner's work specifically, especially his renowned *Power from on High: The Spirit in Israel's Restoration and Witness in Luke-Acts* (JPTS; London: T&T Clark, 1996); particularly stimulating in this regard is Levinson's essay, "The Spirit, Simeon, and the Songs of the Servant." In it, Levinson argues that, over against Turner's more charismatic and spontaneous understanding of Simeon's inspiration, Simeon was "inspired by the Spirit" in the sense that he knew and taught the Scriptures so well that he recognized Israel's hope when it arrived in the baby Jesus.

Also particularly helpful in respect to both careful exegesis and practical relevance is Robert Menzies' essay on the persecuted church in Luke-Acts. Menzies argues that, based on Luke 10:1–16 and Acts 2:17–21, Luke intended for his two part work to not only record the fact that the earliest church was persecuted but that Jesus and his earliest disciples ought to serve as motivation to and models for suffering well as the church in the present context. Additionally, Steve Walton's chapter on Luke 12:12 ought to be engaged, not necessarily because his conclusions are air tight but because the questions he asks are important and relatively unanswered in present scholarship. Walton's aim is to inquire into the background of Jesus' promise that the Spirit will give the apostles the right words to say in the midst of persecution. He concludes that there is no instance in the OT, Second Temple Judaism, or the NT where the Spirit is promised for such a specific reason and in such a specific context, but that this promise is unique to Luke and serves to link Jesus' work among the disciples in the Third Gospel and the Spirit's work among the church in Acts.

While edited volumes are always difficult to assess holistically, since so much depends on the quality of the individual essays, this volume is more consistently of a recommendable quality than others. This is partly due to the fact that so many of the authors are careful and erudite NT scholars, but the main topics are particularly engaging. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit and the relationship of Christology and pneumatology are important subjects, but many times lacking serious exegetical and theological engagement in the field of NT studies. Turner has labored in this area more than oth-

ers, and these essays by and large contribute to the field as well. Instead of merely reflecting and praising Turner's work, they are serious engagements with his work and with the topics themselves, and are beneficial in their own right. Of course as with any book, and especially an edited volume, the reader will not agree with every point made either in an individual essay or with all the essays taken together. But they are as a group incredibly stimulating, exegetically careful, and theologically engaging. What more could a reader ask from a *Festschrift*?

Matthew Y. Emerson
Riverside, California

Dwight J. Zscheile, ed. *Cultivating Sent Communities: Missional Spiritual Formation*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012. 201 pp. Paperback. ISBN: 978-0802867278. \$30.00 (Paperback).

Cultivating Sent Communities: Missional Spiritual Formation is another installment in Eerdmans's "Missional Church Series." It originated from presentations at the annual Missional Church Consultation at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, in 2010. Edited by Dwight J. Zscheile, Assistant Professor of Congregational Mission and Leadership at the school, the work features contributors predominantly from the Lutheran tradition. This volume focuses on the spiritual formation of missional communities, and explores how pastors can mobilize their congregations to participate in God's work in the world. The authors rightly contend that the 'doing' of the church emerges out of the spiritual 'being' of the church. Therefore, missional identity does not come naturally, but must be formed...and formed *spiritually*.

Cultivating Sent Communities: Missional Spiritual Formation is comprised of nine chapters by nine presenters at the Consultation. Zscheile begins the journey by addressing "Missional Theology of Spiritual Formation," which is his attempt to bring a corrective to the shallow 'moralistic therapeutic deism' in contemporary culture. The editor suggests that being Christian implies being both missional and spiritual in nature. He defines spiritual formation as the work of the Holy Spirit, "a communal process that unfolds over time, uniquely for each Christian and often in nonlinear patterns" (p. 7). It involves being conformed to Christ through various Christian practices like worship and prayer and leads to the creation of a community that "offers a living, visible alternative to a society rent by enmity, division, greed, injustice, and hopelessness" (p. 27). Building on this foundation, the remainder of the book contains

treatments of building connections between ministries of building up and sending (Richard Osmer), the value of short-term missions (Scott Hagley), living the biblical story (Allen Hilton), practices of dispossession (Christian Scharen), ministry in the first third of one's life (Nancy Going), practices of congregational discernment (David Hahn), missional formation in the Ethiopian Evangelical church (Dinku Bato), and the role of baptism in missional spiritual formation (Dirk Lange).

Cultivating Sent Communities is one of many books released in recent years sounding the clarion call for God's people to be *missional*. To live missionally in missional communities by joining God on his mission has become both popular and polarizing. The conversation has a variety of expressions that run the theological gamut from conservative to liberal and embrace a variety of missional concepts that include conversion, compassion and service. Amidst such a plethora and diversity of ideas, this book—and the Consultation from which it emerged—seeks to address the frequently neglected reality that all congregational life must be *spiritually* formed. The quality of spiritual formation—rooted in and directed by God's Spirit—is absolutely essential if the church is to be God's agent of kingdom advancement in this world. While the specific answers presented in it involve a breadth of theological understanding over which there certainly is disagreement, the contributors rightly seek to call the church to let go of everything that keeps it from loving God and loving people, and from moving out of insulated organizations into the messy streets and neighborhoods where God is at work in the world.

The highlight of the book is found in the chapter entitled "Living into the Big Story: The Missional Trajectory of Scripture in Congregational Life." Allen Hilton makes it clear that being missional does not come naturally for the people of God. Recounting Abraham and Sarah's apparent distraction from God's commission to be lights to the nations, as well as the Spirit-empowered early church's resistance to move beyond the walls of Jerusalem throughout the first seven chapters of Acts, this chapter illustrates the historical tendency of God's people to shy away from aggressively participating in his mission. Yet, under the consistent prodding and encouragement of God, the church ultimately moves forward in the advancement of the gospel. This chapter is a great reminder of the sovereignty of God in his mission and the grace he manifests in including his church in the work. As his people attend to the gospel story and live within it, they are able to participate in his ongoing work of spiritual formation for missional life. This, in

and of itself, becomes a great encouragement for God's people to participate in his work. Additionally, the chapter may serve to encourage churches to be more diligent in the study of God's Word and to its role in fostering spiritual readiness for his mission. It includes the author's personal and practical approach to using a simple but substantive "Bible for Dummies" class to empower and motivate his congregation to be more involved in Bible study.

A major limitation in the volume is the technical, vague and often ambiguous language, frequently found in the academy's conversations about missional church, as well as many other subjects related to practical theology. One would think that a project set on motivating and equipping pastors to envision and mobilize their congregations on God's mission would take great pains to 'put the cookies on the bottom shelf.' Yet *Cultivating Sent Communities*—like far too many discussions in the academic arena that seek to address the church at large—is laced with terminology that requires a specialized dictionary to read and understand. Such verbiage could keep the work—and the discussion—from ever reaching the front lines.

Given its theological breadth, *Cultivating Sent Communities* likely will find its greatest hearing among the mainline and liturgical segments of the spiritual community. Those affiliated with more theologically conservative groups and/or those who traditionally place greater emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit, probably will listen to other voices when it comes to mobilizing people for both spiritual formation and the involvement of God's people in his mission.

Jim Shaddix

Wake Forest, North Carolina

C. Richard Wells and Ray Van Neste, eds. *Forgotten Songs: Reclaiming the Psalms for Christian Worship*. Nashville: B&H, 2012. xiv + 242 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-1433671784. \$19.99 (Paperback).

With so many books about the Psalms already available, one could ask why yet another should deserve a reading. This volume does more than deserve a reading; it demands and rewards careful scrutiny. Most of its thirteen papers originated in a 2008 lecture series held at Union University and funded by the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, in which prominent biblical scholars joined forces with renowned leaders in worship. In this collaboration be-

tween academy and church, the riches of the Psalter and its potential for enriching contemporary worship were explored.

The book is divided into two sections of nearly equal length. The first section addresses biblical and historical foundations for the Psalms. From the perspective of worship, John Witvliet views the Psalms as formative speech which serve as models of faithful prayer. Douglas Bond discusses how the inspired poetry of the Psalms transcends all barriers that divide humanity, thus uniting the worshipers of the Lord. Ray Ortlund demonstrates that Psalm 1 as it opens the Psalter emphasizes that true worship begins with delighting in God's Word.

From the perspective of the academic study of the Psalms, C. John Collins emphasizes that the book of Psalms was the hymnbook of ancient Israel in its public worship, and that has important consequences governing how psalms are properly interpreted and appropriated today. Ray Van Neste surveys how the Psalms are featured in the New Testament texts as they are employed by Jesus and by the early Church, and he encourages churches to follow these biblical precedents. Craig Blaising also traces how the use of the psalms evident in the Scriptures is demonstrated in the early Christian writings up to the time of Augustine.

The second section of the book is devoted to the practice of integrating the Psalms into various aspects of contemporary church life. James Grant presents both a rationale for including psalm singing in the church and also a personal account of how he has introduced this to his congregation in a winsome way. Recognizing that the psalms are prayers, C. Richard Wells finds them as paradigmatic for creating a culture of prayer both in the pastor and in the congregation, and he shares his own story in doing that. Leland Ryken employs his literary prowess as he discloses how an appreciation of the characteristics of lyric poetry enables the reader to use the psalms as models for expressing her feelings to God. Calvin Seerveld decries the paucity of lament in contemporary worship, and he points the way to reclaiming this major psalmic emphasis in the church today. From his perspective as a musician, James Joiner urges the church to learn again to perform the psalms, both in singing and in living. C. Richard Wells addresses the often neglected topic of how the psalms can be used in pastoral care, and in particular he argues for their significance in the formation of the pastor who provides care for the people of God. Wells concludes the section with a powerful and lucid theological interpretation of Psalm 22.

The main body of the book is followed by three appendices which provide a wealth of additional resources for reclaiming the Psalms for various aspects of worship in the contemporary church.

This collection of essays delights on the first reading, but it also draws the reader back repeatedly to consider its many challenges. The closest parallel to it is John Witvliet's, *The Biblical Psalms in Christian Worship* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), which is not surprising considering the involvement of the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship in the preparation of both books. *Forgotten Songs* continues in the trail blazed by Witvliet as it explores how the psalms can enrich church ministry today. In a time when the worship of the church has too often become a rhetorical battlefield that dishonors the Lord, this collection of essays calls Christians to refocus their attention on the Lord whom they worship and the kind of worship and worshiper in which he delights.

Daniel J. Estes
Cedarville, Ohio

Thomas R. Schreiner, Luke Timothy Johnson, Douglas A. Campbell, and Mark D. Nanos, ed. Michael F. Bird. *Four Views on the Apostle Paul*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012. 236 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-0310326953. \$17.99 (Paperback).

Paul is perennially important and controversial. He embodies beliefs uniting all Christians but also sharply divides them. Modern scholarship only multiplies the controversies. *Four Views on the Apostle Paul* expounds different interpretations of Paul on: (1) salvation; (2) Christ; (3) the framework for understanding him; and (4) the church.

Presenting the “Evangelical View,” Thomas Schreiner argues Paul’s theology is Christocentric. Christ fulfills prophecy, inaugurating the new creation with his resurrection. Believers are no longer under the old covenant, as union with Christ, in the Spirit by faith, replaces circumcision. Because Jesus’ Lordship includes his divinity, Paul has a “high” Christology. Jesus’ work removes the curse of the Law upon all because of sin. The atonement is a penal substitution propitiating God’s wrath for those who believe. Justification is a forensic declaration of rightness obtained by faith, not the Law. Good works accompany justification, not as causes but effects. Salvation is ultimately due to God’s unconditional, free, electing grace. Christ’s work is sufficient to infallibly save the elect. The church is the true Israel comprising the spiritually circumcised, described by Paul with multiple metaphors.

Criticisms of Schreiner by other contributors include that he perpetuates traditional Augustinian/Lutheran views on Paul, the Law and Judaism now questioned by modern scholarship; focuses almost exclusively on deliverance from sin, passing over other ways Paul describes salvation; and imposes a traditional Reformed theological framework on Paul instead of drawing conclusions from historically-based exegesis.

Offering the “Catholic View,” Luke Timothy Johnson maintains that Greco-Roman and Jewish backgrounds are necessary for understanding Paul. With Schreiner, Johnson sees Jesus as central for Paul, especially his death and resurrection in an apocalyptic framework. Usually discussing Jesus in human terms, Paul evidences inklings of a “high” Christology. Salvation is essentially transformation from a negative to a positive state, described with multifarious social, not individual, metaphors. Paul apocalyptically views salvation as a divine, not a human, achievement, and the present time as an eschatological interim. Various proposed “centers” of Paul’s theology fail evidentiary tests. Paul’s churches were similar and dissimilar to Greco-Roman voluntary associations. Convictions that Gentile believers need not be circumcised or follow Torah underlie Paul’s treatment of the Law. Paul’s ethics are continuous, though, with Judaism, although the eschatological interim implicates tensions between utopian ideals and reality.

Other contributors fault Johnson for relying on the disputed epistles; minimizing justification by faith and individual soteriology; handling Paul’s ethics insufficiently; and misreading Paul on how the Law applies differently to Jewish and Gentile Christians.

Douglas Campbell offers a “Post-New Perspective View,” judging the New Perspective as a halfway house toward remediating difficulties with the older “Lutheran” interpretation. He sees Trinitarian and missional dynamics in Paul: God’s salvific acts in Christ, through the Spirit, reveal God’s nature and bring humans into divine communion. Campbell also concludes Paul has a “high” Christology, and likewise sees a prominent apocalypticism: The present is danger-wrought and suffering-ridden, so Paul is concerned to assure believers of God’s love and invincible power to save. Campbell criticizes the popular “Melancthonian” reading of Paul, which begins with the sin problem and moves to Christ as the solution. For Paul, the problem is comprehensible only in light of the solution. Campbell identifies a virtue ethics in Paul, in which the modern dichotomy between causality and freedom does not obtain. The Church is a “community of brothers” called to kingdom ethics, above all love.

Others fault Campbell for focusing on Romans chapters 5–8; relying heavily on dogmatic theology, especially Barthianism; claiming his novel position is historical; treating sacraments and ecclesiology cursorily; intimating a universalism foreign to Paul; and not redressing the New Perspective’s shortcomings.

Mark Nanos offers the “Jewish View.” He urges taking Paul seriously as a first-century Jew. Like Campbell, he says the New Perspective perpetuates mistakes it aims to overcome. Highlighting overlooked passages and re-interpreting well-worn texts, Nanos argues that in Paul’s apocalyptic theology Gentiles become God’s people alongside of Israel in the *eschaton*. Gentiles “live Jewishly,” but must not become Jews through proselyte circumcision. Paul naturally expected Jewish Christ-followers to be circumcised and “under the Law.” Nanos does concur with other aspects of Pauline scholarship, such as how Jews never construed the Law as a means to salvation in some mercantile way. Others respond with evidence that first-century Judaism was more heterogeneous than Nanos supposes; Paul was not Torah-observant; and Paul viewed the Law more negatively.

Four Views on the Apostle Paul commends itself as a superlative study in recent Pauline scholarship. The chief shortcoming is that at times contributors’ *a priori* concerns drive interpretations. That notwithstanding, readers will find articulate cases for important contemporary interpretations of Paul, with treatments of numerous specific issues. Those seeking an introduction to modern Pauline scholarship will be amply rewarded, and seasoned Pauline scholars will expand their knowledge of the labyrinthine halls of this complex field.

Marc A. Pugliese
Richmond, Virginia

W. Stephen Gunter. *Arminius and His “Declaration of Sentiments”*: An Annotated Translation with Introduction and Theological Commentary. Waco: Baylor University Press, 2012. xiii + 213 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-1602585676. \$39.95 (Hardback).

Stephen Gunter is Associate Dean for Methodist Studies and Research Professor of Evangelism and Wesleyan Studies at Duke Divinity School. He has provided a new translation of Jacob Arminius’ *Declaration of Sentiments*. His work is sure to become the definitive English translation for several reasons. First, previous English editions were translated from Latin versions. Arminius, however, delivered his *Declaration* orally to the Dutch authorities at The

Hague in their native language. Gunter's translation is the first English edition to be based on Arminius' original Dutch manuscript.

Second, Gunter's translation reads smoothly and provides a much-needed update to the stilted and dated earlier versions. Expository footnotes accompany the text, which give background and context along with theological commentary. The annotations explain significant or obscure terms and references.

Third, Gunter gives a helpful introductory survey of the life and times of Arminius. The survey emphasizes several important points. Arminius lived in a volatile, dangerous time. As a teenager, his family was wiped out when the Spanish Catholic army massacred the residents of his hometown of Oudewater. Arminius survived because he was pursuing his studies in another city. The introduction makes clear that when Arminius developed his model of predestination he was reacting against a particularly virulent form of High Calvinism. Franciscus Gormarus, his supralapsarian nemesis, advocated a stark, strident version of predestination that contrasts with the infralapsarian version later espoused by the Synod of Dort. In many ways the Canons of Dort rejected both the positions of Arminius and of Gormarus. Gunter also demonstrates that Arminius was more "Calvinistic" than most of his Remonstrant followers. One can only wonder how history might have been different had Arminius not died from tuberculosis within a year of presenting his *Declaration*.

Arminius presented his arguments in three parts. He began with his version of the events that led up to and necessitated his appearance before the Dutch authorities, and he ended with a call for a national synod. But Arminius devoted the main body of *Declaration of Sentiments* to a thorough critique of Supralapsarianism and to a presentation of his own view of predestination (which was election according to foreknowledge). In its formulation of the decrees, he accused High Calvinism of failing to prioritize the place of Christ and of ignoring what God had ordained concerning the role of faith. He pointed out that no prior council or creed taught supralapsarianism. To the contrary, certain councils, such as the Second Council of Orange (AD 529) seemed explicitly to condemn the doctrine of reprobation. Arminius briefly assessed infralapsarianism and sublapsarianism, and he acknowledged that they "do a better job" of avoiding some of the moral quandaries created by the supralapsarian position. In the end he dismissed them also because he believed that, on a practical level, they offered no improvement over supralapsarianism.

Arminius presented his alternative *ordo salutis*, which is now a hallmark of the Arminian/Wesleyan tradition. He understood God to have decreed in four moments: to provide Christ as Savior, to save those who believe and damn those who do not, to provide sufficient grace for all to believe, and to elect and to damn particular individuals according to foreknowledge. He contended that his model was superior to the various forms of Calvinism because his position was more in keeping with the historic teaching of the Church and better reconciled the grace/free will conundrum. One does not have to embrace Arminius' model to be impressed with the force of his critique, particularly of supralapsarianism.

Gunter belongs to the Wesleyan tradition, and he presents Arminius in a sympathetic light. But regardless of one's place on the Calvinist-Arminian spectrum, the student of historical and systematic theology will find Gunter's translation an essential addition to his library.

Ken Keathley
Wake Forest, North Carolina

Donald A. Hagner. *The New Testament: A Historical and Theological Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012. xxiv + 872 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-0801039317. \$49.99 (Hardback).

In a video available on the Baker Publishing's website, Donald A. Hagner (George Eldon Ladd Professor Emeritus of New Testament and Senior Professor of New Testament, Fuller Theological Seminary) says this of his 896-page *The New Testament: A Historical and Theological Introduction*: "One of the unique things about my New Testament introduction is I've placed it in the larger context of the grand narrative of the Bible." Hagner, using a salvation-history approach, does more than simply give his audience the standard information concerning who wrote what, to whom, when, and why. This book is far-reaching in its scope with whole chapters devoted to topics like the synoptic problem (pp. 131-153), historical Jesus (pp. 83-104), Paul's understanding of the Law and righteousness (pp. 366-379), and the formation of the Christian canon (pp. 803-823). It is nearly pure text with only eight figures (five of which deal with the synoptic problem) and two maps. Its chapters are balanced with helpful footnotes at the bottom of each page. And each chapter concludes with detailed bibliographies spanning thematic books, journal articles, and commentaries mostly following the year 1975.

The book is divided into eight parts. The first is introductory and covers background information relevant to the New Testament. What is most interesting is Hagner's coverage of the Old Testament, especially the biblical covenants. This is notable since New Testament introductions generally only reach far enough back to cover the Intertestamental Period. Hagner believes that God's covenant with Abraham is the beginning of "salvation history" (p. 14). A better beginning point really is Gen. 3:15 with the promise of the head-crusher and the heel-bruising he would receive. Parts 2 (eleven chapters) and 3 (two chapters) cover the Gospels and Acts. The fourth part consists of fifteen chapters, seven of which are explicitly devoted to nine of Paul's letters (Ephesians, 1-2 Timothy, Titus, and Hebrews excluded). Part 5 groups Ephesians with the Pastorals. Part 6 discusses Hebrews and the non-Pauline letters. And Part 7 delves into the Apocalypse. The final two chapters in Part 8 extend the discussion about the New Testament from the writings themselves to how the Church received them and eventually formed them into the canon.

Hagner has a real knack for synthesizing information on major issues in New Testament studies with concise, easy-to-read language that's void of unnecessary jargon. There are a handful of differences between this introduction and others published over the years. Here are two. First, there are no outlines for the individual works of the New Testament in this book. As for why he opted for no outlines, Hagner writes, "I have never found other people's outlines very useful. It is far better to do one's own outlines because their real value is in the learning that comes in actually doing them" (p. xi). Most outlines are nearly identical with only minor variations anyway, and Hagner is absolutely correct—the value is in doing them. Second, Hagner's discussions on the theological emphases of the New Testament texts extend further than most introductions.

Readers should exercise some serious caution on certain matters presented by Hagner. As strong as the praise is for the book, with support coming from names like I. Howard Marshall (Univ. of Aberdeen), Darrell L. Bock (DTS), and Thomas R. Schreiner (SBTS), its flirtation with the critical method should raise some eyebrows. Here are just a couple of statements that jump out. First, "[A]ll historical knowledge is necessarily only probable rather than certain" (p. 9). Second, "[T]he critical method is indispensable to the study of Scripture. It is the *sine qua non* of responsible interpretation of God's Word" (p. 11). These statements have serious ramifications for the rest of the book. 2 Timothy 3:16 is clear that inspiration involves more than just the words (or ideas) having their origin in

God. The γραφή includes not only the words themselves but also, according to David Alan Black, the “tense, voice, mood, aspect, person, number, gender, case, word order, phrase, clause order, discourse structure, etc.” (“Greek Grammar, NT,” forthcoming essay in the *Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception*). And the history each of these units of language works together to communicate is necessarily certain rather than probable.

Hagner’s work is detailed, near-exhaustive in scope, and expansive in comparison to other New Testament introductions. There’s little question whether or not this book will become a required textbook on many seminary-level syllabi. For the purpose of training up a generation of scholars, it probably will be. However, there are a number of reasons some of the other New Testament introductions might be better for preparing servants for a lifetime of ministry in the local church. Resources like Thomas D. Lea’s and David Alan Black’s *The New Testament: Its Background and Message* (2nd ed.; Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2003), for example, provide more information about the social settings of the New Testament, while adequately covering each of the New Testament works.

Thomas W. Hudgins
Greenbelt, Maryland

Jerram Barrs. *Echoes of Eden: Reflections on Christianity, Literature, and the Arts*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013. 205 pp. Paperback. ISBN: 978-1433535970. \$17.99 (Paperback).

In this book, Jerram Barrs, founder and resident scholar of the Francis Schaeffer Institute at Covenant Theological Seminary, seeks to answer the question, “How are Christians to think about the arts?” (p. 11). He answers the question in two parts—the first five chapters providing theoretical answers, and the second five chapters giving practical examples of his reflections on works of literature by C. S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, J.K. Rowling, William Shakespeare, and Jane Austen.

Barrs begins in chapter one by grounding human creativity in the Creator-God who made us in his own image as creators (or, “sub-creators,” as Tolkien has it). In this chapter, Barrs mounts a robust defense of the value of the created order as rationale enough for people to engage in the arts. He also argues for the necessity that we are to create art “before the face of God” (p. 21), *coram deo*.

In chapter two, “Imitation, the Heart of the Christian’s Approach to Creativity,” Barrs argues—contra most modern and postmodern theories of art, but in agreement with Lewis and Tol-

kien—that all art is imitative and that it should reflect the reality around us—a reality created, after all, by God himself. He also appeals for an attitude of humility in the arts, both on the part of those who create and those who receive.

Is there such a thing as “Christian art” or a “Christian artist”? With questions like these, chapter three wrestles with issues that many evangelicals may be struggling with. Barrs grounds his discussion in a robust understanding of the Second Commandment.

Chapter four dares to challenge the modern “secular” artistic establishment in proposing objective criteria by which we can judge the arts. In this chapter, Barrs outlines appropriate biblical principles—including the true, the beautiful, and the good—to help us understand and evaluate the arts.

In the book’s fulcrum chapter, “Echoes of Eden: God’s Testimony to the Truth,” Barrs explores the creation-fall-redemption-restoration metanarrative of the Bible and the various ways in which God reveals himself to us (in general revelation as well as special revelation). The center of this chapter is his explanation of the “echoes of Eden” that we all experience (simply because we are human and created in the image of God), and that imaginative literature conveys.

In the remaining chapters, Barrs applies these principles to five British authors. The first two—Lewis and Tolkien—were both professing Christians who consciously worshiped God by writing imaginative literature; these chapters are delightful reads. In his comments on Shakespeare, Barrs defends the notion that his plays inhabit a “Christian universe” because they faithfully reflect the reality of the world that God created. The “surprise” author in this list is Rowling, author of the Harry Potter books. Barrs argues that the Harry Potter books are yet another example of the “echoes of Eden” that he finds in the first three writers. Finally, Barrs suggests that the increasing popularity of Austen’s novels can be attributed to the fact that she taps into the same echoes of Eden that he has been considering throughout the whole book. Readers will find these practical examples of the echoes of Eden in literature stimulating and helpful.

Echoes of Eden is a refreshing read, revisiting essential Christian understandings of human creativity and providing a tonic to the misunderstandings that some Christians bring with them when they read a novel or watch a movie. In the early pages, there is a rather heavy reliance on Lewis to explain the basic arguments of the book, but it is difficult to avoid him on this subject, and, to be sure, Barrs contextualizes his discussion in a thoroughly biblical worldview.

The comments on the five authors “incarnate” Barrs’ theory in practical terms.

Christians and non-Christians alike should read *Echoes of Eden*. Christians will find a robust rationale here for the arts, and non-Christians will find their secular, modernist assumptions challenged in a helpful way. Recommended highly.

Michael Travers
Wake Forest, North Carolina

Jeffrey P. Greenman and Timothy Larson, eds. *The Decalogue through the Centuries: From the Hebrew Scriptures to Benedict XVI*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2012. xv + 239 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-0664234904. \$30 (Paperback).

This is a collection of essays that explores the reception history of the Ten Commandments, beginning with the Hebrew Bible and New Testament and continuing up to Pope Benedict XVI. The collection is selective, of course. It includes ‘the usual suspects,’ such as Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, and John Wesley; but it also features some nice surprises. Here I am thinking especially of the essays on Moses Maimonides, Lancelot Andrewes, and Christina Rossetti. While the overall logic of the selections is not made clear, the aim of the collection is to offer a fair spectrum of the Decalogue’s history of interpretation.

Laying the biblical foundation are essays by Daniel Block and Craig Evans. Block addresses the Decalogue in the Old Testament, and, for me, his essay is the best of the whole work. He examines the Decalogue in the Old Testament and shows how reception history in fact begins in the Pentateuch itself. The Decalogue in Exod 20:2–17, he argues, is increasingly expanded as the Pentateuch progresses: by the Book of the Covenant (Exod 20:22–23:19), the Holiness Code (Lev 17–26), and ultimately in the Deuteronomic Torah (Deut 12–16, 28). The picture, then, seems to be opposite of what is typically assumed. Instead of the Ten Words being the final and fixed version of the law, they rather are the seeds from which the rest of the legal material grows. It is the Deuteronomic Torah, not the Decalogue, which stands as the mature version of God’s will for Israel. That is what Israel was to aspire to and embody, and what they bound themselves to in covenant on the plains of Moab: “the entire package—text and interpretation” (p. 21).

Evans then looks at the use of the Decalogue in the New Testament. His approach is different than Block’s, being more tabular than theological, but it too raises key features. Most interesting is

Evans' observation that the first three commands, the so-called worship commands, are never quoted by Jesus or the New Testament writers. What we find instead is much more of an interest in the last six commands, the ones dealing with the social application of worship. This would seem to indicate that devotion to Yahweh was everywhere assumed, but the social application of this was quite debated.

In the chapters on well-known theologians, there is much of what we might expect. Essays on Luther and Calvin, for instance, do a fine job of outlining their views. But since most people are well acquainted with these figures, especially with their views of the law, the chapters will serve mostly as summaries. With that said, I think the essay on John Wesley is somewhat of an exception. To my mind, it highlights things that, outside of Wesleyan circles, are not commonly known. Examples include: Wesley's hermeneutic that links God's words at creation with his words in the Ten Commandments; his view that the commands are not so much restrictive as permissive, representing a portal into a religion of the heart; and his critique of enlightenment humanism, based on the Decalogue, that thought it possible to erect social ethics apart from proper worship.

Of the lesser-known figures, I found the essay on Lancelot Andrewes quite insightful. For whatever reason, Andrewes, an Anglican of the 1500s, has been largely overlooked in Christian writings, even though he was as brilliant and subtle as any. What the chapter brings to light is how Andrewes used the Decalogue in the so-called third way—as guidance in daily godly living. Shaped by Anglican practice, which used the Decalogue in liturgy to evoke confession and petition, Andrewes took it a step further: to shape holiness and virtue. Through his sermons and devotional writings, Andrewes provided “the first systematic exposition of the Christian moral life undertaken in the Anglican tradition” (p. 167). So while Luther and Calvin still seem to get most of the attention, this collection shows that the views of Lancelot Andrewes and John Wesley deserve more serious notice.

In the end, what are the strengths and weaknesses of this book? As for weaknesses, the book arose from a collection of conference papers, and, as such, it lacks an obvious niche. It cannot be considered a textbook or systematic account of the Decalogue, for its treatment is a little too selective for that. It is not a sustained and in-depth treatment either. Having said this, I find myself thankful, as a scholar, that such essays are published, and perhaps this is the

clue to its niche: to dwell in theological libraries for student and faculty use.

As for strengths, the collection offers a variety of unique and thoughtful discussions on the Ten Commandments. The essay by Block on the Old Testament is excellent, as are the ones on Lancelot Andrewes and John Wesley. What is more, the cumulative effect of the essays, especially those on Aquinas to Wesley, helps establish a robust portrait of the Decalogue's interpretive history. While I think the primary audience is students and scholars, the collection offers a good resource also to pastors interested in fleshing out their understanding of the Ten Commandments.

A.J. Culp
Bozeman, Montana

David Dockery, ed. *Faith and Learning: A Handbook for Christian Higher Education*. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2012. xii + 548 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-1433673115. \$28.26 (Hardback).

At a time in our nation's history when most academies lack both faith and learning, David Dockery, the Chancellor of Union University, presents his reader with a comprehensive blueprint for how a college can authentically integrate biblical truth and robust inquiry in disciplines typical of four-year colleges. For the most part the contributors to this curriculum design presentation are members of the Union faculty, which at first seemed potentially parochial to the reviewer. But after touring with Dockery the various intellectual and spiritual dimensions of this campus, he walked away with a deeper understanding of how all the disparate pieces of a large, 21st century university can be woven together by a single thread.

But this single thread has a multi-colored hue. Dockery explains in the Preface that his institution, as represented by the 22 contributors to this work, avoids the two extremes of "an unquestioning acceptance of the Christian tradition," on one hand, or "free inquiry, unanchored to faith and tradition," on the other (p. xi). Rather, Dockery concludes, "Our vision for the Christian university represents something other than this 'either/or' option. We believe that the calling of Christian higher education is to reflect the life of Christ and to shine the light of truth. Our distinctive mission must not be forced into inappropriate either/or choices. We have chosen another course: the calling to be 'both/and.' ... We offer this volume as a representation of our commitment to the 'divine and'

grounded in Christ Jesus himself, who is both fully God and fully human and who is for us both light and life” (pp. xi-xii).

Following an overview of discussions on worldview and philosophical concerns, the reader is escorted to a wide variety of departments and disciplines that range from a traditional core of English, history, and philosophy to social sciences like political science and sociology. Next come the arts and music, followed by communications and media. The hard sciences of math, biology, physics, and engineering are presented late in the tour. The last stops include more practical pursuits—health care, business, and social work and counseling.

Space will not allow even the briefest explanation of each discipline’s connection to Dockery’s vision, so this reader selected the chapter on sociology for a closer review since it is in the larger arena of social sciences and receives less notice when Christian academics are under scrutiny. Roman Williams, a Ph.D. in sociology from Boston University, effectively articulates the value of his discipline in the Christian university and the Kingdom at large: “The concepts, skills, and insights of sociology are not only useful in explaining and evaluating the contemporary world in which we live, but these tools are foundational to transforming society and culture. It would be unsatisfying to identify a misrepresentation, distortion, falsehood, or problem in society and do nothing” (p. 272). Williams proposes that identification without an attempt to ameliorate the wrong is tantamount to being like the priest or Levite passing by the injured man prior to the Good Samaritan’s intervention. “In a similar way, sociology compels people to go out of their way to make a difference in someone’s life” (p. 272). (This reader/researcher calls attention to the monumental works of Notre Dame Sociologist Christian Smith as illustrative of scholarship that accomplishes both dimensions.)

Of particular interest to the reviewer, who focuses much of his research and writing in the area of the Christian philosophy of education, was how chapter 22, “Faith and Transformational Teaching,” describes the process of teaching and learning. The chapter authors, Thomas Rosebrough and Ralph Leverett, did not disappoint. The visit to the Education Department begins with some refreshing honesty—teaching and learning is a complex, not simple, proposition; and few dare to tread the path of integration in this field. Alluding to Charles Dickens’ character in *Hard Times*, the infamous school teacher Mr. Gradgrind, the authors present a compelling argument for education not being about the transfer of information from the instructor’s mind to the learners’ heads. Rather

they argue forcefully for active engagement in the teaching/learning process. The chapter includes two memorable statements related to transformational teaching and the role of Christian instructors: 1. Teachers have to reflect upon *why* they teach. We believe that *why* we teach equals *who* we teach. And, 2. Teachers have to know *how* students learn before they can teach. How our students learn should dictate how we teach (p. 479).

Rosebrough and Leverett's approach to teaching and learning serves as a double knot at the conclusion of this text to keep the thread of Dockery's Great Commission passion secure as it knits the Christian university together.

Kenneth S. Coley
Wake Forest, North Carolina

C. Marvin Pate. *Romans*. Teach the Text Commentary Series. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013. v + 345 pp. Hardback/eBook. ISBN – 978-0801092213. \$39.99 (Hardback).

The new Teach the Text Commentary Series published by Baker Books attempts to straddle the uneasy gap between technically astute exegesis and practical proclamation in a local church. Each volume has the purpose to provide an accessible exposition of the text with a focus on the preaching and teaching process itself (pp. xvi-viii). The commentary divides the biblical text into smaller preaching units and each unit is discussed within six pages or less. Each preaching unit follows a fivefold structure: *Big Idea*, *Key Themes*, *Understanding the Text*, *Teaching the Text* and *Illustrating the Text*. The commentary is attractively designed with colorful pictures and callout boxes scattered throughout to highlight additional information relevant to the text or history. This volume on Paul's epistle to the Romans by C. Marvin Pate is the first NT commentary released in this series.

Pate writes with concise clarity and the use of the first person pronoun ("I") gives the impression of having a conversation with a learned professor. Although this commentary uses footnotes very sparingly, Pate demonstrates a comfortable familiarity with the secondary literature and current issues debated among Pauline scholars. He also includes a number of helpful ancient sources as illustrative material for background. His commentary typically summarizes many of the standard evangelical interpretations, but Pate also attempts to make a few of his own contributions. He argues that inaugurated eschatology is the "key to Paul's theology" so that much of Romans is shaped by "the already and not yet" of the time

between this present age and the age to come. A second guiding perspective for Pate is that Rom. 1:16-17, the theme of the letter, must be interpreted in light of the story of Israel—God’s faithfulness, Israel’s disobedience and exile, and Israel’s promised restoration (Isaiah 40–66). Finally, Pate suggests that the genre and outline of Romans follows the fivefold covenantal structure of the Hittite suzerain-vassal treaties. Each of these perspectives tends to surface throughout his interpretation of the text.

Romans 1:16-17 represents the first point of contact with some major debates concerning the phrases “righteousness of God,” “from faith to faith” and “the just will live by faith.” He first argues that this passage represents Paul’s reading of the restoration promises of Isaiah so that terms like “not ashamed,” “gospel,” “power,” “salvation,” “righteousness,” “revealed” and “faith” must be understood from the story of Israel (p. 30). He takes a transformative, rather than forensic, view of the righteousness of God as God’s saving act of fulfilling his promises to restore Israel (pp. 30-31). As such, this righteousness is “from the faithfulness of God to the faith of human beings.” Justification by faith, then, refers to an individual’s faith in the faithfulness of God. Faith in Christ is contrasted with the works of the law, which refers to Israel’s attempt at salvation through obedience to the Mosaic Law. In Rom. 3:21-26, Pate argues that the atonement fulfills what was only anticipated in the OT sacrifices. It demonstrates the perfect balance of God’s judging righteousness (“God is the just”) and his saving righteousness (“and justifier”). He maintains that “faith of Jesus” means “faith in Jesus” (objective genitive) as opposed to “faithfulness of Jesus” (subjective genitive).

When interpreting Rom. 9:6-29, Pate sets it within the covenantal structure (Hittite suzerain-vassal treaties) as curses on Israel for unbelief and blessings on Gentiles and the Jewish remnant (p. 190). Pate discusses the Calvinist, Arminian, and the corporate views of election and reprobation, but he ultimately prefers a type of mediating position by stating “God sovereignly chooses individuals’ destinies, but paradoxically humans have the power and responsibility to choose Christ for themselves” (pp. 194-95). Incidentally, he takes the reference to the salvation of all Israel (Rom. 11:26) as a future event when all ethnic Jews will believe in Jesus as the messiah and thereby join the rest of spiritual Israel—believing Jews and Gentiles (p. 225).

This commentary is intended for pastors to use as part of sermon preparation. It is a commentary written by an academic primarily for a non-academic audience. Those looking for a thorough

exegesis of the text may want to consult more technical commentaries. The “preaching units” are very manageable for use in a Sunday school or bible study setting although some of the divisions could be a bit forced. While there are a few places where one may want to quibble with the interpretation or critically examine some of the more novel suggestions, overall Pate offers a clear, judicious and informed interpretation of the biblical text. Anyone teaching the text of Romans, especially in a church, will want to keep this commentary close at hand.

Alan S. Bandy
Shawnee, Oklahoma

James A. Patterson. *James Robinson Graves: Staking the Boundaries of Baptist Identity*. Studies in Baptist Life and Thought, Michael A. G. Haykin, Series Editor. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2012. xvii + 238 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-1433671661. \$19.99 (Paperback).

Author. Editor. Controversialist. Preacher. Debater, par excellence. James Robinson Graves was all of these things and more as Graves’ biographer, James A. Patterson, explains in *James Robinson Graves: Staking the Boundaries of Baptist Identity*. Most twenty-first century Southern Baptists have never heard of Graves—more’s the pity. At a time when people demand relevance, what could be more relevant than the life of a person who perhaps more than anyone else shaped Southern Baptist identity? His lingering influence is beyond dispute.

Graves’ path to Southern Baptist notoriety began in Vermont where he was born in 1820. He came to Nashville in 1845 after brief stints in Kentucky and Ohio. Graves became famous as editor of *The Tennessee Baptist*; he became infamous for the controversies he stirred in the newsprint he edited and the books he wrote. Never one to back down from a challenge, either real or imagined, Graves fired polemical broadsides at Methodists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and Disciples (or, “Campbellites”) with equal passion. His newspaper featured a regular column titled, “And Still They Come...” where he reported conversion stories of those who had seen the error of their ways thanks to his ministry. And, not content to rile those merely outside the Baptist fold, Graves also challenged other Baptists over doctrine and polity when he believed it was necessary. He was particularly sensitive to situations in which he believed denominational structures like mission boards had over-stepped their authority with respect to local church au-

tonomy. When combined with his oratorical and editorial skills, Graves' feistiness made him one of the most beloved—or despised—ministers in the entire nineteenth century.

So, what made J. R. Graves such a polarizing figure? Graves believed that Baptist churches were the only legitimate expressions of ecclesiastical life. All others were merely “religious societies,” and offspring of Roman Catholicism, to boot. He also insisted that in New Testament usage “ecclesia” only meant “congregation,” and hence, there was no universal, invisible church of all believers. Finally, Graves maintained that “true churches” had existed in an unbroken chain from the first century. That is, Jesus had established His kind of churches during His earthly sojourn, and according to Matthew 16:18, the “gates of hell” had never prevailed against them. His detractors balked at the suggestion that they might not belong to a “legitimate church.” His supporters rejoiced in the identity he built for them.

Graves died in 1893 and as Patterson observes, subsequent assessments of his contributions to Southern Baptist life proved less than kind. A self-taught man, Graves had endorsed and printed G. H. Orchard's *History of the Baptists*. Unfortunately for Graves, Orchard's *History* is rife with historical errors, inciting university/seminary trained historians to pounce on Graves' uncritical use of it. Others challenged his hermeneutics and understanding of the Greek New Testament. Meanwhile, some resisted the bureaucratizing tendencies of early-to-mid-twentieth-century Southern Baptist life only to find themselves increasingly marginalized. Ultimately, new denominational groups like the American Baptist Association and the Baptist Missionary Association appeared, each firmly committed to Graves and his teachings.

James Patterson tells Graves' story with fairness and the grace that his protagonist did not always reserve for his opponents. To be sure, Patterson's work is by no means hagiographic. Nonetheless, he correctly observes that Graves feared abusive power at the expense of personal liberty. He also notes that Landmarkism represents a synthesis of Graves' distinct ecclesiology, successionist history applied to Baptist churches, and mid-nineteenth-century American republicanism. Ironically, Graves' strict localism and suspicion of organizational hierarchialism is reminiscent of “3-selfism,” a nineteenth century non-Baptist theory of missionary work that insisted churches should be self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating. Perhaps Baptists were not the only ones interested in articulating proper authority structures.

Between approximately 1979 and 1991, Southern Baptists were enmeshed in a period known as “the Controversy.” Some blamed it on Landmarkism. Why not? Since Graves, practically any denominational kerfuffle has sparked the charge that someone somewhere was/is a Landmarker. Confused? Get James Patterson’s book and read it carefully. It will go a long way in answering your questions.

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Steven Boyer and Christopher Hall, *The Mystery of God: Theology for Knowing the Unknowable*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012. 244 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-0801027734. \$17.99 (Paperback).

In *The Mystery of God: Theology for Knowing the Unknowable* Steven Boyer and Christopher Hall seek to investigate the “notion of divine mystery ... in a way that is explicitly theological” (p. xiv). As such, “to approach God is to approach an unfathomable depth of reality and truth that, like the sun in the sky, is too intense, too bright to look at, but that nevertheless brings meaning and coherence and beauty to everything else. God is a mystery” (p. xiv). Toward this end Boyer and Hall divide the volume into two parts. In the first part they explore the analogy of the sun and its implications for a proper understanding of mystery. In the second part they set out to apply their understanding of mystery to such loci as the Trinity (chapter five), incarnation (chapter six), salvation (chapter seven), and even the problem of pluralism (chapter nine). For the remaining portion of this review I will detail Boyer and Hall’s account of mystery, and focus on one point of application, namely the implications of mystery on the problem of pluralism.

As Boyer and Hall note, the most common biblical use of mystery denotes a “marvelous plan or purpose that God has revealed for creation” (p. 5). In other words, Scripture portrays mystery as something that has been made known (e.g. the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream in Daniel 2), yet with aspects that are not fully apprehended. On some accounts the notion of mystery resides in a paucity of information, but with God it can be the opposite—there is an excess of information (p. 7). The result of this “quantitative inexhaustibility” is our inability as finite knowers to “take it all in” (p. 7). As such, we could never fully apprehend what God gives in revelation, thus a purely rationalistic approach to knowing God is insufficient. Instead, Boyer and Hall suggest a model of mystery predicated on an analogy. Consider a two-dimensional man that lives in a two-dimensional world. Every form

of experience is two-dimensional, and every category of rationality is two-dimensional. Suppose he is presented with a sphere. Such a figure, it seems to him, is impossible. And yet it is given in his experience. The Flatlander can analyze the sphere and yet there will be more about the figure that “remains outside of his two-dimensional perception, namely, the third dimension, which makes this figure not just a circle, but a cylinder” (p. 11). Under this construal, human reason can and should be applied to God because “dimensional mystery” is a form of revelational mystery—something of God has been given to us in our experience. Accordingly, we should expect God to be both reasonable (and so we should not dispense with reason) and beyond reason (and so we should recognize that some theological truths will appear to us as irrational). Otherwise conceived, God is “not less than rational but more” (p. 17).

How does this apply to the relationship between Christianity and other faiths? If our knowledge of God is opaque, then must we accept, as the pluralist suggests, that each person’s concept of God runs parallel and none is better than the other? To this Boyer and Hall exclaim, “our proposal is one that very happily grants priority and precedence to God’s revelation in Christ” (p. 229). Why? Because the truth of God has been expressed by God himself in human terms. To borrow again from the Flatlander analogy, the three-dimensional God is more than a two-dimensional knower can comprehend. But simply because there is more to God does not mean that the aspects that we do possess are inaccurate. Instead, the portraits of God that we have revealed in His word and His Son are accurate “precisely to the extent that they point beyond themselves” (p. 227). To wit, we know “more than mere creatures have any right to know, because God himself has put the unspeakable reality of the Creator into the most adequate terms that creatureliness allows” (p. 214). Further, “are they adequate terms for our knowledge? Certainly, for God has chosen to reveal himself. Are they exhaustively adequate, so that they give complete, unqualified knowledge of the fullness of the divine? Certainly not, for God has revealed himself as the unfathomable Creator of heaven and earth, the transcendent One, who ever remains past finding out” (p. 214).

The Mystery of God is well worth the read for both its clarity and its breadth. Boyer and Hall expose some of the limitations of rationalism, yet avoid the blunders of content-less mysticism. They rightly emphasize that theology (and thus knowing God) cannot be

divorced from the worship of God. We know and learn through worship.

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Francis J. Moloney. *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012. xviii + 398 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-0801048418. \$32.99 (Paperback).

Francis J. Moloney opens his commentary covering the standard introductory material. Though briefer than many other modern Mark commentaries, the introduction covers all the major introductory issues. He accepts the current majority position in seeing Mark as the first Gospel, though he denies we can have certainty in this matter. He regards as hard facts that (1) “the author is familiar with the Roman world, its language, and its mode of government,” (2) “the author and the community for whom he was writing were concerned about the mission to the Gentiles,” (3) “the community is exposed to suffering and persecution,” and (4) “the Gospel was written shortly after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 C.E.” (p. 14).

Though this volume approaches the Gospel as a “unified, theologically driven narrative” (p. xvii), Moloney does not disregard important historical-critical questions that he says must be asked of any ancient text. So while focusing on the narrative and theological connections throughout the Gospel, Moloney makes historical-critical observations along the way.

According to Moloney, the Gospel of Mark is “a story of human failure: the apparent failure of Jesus, the failure of the disciples, and the failure of Israel” (p. 22). With this storyline, Mark is divided into four major sections. In Mark 1:1–13, the reader, who is well aware that Jesus ends up on the cross, is issued a challenge: “How does he [Jesus] live a life, preach a message, and die a death which restore God’s original design and make the Father delight in him (1:11)?” (p. 40). Mark 1:14–8:30 details the rejection of Jesus by the religious leaders, the establishment of the new family of Jesus, and the failure of the disciples to fully understand. Mark 8:31–15:47 follows Jesus on his journey to and arrival in Jerusalem where he suffers, dies, and rises again. Moloney points out the irony of the cross: “The reader is made aware that it is only *on the cross* that Jesus can lay claim to be savior, Christ, the king of Israel, as his enemies demand that he comes down from the cross that they might see and believe (15:30, 32)” (p. 336). In Mark 16:1–8, the last section that Moloney believes was authentic, the story ends surprisingly, yet

fittingly within Mark's overall theological agenda: An empty tomb and the announcement of resurrection are met with terror and flight. The disciples' failure throughout the Gospel is carried through to the very end. However, the words of Jesus echoed by the angel in Mark 16:7 provide the reader "hope in the midst of ambiguity and failure" (p. 24). Though he does not view it as part of Mark's original narrative, Moloney includes an appendix with commentary on Mark 16:9–20.

The placement of the more technical discussions in the footnotes of this volume helps produce a readable prose. It does use Greek and Latin without transliteration, but it at times includes an English translation of the Greek. Moreover, the detailed footnotes attest to the breadth of Moloney's knowledge of secondary sources; these citations suggest that he is well versed in major recent and older commentaries.

Besides the invariable minor disagreements, I am left questioning a couple of recurrent practices in the commentary. While Moloney is critical of much of redaction criticism in his introduction, he regularly and confidently distinguishes between "Markan" and "pre-Markan" material. In these cases, he is almost entirely dependent on secondary works he cites in his footnotes, noting that investigating these matters further is not the concern of the present study (p. 57). Considering the likelihood that the situation leading to the synoptic problem was more complex than is sometimes suggested and because redaction criticism is often plagued by a lack of precise agreed-upon criteria, some will no doubt question Moloney's confidence in deciphering between redaction and tradition.

Furthermore, at times Moloney rejects the historicity of certain pericopes. For instance, he writes that "Mark has some glaring errors of fact" in his account of John the Baptist's death (6:17-29), insisting, for example, that Philip was not married to Herodias, but to her daughter, Salome and that it was incorrect to call Herod Antipas a "king." Various commentaries have explained these alleged "errors" in various ways, and while Moloney should be respected for his honesty, one would like to have seen him at least in dialogue with those who find Mark to be more reliable and are hesitant confidently to accuse him of error.

Despite the questions raised above, these issues do not detract from Moloney's narrational interpretation of the Gospel. This commentary is particularly strong in identifying intertextual links within Mark and in accurately describing the storyline, with Christology being linked to discipleship. In its hardback edition (2002), this

book was already fairly well received and should continue to serve well those who seek to understand the Gospel of Mark better.

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