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Book Reviews

David Marcus. *The Masorah of the Former Prophets in the Leningrad Codex*. Vol. 3, *1 Samuel*. Texts and Studies 14. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2018. vi + 506 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-1463205973. $182.00

Few Bible readers are overly concerned with the Masorah—the scribal notes surrounding the medieval manuscripts. The diminutive typeface appears to confirm its inconsequential status, and several new editions exclude it altogether.[1] The astute student may take note of the odd circellus (small ring) above uncommon words, spellings, or combinations of words in *Biblia Hebraica*.[2] She knows to find the appropriate accompanying Masorah parva (Mp) comment on the outside margins. A few of the more common abbreviations (חסֵ "defective," קִ "to be read") and the numbers (בְּ "twice") may be familiar, but many of the notes and Masorah magna (Mm) references are far from transparent.[3] While this Hebrew-Aramaic amalgam was crafted to ensure a particular, fastidious textualization, most modern readers are mystified by the minor textual comments, tallies, and cross-references. David Marcus addresses such issues in *The Masorah of the Former Prophets in the Leningrad Codex* [*MFPLC*].

Marcus's research represents a recent revival of Masoretic studies. This trend is observable in the growing incorporation of these ancient textual notes into the *Biblia Hebraica* editions. With the Second Rabbinic

[1] Aron Dotan ed., *Biblia Hebraica Leningradensia* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2001); Philip Brown and Bryan Smith, *A Reader's Hebrew Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008); Donald Vance, *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia: A Reader's Edition* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2014).

[2] Rudolf Kittel, *Biblia Hebraica* [*BHK*] (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1937); Karl Elliger and Wilhelm Rudolph, *Biblica Hebraica Stuttgartensia* [*BHS*] (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1997); A. Schenker, *Biblia Hebraica Quinta* [*BHQ*] (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2004–).

[3] See Gérard E. Weil, *Massorah Gedolah iuxta codicem Leningradensem B 19 a* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1971); Mordechai Breuer, *The Biblical Text in the Jerusalem Crown Edition and Its Sources in the Masora and Manuscripts* (Jerusalem: Keren Ha-Masora, 2003); Israel Yeivin, *Introduction to the Tiberian Masorah* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1980); Page Kelley, *The Masorah of Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).

Bible of 1525 (*Miqra'ot Gedolot*), which served as the basis of the KJV and nearly all printed Hebrew Bibles into the last century, an attempt was made to represent the Masoretic Text (MT) tradition, including the Mp and Mm, using various (unidentified) manuscripts. In the middle of the nineteenth century though, with the rediscovery of an early, complete manuscript, the Leningrad Codex (M^{L}) or Firkovich B 19^{A}, a shift from eclecticism to documentary representation began.

BHK includes a facsimile of the text of M^{L} with eclectic Mp notes but no systematic treatment of the Mm. *BHS* adds an innovative catalogue of Mm notes as an apparatus below the text: Using a reference number from Mm 1 to Mm 4271, Gérard Weil indexed and standardized the M^{L} lists in a supplemental volume. *BHQ* finally realizes "an essentially diplomatic representation" of the M^{L} Masorah instead of favoring an aggregated "totality of data" of earlier diplomatic collations and corrected editions.[4] In addition to a glossary of common Masorah abbreviations, appendices include commentaries that translate and discuss the notes. Dotan and Reich recently published a comprehensive index of the M^{L} Masorah as a digital resource.[5] And now we can add the six volumes of *MFPLC*.

The third *MFPLC* volume includes all annotations from M^{L} 1 Samuel. Following each verse, the Mp and Mm notes for each lemma are transcribed and translated in their entirety, even if the information may be incorrect or inconsistent. Verse lists are provided both with the original "catchwords" and modern chapter-verse references. For example, the Mm at the top of M^{L} folio 150 indicates that צוֹפִים (1 Sam 1:1) occurs ג מל ב חסֵ "three times, <once> plene (and) twice defective" (p. 2). The references are given with the Hebrew catchwords in order (Num 23:14; Jer 6:17; 1 Sam 1:1). This presentation is far superior to *BHS* which inverts the original Mm note and collapses it into the Mp with reference to Mm 1528. Weil correctly includes the verse list; elsewhere they are rearranged (cf. Mm 1529).

Accompanying this dizzying mass of data is Marcus's clearly written commentary. These annotations are worth the not insignificant cost of these hefty volumes. Regarding 1 Sam 19:10, בלילה הוא דׄ שתה ודמך לה וקם וערק is explained: "The Masorah notes the *four* occurrences of this phrase, without the expected def. article on הוּא, as opposed to the regular phrase בַּלַּיְלָה הַהוּא that occurs *sixteen* times. The catchwords are given in the form of an Aramaic mnemonic 'he drank, slept, rose, and fled'" (p. 319). The list is enumerated with the corresponding Hebrew *Vorlage*: Gen 19:33 (וַתִּשְׁקֶיןָ), 30:16 (וַיִּשְׁכַּב), 32:23 (וַיָּקָם), and 1 Sam 19:10 (וַיָּנָס).

[4] "Introduction," *BHQ*, x–xi,.

[5] Aron Dotan and Nurit Reich, *Masora Thesaurus* (OakTree Software, 2014).

MFPLC is an unparalleled *tour de force* but is not without suggested improvements. First, while including the entire front matter of the first volume may be unwieldy, an abridged version of Chapter 6 ("How the Corpus is Arranged") would provide quick reference in each of the other volumes. As it stands, one must have Volume One handy if the differences between abbreviations, notations, bibliographic references, or underline/bold verse references must be queried. Second, a helpful addition would be an index of the disparities between *BHS* and M^{L}, particularly the annotations not found in M^{L} and thus not included in *MFPLC*. Examples include an Mp note with שתי נשים (1 Sam 1:2) indicating the only other occurrence of this sequence at Gen 4:17, and both an Mp and Mm note with the first word of 1 Sam 1:7. Third, a cross-referenced index to Weil's Mm numbers would be beneficial for readers using *BHS*.

Had *MFPLC* merely represented and translated the M^{L} Masorah, Marcus would deserve our appreciation (cf. the volumes of *BHQ* for several of these books, which are decades from completion). But his care to evaluate the textual wealth of these ancient scholars will most certainly bring life to their methods of text production and even to their impetuses for constructing the MT tradition. Marcus deserves wholehearted acclaim for moving forward the field of Masoretic studies. The value of *MFPLC* cannot be overstated for the study of the Former Prophets. And we await his (hopefully!) forthcoming series on the remaining books of M^{L}.

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F. Dorie Mansen. *The Unremembered Dead: The Non-Burial Motif in the Hebrew Bible*. Perspectives on Hebrew Scriptures and Its Contexts 26. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2018. xii + 340 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-1463206963. $120.00.

The handling of the dead reveals a society's complex of beliefs regarding death and the afterlife. While the proper care of the body through burial and funerary rites generally shows that life does not end in death, its deprivation may indicate a range of meanings. The monograph under review, which is F. Dorie Mansen's revised doctoral dissertation, is a methodical investigation of the non-burial motif in the Hebrew Bible, arguing that threats of post-mortem abuse functioned as a powerful rhetorical tool for various ideological ends.

Six chapters, which flow logically, comprise the examination of the non-burial motif. Chapter 1 serves as an introduction, where non-burial,

as a threatened or enacted act of violence that results in post-mortem disgrace, is situated along a spectrum of honor that Saul Olyan identified: Denial of burial is the most disgraceful or dishonorable fate of the dead. However, instead of Delbert Hiller's influential classification of non-burial as a "curse" in light of ANE treaties, Dorie Mansen proposes a revised typological description for the motif according to five socio-literary characteristics: (1) elements of post-mortem abuse; (2) reason for the abuse; (3) agent of abuse; (4) victim of abuse; and (5) intended result of abuse. This typology is employed to examine biblical references to the non-burial motif that appears across literary genres and traditions.

The second chapter contextualizes the stereotypical terminology for non-burial in the culture of Israel's neighbors as points of contact. Archaeological, inscriptional, and literary evidence from Mesopotamian, Ugaritic, Egyptian, and Phoenician texts show that proper burial is critical to a peaceful existence after death, and threats or punishments of non-burial can result in shame for the living kin and the dead's inability to rest with the ancestors. In some Mesopotamian contexts, post-mortem abuse and the disposal of the bodies of the defeated are tied to military victory. In Ugaritic references, post-mortem disgrace is an act of retaliation. In Egypt, the care for the dead is related to the preservation of a person's identity in the afterlife. Though there is significant overlap between Israel and its neighbors with regard to burial ideology, there is nonetheless one difference in that the agent of abuse in Israelite texts is frequently God.

Chapter 3 surveys the archaeological and lexical evidence for the Israelite belief system on death and points out that the main concern is for a timely and honorable burial after death. Mourning rites that accompany a burial, and burial within the ancestral tomb or land, are desirable, ideal even, for they constitute proper burial. The emphasis on such elements shows the importance of familial kinship.

The fourth and fifth chapters form the heart of the argument of the monograph. Chapter 4 surveys some forty-nine references to the non-burial motif across thirteen books in the Hebrew Bible and identifies some variations in the way the biblical traditions employ stereotypical terminology associated with the non-burial motif. This terminology includes the threat of predatory birds and scavenging animals, the decomposition of the corpse, and post-mortem ignominy evident in verbs such as to "to cast" or "to fling" a corpse, "to cut off" from a community, "to bury" with the particle of negation, and "to scatter" instead of "to gather." Using the five interpretive categories previously identified for examining texts that employ stereotypical terminology linked to the non-burial motif in the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings, Mansen shows the dynamism of this literary motif in the many ways it is used in these traditions.

Two examples should suffice: First, several texts present God as the active agent of post-mortem abuse. Although inanimate objects and natural calamities act as agents in others, God is implied as the instigator. Second, the victims of post-mortem disgrace include both the individuals and corporate entities.

The fifth chapter exegetically examines six specific passages that employ the non-burial motif: Num 14:28–35; Deut 28:26; 1 Sam 17:44–47; 1 Kgs 14:10–11; Isa 14:18–20; and Jer 8:1–3. The goal is to shed light on the rhetorical function of the threat of non-burial within their socio-historical contexts. One of the important findings is that the threat of non-burial is often directed against those who display disloyalty to the covenant, which is meant to destroy or diminish the identity of the victim. The intended outcome though is knowledge of God as sovereign and just ruler.

The sixth chapter teases out the implications of the biblical use of the non-burial motif, specifically as it applies to how the identities of both agent and victim of post-mortem abuse are conceived. Insights from anthropology buttress the claim that post-mortem disgrace diminishes or destroys the identity and memory of the victim. Since Israel's identity depends on God's covenant with them, the literary use of the non-burial motif becomes a deadly weapon in the author's arsenal in reinforcing covenant fidelity and in showing the ultimate power of Israel's covenant partner.

The study is well done. Still, the treatment of identity, admittedly a complex subject, could use further exploration: If the view is correct that in Israelite anthropology individual identity is intimately intertwined with the collective, what would the differentiation between individual and communal victim of post-mortem abuse imply? In any event, while this volume tends to be repetitive at times and contains some typographical errors, misspelling of names and footnoting inconsistencies, it is nevertheless a welcome and valuable addition to the understanding of Israelite death and burial ideology.

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Peter J. Williams. *Can We Trust the Gospels?* Wheaton: Crossway, 2018. 153 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-1433552953. $17.99.

Peter Williams, the principal of Tyndale House, Cambridge, devotes his attention to one question in this book: Can we trust the Gospels? He chose this question for the title of the book because of his focus on the

"trustworthiness" of the Gospels, namely his treatment of evidence that supports their reliability (p. 15). Williams recognizes that while the claims of Jesus demand a response, these claims depend upon the trustworthiness of the Gospels. He writes: "But before we consider such claims, we need to ask whether the Gospels show the signs of trustworthiness we usually look for in things we believe" (p. 16). For this reason, Williams presents a short volume that consolidates the necessary information that a general audience may study further.

In the eight chapters of the book, Williams surveys the historical records of Jesus in non-Christian sources such as Cornelius Tacitus, Pliny the Younger, and Flavius Josephus. He investigates the geographical references to towns, regions, and bodies of water and contrasts the data with non-canonical works such as the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Philip, and the Gospel of Judas. He offers a statistical analysis of name usage in antiquity that demonstrates that the Gospels' writers most likely did not invent the stories and characters of the Bible. He discusses the text-critical reliability of the Gospels and interacts with claims of contradictions in Scripture. Finally, Williams concludes the book by treating the most contentious topic for the reliability of the Gospels—miracles, and particularly the resurrection of Jesus.

In addition to historical, statistical, and comparative data, Williams balances the presentation of evidence with an apologetic discussion about what claims may reasonably be concluded from the data. For example, as he discusses the early claims about Jesus, he highlights the logical improbability that that such claims arose after AD 62 (p. 34). Additionally, Williams devotes a chapter to the criteria of "undesigned coincidences," which are instances of agreement between writers that are most likely not deliberate (p. 89). Furthermore, when discussing the likelihood that the writers accurately preserved the words of Jesus, he suggests to his readers that they apply ancient conventions for truthful reporting rather than modern ones (pp. 98–99). Overall, Williams has written a book balancing data and deductions that offer reasonable certainty for the trustworthiness of the Gospels.

Can We Trust the Gospels? is the work of a seasoned scholar in biblical research. Williams tactfully exercises scholarly caution while presenting conclusions from the available evidence—never arguing more than what the data allows and never asserting less than what the data demands. As an example, when he discusses the geographical details in the Gospels, he suggests that the writers were most likely acquainted with the land themselves and do not demonstrate the qualities of a writer who would invent a story from a distance. While offering these conclusions, Williams provides the following qualification: "My argument is not that knowledge of

these geographical details demonstrates the Gospels to be true, but rather that the idea that they got the story wrong for lack of high-quality information on the location of events is false" (p. 62). He patiently builds his case on the totality of evidence rather than arguing more than is warranted. Furthermore, Williams demonstrates his commitment to evidence regardless of the popularity of his conclusions when he argues that the Gospels were most likely written before AD 70, a position that could support Jesus's ability to predict the future (pp. 47–49).

In addition to the Gospels' data and the book's apologetic nature, Williams occasionally interacts with the assumptions of skeptics who wish to argue the Gospels are untrustworthy. He exposes the hollowness of explanations from scholars like Bart Ehrman and also addresses those who are unmoved from an atheist disposition. For example, he appropriately points to those who are committed to atheistic assumptions, writing: "If someone is committed to a materialist atheist position on miracles, then no amount of evidence will be able to disturb this belief. He or she will encounter the lines of evidence presented in this book and will find alternative explanations" (p. 133).

Can We Trust the Gospels? is an excellent volume that will benefit the academy and the church. The book cannot address every detail in totality and Williams admits that more may be written than is presented in this book. However, he presents enough information necessary for a general audience to trust the Gospels and to investigate further, should they desire. In sum, he writes with the mind of a scholar and the heart of a disciple. This is clearly expressed in a concluding statement of the book: "If the picture of Jesus in the Gospels is basically true, it logically demands that we give up possession of our lives to serve Jesus Christ, who said repeatedly in every Gospel, 'Follow me'" (p. 140).

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Peter Enns. *How the Bible Actually Works: In Which I Explain How an Ancient, Ambiguous, and Diverse Book Leads Us to Wisdom Rather Than Answers—and Why That's Great News*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2019. 292 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-0062686749. $26.99.

How the Bible Actually Works (hereafter *HBAW*) seems to be an updated and expanded version of Enns's 2014 work, *The Bible Tells Me So: Why Defending Scripture Has Made Us Unable to Read It*. It is the most recent presentation of Enns's perspective on the nature of the Bible and biblical

interpretation. It is designed for popular consumption rather than an academic audience. Indeed, Enns laces its pages with humor (a plus in this reviewer's opinion!). To adequately assess *HBAW*, this review, first, commends *HBAW* for popularizing academic biblical studies and, second, engages and (largely) critiques the three primary claims of *HBAW*.

HBAW deserves praise for making many profitable points for a lay audience from the field of professional biblical studies. Topics Enns illuminates include: (a) Torah as wisdom (pp. 54–71), (b) critical scholarship on Deuteronomy (pp. 82–86), (c) YHWH's council of divine beings (pp. 129–31), (d) the influence of the exile on the production and message of Scripture (pp. 166–73), (e) the purpose of the Synoptics (pp. 205–12), (f) issues related to the New Perspective on Paul (pp. 218–38), and (g) the Quadriga—the ancient and medieval method of interpretation which views every biblical text from four angles (literal, allegorical, moral, and eschatological, pp. 274–75). *HBAW* thus deserves commendation for serving as an entree into the panoply of subjects which constitute academic biblical studies.

HBAW also contains three primary claims repeated multiple times throughout the volume. First, the Bible is an ancient, ambiguous, and diverse book, and these factors should influence the way that interpreters read it. Second, the Bible leads its readers to wisdom rather than answers. Third, the biblical authors constantly reimagined God based on their changing historical circumstances. The first primary claim is both insightful and incomplete. Throughout *HBAW* Enns demonstrates that interpreters must recognize the Bible's antiquity, ambiguity, and diversity to understand it properly. His examples are legion and, in a number of instances, helpful. However, Enns ignores the Bible's overarching unity. Interpreters will debate the nature and extent of the Bible's unity, but to ignore or even deny the Bible's unity altogether is a misstep.[6] The Bible tells one overarching story about God's plan to build his kingdom through his covenants, beginning at creation and ending at the new creation. Enns's triumvirate (ancient, ambiguous, and diverse) is incomplete. Adding the category of unity to his list paints a more accurate picture of the nature of Scripture.

Enns's second primary claim is astute but insufficiently nuanced. His subtitle states that the Bible, "leads us to wisdom *rather than* answers" (emphasis added). Enns offers numerous examples (outside the book of

[6] It is unclear whether or not Enns would overtly deny the Bible's unity. However, his emphasis on ambiguity and diversity leads me to think that he would.

Proverbs but much like the book of Proverbs) that lead the reader to wisdom rather than answers. So, should God's people submit to human governments at all times and in all circumstances? On the surface, a text like Rom 13:1 ("Let every person be subject to the governing authorities . . ." ESV) seems to answer in the affirmative. Enns points out, however, that interpreters must consider the Romans' context (i.e., the recent exile of the Jews from Rome under Emperor Claudius in 50 CE) and not necessarily read this injunction as a binding principle for all time. Perhaps, Enns suggests, Paul was encouraging this Jewish-Christian community to keep a low profile to avoid persecution. Moreover, he notes the stream of biblical teaching that anticipates the undoing of governmental oppression in history (Isa 9:4; 10:27; Jer 30:8, pp. 256–60). Enns's answer to the question, "Should Christians always obey Romans 13:1?" would probably be something like, "They need wisdom to answer this question and, by giving various options, the Bible is the source of such wisdom."

While the above example is relevant, Enns mistakenly applies this wisdom approach to every text of Scripture. In reality, some texts of Scripture do provide authoritative answers to religious questions: Scripture uniformly answers the following, "Do humans have inherent dignity?" (Yes); "Is there one, divine being who rules over the heavenly and earthly realms?" (Yes); "Is this divine being just or merciful?" (Both); and "How should humans respond to the revelation of this divine being?" (By receiving his grace and walking in obedience). These examples, at least, demonstrate that Enns inaccurately contends that the Bible only leads to wisdom rather than answers.

The third claim, that the biblical authors constantly reimagine God, is only partially true, like his other primary claims. To his credit, Enns attempts to account for the diversity of thought across the canon. For example, the differences between Abraham's view of God and the Apostle John's view of God appear to be a fecund example of the biblical author's reimagining God. However, Enns's perspective has, at least, two flaws. First, it ignores and undermines the continuity of the biblical authors' portrait of God across the canon, a weakness related to my earlier critique that Enns fails to recognize the overarching unity of the Bible because of his focus on its diversity. In both Testaments, God is both one and many (Gen 1:26–27; Isa 6:8; John 1:1–14). In both Testaments, he is just and merciful (Exod 34:6–7; Rom 3:21–26). In both Testaments, he plans to redeem the world through a descendant of Abraham and David (Gen 12:1–3; 2 Sam 7:12–16; Matt 1:1). In both Testaments, he personally enters into human history in miraculous ways (Gen 18; Luke 1–2).

Second, some of Enns's examples of reimagination are dubious. Considering the theme of resurrection in the Old Testament, he asserts, "No

one would arrive at a conclusion like that [i.e., future, universal resurrection] simply from reading the Old Testament. Rather, you have to start with seeing Jesus as the 'solution,' read the Bible backwards, so to speak, and reimagine God to account for this surprising turn of events" (p. 245). This statement ignores a number of Old Testament texts, such as Isa 25:7–8a, "And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death forever." Examples of inaccurately positing reimagination, like this one, abound in *HBAW* despite some productive examples.

In conclusion, *HBAW*, unlike *The Bible Tells Me So*, is a useful volume. I would cautiously recommend it to an educated audience, but I would also recommend that they read a critical review along with it.

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James T. Turner. *On the Resurrection of the Dead: A New Metaphysics of Afterlife for Christian Thought*. New York: Routledge, 2019. 244 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-1138350625. $140.00.

Turner opens his innovative work *On the Resurrection of the Dead* by noting a problem for Christians. He asks, "What kind of a thing is a human being such that it can die, its parts dissolve, spread to the wider cosmos, and come back together again to form a body rising from the grave?" (p. 4). If Christians want to affirm a bodily resurrection, what must they believe about the human person and the time between death and resurrection? It is Turner's aim to clarify this relationship. He does so by setting forth three theological affirmations that all Christians should accept: (1) Bodily resurrection is not a superfluous hope of afterlife. (2) There is immediate post-mortem existence in Paradise. (3) There is numerical identity between pre-mortem and post-resurrection human beings. He then determines which anthropological positions can endorse them.

Therefore, he begins in Chapter 1 by arguing that substance dualism is both untenable for Christian theology and in fact false (p. 11). He thinks 1 Cor 15:12–19 demonstrates its falsity. For, if one affirms substance dualism, he denies Paul's premises and conclusion (p. 27). Here one finds Turner's most provocative claim. He thinks Christians should deny the intermediate state because it undermines the first theological affirmation (p. 11). If the intermediate state really exists, the bodily resurrection is unnecessary (p. 21). Next, he argues that physicalism too fails to meet the three theological affirmations sufficiently in Chapter 2. He primarily looks to versions offered by Peter van Inwagen, Kevin Corcoran, Dean Zim-

merman, and Trenton Merricks. He finds all the versions wanting for various reasons. Chapter 3 engages Lynne Baker's constitution view at length and advances extensive critiques against it. Chapter 4 explains hylemorphism (concrete material objects are a compound of matter and form, whereas being is strictly just existence) and asks whether it allows for disembodied souls. Here he critiques Thomas Aquinas and Eleonore Stump by claiming that it is flatly impossible to have a disembodied soul (p. 171). Chapter 5 is the hinge chapter in the book, providing the metaphysics of time that can account for all three theological affirmations. He calls his position "eschatological presentism," which is a form of compound presentism suggesting "that present realities are spread out across two adjacent temporal moments" (p. 200). Chapter 6 concludes by summarizing the argument of the book: He thinks a version of hylemorphism coupled with eschatological presentism is what fits with the biblical witness.

Having quickly summarized Turner's book, are there any weaknesses? I have several misgivings about his work that exceed the scope of this review. Suffice to say, I think he assumes a greater tension between the resurrection and the intermediate state than exists. He claims it is a "clear contradiction" (p. 28). He also thinks the bodily resurrection can't do anything more than what the intermediate state could do (p. 56). However, if Christians have believed it for nearly two millennia, I wonder if there isn't an alternative? But most devastatingly, his entire argument builds toward how one can affirm the immediate post-mortem existence of humans in paradise without affirming the intermediate state. And yet his positive construction of how this works is the thinnest portion.

The bulk of his work is deconstruction, showing how other positions fail to meet the test, but when it comes time for him to defend his own position he admittedly punts to mystery (p. 210). If anyone is to be convinced by his thesis, she needs to be convinced not only that alternatives are false, but that there is a position available besides them. To be fair, no view is without costs and all tend toward mystery at some point, but it appears his view has no fewer challenges than the ones he discards as unsustainable. To his credit, he does list several issues with his proposal (p. 205). He simply fails to address them substantially. He offers two potential rejoinders in the space of three pages (pp. 214–16). And it is precisely here that I have serious concerns about his theory of time that is supposed to solve the mystery. Nevertheless, his project is one of novel contribution, and what first pass at something truly original doesn't have weaknesses? He is to be commended for his attempt at consistency and creativity. And hopefully his work will spur more thought in the broader sphere on these issues.

To conclude then, Turner's book is far from all negatives. It is a fine work of analytic theology. He argues rigorously and attempts to be painstakingly clear. Few works of theology care to be as consistent or as honest about their warts as his. If for nothing else, this is a worthy reason to read Turner—he is a model of how precise theology should be done. It also is a unique response to the metaphysical problems associated with resurrection and the so-called intermediate state. Turner is to be applauded for his creativity and commitment to the core theological affirmations he provides. Even if one disagrees with his arguments, he will be instructed by them and come to a clearer understanding of the issues at hand. Based on positives like these, and many others, I find Turner's work to be invaluable for any student of the human person or afterlife.[7]

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W. Brian Shelton. *Quest for the Historical Apostles: Tracing Their Lives and Legacies*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018. xiii + 314 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-0801098550. $32.00.

This examination of the lives of the apostles by historian Brian Shelton goes beyond the biblical accounts (without ignoring them) and examines the extant post-biblical documents, legends, traditions, venerated locations, and icons and images for a thorough, even exhaustive exploration of the post-New Testament ministry of these men. With his title he deliberately evokes the various quests for the historical Jesus in New Testament scholarship, particularly the title of Albert Schweitzer's seminal work in its English translation, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*. However, while Shelton acknowledges a kinship to the purpose of that work, he varies from in it in two significant ways. The first is his avoidance of an attempt to write a biography of the apostles; instead he concentrates on what he terms their journeys. The second is his confidence in the veracity of the biblical accounts.

One of the most helpful features of Shelton's study is the introduction and first chapter, where a thorough explanation of the methodology he employs is provided. He addresses the difficulty of separating historical fact from myth and legend. His methodology is to begin with the biblical accounts of each of the twelve (including Matthias, Judas's replacement) and also Paul, then to examine their mention in various writings of the early church, and the apocryphal works attributed to them. An interesting

[7] I would like to thank Dr. Turner for his gracious interaction with this review and his helpful feedback to ensure it properly represents his work.

inclusion is his consideration of symbols, art, purported relics, and geographic traditions concerning each apostle, as further evidence to be weighed in evaluating the traditions concerning their lives and ministries. Shelton notes the difficulties of extracting historically reliable material from non-canonical sources. Yet by the careful use of the historical criteria of critical historical scholarship, he believes even the Gnostic sources can contain some plausible historical information. In particular, he places emphasis on tracing the geographical outreach of each apostle's ministry.

In his examination of each of the apostles, Shelton judiciously and consistently follows the methodology he has established. In sum, after tracing the New Testament accounts of their ministries, he turns his attention to the writings that have been attributed to or identified with them. He rejects the tradition of authorship of apocryphal works, while finding information which speaks to the reputation and tradition concerning them worth considering for his historical reconstruction of their ministries. He then looks at the traditions of their ministries in various locations, examines the images and symbols that have been preserved, and finally the tombs and traditions associated with their deaths.

The results of his examination of the extant evidence are complete and informative. He provides a thorough examination of each element, then cautiously weighs the historical likelihood of the claims. For example, in his assessment of Peter, for whom many apocryphal writings, legends, and symbols exist, Shelton rejects the claim of a ministry in Britain, while affirming his Roman ministry and martyrdom, noting the lack of any competing claims to the location of his tomb and martyrdom on Vatican Hill. However, he criticizes the popular acceptance of the tradition of Jesus's appearance to Peter on the way to his martyrdom by those who reject other claims made in the same source.

Shelton rejects the historicity of the apocryphal Acts associated with Andrew but accepts the tradition of his ministry in Greece. He notes the significant impact of Andrew on the culture of Scotland but sees little historical basis for his ministry there. He notes the wide diversity of legends concerning the ministry and martyrdom of Bartholomew. The various locales claimed for his ministry include Armenia, Africa, and India. Competing legends concerning the method of his martyrdom include clubbing, being skinned alive, beheaded, thrown into the sea and drowned, or crucified, with some of these having more than one location for the claim. Shelton deems it most likely he was clubbed to death after a ministry in Armenia.

The tradition of Thomas stands out for the solidarity of the claim of ministry in India. However, Shelton notes the complexity of ascertaining the precise area of his activity, which arises from the various locales within

that region with competing claims for Thomas's apostolic ministry. However, he accepts Jerome's dating of John's natural death as an elderly man, for the precise knowledge necessary to specify the timing as sixty-eight years after the death of Jesus.

These examples serve to show the value of Shelton's study. He is to be commended for his judicious handling of the evidence, rejecting the historically unlikely, while still constructing a plausible understanding of the ministry of each apostle. While one may not agree with all his historical conclusions, this study will inform the reader of the variety of sources available for each apostolic tradition which can be the threshold for further research.

David R. Beck
Wake Forest, North Carolina

Alan S. Bandy, ed. *A Greek Reader's Apostolic Fathers.* Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2018. xvi + 300 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-1625648631. $37.00

The late first to mid-second century was pivotal for the development of early Christianity. The writings of the Apostolic Fathers (ca. 70–150 CE) are indispensable sources for understanding the institutions, theology, mission, and interpretive practices of the early church, as well as early Christianity's relationship to heretical groups, the larger Greco-Roman world, and Judaism. This corpus's inestimable value for scholarship makes the lacuna of complete Greek reader editions of the Apostolic Fathers remarkable. Into this lacuna enters Alan Bandy, Rowena R. Strickland Associate Professor of New Testament and Greek at Oklahoma Baptist University.

Motivated by the Apostolic Fathers' value for scholarship as well as the pedagogical success of reader's editions of the Greek New Testament, Bandy offers a new tool. He asserts that his *Greek Reader's Apostolic Fathers* (*GRAF*) will "help one develop the necessary skills for advanced familiarity and fluency in the Greek texts of early Christianity" (p. xiii). Bandy created this volume for those with at least one year of biblical Greek and suggests the "sustained immersion" in Greek texts of the Apostolic Fathers will yield "an extensive vocabulary" and "aid with observing complex patterns of syntax" (pp. xiii–xiv). Bandy envisions this volume as a useful textbook for an intermediate Greek syntax or advanced Greek readings course (pp. xiii–xiv), but it will be useful for students and scholars alike.

The sources and characteristic features of *GRAF* reflect Bandy's goal of offering a pedagogical tool for increasing Greek reading fluency. He

explains that the reader is "intentionally minimal" when offering lexical data, since his purpose is "to encourage the necessary skills for advanced familiarity and fluency in the Greek texts of early Christianity with as little English help as possible" (p. xv). The base text is from Kirsopp Lake's translation in the Loeb Classic Library, with supplements from the texts of J. B. Lightfoot, Bart Ehrman, and Michael Holmes. Care was given in selecting appropriate English glosses as Bandy consulted other English diglots, as well as the standard lexicons by BDAG, Louw and Nida, and Liddel-Scott to "adjudicate the most appropriate contextual glosses and translation choices" (p. xiv). Furthermore, he provides additional glosses when the "sense and range of meanings may be more flexible or difficult to determine based on context" (p. xvi). Consequently, the *GRAF* offers English glosses and parsing data in footnotes for words occurring fewer than thirty times in the Greek New Testament (NA28) and indicates significant variant readings with an asterisk (*), including them in footnotes. Bandy also offers a brief one-page introduction to each book following the format "Who," "When," "What," "Texts," and "Reading Difficulty" to discuss critical issues. Additionally, he arranges the texts from the lowest reading difficulty (2 Clement) to the highest (The Epistle of Diognetus).

A comparison with other Apostolic Fathers Greek readers should convince one of this volume's strengths. Unlike the readers offered by Rodney Decker (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007) and Rodney Whitacre (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), Bandy's work contains the entirety of the Apostolic Fathers. Furthermore, unlike Daniel B. Wallace et al., eds.' *A Reader's Lexicon of the Apostolic Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2013), this volume contains the Greek text, enabling the student to avoid referencing those all-too-helpful English diglots. Bandy's volume also compares favorably to the only similar work in English. Published a year later, Shawn J. Wilhite and Jacob N. Cerone, eds.' *Apostolic Fathers Greek Reader: The Complete Edition* (Willmore, KY: GlossaHouse, 2019) is a massive 615-page volume. Wilhite and Cerone share Bandy's goal of promoting Greek reading fluency, with a dictionary that addresses words occurring thirteen times or more within the NT (while their work has a comparable price listing of $34.99). However, the texts are not arranged according to reading difficulty, making it less suitable for use as a graded reader.

In sum, Bandy provides both students and scholars a valuable tool for engaging the Apostolic Fathers in the original language. The glosses and parsing information guides are helpful aids for the reader; the page layout and font are visually appealing; and in particular, arrangement according to reading difficulty makes this volume ideal as a graded reader for the classroom. Approaching this corpus in the original languages is difficult, and the temptation to rely on translations is ever-present. However, *GRAF* is tailor-made to offer the right amount assistance to alleviate confusion and promote Greek reading fluency. Hopefully this work will instill in students both a mastery of Koine Greek and an appreciation of the Apostolic Fathers.

Levi Baker
Wake Forest, North Carolina

Simon Gathercole. *The Gospel of Thomas: Introduction and Commentary*. Texts and Editions for New Testament Study 11. Leiden: Brill, 2019. xii + 723. Paperback. ISBN: 978-9004273252. $84.00.

Simon Gathercole is Senior Lecturer in New Testament Studies at the University of Cambridge. He has published research on a wide range of topics including Christology, the extent of the atonement, and ancient New Testament manuscripts. He has also written widely on the non-canonical Gospels including the Gospel of Judas, the Gospel of Jesus' Wife, and especially the Gospel of Thomas. In 2012 he published *The Composition of the Gospel of Thomas: Original Language and Sources* (Cambridge University Press). Thus, the Gospel of Thomas is no new interest to him. He has labored in that field of study for at least a decade.

This commentary contains an extensive introduction to the Gospel of Thomas (GT) that examines its Greek and Coptic manuscripts and carefully compares the Greek and Coptic texts. Gathercole concludes that witnesses to the text are sufficient to restore the text of the GT using normal procedures of textual criticism. He concludes that the Coptic text, despite some differences, can be traced back essentially to the second-century Greek text.

Gathercole inventories the references to the GT in late antiquity. In the process, he significantly expands previous lists, roughly doubling the number of testimonia identified by Harold W. Attridge. He identifies thirty-nine clear references and an additional nine questionable references. He sees the main contributions of the testimonia as lying in their evidence for the original language, provenance, and date of the GT.

Gathercole explores the three major theories regarding the language in which the GT was originally composed: Western Aramaic, Syriac, and Greek. Six lines of evidence are offered as support for the view that Greek was the language of composition, such as correspondences between the Greek and Coptic texts, density of Greek loan-words in the Coptic text, the language of the earliest fragments and six earliest testimonia, and the correspondences between the GT and the Greek texts of the canonical Gospels.

His examination of the possible provenance of the GT focuses on Syria (the majority view) and Egypt (the minority view). Gathercole admits that the evidence is insufficient to reach a conclusion.

Gathercole argues persuasively that the GT was written sometime between 135 and 200 CE. Although the author cannot be identified based on present evidence, the established date of composition precludes claims of authorship by the apostle Thomas (since the GT is too late) and by a Manichaean (since the GT is too early).

Although he dismisses a handful of proposals regarding the structure of the GT, Gathercole recognizes three structural markers: the use of "Jesus said" to introduce each saying, an opening section (though its length is difficult to determine), and linkage of sayings by genre, catchwords, and shared themes.

After an overview of several theories regarding the genre of the GT, Gathercole suggests that the book is a mixture of two genres: gospel and *chreia* collection. He affirms Werner H. Kelber's description of the book as a "sayings gospel."

Gathercole argues that although the GT has a reasonably coherent religious outlook, it should not be labeled "Gnostic" since it does not have a "clearly demiurgic account of creation." The GT cannot be assigned to any one religious group. However, it shares some themes with other early Jewish and Christian writings including Philo's works, the Epistle of Pseudo-Barnabas, the Gospel of Philip, the Dialogue of the Savior, the Epistle of Ptolemy to Flora, the Treatise on the Resurrection, and Justin Martyr's works.

Although several scholars have relied heavily on the GT as a source for reconstructing the life and teachings of the historical Jesus (e.g., John Dominic Crossan), Gathercole holds that significantly earlier primary sources exist (i.e., the canonical Gospels) and that the GT "can hardly be regarded as useful in the reconstruction of a historical picture of Jesus."

The commentary proper proceeds logion by logion. It first discusses the textual witnesses to the logion and reconstructs the earliest recoverable text by means of a Greek text, Coptic text, and English translation. It then interprets the text based on its place in the second century context. Although this is the traditional role of a commentary, this purpose is surprisingly distinct from that of most recent commentaries on the GT, which tend to pursue other goals such as exploring the pre-history of the text or comparing and contrasting the sayings of the GT to those in the canonical Gospels to determine which is most primitive. Finally, a "Notes" section discusses linguistic issues, catchword links, and parallels with other literature.

This commentary sets a new standard for the GT. Gathercole's research is remarkably thorough. His bibliography includes fifty-five pages of scholarly research and the introduction and commentary suggest that Gathercole has digested the discussions in the vast majority of these resources. The entire introduction is marked by a scholarly caution that is atypical of Thomasine studies. Although several recent treatments of the GT seem devoted to promote some novel idea, Gathercole simply refuses to speculate or offer hypotheses when the evidence is insufficient to yield firm conclusions. In addition, readers will be grateful to Brill for issuing the earlier (2014) volume in a more affordable paperback format. Highly recommended!

Charles L. Quarles
Wake Forest, North Carolina

Ronald E. Heine, ed. *The Commentary of Origen on the Gospel of St Matthew*. Oxford Early Christian Texts. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018. 792 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-0199669073. $255.00.

If patristic scholars were a family, Ronald E. Heine would be a household name. Professor Emeritus of Bible and Theology at Northwest Christian University, Heine is perhaps best known for his work on the third-century theologian Origen of Alexandria. Heine has produced numerous books and articles on this ancient Bible scholar and systematician. No stranger to translating Origen, Heine now exhibits his seasoned command of ancient Greek and Latin with the *Commentary on Matthew*, providing yet another venerable contribution to the field of patristic scholarship.

The contents of the *Commentary* include only portions of Origen's exegesis of Matthew. Heine translates the Greek manuscripts first, representing the more stable, though far from perfect, textual tradition (p. 29). Originally consisting of twenty-five books, the first nine books of the work now are missing. The English translation thus begins with Origen's commentary on Matt 13:34, as Jesus dismisses the crowd and enters the house, his disciples asking him to explain the parable of the weeds. Through no fault of Heine, this late entry-point into the Gospel does leave the lover of St. Matthew desiring those cherished earlier portions of the story, such as the birth narrative and the Sermon on the Mount, and Origen's thoughts thereon.

The Latin text that Heine translates overlaps some with the Greek text, providing the opportunity for comparison between the two. (The Greek commentary includes Matt 13:34–22:33; the Latin includes Matt 16:13–27:66.) Heine draws no definitive conclusion from this comparison, though the scholars he cites prescribe reading the Latin with caution and

"with the necessary reservations," for it contains "errors, omissions, additions, and peculiarities" in relation to the Greek (p. 30). Unfortunately, the Latin text leaves a significant lacuna at the end of the Gospel, normally filled with the glory of Resurrection and Great Commission. Again, Heine is not to blame, for the Latin text is the only one available. Heine simply translates all the extant material, including, thankfully, many fragments of Origen's thought gleaned from later church fathers and catena commentaries. These fragments partially fill—with glimmers of insight from the Alexandrian—the gaps at the beginning and end of the *Commentary on Matthew*. Heine includes this mass of translated fragments in an appendix.

The fact that the *Commentary* is the first (known) full-scale exposition of Matthew makes it shine in the history of Christian exegesis. But the importance of the *Commentary* for Origen studies lies chiefly in the work's location within the chronology of Origen's written corpus. The majority of Origen's writings are lost to time, destroyed following an edict of heresy by Emperor Justinian I. Of the fraction surviving, the work *Contra Celsum* has long been considered Origen's last and thus the most mature example of his theological thought. Heine, however, takes a different tack. He contends that the *Commentary on Matthew*, in which "Origen gives us his final word on many topics" (p. 1), is in fact one of Origen's last penned extant works, to be dated after the *Contra Celsum*. Several factors lend credence to Heine's argument. The most vital is Origen's promise in the *Contra Celsum* to discuss, in a later work, Jesus's burial, tomb, and the man (Joseph of Arimathea) who buried him—a promise which he fulfills in the *Commentary on Matthew*. Origen unpacks in detail the symbolic significance of the burial narrative in his comments on Matt 27:57–65. This revelation breaks new ground, not only for Origen studies in general but also for Heine himself, who admits to a change of mind in regard to an earlier published conclusion (p. 26n146).

Textual notes, largely consisting of cross references to Scripture, accompany Heine's English translation throughout. The translation of the text is sober, communicating the underlying languages plainly and clearly, avoiding florid linguistic embellishments. This translation approach attempts to best illumine what the manuscripts are saying, but Heine also gives ample consideration to what he thinks the Alexandrian is doing, hermeneutically, as he reads the Gospel, since Origen's preeminent lifework was the interpretation of Scripture (p. 7). Heine distinguishes several "methods" applied by Origen, including the unity of Scripture and figurative interpretation. The reader will encounter this figurative (i.e., tropological) approach employed frequently by Origen throughout the *Commentary* (p. 18). Heine emphasizes, moreover, that "Christ is at the centre of Origen's hermeneutic" (p. 12).

With the *Commentary on Matthew*, Ronald Heine makes a first-rate contribution to Origen scholarship, moving the conversation forward through clear historical argumentation based on textual evidence. His examination of Origen's method of reading Matthew deserves attention from those interested in patristic hermeneutics. Of course, for the general reader of the church fathers, Heine's translation is a jewel, revealing dazzling facets of Origen's most mature mind. Scholars of Matthew's Gospel and historical theologians should also take notice. Because of the price, however, this two-volume set is best obtained through a good theological library.

Owen Kelly
Wake Forest, North Carolina

Will Brooks. *Love Lost for the Cause of Christ: Three Missionaries and Their Sacrifices for the Great Commission*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2018. 116 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-1532635595. $16.00.

Learning from the lives of others is always helpful, particularly when those people are presented as normal, flawed men and women. In *Love Lost for the Cause of Christ*, Will Brooks uses missionary biography to address familiar areas of calling and sacrifice while also speaking to an oftentimes unaddressed area of relationships and missions. His goal, as he states it, is to "consider how missionaries have often made tremendous sacrifices for the sake for the gospel" (p. 7). These sacrifices are many, but Brooks places emphasis on missionaries' sacrifices of romantic or earthly love in light of their call to take the gospel to the nations.

The outline of the book is straightforward. After an introductory chapter in which Brooks notes misguided emphases on love and companionship in both the church and contemporary culture, Chapters 2 through 4 provide a biographical sketch of missionaries Henry Martyn, Lottie Moon, and Hudson Taylor. Chapters 2 and 3 demonstrate that both Martyn and Moon sacrificed companionship and marriage due to the priority of their calling to India and China, respectively. In fact, sacrifice is a normal aspect of the Christian life in general and the missionary life in particular. In Chapter 4, Hudson Taylor stands out since he did ultimately marry, not once but twice, while also continuing his service as a missionary in China.

The biographical data in each of these chapters is fairly standard and relies on known missionary biographies even if the sampling is small, which is a minor point of critique. However, Brooks gives enough information to emphasize the overall goal of the book while also allowing each

missionary life to show that these are genuine but flawed people, committed to Christ above all else.

Chapter 5 rescues the uneven introductory chapter of the book. In this chapter, Brooks clearly connects the recurring themes throughout Chapters 2 through 4 with the emphasis on sacrifice in light of calling, especially the sacrifice of earthly comfort and love. While there are varying perspectives on the usefulness or need for the category of calling, Brooks assumes the need for calling and clearly connects a believer's daily responsibilities to that calling. Brooks also explains that the Great Commission is not merely for a select few, but every Christian has a role to play. Each of these roles requires faithfulness, obedience, and, often, difficult decisions in order to keep one faithful and obedient to Christ. Similar to the introductory chapter, Brooks continues to insert personal stories strategically to illustrate his primary pedagogical points. In this chapter, he includes the story of an influential senior adult in his own life that helps introduce the key principles he hopes will encourage the reader toward Great Commission obedience (pp. 90–94).

Aside from the minor critiques already mentioned, this book is both familiar and refreshing. While brief, it packs a lot of useful information and fodder for self-reflection and discussion. Each chapter ends with a "Questions for Consideration" section that makes this book accessible to a wide audience. Overall, Brooks accomplishes his goal and I appreciate that he challenges individual believers and the church in areas of love, relationships, marriage, and ministry.

In conclusion, readers interested in missions or those considering their role in the Great Commission will enjoy *Love Lost for the Cause of Christ*. The discussion questions provided at the end of each chapter help this book to move beyond the quick read category to a helpful resource for individuals and groups. Brooks helps readers consider their motivations and commitments to Christ and his commission in light of their entire lives not just their intellects or emotions.

Gregory D. Mathias
Wake Forest, North Carolina

Rebecca McLaughlin. *Confronting Christianity: 12 Hard Questions for the World's Largest Religion*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2019. 237 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-1433564239. $24.99.

Rebecca McLaughlin (PhD Cambridge University), former vice-president of the Veritas Forum, writes *Confronting Christianity: 12 Hard Questions for the World's Largest Religion*, an apologetic work on twenty-first-century

Christianity. Divided into twelve chapters or themes, each approximately fifteen pages in length, the book addresses contemporary issues that face Christians today. Scholars from MIT, Harvard, Oxford, and Cambridge endorse this work, as well as evangelicals such as Russell Moore, Os Guinness, and Sam Allberry.

Much of *Confronting Christianity* concentrates on traditional questions people have asked throughout modern times: why God allows pain and suffering; why God sends people to hell; whether science has shown Christianity to be false; whether there is more than one way to God; and whether the Bible should be read literally. All of these may be found in other works of this nature. Where McLaughlin's work differs, and perhaps is most controversial, is in the chapters that contextualize Christianity to present-day culture: What about slavery in the Bible? Is Christianity homophobic? Does religion incite violence? What about cultural diversity in Christianity? Does Christianity degrade women?

It is the latter chapters that give her work a voice. In her chapter regarding religion and violence, McLaughlin's reminder that the Crusades were a "counteroffensive" to the Islamic invasion of the Middle East is justified, particularly since she admits and balances this against the atrocities committed by Christians during that time (pp. 77–78). Similarly, while acknowledging evils perpetrated by people claiming to follow the biblical understanding of manhood and womanhood, she explains that the early church was mostly female, and that Christianity was scorned by non-Christians for its feminine appeal (p. 144). In her chapter about Christianity and diversity, she admits the "regrettable" connection between Christianity and imperialism but explains that arguments claiming Christianity to be a white Western religion, connected to colonialism, betray an inaccurate Western ideological prejudice. Christianity, she points out, is "the most diverse, multiethnic, and multicultural movement in all of history" (p. 45).

McLaughlin's strongest chapter is on Christianity's relationship to homosexuality. Not only does she condemn all forms of sexual immorality (including sins of the mind) among both heterosexuals and homosexuals and recount the biblical narrative of the beauties of sex within the husband/wife relationship, she also examines same sex attractions (homosexual attractions) among Christians today, which seem to be getting more notice. The statistics she provides show that many homosexuals at one point or another become interested in the opposite sex, meaning that sexuality can be fluid and that the categories of heterosexual and homosexual may be too binary (pp. 169–70). Her reminder that Christianity was founded by many who had these struggles is an admonition for the church not to be homophobic (p. 167). "Blue-blooded heterosexuality is not the

goal of the Christian life," she writes, "Jesus is" (p. 154).

These praises notwithstanding, there are areas where the work needs development. The inclusion of more theory and context (even if only in content footnotes) would have provided clarity and improved the work's overall attractiveness—by defining certain terms, for example. Based on her lack of explanation, Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses could be classified as Christians, as could others that are grouped into the general category of "Christian." Not explaining the term "myth" is another concern. While only used a couple of times, myth is often confused with ideology, and myth and ideology are at times misinterpreted as fact. Another point needing disclosure: in her chapter on slavery, she fails to state that the Southern Baptist Convention, the largest Protestant denomination in the United States, was founded at least in part by slavery, something the Convention only apologized for recently.

The weakest feature of *Confronting Christianity* though, is not of McLaughlin's doing. While understandable, the commendations provided in the beginning of the work by the publisher are similar to extravagant praises of a movie not yet seen: the high anticipation of the experience often outweighs the actual results. This is not to say that *Confronting Christianity* is a disappointment. McLaughlin's writing style is lucid. Her positions are evangelical. Her choice of topics is warranted. Her vulnerability in admitting her same sex attraction is brave and commendable. Claiming "state of the art research" (front cover) though, gives the indication this is an academic treatise. Rather, her work falls within the sub-genre of "pop Christianity": it is a short, sparsely-documented, theologically light work intended to encourage and educate a popular audience, although that is certainly needed too.

Philip O. Hopkins
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Christina S. Hitchcock. *The Significance of Singleness: A Theological Vision for the Future of the Church*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018. xxviii + 148 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-1540960290. $21.99.

When I was approaching my thirtieth birthday, I began to look for resources to help me understand and maximize my life as a single man. While I found numerous reflections on celibacy and singleness from the Catholic viewpoint, there was little written from an evangelical perspective. Thankfully, books like Christina Hitchcock's *The Significance of Singleness* have begun to fill that void.

Hitchcock begins her book on a biographical note, explaining her personal experience as a single woman in an evangelical context. Her own experience frames the first part of the book, in which she critiques American evangelicalism's understanding of marriage and singleness. Hitchcock argues that many evangelicals simply place the spiritual veneer of marriage over the same basic assumptions of contemporary American culture—that sexual activity is inevitable and central to human flourishing. A normative reading of Genesis 1 and 2 together with a version of natural law theory leads evangelicals to conclude that marriage is important, if not necessary, to experience the fullness of what it means to be human. In response, Hitchcock argues for an eschatological perspective that looks forward to our future, celibate state in order to define true humanity.

Hitchcock's argument for a positive valuation of singleness leads into the second part of the book, where the lives of three single women—St. Macrina, St. Perpetua, and Lottie Moon—frame her theological reflection. Each woman's biography is offered as inspiration for singles and as evidence for Hitchcock's theological argument. For example, Hitchcock details St. Macrina's life of celibacy in pursuit of Christ and virtue. Her life serves as an example of how singles can embody Gen 1:26–28, serving as the image of God and fulfilling the Creation Mandate. Hitchcock defines the Creation Mandate under the headings of righteousness, relationships, and ruling. All of these, Hitchcock argues, were epitomized by Jesus—a single man—and can be fulfilled by singles, often in ways that are more direct and powerful than possible for married Christians.

In the third and final part of the book, Hitchcock envisions what a positive evangelical view of singleness—as well as the presence of joyful, faithful singles within congregations—would provide for churches. One potential benefit that she discusses at length is the end of the church's hypocrisy toward homosexual individuals. By including marriage in their understanding of human flourishing and at the same time holding to the traditional teaching that same-sex marriage is prohibited by Scripture, evangelicals have created a lose-lose situation for homosexual Christians. Embracing the theological significance of singleness creates a third way, beyond either rebelling against the Bible's definition of marriage or living an unfulfilled life.

Perhaps the greatest strength of Hitchcock's work is that she places the gospel in the center of her thinking about marriage and singleness. Her argument for a positive valuation of singleness is based in the gospel truths that God loves us based on our relationship to Christ, not to the opposite gender, and that the Church grows by evangelism, not by procreation. Her proposal for a more eschatological, New Creation-oriented

view of the person makes use of Jesus's statements to his disciples in Matthew 19 and to the Sadducees in Matthew 22, and of how that teaching is applied by Paul in 1 Corinthians 7—passages that are often underutilized in evangelical theological reflection on marriage and singleness. In contrast with the creation-oriented view that dominates evangelical thinking, Hitchcock's proposal is an encouragement to singles that they are able to please God and experience the fullness of humanity now, instead of waiting on marriage. The women Hitchcock discusses in the second part of the book show how powerful a positive view of singleness can be in the lives of singles and in the communal life of the Church.

One weakness of the book is that Hitchcock does not show her work, so to speak. She makes a number of interesting theological claims—e.g., her definition of the Creation Mandate and how singles can fulfill it—that need further defense and explanation. I hope she will provide fuller arguments for those theological moves in future publications. With that said, I am happy to commend this book to anyone wishing to think more deeply about the theological significance of singleness. It will certainly excite meaningful theological reflection on singleness, raise a number of questions for further study, and force churches to reexamine their teaching about and ministry to the singles in their midst.

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John D. Street. *Passions of the Heart: Biblical Counsel for Stubborn Sexual Sins*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2019. xix + 308 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-1629954028. $19.99.

Humanity's fall into sin corrupted every element of our psychosomatic experience, including our sexuality. The heart of every person is corrupted, and human sexuality particularly manifests the distortive effects of sin upon bearers of the divine image, as men and women abuse God's good gift of sex in a variety of ways. Technology has only increased easy access to illicit content, fueling temptations and compounding the need for churches prepared to counsel and care for the sexually broken. Anyone with experience in such counseling recognizes that stubborn sexual sins require more than cute anecdotes and proof texts, but a comprehensive understanding of the human heart and its sinful expressions.

John Street provides such a paradigm in his work *Passions of the Heart*, in which he labors to unveil the connection between sexual sin and heart idolatry. God created the human heart as a dynamic control center that would exist in a worshipful relationship with himself, submitted to his

revealed will for human flourishing (p. 30). The functions of the human heart—thinking, purposing, desiring—bear their fruit in actions, words, and desires. Now that humanity has replaced the worship of God with created things, our hearts are bent towards idolatry, which is "anything ruling your heart—whether an object or an idea, whether a statue or an intense longing" (p. 34). Street argues that sexual sins are the fruit of a covetous heart, a sinful response to experiences of hunger or hurt.

Street adds a major contribution to counseling resources with his paradigm for lustful enslavement. Along the axes of strength of temptation and surrender to lust, Street maps out the path towards sexual enslavement (pp. 61–86). Like any plant, sexual sin exists in seed-form long before the appearance of any fruit. He lists four stages of lustful enslavement based upon James's teaching on the birth of sinful desires (Jas 1:14–15). First, depraved desires are stirred by sinful thoughts or experiences. Second, lust conceives in a heart when the self willfully "agrees to entertain its enticements" (p. 65). Third, the lustful heart gives birth to sin through a visible act. Lastly, sin matures unto death where the individual gives in to his desires repeatedly, with the accompanying feelings of hopelessness and uselessness. As one consistently capitulates to one's own desires for sexual gratification, resistance to sin and craving for sin maintain an inverse relationship—when desire increases, resistance steadily falls. Once the desire for sin surpasses the matching resistance, the individual has reached the point of sexual bondage.

Victory over sexual sin focuses on unveiling and destroying the idols of the covetous heart. Street argues that all sexual idols stem from either a hurting heart (motivated by anger, self-pity, discontentment, and fear) or a hungering heart (motivated by self-reward, flattery, power/control, and comfort). After exposing the dynamics of the idolatrous heart, Street transitions into applying gospel grace to dethrone the various idols of the heart through repentance, humility, and the formation of the Christian fruit of holiness and Spirit-driven diligence against temptation. Also, Street offers personal counsel to both married couples and singles attempting to pursue sexual purity. Street counsels married couples to utilize the marriage bed as a weapon against sexual sin. He advocates for single Christians to prioritize heart habits of contentment and gratefulness, in order to disarm temptations to pursue personal satisfaction or promiscuity.

It is not an overstatement to say that this work will help many Christians find victory over sexual sin. The complexities of the human heart and the stubbornness of sexual lust require a comprehensive response from someone who has spent years in the counseling chair and in God's

word. Street combines a thorough taxonomy of sexual sins with convicting biblical truth, personal experience, and piercing application. This work will reveal the seeds of sexual sin in your own heart, waiting to entrap you in sexual bondage. In addition, counselors who are struggling to help their counselees mortify their sinful desires will benefit from Street's discussion concerning the connection between the fruit of sexual sin and the root desires driving the human heart.

While this work is perfect for a biblical counselor, pastor, or mature layman, its exegetical and theological depth may overwhelm a counselee thick in the throes of battle with temptation. Street's book would thus benefit from an accompanying "counselee" edition in which the main ideas are boiled down into a format suitable for counselee homework. Otherwise, the counselor should distill and transmit its material to the counselee. Nevertheless, I expect this work to be a frequently used resource for counseling, pastoral ministry, and seminary education for years to come.

Jared Poulton
Seneca, South Carolina

Michael S. Wilder and Timothy Paul Jones. *The God Who Goes before You: Pastoral Leadership as Christ-Centered Followership*. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2018. xx + 268 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-1433671135. $29.99.

Michael Wilder and Timothy Jones provide a biblically-based work on Christian leadership, with theologically-driven building blocks for church leaders. Its purpose is to provide a Christ-centered foundation for leadership, highlighting leadership patterns rooted in Scripture.

Wilder and Jones set out to explain Christian leadership as more than the sum of marketplace leadership principles backed up by a Bible verse. Rather, Christian leadership must be guided by the whole canon of Scripture, which reveals it to be Christ-centered followership. The Christ-following leader is thus one who "develops a diverse community of fellow laborers who are equipped and empowered to pursue shared goals that fulfill the creation mandate and the Great Commission in submission to the Word of God" (p. 16). Conservative, evangelical presuppositions are appropriately laid out near the start, as well as the authors' historical-grammatical hermeneutical approach which recognizes a place for Canonical Theology.

Christian leaders must be seen primarily as followers and always as servants. Chapter 1 acts as an introduction as it lays out definitions for

the Christian leader. Chapter 2 gives the foundation for how leaders are called to be followers, as seen in the Creation, Fall, and Exodus. God is the origin of all power and delegates his power to stewards of his creation. Hence, he has designed leaders to follow him (pp. 29, 45). Furthermore, leaders are shown to be followers as God faithfully goes before Christian leaders and is present with them through union with Christ in order to empower them to fulfill his mission.

Part Two examines how the Old Testament guides Christian leadership, with a focus on the Book of Deuteronomy. Jones, the primary author of this section, explores how the roles of prophet, priest, king, and judge are not a typology for leaders today, but offices whose functions "have been fulfilled in Christ and conveyed to the whole people of God through union with Christ" (p. 52). Even a godly king, priest, prophet, or judge functioned in humble submission to God as a servant. So, while all are called to follow as God's sheep, Christian leaders are exhorted to follow the call to lead in the way of the shepherd leader—one who leads among the people to provide for and protect them.

In Part Three, Wilder, the primary author here, explains how Jesus was "the perfect embodiment of prophet, priest, judge, and king" (p. 137) as he modeled what it means to lead as one who fears and follows God through submission to the Father and dependence on the Spirit, and in demonstration of humble servanthood among his followers (pp. 136–37). Next, Wilder examines the leadership example of Simon Peter. A chapter is provided on Peter's commission to lead, including his preparation for suffering and sacrifice, with a final chapter on how he fulfilled that commission through suffering and sacrifice.

Unfortunately, a weakness of the book is a lack of strong application, or relevant steps towards implementation, for Christian leaders. While the authors extend the principles presented to Christian leaders in the marketplace (pp. 8, 46), there is little directive outside leadership within the church or parachurch organization. To be fair, the church leader is the focus and primary audience (pp. 8, 13). However, the specific applications given to church leaders are basic at best, such as making time for personal and family development, putting one's identity in Christ rather than a leadership position, taking time for self-care, and scheduling time for prayer and Bible study (pp. 101, 124). For some readers looking intently for leadership practices, this aspect may distract, although it does not weaken the book's goal of showing the Christian leader's function and calling as one who is a Christ-follower leading among other Christ-followers in submission to God's authority towards God-given purposes.

In addition, a clear strength of the book is the authors' consideration in helping readers understand and synthesize the content. Summary charts

connect each chapter's content with the bigger picture of the Christian leader. Readers will find helpful sidebars with thorough definitions of important terms and with reflection questions for church leaders. The authors also provide key points at the beginning of each chapter. However, end notes are so thorough (and integral) that readers will miss out on necessary content if they do not flip to the back of the book.

To conclude, the book is a welcome addition to the library of church leaders who want a Christian leadership foundation that is more than a forced extraction of leadership examples and principles from the Bible. Such leaders should give it careful thought and attention in order to implement the humble, Christ-centered followership described therein.

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C. Christopher Smith. *How the Body of Christ Talks: Recovering the Practice of Conversation in the Church*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2019. 206 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-1587434327. $16.99.

C. Christopher Smith addresses a deficiency in modern culture that has serious implications for the church, namely our marginal ability to create and maintain conversation within the congregation and with the surrounding community. In his book *How the Body of Christ Talks*, Smith not only lays out his concerns about the church's capacity for conversation but goes on to provide advice and tools to help churches develop important conversations and learn skills to foster Christian growth through conversation. In the introduction, Smith ties church attrition to people's lack of connection, explaining that "one of our deepest human desires is to belong." It is through participating in conversation that individuals gain a sense of belonging, and Smith offers this book as "a field guide of sorts for the [conversational] journey toward belonging" (pp. 9–10).

The book is arranged in twelve chapters that work to encourage churches to grow in their conversational abilities. Smith is clear from the outset that the ultimate goal is not simply to become better conversationalists but that through conversation the church and the individuals within the church would become "a witness to the world of the loving and just character of God and the hope of belonging" (p. 10). The ultimate example of conversational community is found in the Triune God, and Smith compares the conversational community of the Trinity to God-honoring conversations among believers early in his discussion and revisits this comparison throughout the text.

The body of the book is divided into three sections. The first provides tips on ideal group sizes for conversation, possible topics to help churches get started, and three conversational methods. Having established why talking together is important for the church (with guidelines for healthy conversations), Smith shows how these methods can help churches understand broad topics (Open Space Technology), establish a vision (Appreciative Inquiry), or get to know one another better (World Café). The second section focuses on the spiritual preparedness of the individual participating in church conversation, while the final section instructs churches to cultivate a sense of mission and identity through conversation—and to sustain their conversations even in times of conflict. The concluding chapter reiterates the goal of conversation: for churches to bear witness to the abundant life available to everyone through a relationship with the Triune God (p. 185).

One of the strengths of this book is the varied way it encourages churches to recognize and welcome diversity both within the church and in surrounding neighborhoods. Even though modern American social networks tend to be noticeably homogenous, homogeneity does not reflect early church communities which included "women and men, rich and poor, highly educated and uneducated, native peoples and foreigners" (p. 18). Smith goes on to point out that the church should be like our physical bodies and like the Triune God, one unified body made up of diverse members. It is through conversation, Smith argues, that "we discover the particular functions that each member has been prepared by the Holy Spirit to enact in the life of our church body" (p. 23). He also argues that conversation is a discipline that helps us grow in patience, neighbor love, and in our witness to surrounding communities.

While Smith's undertaking to help churches grow in their conversational abilities is admirable, there are two areas that would benefit from more detailed discussion. He offers several examples of churches in conversation throughout the book; however, more successful and more detailed examples would help readers better understand how to begin conversations within a church body. For example, in Chapter 2, Smith offers a detailed example in the "What *Not* to Talk About" section but no example in the "What Then Do We Talk About?" section. When it comes to the implementation of suggested practices, more detailed examples would be immensely helpful to churches throughout the process of growing in their conversational skills. Another area that could use more explanation is in Chapter 1 in which Smith suggests that the Holy Spirit dwells only within a body of believers and "does not dwell *in* an individual" (p. 22). This statement raises several theological questions, and many evangelicals would disagree with the assertion. Nevertheless, Smith's goal to

help churches build Christian community through conversation does not hinge on this claim.

Despite these drawbacks, this book provides tips, suggestions, and guidelines for conversations within the church body. It challenges readers to learn "to listen and talk in the compassionate way of Jesus" (p. 181). In the increasing isolation that engulfs many twenty-first-century Americans, it has become difficult for people to converse with each other in a caring way. Smith is right to call churches to be leaders in building community through conversations covered in prayer, love, patience, and humility. Through such conversations, the church can demonstrate the love and goodness of God to the world.

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