

Book Reviews

William P. Brown. *A Handbook to Old Testament Exegesis*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2017. xv + 363 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-0664259938. \$35.00.

“From start to finish, exegesis is a communal enterprise” (p. 5). These words from chapter 1 of *A Handbook to Old Testament Exegesis* capture William P. Brown’s claim that exegesis is dialogical. Brown is a well-respected exegete, publishing widely on Psalms, Wisdom Literature, and creation. He writes this volume as a classroom text in order to offer a “tell-and-show” introduction to the interpretation of the Hebrew Bible that attempts to draw together various exegetical approaches “in a way that cultivates the reader’s curiosity, critical engagement, and emphatic imagination” (p. ix).

Part I (chapters 1–3) theoretically and hermeneutically orients the reader to the task of exegesis explored in Parts II and III. Brown frames exegesis as a hermeneutical adventure of variously situated readers engaged in the relational and hence communal enterprise of reading, which necessarily involves not only an exegesis of the text but an exegesis of the self as well. As situated, all readers come to the text, he contends, with influences, convictions, and interests that shape how one reads a text. As a result, “any full exegesis of the text requires, in some form or manner, an exegesis of the self” (p. 4). And an exegesis of the self, according to Brown, is the necessary first step in a dialogical encounter with the text, which seeks not only what the text could have *meant* in its ancient context but also what the text may now *mean* in particular contexts and communities.

This familiar conception—what the text meant and what it means—summarizes well the content of Parts II and III. In Part II (chapters 4–13), Brown surveys a broad range of “analytical” approaches to interpretation that engage the world within the text before enquiring of the world behind the text. Chapters 4–8 cover approaches that deal with the present form of the Old Testament text, moving from translation and text criticism to stylistic and structural analysis. In chapters 9–12, he presents several approaches that investigate the text’s compositional prehistory, its place in the context of the ancient Near East, its literary development, and the historical machinations that produced and shaped such develop-

ment. He closes Part II with a presentation of “canonical analysis” (chapter 13), which he contends is primarily concerned with placing texts in dialogue with other texts that form the canon of a particular community (e.g., the canonical texts of the Jewish Bible, the Roman Catholic Bible, the Protestant Bible, etc.).

Brown addresses ideological approaches in Part III, many of which emerge from post-structuralist theories. He begins in chapter 15 by addressing how one might read the Old Testament from the perspective of science. He presents the rationale and means for a generative—not apologetic or defensive—engagement of the biblical text that seeks to appropriate “the findings of science while also recognizing their limits in biblical interpretation” (p. 202). In the remainder of Part III, he indicates how the biblical text may be read within interested communities and from diverse perspectives ranging from Feminist, Womanist, *Mujerista* (Latina), Asian Feminist, and Genderqueer to Post-colonial, minority, and disability readings. Part III ends with a focus on theological interpretation (chapter 22), which, for Brown, begins by taking seriously the claims of the biblical text concerning God and the world while continually acknowledging the constructive role of the interpreter.

Lastly, in Part IV (chapter 23), Brown argues that communicating the text is the culmination of the exegetical process. He envisions communicating the text to be a retelling of the text via a different genre and directed toward a different audience: “What you find to be central to the text as you retell the text should arise naturally from the text and your work with the text, yet also in response to the concerns of people today” (p. 329). This culminating step of exegesis requires, according to Brown, an exegesis of the community to which one seeks to retell the text.

There is much to commend in *A Handbook to Old Testament Exegesis*. Brown writes in a clear and engaging manner. He does an excellent job of explaining the theoretical aspects of hermeneutics and of the various approaches he covers without becoming tedious and also demonstrates the theoretical in action. His attention to Genesis 1–3 throughout the book allows for a measure of continuity to be held across disparate approaches to reading. Brown’s recognition of the situated nature of reading and readers is a welcome focus in a classroom text on interpretation and provides a helpful corrective to an overemphasis on authorial intention. As a result, he rightly calls for “self-exegesis” as an initial step in exegesis.

While many evangelicals will certainly contend he takes the dialogical nature of exegesis too far, his willingness to draw the text into a broader dialogue, which seeks understanding of the text, is to be commended. Nevertheless, some shortcomings exist. First, while self-exegesis is a much-needed initial step of exegesis, it is problematic as “the first step in

the exegetical venture” (p. 11) and casts exegesis as an anthropocentric enterprise. Second, this anthropocentric focus actualizes in Brown’s contention that biblical authority emerges from the reading community: “Simply put, biblical authority is reader-responsive: through our genuine engagement with Scripture, God ‘authors’ us... After all, authority must be acknowledged in order for something to be authoritative” (p. 175). In contrast, it is my contention that exegesis of Scripture beckons the reader to listen for the authoritative voice of God in the text—as the first step toward a truly theocentric (and indeed Trinitarian) reading of Scripture. Apart from this, an exegesis of the self, though needed, remains ultimately elusive.

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T. Desmond Alexander. *Exodus*. London: Apollos, 2017. xx + 764 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-1783594344. \$45.00.

T. Desmond Alexander has written a masterful analysis of the book of Exodus that is of value not only for the interpretation of the book of Exodus but also as a defense of the meaning of this text and how it is to be read.

Alexander writes from the perspective that the critical study of the Pentateuch, which began earnestly with Julius Wellhausen near the end of the nineteenth century, has reached a state of impasse regarding the Pentateuch’s composition. Alexander not only states this as his own personal conviction but demonstrates repeatedly in his analysis of the book of Exodus that the division of the Pentateuch into various sources (as well as the tendency to refer to secondary additions), is time and again not the most cogent way to account for the text as it now exists. In addition, the dating of alleged Pentateuchal sources relies completely on hypothetical assumptions that continue to exist solely because they are held by critical biblical scholars.

An illustration of Alexander’s methodology can be gleaned by his analysis of Exod 20:22–23:33, known as the Book of the Covenant, which covers one hundred pages of his book. The topics of the Book of the Covenant include The Extent and Structure of the Book of the Covenant, The Book of the Covenant and Its Narrative Context, Dating the Book of the Covenant, The Book of the Covenant and Ancient Near Eastern Law Collections, The Book of the Covenant as a Covenant Document, and then textual analysis of Exod 20:22–23:33, which covers eighty-six pages.

In his treatment of the Book of the Covenant, Alexander argues for a single origin of this material as it exhibits a self-contained entity. The Book of the Covenant, which follows the Ten Commandments, contains instructions for building of altars. This is essential, Alexander notes, for the covenant ratification in Exod 24:4–5. Thus, the sections of Exod 20:22–23:33 include instructions for making cultic objects (20:22–26); rulings (22:1–22:20[19]); moral precepts (22:21[20]–23:9); and promises and warnings concerning the land of Canaan (23:20–33).

Alexander also points out how the Book of the Covenant reflects the teaching of the Decalogue: no other gods (Exod 20:3) is echoed in 22:19; 23:13, 24, 32, prohibition of images (Exod 20:4) is repeated in 20:23, Sabbath observance (Exod 20:8) reemerges in 23:10–12, etc. Thus, from a literary analysis there are sufficient grounds for viewing the Book of the Covenant as a vital part of the Sinai narrative. In the conclusion of the Book of the Covenant (23:20–33) the instructions address the future occupation of the land of Canaan. Alexander argues that this section should be considered an appropriate conclusion for a covenant document as Israel looks forward to becoming a holy nation in the land promised to the patriarchs. Thus, the different sections of the Book of the Covenant complement each other, creating a unified text focusing on Israel’s covenant obligations that will enable them to become a holy nation under God’s authority.

Finally, the focus of the commentary is on the Hebrew text of Exodus as it has been received. It displays excellent textual analysis of the original language, focusing on interpreting the original meaning of each passage in its literary context and then connecting the passages to other similar texts both in the Old and New Testaments. Ancient Near Eastern parallels are presented, but their contribution to the meaning of the Old Testament Hebrew texts is kept to a minimum. The Old Testament laws are unique among the Ancient Near Eastern laws, not only because superior value is placed upon human life, but also because of the Bible’s monotheism.

This work is highly recommended not only for serious Bible students but also as a model for those reading Exodus in the light of modern biblical scholarship. In this regard the commentary not only helps us to understand the teaching and relevance of Scripture for our lives, but also serves as a Christian Apologetic for our secular age.

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Peter J. Gentry. *How to Read and Understand the Biblical Prophets*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2017. 141 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-1433554032. \$17.99.

The principles and practices of literary interpretation divide into general and special hermeneutics. General hermeneutics (word study, use of context, charting, etc.) gives us methods useful for literary types such as narrative, legal, and epistles. Other types of literature, including poetry, proverbs, parables, and prophecy, will use these to a greater or lesser degree but require special methods. These types of literature have characteristics requiring additional guidelines. Textbooks on biblical interpretation seldom have the space to give extended instruction for these. Peter Gentry's handbook provides a corrective for prophetic literature.

In each chapter, Gentry presents a facet of prophetic study and then illustrates the concept with examples, usually from the book of Isaiah. The first two chapters review the prophet's task: chapter 1, calling God's people back to their covenant responsibilities (illustrated in Isa 5 and 6); and chapter 2, predicting judgment and restoration for Israel (applied to Isa 36 and 37, along with a brief discussion of how they were to discern true and false prophets).

Chapter 3 takes up the function of repetition in the OT, a feature associated with Semitic poetry. OT writers delight to use repetition—within a verse one might find parallel lines, within a context the same subject repeated more than once in a different form, or between sections a purposive paralleling to emphasize similarities (e.g., Gen 3 and 4) or contrasts (John 3 and 4). Gentry's discussion of poetry (including chiasm and word pairs) in this chapter is not out of place in a book on prophecy, since a good deal of the prophetic material is in poetic form. He shows how Isaiah repeats the same themes throughout his book.

At first, chapter 4 appears to be out of place. It concerns the oracles against foreign nations. It would seem to connect better following chapter 2, oracles concerning God's people. But Gentry builds on Deut 32, an example of ancient Hebrew poetry, and the principles of repetition are found there and in the "other nations" oracles that Isaiah gives, particularly in Isa 13–27. Though these oracles emphasize the punishment of the nations and the renewal of God's people, Gentry shows that there is a secondary theme of how this renewal can be a blessing to all the nations of the earth. This is consistent with the larger story the OT encapsulates (e.g., in the call to Abraham [Gen 12:1–3]) and provides a nice transition to the message of the NT.

The final three chapters are styled "Describing the Future." Chapter 5

describes the feature of near and far prophecy, where events that are distant chronologically are juxtaposed, and typology, the foreshadowing of events by earlier events. To illustrate this, Gentry traces the theme in Isaiah of a new exodus out of Babylon patterned after the exodus out of Egypt.

Chapter 6 treats how the prophets use bold metaphorical language, particularly in apocalyptic contexts, to describe events. Gentry provides illustrations from several prophets, but especially from the book of Daniel, examining the language of destruction and restoration (often described in terms of un-creation and re-creation). To read these passages in an overly literal way will cause the interpreter to miss the real-world OT referent. Gentry illustrates from the language of Jer 4:23–26 that to read the passage literally one would think Jeremiah is predicting the end of the world that still lies in our future. Jeremiah, however, uses un-creation language to describe the destruction of Jerusalem at the hands of the Babylonians, completed by 586 BC.

In chapter 7 Gentry takes up the concept of already-not yet, the idea that an action is inaugurated but not yet fully consummated. Gentry's discussion centers on the first and second coming of Christ as King and the resultant kingdom that is/will be established. The book ends with a brief conclusion and an appendix with a chart and discussion of the structure of Revelation.

Gentry has given readers a serviceable handbook for understanding prophetic literature. The explanations are clear and usually easy to follow. The most challenging section is probably chapter 6, the discussion of figurative language. A fuller discussion and more examples would be helpful. I think that some attention should be given to the use of the word "forever" in the OT. Appeal is often made that a prophet is speaking of events or conditions that continue for an eternity of time (or at least until the end of time) without gaps. There is no Hebrew word that must mean this in every context. The words usually translated "forever" in the English Bible commonly designate in the Hebrew Bible that which will continue while the conditions remain. For example, a servant who desires to serve his master will not serve him eternally (Deut 15:17), rather just until the servant dies (cf. Job 3:19). Likewise, the priesthood of Aaron is not an eternal priesthood (Exod 29:9); it continued until the completed work of the Lord Jesus Christ (cf. Heb 7:11–28). Of course, this same Hebrew word can designate what is everlasting. God is always God (Ps 90:2). Thus, when a prophet uses the Hebrew words translated "forever" it does not necessarily mean everlasting.

Finally, Gentry also draws out lessons in theology that derive from the prophetic message. For example, based on the material of chapter 2, he

shows that the text teaches how to discern the true God from a false god, that deliverance sometimes takes a long time, that God is sovereign, and that the word of God is trustworthy. The theological insights Gentry provides have parallels to the NT prophetic message and our future hope as well, making this an encouraging book for New Testament believers.

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Joshua J. F. Coutts. *The Divine Name in the Gospel of John: Significance and Impetus*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2/447. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017. xvi + 259 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-3161551888. \$96.76.

This volume is the revised doctoral thesis of Joshua Coutts, written at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, and supervised by Larry Hurtado. Coutts is a lecturer in New Testament at Regent College. In this monograph, Coutts explores the distinctive emphasis on the divine name in the Gospel of John by identifying the impetus for its use. He argues that the divine name category acquired particular significance for John through his reading of Isaiah. In light of this, Coutts attempts to elucidate the significance of the divine name in key passages in the Gospel and Isaiah. In doing so, he is not arguing by way of identifying allusions to Isaiah but rather making a case “that Isaiah played a prominent role in shaping John’s convictions about the divine name category” (p. 23). Coutts approaches the subject by investigating the significance of name language within the Gospel alongside the diversity of background influences to the divine name category. So, while his focus is primarily on the conceptual impetus for John’s interest in the divine name, he also proposes a possible socio-historical impetus.

In chapter 1, Coutts lays the groundwork for his thesis by demonstrating John’s dependence on Isaiah in three stages. First, he argues that John interpreted Isaiah with regard to references to the divine name “as part of the prophet’s witness to Christ” (p. 68). Second, the divine name concept is embedded in a thematic cluster along with two Johannine themes: the “I am” sayings and “glory.” Third, these two concepts, according to Coutts, accord well with Isaiah’s use of the divine name and the broader conceptual cluster, particularly in the latter half of his book (chapters 40–66). He contends that John “regarded name, [and] glory . . . as having eschatological and associative significance” (p. 68). By “associative,” Coutts means that “the name and glory language serves as a locus for the associ-

ation of God with a distinguishable ‘Servant’ figure” (p. 48). Taken together, these points form a cumulative argument that John was indebted to Isaiah for his interest in the divine name.

In chapters 2 to 4, Coutts investigates the divine name within the Gospel by isolating the significance of the name from its meaning and function in key passages. By isolating the significance, Coutts attempts to determine the primary impetus for John’s interest in the divine name. In each of the key passages, Coutts argues that John’s use of the divine name is associative and eschatological. Concerning John 12:28 and 17:6 (chapter 2), he contends that the divine name is located at the climax of John’s narrative “because [John] is convinced that the name is an eschatological concept and that it is at the heart of the mission of Jesus” (p. 119).

In John 17:11–12 (chapter 3), the impetus for John’s use of the divine name is his “conviction that Jesus embodies the eschatological revelation of the divine name that he shares with the Father,” which he draws from Isaiah (p. 162). Regarding John 5:43 and 10:25 (chapter 4), he argues that John reformulates the Synoptic expression “in my name” to “in my Father’s name” based on the Isaianic Servant, who is simultaneously a witness to God and the glorification and revelation of the name. Both passages function not only to authorize Jesus as the divine agent but also to signify “the association of the Father and Son in a way that is best described in the language of oneness” (p. 184). Thus, Jesus’s own glorification is associated with the glorification of God’s name.

In chapter 5, Coutts supports his argument by exploring the possible socio-historical impetus that worked alongside the conceptual impetus supplied by Isaiah. Here he makes two tentative proposals that support his overall thesis. Drawing upon the work of Lincoln, Baron, and Hurtado, among others, he argues that there was both a polemical and pastoral impetus for John’s interest in the divine name: the conflict between early believers and their Jewish detractors who charged them with blasphemy, and the challenge posed by the delay in the expected return of Jesus. Coutts proposes that these forces “converged with John’s reading of Isaiah to produce the unique emphasis on the divine name” (p. 185).

Overall, Coutts makes an original and important contribution to Johannine studies. His contribution is in both method and substance, particularly in the area of John’s Christology. He broadens our understanding of the divine name concept by demonstrating its eschatological and associative significance. The latter, in particular, has profound Trinitarian implications. As Coutts notes, it “opens a window into the God of the Gospel of John, and helpfully captures the key Father-Son dynamic in Johannine Christology” (p. 199). In addition, his approach in distinguish-

ing John's primary impetus "opens a new entry-point" for discussion beyond the focus on allusions and parallels (p. 200). In both method and substance, Coutts' contribution opens new possibilities for further research.

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Paul M. Hoskins. *The Book of Revelation: A Theological and Exegetical Commentary*. North Charleston: ChristoDoulos Publications, 2017. 491 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-1542553964. \$24.99.

Paul Hoskins's recent commentary on Revelation is a new entry in a field that has seen several recent publications at a variety of levels, including expositional commentaries (Akin, Phillips), pastoral and popular works (Beale and Campbell, Patterson, Osborne), and scholarly contributions (Mathewson, Koester, Leithart). Despite the influx of volumes, Hoskins has still provided a helpful contribution with this work.

Probably more than any other work in the New Testament, Revelation nearly demands clear statements of one's interpretive perspective. Hoskins affirms historic premillennialism and eclecticism, advocating for a strongly futuristic position while also drawing on strengths from preterists, historicists, and idealists, seeking to highlight the already and not-yet nature of Revelation. This position includes an openness to interpreting numbers symbolically (pp. 29–36).

As far as introductory matters go, Hoskins holds to Johannine authorship and a date during the reign of Domitian (pp. 13–24). In addition to defending Johannine authorship, Hoskins readily connects the theology of Revelation with John's other writings, especially the Gospel of John. Structurally, Hoskins advocates a telescoping progression in Rev 4–16. There is a general progression from the first seal through the seventh bowl, and the seventh seal and trumpet each introduce the next set of judgments. At the same time, the seventh seal, trumpet, and bowl all describe the same event, the Day of the Lord, which is introduced by the sixth seal. So chronologically, the first five seals—which Hoskins understands as ongoing judgments occurring between the cross and the end times—are followed by the first six trumpets and then by the first six bowls, and these are all followed by the sixth seal, and finally by the seventh seal, trumpet, and bowl (pp. 24–28, 138).

Hoskins's work is not a technical commentary and will be accessible to a wide audience while remaining beneficial to pastors, students, and scholars. Its non-technical nature can be seen in its format and especially

its content. It normally proceeds section-by-section rather than verse-by-verse, focusing on broader comments instead of comprehensive analysis. The work is well researched, but he does not offer thorough comments on every detail of the passage or provide in-depth grammatical and syntactical observations. Rather, Hoskins elucidates the main point and theological import of the verses, especially in light of how they fit into the book as a whole. Additionally, Hoskins only rarely makes explicit use of Greek and Hebrew, and then mostly in footnotes, and always transliterated.

The most notable aspect of the commentary is the emphasis on biblical theology, specifically how Revelation uses the Old Testament. Hoskins draws attention to Revelation's frequent allusions to OT texts as well as the way it picks up and develops OT themes. In both cases he seeks to emphasize Revelation's frequent typological fulfillment of the OT and to show how recognizing these OT references and themes helps the reader to better understand the meaning of Revelation. This focus is arguably the single greatest strength of Hoskins's commentary. Similarly, he takes the OT background of Revelation seriously for interpreting its imagery, gives it far greater interpretive priority than the Greco-Roman background, and demonstrates how Revelation's symbols are grounded in the OT. The net result of these factors is a commentary that clearly explains each passage, helps the reader understand the passage's theology (including how it contributes to the whole of Revelation), and shows how Revelation makes use of, develops, and fulfills earlier Scripture.

A few weaknesses are worth noting as well. Generally, Hoskins does not interact much with opposing viewpoints. For example, he gives no mention to the importance that Rev 1:19 plays in interpreting the book (concerning things John has seen, that are, and that will take place after), nor does he provide alternative interpretations to his own (pp. 65–66). Minimizing interactions may streamline the content and help with the focus, but it means that the commentary is not as useful for addressing questions or objections that readers may have. Similarly, contentious issues in Revelation are generally not addressed. For example, one issue that appears increasingly in both scholarly and popular literature on Revelation is a concern with its violent imagery. Hoskins does not raise the issue at all. The work would be stronger if he were not only to provide the good interpretations he has given but to proactively address issues such as this for readers who may have questions or concerns. Finally, the book unfortunately lacks any Scripture or subject index, making it difficult to quickly find references.

Overall, these weaknesses are fairly minor. While failing to interact more thoroughly with alternative viewpoints and scholarly works may

lessen the work's value in research contexts, it does not diminish its worth in providing an excellent commentary on the text of Revelation. Hoskins's commentary will prove to be especially beneficial for students, pastors, and other non-specialists who wish to better understand the theological content of Revelation and the biblical theological connections between Revelation and the rest of Scripture.

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John M. Frame. *Theology in Three Dimensions: A Guide to Triperspectivalism and Its Significance*. Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2017. 107 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-1629953229. \$12.99.

John M. Frame's triperspectivalism shapes the way in which he presents and explains his understanding of theology, philosophy, and ethics. As a pedagogical approach to various academic disciplines, it has influenced and shaped scholars, theologians, and students for nearly half a century. Why then does he produce a short volume explicating this three-fold system? In *Theology in Three Dimensions* Frame strives to further explain, clarify, summarize, and apply his triperspectival approach for a broader audience.

Frame's introduction to triperspectivalism divides into three sections. First, he defines the word "perspectives" and elaborates upon God's infinite perspectives while proposing humanity's limited and changeable perspectives through critical judgments. Frame argues that God has revealed some of his perspectives through general revelation, special revelation, and the *Imago Dei* (p. 9). He argues his triperspectival methodology from the doctrine of the Trinity and from God's three lordship characteristics: control, authority, and presence (p. 20). These lordship characteristics correspond to the author's triperspectivalism method. In other words, control corresponds to the situational perspective, authority to the normative perspective, and presence to the existential perspective (pp. 22–26). Frame concludes with how his triperspectival structure equates with the threefold gospel (i.e., with God, Son, and Holy Spirit) and how humanity responds to God's revelation in knowledge, choice, and emotions (pp. 46–50).

Second, Frame briefly clarifies the three perspectives of his framework. He defends the idea that the normative perspective portrays God's obligations for humanity. The situational perspective perceives God's world as factual or the way he designed and created it to be. The existential perspective then allows one to take information from the normative and

situational perspectives and adequately hold to a belief or feeling with reasonable certainty. Frame points out that each perspective does not operate independently but in conjunction with the other two. Triperspectivalism, therefore, observes these three differing perspectives within a unified whole.

Third, Frame applies his approach for a student to use in various Christian disciplines. He illustrates how triperspectivalism brings balance to one's reading, interpretation, and application of Scripture. The author then implements triperspectivalism in the following areas: salvation, the Bible, ethics, philosophy, apologetics, pedagogy, and hermeneutics (pp. 71–84). He concludes with the significance of this triperspectival approach as a means to keep "us focused on the biblical bottom line, that God is nothing less than Lord, and that his lordship is fully revealed in Jesus Christ" (p. 89).

Positively, the structuring of *Theology in Three Dimensions* makes the content accessible for a broad range of readership. Each chapter ends with summary points, questions to ponder, and a glossary to help the reader comprehend Frame's triperspectival methodology and terminology. The work explains triperspectivalism without overt academic jargon in order to accomplish the author's intended purpose—to provide a brief introduction and guide for his pedagogical approach. This introduction would benefit any scholar or student prior to their engagement with Frame's other books. In sum, his argument for this unifying methodology observed in three differing ways is particularly helpful.

Some who argue that philosophy and theology should be viewed as separate from one another might argue against Frame's use of philosophical terms. However, he clarifies and defines the terms for his triperspectival formula from a biblical position. Frame adequately provides his rationale for employing the normative, situational, and existential terminology against the separatist's objections. To put it another way, Frame does not apply these terms from a philosophical epistemology but rather from a theological ontology: the normative perspective associates with God's authority, the situational perspective relates to God's control, and the existential perspective represents God's presence.

One critique would be against Frame's forceful attempt to fit all aspects of the Bible's teaching into his triperspectival model. While that model works most of the time, one must be careful not to allow any model to take precedence over Scripture. For example, Frame argues that regeneration and sanctification have differing functions in a person's life (p. 35). Yet, in his pedagogy application, he presents regeneration and sanctification as equal when teaching about one's new creation (p. 79). This

critique illustrates that one must be aware that the triperspectival approach could be pushed beyond biblical parameters if one is not careful. An individual must allow the Bible to be the final arbiter of truth for any system being promoted.

In conclusion, Frame's introductory work, *Theology in Three Dimensions*, provides a reader with ample information on his triperspectival methodology. For anyone interested in Frame's writing, this book is a must-read for understanding his framework before one embarks on any additional works. While he may push his methodology beyond biblical parameters at times, this book's strengths far outweigh its weaknesses. Anyone—regardless of academic standing—would benefit from reading and thinking through Frame's approach.

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Pete Ward. *Introducing Practical Theology: Mission, Ministry, and the Life of the Church*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2017. 188 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-0801098192. \$21.99.

Regardless of discipline, introductory volumes often seek to engage two worthy audiences. On the one hand, they engage students or those who constitute a general audience in the necessary aspects of the field of study. On the other hand, they engage practitioners of the discipline in hopes of critiquing and shaping the larger field in question. Pete Ward (PhD, King's College, London), a professional fellow in ecclesiology and ethnography at St. John's College, Durham University, masterfully engages both audiences in each chapter of this introductory volume to practical theology. Ward acknowledges his conception of practical theology is broad, for he defines practical theology "as any way of thinking that takes both practice and theology seriously" (p. 5). Such a broad beginning is appropriate, says Ward, because practical theology must recover its theological rootedness as a discipline before it can endeavor to examine practical avenues of application.

Throughout ten chapters, Ward navigates the topics one would expect to encounter in such a work. In chapter 1, Ward skillfully positions his work from the perspective of the church. He senses an erosion in the academic discipline and its relationship to local gatherings of believers. From this beginning, he leads readers through focused chapters on the discipline's connection to the gospel, lived theology, and theological reflection. Ward follows these chapters with an important view into the critical relationship practical theology has with other theological disciplines.

Ward challenges readers to consider how practical theology encompasses more territory than traditionally understood, and he explains how this specific discipline brings out the best emphases of others. Ward finishes his work with two unique chapters for an introductory volume: Readers, especially students, will return to Ward's careful distinctions in research strategies and models. Finally, the book concludes with helpful summaries of how practical theology is produced in spiritual, ecclesial, and academic arenas.

Numerous strengths emerge within this volume. First, Ward masterfully connects practical theology to the life of the church. Through ecclesial practices (corporate worship, sacraments, preaching, etc.) and ethics, Christians encounter aspects of practical theology routinely. Ward suggests five practices that practical theology helps define: remembering, absorbing, noticing, selecting/editing, and expressing (pp. 14–21). In the life of the church, remembering reveals how the church is "shaped and formed by the gospel" (p. 14). Absorbing acknowledges churches are more than incubators of theory. Rather, the rites and practices of the church are absorbed, forming habits and relationships. Noticing involves creating and maintaining a Christian worldview, a necessary responsibility of Christian churches whose people live and breathe in a fallen world. Selecting/editing speaks broadly to everything from the importance of listening to sermons to specific forms of discipleship. Finally, expressing encompasses the activism that flows from Christian devotion. In each of these five practices, Ward promotes a practical theology that is truly born out of and for the flourishing of the church.

Second, Ward examines the connection of practical theology to the growing fields of theological study and literature as an embodied, lived experience among individuals and communities. While some readers may not find this chapter necessary for an introductory volume, Ward finds much to praise about these developments and locates specific components worthy of further investigation. Examples include the necessity of self-reflection for a robust practical theology and the critical methodologies that necessarily flow from theological inquiry. Ward's positive engagement is not without caution since he also reminds his readers that "lived theology is charged with emotions and commitments, and making changes requires more than ideas alone" (p. 66).

Ward's work does not contain any glaring issues of concern or weakness. He successfully navigates his conversation partners through each chapter of his introductory volume. Students will appreciate Ward's irenic tone and substantive insights, especially as they relate to situating practical theology as a good to the church and a defined field of study. Scholars will appreciate his measured evangelical perspective, his vast knowledge

of scholarly literature (from American and UK scholars), and his insistence that practical theology offers a critical place in theological reflection. One might wish that Ward had used his project to include a full chapter on how practical theology shapes preaching although he does briefly reference its importance (pp. 172–73). In the end, the field of practical theology is experiencing a revival of helpful introductory and critical volumes, and Ward's contribution proves to be a significant contribution.

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Toby Jennings. *Precious Enemy: A Biblical Portrait of Death*. Eugene: Pickwick, 2017. xiv + 259 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-1498280679. \$33.00.

Toby Jennings (Professor of Theology, Grand Canyon University and Theological Seminary) wants his readers to understand the biblical teaching on death in service of pastoral concerns. *Precious Enemy*, a revised version of Jennings's doctoral dissertation at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, is intended to provide a counterbalance to the prevailing cultural winds that push death to the margins and ignore God's providence over death. The author's argument is that "a biblical portrait of death limits the value and ethic of human life in contradiction to the pervasive yet allusive sin of biolatry" (p. 17). To state it positively, a biblical portrait of death reminds us that human life is penultimate due to its creaturely, not divine, status; that death is a result of humanity's sinful disobedience of the one, holy God; and that death is governed by God's good providence. Therefore, argues Jennings, we should learn to die well.

The book's outline is straightforward. After an introductory chapter that notes the project's place in current scholarship and provides a survey of prior work on death, chapters 2 through 4 review the biblical data. Jennings's goal in chapter 2 is to demonstrate that death originates in the sin of Adam and Eve, a sin that is imputed to the rest of humanity due to Adam's status as federal head. Chapters 3 and 4 provide fairly standard surveys of death in the Old and New Testaments; the former focuses on terminology and the issue of the afterlife in the OT while the latter addresses the relation of Christology, soteriology, and the resurrection to the nature of death. The conclusion of these chapters is that death is the God-ordained result of sin for Adam and Eve and, by virtue of federal headship, for the entire human race. God ordains death both as punishment for sin and as the means by which humans can be freed from their sinful flesh and subsequently be resurrected in a body free from sin's stain. Death is thus an enemy, but one that is God-ordained and vanquished in

Christ's own death and resurrection. It should be faced by Christians with faith that God is in control and hope that one day Christ will finally put this last enemy under his feet at the resurrection of the dead.

This leads to Jennings's reflections in chapter 5 on the church triumphant, where he explains the theological rationale for martyrdom and reviews the history of martyrdom in Christ's church. The penultimate chapter is an excursus on the death of infants and the cognitively impaired, in which Jennings argues that there is no explicit biblical data that justifies belief that infants or cognitively impaired persons experience salvation at death. There is a very brief aside where Jennings suggests that perhaps God could ordain to save some infants and cognitively impaired persons via his electing and irresistible grace, but (according to Jennings) we have no biblical data to suggest that this is the case, and especially not in any kind of totalizing way. The book ends with a concluding chapter that summarizes Jennings's work and also urges Christians to approach death in faith that God is in control and in hope of the resurrection and the beatific vision.

Readers will have already drawn some of their own conclusions about the book given this summary. Regarding what is to be celebrated in Jennings's work, all who study the Bible and theology will agree that Western culture does not take death nearly as seriously as the Bible does. Jennings's call to take death seriously, and to do so in a way that looks to the Bible for our portrait of death and the God who ordains it, is thus needed in our day. Jennings is at his best when he expositis the pastoral and spiritual claims that a biblical understanding of death makes followers of Jesus, namely to have faith and hope in our good and gracious God in the face of it. There are portions of the book that are, in this sense, inspiring and exhortative.

In spite of the portions in which Jennings is appropriately exhortative, criticism is warranted. I do not intend here to wade into debates about Reformed views on hamartiology and soteriology, but I will say that Jennings is clearly Reformed and often assumes the arguments of that tradition without giving adequate attention to the serious and scriptural criticisms others have made of it. Jennings often assumes a Reformed framework for all his questions, such that his questions are not so much questions as they are conclusions in need of a previously articulated Reformed explanation. This leads to the most controversial chapter, the penultimate chapter on infant death. Here one can almost feel the pull of the inevitable conclusion; all Jennings needs to do is show his readers the irrefutable chain of Reformed logic to get us there. Of course, none of this is to say that Reformed theologians, including Jennings, are neces-

sarily wrong about what they say about these matters (although, full disclosure, I disagree with Jennings on his logic regarding infant death and about a few other matters). It is to say that the means of argumentation is often lacking in truly rigorous and serious engagement with those who might disagree.

Readers who are interested in a biblical theology of death should engage Jennings's *Precious Enemy*. But they should enter into such an engagement with the understanding that this is not a comprehensive, final, or ecclesially universal word on the subject. Of course, Jennings does not portray it as such, but in light of the assured tone of the conclusions, it is best to exercise such discernment in reading.

Matthew Y. Emerson
Shawnee, Oklahoma

J. P. Moreland, Stephen C. Meyer, Christopher Shaw, Ann K. Gauger, and Wayne Grudem, eds. *Theistic Evolution: A Scientific, Philosophical, and Theological Critique*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2017. 1007 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-1433552861. \$60.00.

Theistic Evolution: A Scientific, Philosophical, and Theological Critique brings together a wealth of scholars from across the fields of science, philosophy, and theology to present the fullest (in terms of sheer volume) critique of theistic evolution to date. The major argument of the book is that theistic evolution is a deficient explanation of creation in each of the fields represented. Many of the scholars in this book are aligned with intelligent design, and so a second running theme of the book is the superiority of intelligent design over theistic evolution.

Theistic evolution includes a number of different camps and understandings, and so Stephen Meyer and Wayne Grudem spend the first two introductory chapters defining exactly what they mean by the term. Meyer gives three definitions of theistic evolution: change over time, common descent, and unguided/undirected evolution. Each of these definitions narrows the possibility of God's direct involvement in the development of creation, and Meyer emphasizes that the third position is the major focus of the book's critique, although common descent is also in focus in chapters 10–17. Grudem similarly pinpoints the third view as the major target when he writes, "[I]he form of theistic evolution that we are respectfully taking issue with is this belief: God created matter and after that did not guide or intervene or act directly or cause any empirically detectable change in the natural behavior of matter until all living things had evolved by purely natural processes" (p. 67). In theory, this definition

leaves out prominent evangelical voices who have proposed different possibilities of directed evolution, including John Stott, Tim Keller, Alvin Plantinga, and certain members of *Biologos*. However, it appears that the individual authors of the book often have both directed and undirected forms of evolution in view in their critiques.

The book itself is divided into three major sections: science, philosophy, and theology. The science section is further divided into two sections critiquing neo-Darwinism and common descent. Most of the essays in the science section have been previously presented in other publications and so there is little new information here, but this section's material adds together for a cumulative case showing various ways in which evolution is not settled science. The philosophy section focuses mainly on methodological issues, demonstrating the necessity of philosophical reflection on the larger metaphysical issues surrounding evolution. The theology section emphasizes the difficulty of holding to theistic evolution and the major tenets and storyline of Scripture at the same time. Some of the salient chapters in the book are Sheena Tyler's "Evidence from Embryology Challenges Evolutionary Theory," Casey Luskin's "Missing Transitions: Human Origins and the Fossil Record," and C. John Collins's "How to Think About God's Action in the World." Each of these chapters challenges some form of theistic evolution with clear prose and honest assessment of the topic.

Of course, in a book with this many authors focused on one particular topic, it is not surprising to find discrepancies in definitions between the chapters. One such discrepancy is the use of theistic evolution, mentioned above. It appears at times to function as a broad term for all forms of theistic evolution (unguided, planned, directed) and at other times only as the unguided/undirected version. Another such discrepancy involves the use of intelligent design, which is important because it plays such a prominent role in this book. Like theistic evolution, intelligent design has a number of connotations and definitions, and it appears to be used in different ways. For example, Stephen Meyer writes, "[A]ny proponent of theistic evolution who affirms that God is directing the evolutionary mechanism, and who also rejects intelligent design, implicitly contradicts himself" (pp. 43–44). According to this statement, intelligent design can simply mean that God directed the creation process by whatever means it took. However, Winston Ewert argues in his chapter that intelligent design makes specific falsifiable claims that distinguish it from theistic evolution (p. 199). J. P. Moreland similarly postulates intelligent design as a superior explanation for creation over theistic evolution (p. 559). This leads to some confusion over exactly what intelligent design means for

each particular writer and how it specifically distinguishes itself from theistic evolution as the superior position.

As is often the case in books on this topic, there is a question over whether it generates more heat than light in dialogue between the various creation positions. I found some sections more helpful than others in this regard. For instance, I found the spirit of Wayne Grudem's engagement with members of *Biologos* and others as fellow believers encouraging, even in the midst of his direct critique of their position (p. 64). However, I found J. P. Moreland's request that *Biologos* interact with more traditional Christian scientists, philosophers, and theologians a bit odd considering that *Biologos* has done a number of those interactions with young-earth and old-earth creationists over the last several years (p. 559). I also found Colin Reeves unhelpful in his use of J. I. Packer's definition of liberal methodology to label Denis Alexander's approach as a type of "de-mythologization," particularly since Packer endorsed Alexander's work that Reeves criticizes (p. 722). I hope that future interactions on both sides will follow Grudem's lead here.

Overall, I believe this book will benefit those who are making their way into the creation-evolution debate and are curious about the major issues involved. Those who understand the major figures and ideas of the debate will not find much new information here although having all of these essays in one volume is handy. Finally, those who are more agnostic toward the specific mechanisms of creation will leave this book understanding the importance of key doctrines, methodological questions, and metaphysical issues without necessarily feeling the need to commit to a specific view related to the mechanisms of creation.

Chet Harvey
Nashville, North Carolina

Nathaniel T. Jeanson. *Replacing Darwin: The New Origin of Species*. Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2017. 287 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-1683440758. \$24.99.

Nathaniel Jeanson earned his PhD in Cell and Developmental Biology from Harvard University. He presently serves as a research biologist with Answers in Genesis.

In *Replacing Darwin*, Jeanson presents an ambitious project to do exactly that—provide an alternative to Darwin's theory of evolution. He contends that a paradigm shift is in order. To illustrate his argument, Jeanson effectively uses the analogy of a jigsaw puzzle—a puzzle where one lacks a box cover to follow and doesn't know the total number of pieces.

However, since the time Darwin published his *Origin of Species*, the field of genetics has arisen. Lacking the crucial information provided by genetics, Darwin made many premature (and therefore erroneous) conclusions. Genetics has just recently provided the critical "corner pieces" to the puzzle.

Jeanson contends that a form of evolution has indeed happened—speciation. Speciation is the process by which one species evolves from another species, and to a significant extent the process is driven by natural selection. However, Jeanson does not embrace Darwinian evolution, particularly Darwin's hypothesis of universal common descent. Rather, he argues that speciation is limited to basic families, or orders. Furthermore, speciation occurred rapidly and recently—meaning that it all happened in less than 10,000 years.

Jeanson presents his argument in three steps. First, he provides a clear and succinct account of the development of the field of genetics from the discoveries of Gregor Mendel up to the Human Genome Project (and the ENCODE Project which followed). Jeanson explains that the role of genetics was unknown when Darwin wrote *Origin of Species*. This put Darwin at a fatal disadvantage since genetics is the scientific field most central to speciation.

Second, Jeanson admits that the genetic evidence demonstrates that many distinct species share a (perhaps extinct) common ancestral species. But abandoning the fixity of species does not entail embracing universal common descent. Jeanson laments that the controversy over universal common descent has obscured the reality of significant "family trees." The myriad of species on earth today originated from a relatively small number of families. Jeanson explains, "For example, the family Bovidae possesses 138 living species. From cattle-like species to goat-like species to antelopes and duikers, Bovidae is a very diverse family. Yet over 3,000 breeds of cattle, sheep, and goats exist in this family."

Jeanson argues that Darwin's assumption that speciation occurred over eons of time was as unnecessary as it was incorrect. Rather, Jeanson observes that evolutionists agree that the thousands of distinct breeds have come about in the past 12,000 years. This is because the various breeds—of dogs, cats, and livestock—are all the products of animal husbandry practiced by humans. Humans have been practicing such farming activities for only 12,000 years; therefore breeds are a relatively recent phenomenon. Fewer species exist than breeds, so Jeanson reasons that speciation could have occurred recently also. This raises the objection that such rapid and recent speciation should be occurring today, yet none is detected. Jeanson responds that species discovery is recent and ongoing, and as such is virtually indistinguishable from species creation.

This sets the stage for the third part of Jeanson's argument. He contends that, on the issue of mutation rates, the (time) tables have turned. The genetic time-markers do not agree with an ancient timescale. Jeanson argues that the mutation rates found in mitochondrial DNA do not match standard evolutionary theories. The evolutionary timescale predicts more differences than are actually found, typically by many orders of magnitude. This disparity is found across a wide spectrum of species, from humans to insects to baker's yeast. He contends that the mutation rates fit a young-earth model rather well.

To explain speciation, Jeanson argues that the original creatures were created with genetic diversity already imbedded within their respective DNA. This latent diversity then expressed itself rather quickly, depending on environmental factors brought on by geography and other influences. This means that speciation, rather than being an "evolutionary" phenomenon, is more "devolutionary."

In sum, *Replacing Darwin* makes primarily (maybe even exclusively) a genetic argument for young-earth creationism. The book deals little with other areas of science or with biblical exegesis and theological concerns. However, the model presented in *Replacing Darwin* gives a coherent and understandable explanation for how all types of land creatures were able to fit in Noah's ark. It also provides an explanation as to how the different and distinct species are found in disparate parts of the globe (some exclusively so). For example, how did kangaroos get all the way from Mt. Ararat to Australia? And why are they found only there? Jeanson's hypothesis addresses those questions. This model also makes testable scientific claims. One can expect they will be examined closely, both by those sympathetic and those who are not. In any event, as an old-earth creationist, I found much to appreciate in this work, especially the evangelistic appeal at the end of the book.

Jeanson also does a good job of presenting the current controversy surrounding the findings of the ENCODE Project. He explains that evolutionary and creationist models make very different predictions about the differences found in nuclear DNA and that the findings fit creationists' models far better. Evolutionary models predict that the DNA will contain large quantities of "junk" or nonfunctional genes. This is why the findings of the ENCODE Project have been so controversial. Though the results are still preliminary, they indicate that most of the genome that was labeled as junk turns out to be functional after all.

Nevertheless, some portions of *Replacing Darwin* give reason for concern. Jeanson places a great deal of weight on the meaning of the Hebrew word *min* (typically translated as "kind") in the account of Noah's flood

in Gen 6–9. He argues that Moses intended the word to refer to the scientific categories of family or order, rather than species. Jeanson claims that his approach stems from the "explicit statements from Genesis," but he also admits, "the exact definition of *min* is debated among Hebrew scholars" (p. 148). Actually, there is broad agreement among Hebrew scholars that the term does not have scientific precision. And the Bible does not say Noah released the ancestor of the Columbidae family, but rather he released a dove—which seems to be a particular species of bird. Jeanson appears to be building on an assumption that is difficult to prove exegetically.

On another tack, Jeanson concedes that evidence exists for transitional species. He admits that his "argument eliminates the hypothesis of the fixity of species" (p. 147). This is not a trivial concession. One past major argument made by creationists of all stripes has been the lack of transitional species in the fossil record. It will be interesting to see how other creationists respond to this change. Jeanson argues that his model is non-evolutionary in that it affirms *speciation* but not *evolution*. Yet the *Encyclopedia Britannica* defines speciation as "the formation of new and distinct species in the course of evolution." In contrast, *Replacing Darwin* presents cattle, sheep, goats, and antelopes as having come from a common ancestor. This is one example among many.

To conclude, *Replacing Darwin* presents a clear argument for a rapid version of speciation that is compatible with the belief that the earth is less than 10,000 years old. The book provides a testable hypothesis, so time and scientific testing will tell its merits. Though rather technical, *Replacing Darwin* can be read by the motivated layperson. This work is essential reading for those wanting to understand the current state of young-earth creationism.

Kenneth Keathley
Wake Forest, North Carolina

John Behr, ed. *Origen: On First Principles*. Oxford Early Christian Texts. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018. 800 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-0199684021. \$180.00.

Fr. John Behr, Dean and Professor of Patristics at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, has recently joined a chorus of voices chanting the praise of Origen of Alexandria (c. 185–c. 254). Pope Benedict XVI dubbed the third-century theologian a "great master of faith" in his General Audience of April 2007. More recently, David Bentley Hart offered homage in his article "Saint Origen" (*First Things*, October 2015).

Behr's "song of praise" takes the form of a new translation and introduction to Origen's masterpiece of theology, *On First Principles*. As the pioneering work of Christian systematics, this text has significantly influenced the history of theological discourse, inspiring thinkers such as the Cappadocian fathers, Jerome, and Maximus the Confessor. Behr's substantive introduction and fresh English translation is thus a landmark feat—the first work of its kind to appear in over eighty years.

Unlike G. W. Butterworth's translation of 1936, based largely upon Paul Koetschau's reconstruction of the text (1913), Behr focuses on translating the Latin text (*De Principiis*) produced by Rufinus in the fourth century. The original Greek (*Peri Archon*) did not survive the patristic skirmishes surrounding Origen's orthodoxy. Thus, Behr avows to give the English-speaking world the best opportunity to hear Origen's voice, albeit via the pen of Rufinus.

Behr provides "as literal a translation" as possible, "while still respecting the rules of English grammar" (p. xcvi). Those familiar with Behr's other translations, such as *On the Apostolic Preaching* by Irenaeus and *On the Incarnation* by Athanasius (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1997 and 2012, respectively), know that he strives to provide word-for-word renderings of patristic texts. This version of *On First Principles* is no exception. Behr translates Rufinus's text into fluid English prose, providing the Latin with critical apparatus on each adjacent page.

The mention of Origen's name seems to perpetually convey the connotative freight of "heresy." While Behr admits certain unconventional aspects of Origen's teaching (e.g., the eternity of creation; p. lvii), he also highlights the unpropitious circumstances surrounding Origen's condemnation (p. xvi). A careful reading of *On First Principles* nevertheless suggests several outside-the-main viewpoints. As a representative example, Behr discusses at length the notion of the soul's pre-existence, a concept integral to Origen's project. In this prior state, outside of time and yet somehow embodied, the soul merits its subsequent status within the present age, a position garnered either by virtuously clinging to God in love or by moving away through a slothful lack of divine imitation (see *Princ.* 2.9.6–9.8). Souls persist in adherence to the Word with varying degrees of intensity, some clinging ardently, some less so, until all fell away, save one. The only soul that adheres fully to the Word is that of Christ, which is "joined to the Lord" to become "one spirit," thereby becoming indistinguishable from the Word through this union (1 Cor 6.17; *Princ.* 2.6.3).

The now divinized soul of the incarnate Christ never abandoned God, whereas all others moved away. But Origen is subtle on this point. And so is Behr. Admitting the novelty of his reading, Behr argues that Origen's (putative) "mythology" of the soul refers to a particular moment in the

biblical narrative: "The most concrete passage in Scripture, where all who had, with varying degrees of love, adhered to their Creator, fell away, except one, is the crucifixion" (p. lxviii). The cross is the event in which the visible, temporal horizon both mirrors and somehow fuses with the unseen, eternal horizon: all the disciples depart from their Lord, yet Christ holds fast to God. Behr argues that because the soul of Christ was divinized by its holding fast, "the unity of the God-man is again effected upon the cross, for after it, and in its light, we can no longer differentiate between human and divine properties" (p. lxix). This reading of Origen characterizes the cross as Christ's exaltation, not his defeat: "Through the Passion, Christ, as human, becomes that which, as God, he always is" (p. lxxiv). Like an iron placed in the fire, Christ's soul unceasingly clings to God, receiving the very properties of God and mediating those divine properties to the fullness of his humanity. Christ's divinization is thus an eternal reality most fully revealed in the historical event of the cross.

Behr's introduction to *On First Principles* contains several other intriguingly novel analyses of Origen. Even after several readings, this reviewer remains less than fully convinced by every conclusion. I do, however, feel compelled to read it yet again, mainly for its subtle complexity and wide breadth of theological insight. Behr's translation work is superb; it is no doubt the new standard for an Anglophone readership of Origen. And Behr's creative introduction provides a fascinating entryway to the mysterious land of *On First Principles*. The two-volume set is recommended reading for patristic scholars and philosophical theologians as well as those seriously interested in the history of Christian doctrine.

Owen Kelly
Wake Forest, North Carolina

Robert W. Caldwell III. *Theologies of the American Revivalists: From Whitefield to Finney*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2017. ix + 246 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-0830851645. \$35.00.

For years scholars have understood the importance of conversion in the events of the Great Awakenings. However, among leading pastors and theologians of the era, convictions surrounding conversion varied. Robert W. Caldwell III, professor of church history at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, has established himself as an authoritative voice on Jonathan Edwards and the Edwardsean tradition, the Great Awakenings of North America, and Baptist history during these periods. In *Theologies of the American Revivalists*, Caldwell offers a summary and assessment of the theological foundations of leaders and major denominational groups during the Awakenings.

According to Caldwell, the revivalists of this era shared a common theology. He observes that moderate evangelicals held to a revival theology marked by conviction, conversion, and consolation. These evangelicals recognized that God prepares the heart so that the individual recognizes and experiences his or her guilt of sin. Individuals experience regeneration through the work of the Holy Spirit, and by turning in repentance and faith, the work of regeneration is found to be authentic. Moderate evangelicals found that assurance is the by-product of faith; thus, it is only experienced after regeneration. Caldwell rightly uses individuals like Samuel Davies, John Tennent, and Jonathan Dickinson to convey this process.

While understanding this process of salvation was shared by many moderate evangelicals, other groups took it and modified it to accommodate their own theological convictions. Caldwell shifts to compare and contrast the revival theologies of Andrew Croswell and Jonathan Edwards. Croswell, who opposed and was strongly opposed by moderate evangelicals, held to immediate conversion. His emphasis was on personal salvation. On the other hand, Edwards's revivalist theology emphasized a voluntarist accent and disinterested spirituality. Through these two individuals, Caldwell builds a vision for how their views would be tailored in the years to come.

Caldwell explores the New Divinity movement and the expansion of Edwards's disinterested spirituality and voluntarism. Caldwell shows the significance of Joseph Bellamy and Samuel Hopkins, both of whom contributed to the establishment and promotion of New Divinity theology. They shifted from a disinterested spirituality to a disinterested benevolence, and they (particularly Hopkins) embraced Edwards's anthropology while adding to it the call for immediate repentance. Caldwell is careful to note here that while this sounds similar to Croswell's revival theology, Hopkins's approach is much different. The New Divinity movement also adjusted some of Edwards's theology, including convictions regarding original sin, atonement, and justification.

Caldwell argues the Second Great Awakening is best understood in the regional movements found in New England, the western frontier, and upstate New York. Caldwell explores the alterations made by Congregationalists, such as seen in the work of Edward Dorr Griffin. Nathaniel William Taylor also worked to improve New Divinity Theology—his New Haven Theology. This changed the direction of New Divinity theology. Through this assessment, Caldwell conveys how these ideas affected Congregationalists and New School Presbyterians. Many rejected this New Haven theology, and it brought division between New England Congregationalism and American Presbyterianism.

Caldwell also describes other revivalist theologies. The revivalist theology of Methodists during the era was popular and influential. Methodists stressed the love of God and free will, the universal offer of the gospel, and the call to holiness and Christian perfection. Early Baptist revival theologies also played a significant role. However, unlike the uniformity of the Methodists, Baptist revival theology varied in each of the Baptist groups. Caldwell compares and contrasts Separate and Free Will Baptists, Edwardsean Baptists, and Regular Baptists, showing their common ecclesiology but varied soteriology.

As Caldwell continues, he surveys several other individuals and schools of thought. First, Caldwell argues that Charles Finney's theology was an extension of Edwardsean theology, except for the rejection of moral inability. Finney sought to avoid causality when addressing salvation and the relationship between the work of the Holy Spirit and individual free will. As such, he found that "agents of revival" contributed to the sinner's acceptance of the gospel (p. 183). The phenomena experienced in revivals were not always well received though. Responses came from Princeton Seminary through Charles Hodge and Archibald Alexander as well as from the Restoration movement with Alexander Campbell. Caldwell carefully describes the features of their responses and visions for revival. He concludes with a brief summary and offers a helpful assessment of the factors and trajectories of revival theology.

This work is an excellent resource for anyone interested in understanding and exploring the complexities and commonalities of the theology of revivalists during the Great Awakenings. Robert Caldwell's expertise in these areas emerges in his writing, and he excels in conveying multifaceted issues in precise ways. He is careful to remain objective in his descriptions without advocating a theological agenda. On the practical side, he provides summaries at the end of each chapter that are quite helpful in condensing the content. This book will serve both the layperson and scholar well, and it ought to challenge us to call on God to do a fresh work among us today.

Aaron Lumpkin
Saint Louis, Missouri

Joe E. Trull and R. Robert Creech. *Ethics for Christian Ministry: Moral Formation for 21st-Century Leaders*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017. 275 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-0801098314. \$26.99

Commenting on the challenges facing the Church today, both friend and foe are apt to raise the issue of moral failure within ministerial ranks. Sadly, there is much fodder for the critique as reports of pastors felled by

egregious sin is a “regular front-page phenomenon.” Such is the characterization of Joe E. Trull and R. Robert Creech in the opening chapter of their recent book, *Ethics for Christian Ministry: Moral Formation for 21st-Century Leaders (ECM)*. “Ministerial ethics can no longer be presumed,” they assert, and so they intend with the book a resource for educating ministerial students on the “ethical obligations contemporary clergy should assume in their personal and professional life” (p. x).

Neither Trull nor Creech are new to pastoring or to ministerial education. For the past decade, Creech has served on faculty at George W. Truett Theological Seminary, and before then he pastored for twenty-two years in Texas. Trull, likewise, has over two decades’ experience in pastoral ministry and more recently served a fifteen-year stint as a professor of Christian ethics at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, where in 1993 he wrote his first book on ministerial ethics with the help of fellow Baptist James Carter. In its organization and content, *ECM* largely follows this seminal work as revised in 2004 and published under the title *Ministerial Ethics: Moral Formation for Church Leaders*.

On structure, *ECM* features eight chapters and four appendices. In the first chapter, Trull explores the question of pastoring as a profession or calling and arrives at a “both/and” conclusion. Significantly, as professionals, ministers are “committed to certain ideals” that include adherence to a high standard of conduct (p. 21), and it is Trull’s express hope that his pastor-readers will, by the end of the book, be positioned to pen a “personal code of ethics” to guide them in ministry (pp. 21–23). Working towards that objective, Trull begins with a brief introduction to ethics (chapter 2) that assumes the classic three-fold division of character, conduct, and moral vision (“integrity”). In fleshing these out, Trull declares “the Bible is the primary resource” as it presents not just explicit commandments but also moral principles and the example of Christ (p. 28). Much, however, is to be gleaned, he insists, from reflection on Christian tradition and so he commends the reading of Augustine, Aquinas, Calvin, and, of more recent and diverse vintage, Cahill, Hauerwas, and Verhey.

In the book’s mid-section Creech considers the practice of ministerial ethics with four foci in view, beginning with the pastor’s personal life (chapter 3). It is critical, Creech contends, that both pastor and congregation recognize the pastor’s “inherent vulnerabilities” and covenant together to develop “structures of support and accountability” (p. 59) to facilitate health in all dimensions (spiritual, emotional, and physical). In chapter 4, Creech focuses the discussion on the minister’s relation to the congregation. Love for the flock is paramount and manifests, he contends, as “competent proclamation, pastoral care, and leadership” (p. 77).

Interaction with fellow ministers is the focus of chapter 5. As he discusses how to deal with one’s predecessor, fellow staff, neighboring ministers “preaching the same gospel,” and, finally, one’s successor, Creech offers much good practical advice. In chapter 6—Creech’s final contribution—the focus is engagement beyond the walls of the church in ministry to the civic community that promotes “peace and justice.” In this chapter more than any other, Creech draws from the work of other scholars whom fellow Southern Baptists may be challenged to recognize or with whom they lack solid theological agreement.

In chapter 7, Trull returns with what may seem a detour for the book as he homes in on a particular issue—specifically, the scandal of clerical sex abuse. After noting its scope and impact, he lobbies for action, calling church leaders and members to advocate for “justice through due process and ministry to victims” (p. 176). They must also labor at prevention, however, and that, Trull contends, requires “guidelines and accountability” (p. 206). In chapter 8 he argues that such may best be facilitated by ministers adopting both a personal and a professional code of ethics, and in the book’s appendices, he provides a number of sample codes to stimulate the process for willing readers.

On general features, *ECM* presents well with a logical flow, few errors of grammar and syntax, and a style of writing accessible to students and non-academics. Gender-neutral language pervades, though, and serves to convey an unstated egalitarian conclusion on the question of women in the pastorate. The oblique delivery understates the importance of the issue as it concerns the book’s *raison d’être*. If Scripture is properly interpreted as limiting the role of pastor to men, then in projecting a contrary view *ECM* would clearly undercut the authors’ stated mission of helping equip the Church with leaders who strive for obedience to God’s will in every aspect of life. In sum, while the book’s egalitarian bent may prove a significant distraction for some readers, it certainly delivers much practical content that churchmen across the theological spectrum can accept.

Erik Clary
Stillwater, Oklahoma

Sam Chan. *Evangelism in a Skeptical World: How to Make the Unbelievable News about Jesus More Believable*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018. 288 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-0310534679. \$24.99.

Globalization, pluralistic contexts, and the rise of global Christianity leave some Christians in the twenty-first century scratching their heads. Is there a “correct” way to do evangelism? If so, what is it? The dizzying array of answers to these questions can be overwhelming or frustrating.

In the midst of such murky waters, where does one find a comprehensive evangelism book for the twenty-first century? Sam Chan, a City Bible Forum public evangelist in Australia, rises to meet the challenge in his book *Evangelism in a Skeptical World: How to Make the Unbelievable News about Jesus More Believable*. His book can also be accompanied by a 15-lecture video study, in which he tackles his topics with more depth.

Chan, a global Christian himself, claims that in today's changing world, there is no "one-size-fits-all" way to do evangelism. The method and medium can be shaped by the audience and the speaker. Though promoting a variety of methods, he continually harps, "Evangelism is defined by its message" (p. 37), firmly situating evangelism in the realm of gospel proclamation. Chan hopes that the flexibility in method encourages believers to be intentional when thinking through methodology, be less critical to those who do evangelism differently, and gain "a profound understanding that God uses our humanity ... to communicate his gospel" (p. 284).

Chan's chapter "A Theology of Evangelism" simultaneously grounds his evangelism to a theological foundation while laying the groundwork for his argument that evangelism is not bound to a single method. In it, he defines evangelism as "our human efforts of proclaiming this message [that Jesus Christ is Lord] ... and trusting and praying that God, in his sovereign will, will supernaturally use our human and natural means to effect his divine purposes" (p. 24). He succinctly covers important evangelism foundations such as the definition of the gospel, various roles in the evangelism process, and models of conversion. While operating within a specific theological tradition, Chan is not overly dogmatic to his position. Though some readers in other traditions may not agree with some facets of his theology of evangelism, they can still find value in Chan's work.

To answer the question of how to craft a culturally relevant but biblically faithful evangelistic presentation, Chan borrows from the world of missiology, discussing issues like gospel-cultural hermeneutics, storytelling, and contextualization. One of the strengths of his work is his emphasis on entering a culture's story, challenging the culture's story, and fulfilling the culture's story (pp. 159–66). Through this pattern, Chan advocates intentional, faithful gospel presentations that use cultural bridges to speak to the hearers' hearts in a way that resonates with them.

Chan not only claims multiple evangelistic methodologies are valid, he also dedicates large chunks of the book to providing specific examples. He shares multiple Bible stories that illustrate how God works through a variety of different evangelistic models. He provides simple step-by-step simple instructions to build gospel presentations that take into account

the audience, the platform, and the evangelist. He describes multiple gospel metaphors and how to present the gospel using each one. He gives examples of contextualized gospel presentations, storytelling, and various evangelistic talks. He defines common traits of postmodernism and then describes ways to faithfully share with Postmoderns.

While much of his book reads like an evangelism primer for any person, Chan's chapters on storytelling, evangelistic topical talks, and evangelistic expository talks exhibit that he is writing for students preparing for ministry. Though he mentions storytelling as a way to present the gospel, he spends the majority of the chapter on formal, discussion-based storytelling, skimming over the prolific uses of storying as an informal entry point for an individual or group. There is little mention about how to transition into a story, how to gauge interest, or how to move from the story to broader gospel presentation. While the rest of the book could appeal broadly to the normal layperson in the pew, these three chapters focus on opportunities that will not normally be available to everyone.

By pushing against a set evangelistic method, Chan attempts to help a generation maintain theological faithfulness while being culturally relevant to an ever-changing non-Christian context. His argument, examples, and instructions do not disappoint. Chan integrates missiological strategies, theoretical and practical evangelism, the reality of global Christianity, and conservative evangelical moorings to give his readers a work set apart from other contemporary evangelism textbooks. It is both theologically robust and profoundly practical. His book empowers the believer with both a knowledge of evangelism's fundamentals and the practical tools needed to actually go out and do it.

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Jason S. Sexton, ed. *Four Views on the Church's Mission*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017. 208 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-0310522737. \$16.95.

What are we to make of the debates that surround the idea of missions and the mission of the church? Why is it so hard for evangelicals to find an agreed upon definition? How can evangelicals decide about the role of evangelism, church planting, social work, and other holistic ministries within the mission of the church?

This volume seeks to address, though not wholly solve, questions like the ones above. *Four Views on the Church's Mission* is part of the Counterpoints series published by Zondervan. According to the publisher, the

series is designed to encourage dialogue by comparing and critiquing varying views on issues important to Christians. In the current volume, the writers are seeking to correct what they perceive to be a problem among evangelicals—divorcing missions from the normal, congregational activity of the church. They are concerned that the common understanding of mission is “something the church does, largely outside the church” (p. 11). Beyond this shared concern, each of the contributors develops his own theological description of the church’s mission.

As with all the other books in this series, each view is presented by its proponent. Responses and critiques by the other three contributors follow that presentation. The format provides a very helpful example of theological development as well as a model of scholarly debate. The contributors are able to highlight where their respective views are similar as well as where and why they differ. The format also keeps each presenter honest as it requires care in the presentation of one’s ideas and in the way others are represented. In the end, the reader has a thorough understanding of the issues at hand and a grasp of the different theological positions.

This book presents four competing views of the mission of the church. The first, represented by Jonathan Leeman, is called the “Soteriological Mission.” This is the more traditional understanding of the church’s mission. It emphasizes the priority of individual conversion and redemption.

The second position is called “Participatory Mission” and is presented by Christopher J. H. Wright. The chapter is a summary of Wright’s book *The Mission of God*. It suggests that the mission of the church includes everything that God’s mission includes. While Wright does place emphasis on conversion and gospel proclamation, he also comments that everything the church does is its mission. It is quite interesting that even though Wright includes many different elements in his discussion, he makes a point to highlight creation care as a central element.

The third position is called “Contextual Mission.” This idea is presented by John R. Franke and it advances the idea that the mission of the church will take on different characteristics and emphasize different elements in different places (i.e., in different contexts). He suggests that the witness of the church acts as the first fruits and as a sign that God’s Kingdom is not present in the world today. The church’s mission brings healing to broken communities in very specific yet varying ways.

Finally, the fourth position is called the “Sacramental Mission.” It is presented by Peter J. Leithart. This position suggests that the church’s mission is shaped by the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper. Each of these demonstrates the vitality of faith and the Christian community. As a new, redeemed community, the church is then called to engage

in social and political ministries in an attempt to repair the damage caused by sin in this world.

The contributors (and responders) each present their ideas clearly. They also do an excellent job of demonstrating not only where they differ, but also why. Each engages the biblical storyline from OT through NT, and each shows how his position is supported in the overarching biblical narrative. This discussion is helpful for the reader because of the temptation we all face—failing to grasp the biblical basis of positions different to ours.

As the contributors advance their different theories, one idea becomes abundantly clear. The issues that separate these men cannot be settled by agreeing on a definition of the critical terms. Instead, the differences rest on interpretative decisions throughout the biblical narrative—most significantly on the continuity and discontinuity between the Old and New Testaments.

I think that any person interested in the debate/discussion about missions and the place of the local church in the mission of God will benefit from reading this book. It is well written, and each contributor represents himself and his position well.

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Duane Alexander Miller. *Two Stories of Everything: The Competing Metanarratives of Islam and Christianity*. Grand Rapids: Credo House Publishers, 2017. 160 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-1625860965. \$15.99.

Many people outside the church or mosque assume Muslims and Christians spend their time quibbling about certain universal religious categories such as “deity,” “morality,” and “ritual.” Reduced to such abstractions, any religion’s ultimate claims about human destiny can be safely compartmentalized as having little relevance to the modern quest for “human flourishing.” Anglican missiologist Duane Miller’s latest work challenges the reader to escape this path of gross oversimplification and, instead, view Islam and Christianity not simply as tame “religions” but as “metanarratives” demanding a reply. “Religions” may indeed quibble over doctrines and practices. “Metanarratives,” by comparison, make comprehensive claims to explain the world, humanity, and human destiny in all places and all times, summoning the hearer to either affirm or deny them. Those willing to accept the challenge and ponder the ramifications Miller outlines may learn just how dramatically the despised category of “religion” shapes the future under the very nose of Western secularism.

Miller accomplishes his task by comparing and contrasting how Islam

and Christianity conceive of human origins, human nature, Israel, Jesus, Muhammad, the community of God, and eschatology, summarizing it all with a helpful glossary. To present both worldviews plausibly in a short space, the author must write with great brevity and selectivity. Nevertheless, Miller ably demonstrates the stark differences between Islam and Christianity while amply footnoting his sources. By laying the basic groundwork in this way, Miller allows readers to explore the issues more fully for themselves. Along the way, he introduces interesting nuances of each respective creed, from Anselm's views on the atonement in *Cur Deus Homo* to the doctrine of abrogation in Qu'ranic hermeneutics.

As both a scholarly student of Islam and Christianity and former academic dean and professor at Nazareth Evangelical Theological Seminary for nearly a decade, Miller speaks as one with an intimate professional and personal knowledge of both faiths. He displays a deep respect and affection for Muslim peoples while also reflecting a passion for their incorporation into Christ. This nuanced regard for Islam alone should commend the book to the Western Church. Miller's analysis equips the church to find confidence in the distinct message of the gospel while recognizing its own deep wounds, which Islam's strengths expose.

Readers, of necessity, will be disappointed in such an introductory work when their pet issues are not shared by the author. Some readers will frown upon Miller's doctrine of sin which skews Orthodox, not Reformed, in trajectory. Others will lament Miller's failure to chronicle Muhammad's failings in detail while some will consider that he has whitewashed the evils associated with the Crusades. He could be considered a "Zionist" for his comments on Israel by some while others, naturally, will think him not nearly zealous enough on behalf of the Jewish state! These criticisms, however, reflect the price paid for attempting to present "mere Christianity" instead of any particular sectarian presentation of the Christian faith.

Upon reflection then, Miller's work might be said to present "Three stories of everything." In the act of describing Islam and Christianity, he ultimately critiques the dominant metanarrative of our age, secular humanism. In fact, despite their differences, Islam and Christianity share this in common:

[They] resist privatization and compartmentalization. The Enlightenment vision was that . . . society would be able to move beyond the superstition of medieval Christendom into a brave new world of reason, analysis, individualism, and modernity. . . . This project of discerning "objective reason" from the "subjective religious faith" is from the very beginning, an impossible task. (p. xii)

Islam and Christianity both pronounce Western secularism to be dead and dying. The practical question Miller explores at various junctures is which way of life will ultimately take secularism's place. Miller offers some possibilities that Western Christians may find disconcerting, reflecting their own concessions to secularism.

In any event, pastors seeking a respectful Christian comparison of Islam and Christianity would do well to help their people work through this book. The average Christian reader should have no problem accessing the information independently. Writing for a popular audience, Miller does so without sensationalism, while still offering honest assessments of the current situation the average Christian won't otherwise encounter. The scholar may not learn new information here, but Miller's approach serves as a worthy model for taking potentially difficult material and presenting it in an accessible way for Christ's Church. This work is well suited for church-based study groups, for individual study, and even as a classroom text in some settings.

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