

Book Reviews

Ulf Bergström. *Aspect, Communicative Appeal, and Temporal Meaning in Biblical Hebrew Verbal Forms*. Linguistic Studies in Ancient West Semitic 16. University Park, PA: Eisenbrauns, 2022. xv + 215 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-1646021406. \$94.95.

Biblical Hebrew verbs are, for the most part, morphologically transparent. Introflexive and inflection formatives comprise their fusional morphology designating a matrix of roots, stems, conjugations, persons, genders, and numbers. These morphological categories express core semantic and syntactic notions. For instance, the information identified as person, gender, and number licenses the subject as the primary syntactic argument of the sentence. The root conveys the basic action, event, or process. The stem (*binyanim*) corresponds largely to the properties of voice, valency, and/or *Aktionsart*. Yet, the form-meaning mappings of the verb conjugations—*qatal*, *yiqtol*, *wayyiqtol*, *wəqatal*, *qotēl*, etc.—are anything but clear. A cursory survey of scholarship results in a wide disparity of opinions regarding their meanings. Ulf Bergström’s *Aspect, Communicative Appeal, and Temporal Meaning in Biblical Hebrew Verbal Forms* investigates conjugation meaning in BH and interacts with research in linguistic typology, historical linguistics, and semiotics.

Verbs encode notions of tense, aspect, and/or mood (TAM). *Tense* “locates focused time relative to a vantage point, which can be either the time of speech or a secondary vantage point before or after the time of speech” (p. 24). Bergström labels the former “absolute tense” and the latter “relative tense.” *Aspect* is best understood not in the classical Greek/Latin sense, according to Bergström, but in terms of differing views or stages of an event. Stage-based aspect “can be described as the temporal relation obtaining between the time of the view and the time of the event referred to by the verb” (p. 41). *Mood* or *Modality* is “primarily concerned not with the question of whether something really happens or not but rather with the conditions under which it happens” (p. 50). Most grammarians focus on one of the TAM concepts as predominant for each conjugation. The core semantics of *qatal*, for example, have been suggested to encode past tense, perfective aspect, or realis modality. The *qatal* and *yiqtol* forms are generally described as exhibiting a binary semantic relationship. Respectively, *wayyiqtol* and *wəqatal* function as their consecutive counterparts. Bergström’s succinct definitions

of these semantic features and conscientious interactions with differing approaches are invaluable for the newcomer as well as the veteran reconnoitering the battlelines of BH verbal semantics.

The book under review takes on the challenge of presenting a “semantic interpretation ... [that] strike[s] a balance between the descriptive and explanatory aspects” of the temporal meanings of the verbal forms (p. 2). Bergström’s solution employs a grammaticalization approach in which “the various meanings of the verbal forms [are] the result of an evolution that can be reconstructed” (p. 3). Reconstruction of these diachronic pathways is assessed using two criteria: semantic invariance and cognitive precedence (pp. 8–13). *Semantic invariance* establishes the basic meaning of a linguistic form (or its “primary sense”) as the one that can accommodate the most possible contextual situations and lexemes. This criterion is independent of usage frequency. *Cognitive precedence* posits basic meanings that in language use are most amenable to result in ambiguity and semantic reanalysis. It should be noted that these basic or intrinsic meanings are fundamentally semantic (or conventional) rather than pragmatic (or situational) in nature (p. 8).

Bergström outlines the basic TAM characteristics as: nonnarrative past or perfect irrespective of tense for *qatal*, future or progressive irrespective of tense for *yiqtol*-L (i.e., the forms deriving from Proto-West Semitic **yiqtolu*), narrative past or volitive for *yiqtol*-S (including *wayyiqtol*, jussives, and cohortatives, i.e., the forms deriving from **yiqtol*-Ø), and instant future or progressive irrespective of tense for *qotēl* (pp. 13–14). Building from research on verb typology and grammaticalization, Bergström constructs two major diachronic pathways wherein the temporal meanings emerge from aspectual ones. The *qatal* and *wayyiqtol* forms develop from the resultative to the past, and the *qotēl* and *yiqtol* develop from the progressive to the future.

Finally, semiotic theory plays a role in verbal semantics. Linguistic utterances communicate three types of semiotic functions: expression, appeal, and representation. “Expression has to do with what the utterance reveals about the sender, appeal is the effect on the receiver, and representation is the knowledge that is exchanged between them” (p. 158). Bergström designates communicative appeal as triggering “world-oriented action” associated with “some kind of motoric adjustment to and/or manipulation of the physical environment” (p. 160). *Full appeal* signals the need for an immediate reaction from the listener, while *reduced appeal* is associated with more relaxed speech requiring less imminent reactions. Bergström argues that *yiqtol*-L and *yiqtol*-S are marked for reduced appeal, whereas *qotēl* and *qatal* default to full appeal.

Overall, this study is well written and concise. While terseness is ap-

preciated, this characteristic cuts against the enormous breadth of the scholarly conversation on the topic. However, Bergström balances these opposites admirably, crafting a useful *vade mecum*.

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Iain M. Duguid, James M. Hamilton Jr., and Jay Sklar, eds. *ESV Expository Commentary: Deuteronomy–Ruth: Volume 2*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2021. 743 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-1433546327. \$60.00.

Biblical commentaries normally fit into one of three broad categories: devotional, homiletical, or technical. The focus and audience of a commentary determines which category it falls into. Devotional commentaries aim to illuminate the biblical text for lay readers as they seek to hear God’s voice in Scripture. Homiletical commentaries seek to assist pastors and teachers in their exposition of the biblical text. Technical commentaries attempt to convey detailed historical, linguistic, and literary elements of the biblical text for scholars and researchers.

Within this framework, the *ESV Expository Commentary* could be reasonably designated homiletical-devotional. The order in this term matters. It is first homiletical and then devotional. The editors clearly state their goal in the preface, “to provide a clear, crisp, and Christ-centered explanation of the biblical text” (p. 11). They clarify this when they outline the parameters for each individual commentary: “exegetically sound, biblically theological, globally aware, broadly reformed, doctrinally conversant, pastorally useful, application minded, efficient in expression” (pp. 11–12). They also identify their intended audience as “serious students of God’s Word, both those who seek to teach others and those who pursue study for their own personal growth in godliness” (p. 11).

This review examines the *ESV Expository Commentary*’s coverage of the books of Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, and Ruth. Each treatment is briefly examined and judged according to its alignment with the goals and intended audience as outlined in the preface to the entire commentary series.

August H. Konkel’s work on Deuteronomy aligns with many of the editors’ goals. He successfully clarifies many of the interpretive mysteries of the legal collection in Deuteronomy 12–26. For example, Deut 14:1–2 forbids the Israelites from cutting themselves or making themselves bald for the dead. Konkel sets this instruction within its historical context. From the perspective of Deuteronomy, the Israelites were about to enter Canaan in which ritual cutting and baldness for the dead

were “intended as sympathetic magic to appease the gods or influence them to show favor” (p. 159). However, Konkel’s commentary on this passage also demonstrates a significant weakness: His applications to the contemporary moment are often not that helpful or, as in the case of Deut 14: 1–2, altogether absent.

David Reimer’s commentary on Joshua thoroughly accomplishes the goals of the *ESV Expository Commentary*. His deftness in presenting a cogent historical, literary, and theological interpretation of the text makes his commentary the best of the four. He demonstrates keen awareness of all the major issues at play in the interpretation of Joshua and condenses them in an understandable manner for pastors, teachers, and lay people. Readers would be wise to start with his insights on Josh 5:13–15 (the famous commander of the Lord’s army episode) as an example of his skillful analysis and application. No commentary is perfect, but faults in this one are difficult to find (my own differences on specific textual interpretations notwithstanding).

Miles V. Van Pelt’s commentary on Judges matches many of the criteria for the commentary series set forth by the editors. The greatest strength of his work is his identification of inner-biblical allusions. He constantly and capably connects individual episodes in Judges with other episodes—in this biblical book, elsewhere in the Old Testament, and in the New Testament. For example, he argues that the Deborah and Barak narrative and song in Judges 4–5 intentionally looks backward to the exodus narrative and song in Exodus 14–15 and forward to the final battle between Jesus Christ and the powers of evil in which the Lord utterly defeats his enemies. Van Pelt’s work does deserve some minor criticism (e.g., he presents an overly generous reading of the Samson narrative, and his covenant theology is unnecessarily overt). Nevertheless, the positive far outweighs the negative in his commentary.

Mary Willson Hannah’s commentary on Ruth satisfies many of the editors’ criteria for this commentary series. The brilliance of her work is her close narrative analysis of the story of Ruth. In her careful reading of the text, she uncovers many hidden treasures of this artistic narrative. For example, she exposes both dramatic tension and creative characterization in Ruth 3. In almost every episode of this chapter, the author builds suspense and anticipation. Will Naomi’s risky plan work? What will happen when Boaz awakens to Ruth at his feet? Will Boaz accept Ruth’s bold marriage proposal? The dramatic tension is relieved when Boaz accepts Ruth’s courageous approach. Moreover, each episode portrays Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz as faithful and godly figures. Her analysis of the tension and characterization in Ruth 3 (only very briefly summarized here) exemplifies her insightful analysis throughout the commen-

tary. However, in remarks on the same chapter, she relegates the question of a sexual encounter between Ruth and Boaz to a footnote. Since most interpreters ponder this question, a more detailed discussion would have assisted the intended audience.

To fairly review four commentaries at once is a challenging task. These evaluations do not come close to representing all that should be said about each. In summary, I heartily recommend volume 2 of the *ESV Expository Commentary* to lay people, Bible teachers in the church, and pastors (especially the volumes on Joshua and Judges!).

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William B. Tooman with Marian Kelsey. *(Re)reading Ruth*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2022. xxiii + 176 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-1725262713. \$25.00.

William A. Tooman, Senior Lecturer in Old Testament/Hebrew Bible at the University of St. Andrews, and Marian Kelsey, visiting scholar at the University of St. Andrews write *(Re)reading Ruth* to explain the Ruth narrative and to demonstrate its “literary sophistication” (pp. 145, xv–xvi). They insist that Ruth’s elegance manifests in poetic features typical of all great literature. Largely bracketing out historical matters (pp. xvii–xxi), they stress how analogies, or “dialogues” (p. xv) between Ruth and other biblical books function exegetically (pp. xv–xvi).

Chapter 1, “Reading Ruth,” lays out several “rules” of biblical narrative: its terseness, repetitiveness, proclivity for inner-biblical analogies, and intentional structure (p. 1). The authors demonstrate each rule with clear illustrations from Ruth. Those unfamiliar with repetition and analogy will benefit greatly from their explanations. They stress the intentionality of “almost absurd” levels of repetition (p. 6) and the “omnipresence” of analogy (p. 7). These inform the entire work.

Chapters 2–5 each focus on one chapter, or “act” of Ruth. Scattered among these chapters are various excurses further exploring inner-biblical analogies, literary features, or even historical issues unique to Ruth.

In Chapter 2 (1:1–22), the authors explain ancient covenant making lucidly (pp. 40–41), offer fruitful analyses of analogical texts (pp. 42–44), and examine Ruth’s conversion clearly (pp. 45–47). Regarding covenant for instance, they argue that 1:16–18, with its individual vow to adopt another’s God, is unique in the entire biblical corpus (p. 44). In a few pages they expose readers to much without overwhelming them.

In Chapter 3 (2:1–23), they demonstrate how various analogies associate Ruth with the great characters of the Pentateuch: Ruth leaves her homeland like Abraham (Gen 12:1–3) and is described like Rebekah and Rachel (Gen 24, 28:1–5). Chapter 3 stresses the exegetical value of analogies, in four excurses. In addition, these analogies display the interconnectedness of the Old Testament by examining how Ruth elegantly converses with Deut 23:4–9 (“No Ammonite or Moabite may enter...,” pp. 87–89).

Chapter 4 (3:1–18) marks the zenith of both Ruth’s plotline and *(Re)Reading Ruth*. Here, the authors deliver a sensitive and fruitful reading of Ruth’s encounter with Boaz, illustrating the profound depth of OT narratives. They buttress their careful analysis by demonstrating how analogical stories can shape a story’s purpose and interpretation (p. 90, Excurses 9, 10). Finally, they display the symmetrical structure of Ruth by charting the “mutually informing,” shared elements between 2:1–23 and 3:1–18 (pp. 117–19, Excursus 11). Again, they prove there is more to Ruth than meets the eye.

In Chapter 5, the authors skillfully exegete Ruth 4 while isolating more complicated, but exegetically fruitful legal matters in the lengthy excursus at the chapter’s end. Just as before, they maneuver through narrative ambiguity to create a coherent reading, in this case, demonstrating Boaz’s noble character (pp. 123–26).

To round off this review, I offer four specimens of how *(Re)Reading Ruth* demonstrates a broadly applicable interpretive approach and how the book itself will benefit Christian readers. First, the authors show, perhaps unintentionally, how to extract theological principles from narrative texts. For instance, something as trivial as David’s genealogy (4:18–22) proves to be anything but superfluous. Rather, it “intensif[ies] the humility of [David’s] roots,” since Ruth, David’s ancestor, also comes from humble beginnings (p. 130). Even more, juxtaposed with Mara’s “self-centeredness,” Ruth becomes an exemplar of faithfulness and someone to emulate (pp. 54–55). Again, Chapter 3 charts an analogy between Ruth and Judas from the Gospels (2:14; Mark 14:18–20). Tooman and Kelsey argue this analogy emphasizes Judas’ treacherous betrayal of Jesus by comparing him with Ruth, who embodied faithfulness and loyalty to Naomi (pp. 69–70). They thus expand one’s theological imagination, showing how biblical narratives become sites for broad, comparative theological reflection.

Second, their principles of biblical narrative—its terseness, repetitiveness, proclivity for inner-biblical analogies, and intentional structure—have long-lasting value. *(Re)Reading Ruth* demonstrates how anyone can use them to interpret OT narratives fruitfully.

Third, the authors resist judging difficult texts as unreadable, arguing a text's strangeness may serve "a function that is important enough for ... writers to risk some confusion by including it" (p. 115). They thus suggest Naomi's strange sentence "Who are you, my daughter?" (3:16) intentionally alludes to Boaz's similar words in 3:9–10 and Isaac's in Gen 27:18 (pp. 115–16). They trust the text's intentionality (as seen also in their careful explanation of the *ketiv/qere* of 4:5–6 [pp. 122–24]).

Finally, and more generally, they consistently "trust in the writer's purposes." By elucidating the symmetrical structure of the book and its myriad analogies, the Christian reader will come to appreciate the indomitable depth of biblical narrative and will surely never call the book of Ruth simple again (p. 145). Intended for average Bible readers, this incisive work will reward all levels of biblical literacy.

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Eric J. Tully. *Reading the Prophets as Christian Scripture: A Literary, Canonical, and Theological Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2022. xv + 409 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-0801099731. \$30.99.

The second in a series (after Constantine Campbell and Jonathan Pennington's *Reading the New Testament as Christian Scripture*), Eric Tully's *Reading the Prophets* presumably anticipates similar volumes on reading the Law and the Writings. As the subtitle indicates, the series explores Scripture from literary, canonical, and theological perspectives, although Tully devotes considerable attention to history as well. Divided into three parts, the work begins by situating the prophetic books into the Old Testament's theological and historical story. It then covers other background materials, including the role of true prophets, false and ANE prophets, the prophet's message and persuasive strategies, and prophecy from nonwriting prophets to a book's final form (including critical approaches to the prophets). The rest of the volume comprises an overview of each (writing) prophet.

Tully's style is well structured and clear. The material is well laid out, with excellent maps, charts, photos, outlines, and sidebars. The sidebars include literary notes (e.g., Hab 3 as a psalm), figures of speech ("cup" in the OT), theological issues tangent to the text (imprecation in Jeremiah), historical matters ("Mot" as the Canaanite god of death), reception history (Habakkuk at Qumran), and canonical connections (similar wording in the OT and quotes/allusions in the NT). This reviewer found the first parts of the book too short, but they do provide the reader with a starting point, if not enough bibliography, for further thinking. One might

also expect an overview of prophetic theology in the chapter on the prophets' message, while Tully's mostly temporal paradigm presents five phases: past (mostly indictments), warning of judgment (near), repentance and restoration (near), warning of judgment (far), and eschatological (far restoration).

Additionally, the first parts of the book would benefit from further discussion on figurative language, particularly the vocabulary of disaster and restoration. For example, does Jeremiah's description of destruction suggest a cosmic overthrow in our future (Jer 4:23–26)? In the restoration, will the sun produce seven times its light (with a resulting increase in radiation, Isa 30:26)? The book's parameters prevent Tully from discussing these passages, but the questions remain pertinent. Synecdoche and metonymy need treatment as well. Lexically, terms like "earth/land" and "forever" need further comment. A prophet will often use "earth/land" (*'éres*) to refer only to the land of Israel or just the then known world, but not the entire globe, and "forever" (*'ólām*) is not always time without end or gaps. Tully does chart a way forward on the "forever" issue, but in my opinion, often locates the fulfillment in our future too quickly. Nevertheless, his observation that earlier events foreshadow later ones seems a good beginning.

Page limits inevitably leave a reader wanting more in the third part, which covers each prophet. In any event, Tully begins each book with a historical and literary orientation, then presents an often-insightful summary of the content, including the past, near, and far temporal phases. Unfortunately, these appear arbitrary at times and give no indication of other interpretations in the literature. For example, he divides Joel 2:28–32 into two time periods: the Church Age (not his term) and the "end of time" (pp. 270–72). It seems though that Peter declares the fulfillment of Joel 2 at Pentecost (Acts 2:16–21), suggesting the use of figures of speech. Thus, where evangelical scholarship is decidedly divided, Tully could have footnoted other interpretations. He does not advocate any one system of eschatological interpretation and, in fact, does not mention them.

Of course, the "snag" for the study of prophecy comes in distinguishing near and far judgment and restoration passages, particularly restoration in the "eschatological future." Tully's discussion on the ambiguity of phrases like "the latter days," near and far "mountains" on the prophetic horizon, and earlier events presaging later events (pp. 102–7), provides a good introduction. However, I believe his conclusion that such vocabulary most often refers to our future (though it sometimes refers to nearer OT fulfillment or to the time of Christ's incarnation and the Church, p. 104), is an overstatement. NT usages of "that day" and

“last hour/day/days/times” speak of events yet future (see Matt 24:36; John 11:24; 2 Thess 1:10; 2 Tim 4:8), but also describe the Church Age (see Acts 2:17; 2 Tim 3:1; Heb 1:2; 1 Pet 1:20; 2 Pet 3:3; 1 John 1:18). Arguably, of the 14 uses of the phrase typically translated “latter days” in the OT, most refer to events that are simply “in the [unspecified] future” and few refer directly to events in our future. The link between Isa 65:17–19 and Rev 21:1–4 (p. 170) also needs clarity. The impression that both speak of the same event seems to run afoul of the context, because Isaiah’s new state retains birthing and death (Isa 65:20). Here the importance of exploring figurative restoration language in the prophets emerges. Survey limitations prohibit an author from probing any topic too deeply, but further introductory discussion and an acknowledgement of the difficulties, perhaps in endnotes, would provide greater clarity.

The lack of a complete author index or of a non-sequential Scripture index also renders this book less complete and was, perhaps, an editorial decision. Additionally, the meager index includes some Hebrew words, but omits *éres* (land [even as an English listing]), *xéved* (lovingkindness), *kōl* (all), *ólām* (eternal), *qādōš* (holy), and *riḅ* (legal dispute) among others. A searchable e-copy might remedy this. However, for a book that includes “literary” in the subtitle, it is strange that David Dorsey’s *The Literary Structure of the OT* is never cited.

Nevertheless, I like this book for its appearance, writing style and topics covered. It is a very good starting point for the study of the prophets of Israel. I look forward to future contributions from this author.

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James M. Hamilton Jr. *Typology: Understanding the Bible’s Promise-Shaped Patterns: How Old Testament Expectations Are Fulfilled in Christ*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2022. xxiii + 405 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-0310534402. \$39.99.

In his recent work *Typology*, James Hamilton argues that God’s promises shape the way the biblical authors perceive, understand, and write Scripture. From Genesis onward, the authors utilize Moses’ writings to build and establish promises into patterns that culminate in Jesus Christ.

To clarify his terminology, Hamilton defines *typology* as “God-ordained, author-intended historical correspondence and escalation in significance between people, events, and institutions across the Bible’s redemptive-historical story” (p. 26). He specifies *types* as impressions

that develop into *ectypes*, or patterns, that find fulfillment in the *antitype* of the original type (e.g., Adam and Christ). *Historical correspondence* appears when an author reuses significant terms, quotes, phrases, sentences, or anything that is necessary to establish patterns important to the salvation-history process, or to covenantal language (p. 20). *Escalation in significance* refers to biblical authors seeing significance in the pattern(s), or to their finding it in a way that pertains to future events (p. 23).

Hamilton begins his work by guiding the reader through micro-level indicators of authorial intent, showcasing how Moses’ writings influence and shape future authors. He then suggests one reads his final chapter, which focuses on macro-level indicators, before progressing into the body of the book to see how promise-shaped patterns develop from Genesis to Revelation.

Imitating the biblical writers, Hamilton structures his chapters chiasmatically, as follows:

1. Micro-Level
2. Adam
3. Priests
4. Prophets
5. Kings
6. The Righteous Sufferer
7. Creation
8. Exodus
9. Leviticus
10. Marriage
11. Macro-Level

He then divides these chapters into three categories common to the field of typology: people, events, and institutions. In doing so, he directs the reader to see the natural development of themes, patterns, and types which climax in the anti-type, the Messiah. Each chapter focuses on Moses’ use of God’s promises which then develop into patterns throughout the Bible. He argues that the authors continue the story that begins in Genesis because the content there is necessary for the rest of Scripture.

What *Typology* accomplishes is far greater than the sum of its parts. Hamilton not only provides a foundational masterpiece for the field of typology. He also teaches believers how to *read* Scripture. Referring to his own work, he acknowledges the task is greater than one book can accomplish but succeeds in providing a concise resource to navigate the rich breadth of Scripture. He enables believers to see how the text builds upon itself, developing seamlessly from author to author, but ultimately

revolves around Christ. While the book concentrates on typology, it also lends itself to developing themes and thoughts congruent to biblical theology.

Throughout the work, Hamilton provides a rich assortment of evidence supporting his case. However, he also engages a plethora of views opposing or contrary to his positions. This is helpful as he shows how many in the field understand these patterns. At the same time, the dense nature of his research may discourage some considering it as an entry point into the subject. One criticism of his work is that his frequent use of chiasms distracts the reader from seeing his arguments clearly. In fact, in some occurrences, his chiasms appear to fit his paradigm better than the biblical authors' writings.

Nevertheless, the reception of Hamilton's work proves the value of his research. One reviewer notes the value of each page and the importance of absorbing the contents slowly. Another highlights how clearly and concisely he presents his material. In sum, typology is a great hermeneutical tool that shows the unity of Scripture. Undoubtedly, many in the church and academy will benefit from his work for years to come.

Although readers may not agree with every instance of a type or pattern, Hamilton's observations truly are evidence of a master at his craft. Not only is this a book about understanding typology; it is also a rich treatment of hermeneutics, a helpful approach for doing biblical theology, and a valuable tool for grasping the grand narrative of Scripture.

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Gilles Dorival. *The Septuagint from Alexandria to Constantinople: Canon, New Testament, Church Fathers, Catenaes*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021. xv + 219 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-0192898098. \$85.00

Gilles Dorival's *The Septuagint from Alexandria to Constantinople* is a study of the reception of the Septuagint (LXX) from the formation of the Jewish canon to its use in the Christian catenae. He investigates the reception of the LXX in the New Testament and the church fathers while exploring the significance of the LXX for Jews and Christians since its inception. Readers interested in the LXX will greatly benefit from his work. It is a helpful and interesting introduction to the LXX and its reception.

The book is divided into three main sections. Part 1 investigates the LXX and the issue of canon. Dorival begins this section by defining his

understanding of the canon as "the list of the Biblical books understood as being inspired by God and therefore normative, enumerated according to a given order and in a determined number" (p. 3). This definition understands the canon as "closed" and normative not only in content but number and order.

In Part 2, Dorival investigates how the NT affected the transmission of the LXX. He begins by investigating whether the LXX was the Old Testament of the NT. Then, he considers how the LXX was Christianized. This "Christianization" was achieved, for example, through scribes who retroverted the text of NT quotations back into the LXX (pp. 90–91).

Part 3 is an investigation of how the church fathers used the LXX. Dorival contends that the LXX was the OT of the church fathers until the Vulgate gained wide acceptance, except in the Syriac area. The latter region used the Peshitta which was a translation from the Hebrew text. The Church fathers, however, had access to the Hebrew OT through the Old Greek revisors. Similarly, the Syriac fathers, although they used the Peshitta, had access to the LXX through the Syro-Hexaplar.

In the final section of the book, Dorival explores the reception of the LXX in the biblical catenae. He introduces the biblical catenae (i.e., linked patristic commentaries) in Chapter 7. Then, in Chapter 8, he explains the significance of this literature and its use of the OT. Hexaplaric studies are significant here since scribes collated fragments from this important source.

Dorival's book on the reception of the LXX has many strengths. First, his discussion on the theory of the formation of the OT canon opens interesting new possibilities for further study. For example, he challenges the classic theory that understands a three-part formation to the canon by suggesting a two-stage process that began with the canonization of the Law and the Prophets. According to this theory, some books then shifted from the Prophets to the Writings for either liturgical or literary reasons (pp. 23–26). Second, he provides a helpful book-by-book discussion of how the NT uses the OT. This strategy is helpful since not all NT authors use the OT in the same way. Dorival's book-by-book overview avoids the risk of being too general when investigating this important question.

The book also has a few drawbacks. One is omission of evidence in places. An example is found on page 36 where he bluntly says that "in the first centuries, Christians viewed as Scriptures some writings which had never belonged to the Alexandrian canon" (p. 36). He then cites examples such as 4 Esdras but does not provide any further evidence for his claim. Furthermore, he states that the Talmud cites Ben Sira as

Scripture, but does not refer to the tractates where the Talmud does this (pp. 59–60). The seriousness of some of his conclusions surely requires the provision of such additional evidence.

Another drawback is his equation of a book's reception with its canonical status in at least one instance. He says that "some Jewish circles made use of a larger collection of books than those preserved by the Masoretic Bible" (p. 36). He then lists fragments of Ben Sira discovered at Qumran and Masada as evidence that some Jewish groups had a wider canon than the rabbis. The problem with this line of reasoning is that the reception of a book does not demonstrate a work's canonical status. It would be incorrect for scholars a millennium into the future to conclude that I understood non-biblical literature from Qumran as canonical because I had several copies on my bookshelf. Yet, on page 36, Ben Sira's reception at Qumran and Masada demonstrates that these communities had a wider collection of canonical books in Dorival's mind.

Although Dorival excludes important data at times and draws conclusions that do not necessarily follow in places, his book is a helpful investigation into the LXX's reception in Jewish and Christian circles. He introduces his readers to many helpful and interesting concepts. Overall, those interested in the subject will gain from this useful introduction to the Septuagint's reception.

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Simon Gathercole. *The Gospel and the Gospels*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2022. xxiv + 576 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-0802877598. \$55.99.

In this volume, Simon Gathercole makes a careful and detailed case that there were discernible features of the canonical Gospels that allowed readers to differentiate them from other Gospel-like texts. His thesis is twofold. He first argues that the four canonical Gospels "share key elements of theological content that mark them out from most of the noncanonical Gospels" (p. 15). He argues further that the reason these four Gospels "are theologically similar to one another is that they—unlike most others—follow a preexisting apostolic 'creed' or preached gospel" (p. 15).

Accordingly, the theological coherence of the four New Testament Gospels was not an arbitrary element of their reception history but rather a foundational feature of their initial composition. "All written Gospels" therefore, "emerged from a situation in which there were al-

ready established, though also developing, norms of what constituted authentic apostolic proclamation" (p. 14). For Gathercole, because this theological standard was operative in the first century, it should directly inform the way the history of early Christianity is understood (cf. pp. 463–502).

Noting the difficulty of comparing every detail of any two works, Gathercole selects the earliest form of the apostolic preaching (the "kerygma") as his comparator for examining these texts (pp. 34–35). Taking 1 Cor 15:3–4 as a starting point, he identifies four essential components of the kerygma (pp. 36–46). The apostolic preaching (1) identified Jesus as the Christ, (2) affirmed Jesus' saving vicarious death, (3) explained Jesus's resurrection on the third day, and (4) viewed each of these elements as a prophetic fulfillment of the Scriptures. He also argues that the kerygma is a justifiable comparator for such a study because this form of the apostolic preaching likely pre-dates Paul's letters, resonates with broader New Testament theology, and was widely affirmed among diverse Christian communities (pp. 47–70). The kerygma is thus uniquely and strategically positioned to serve as a ruler by which to measure the texts of early Christianity.

In the most substantive section of the book, Gathercole systematically evaluates how each Gospel text does or does not address the key features of the kerygma. For Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John, all the elements of the kerygma are present, even with some distinctive features in their presentation (chs. 4–7). He then examines seven of the best known and preserved apocryphal Gospels in early Christianity, the *Gospel of Peter*, Marcion's Gospel, the *Gospel of Thomas*, the *Gospel of Truth*, the *Gospel of Philip*, the *Gospel of Judas*, and the Coptic Gospel of the Egyptians (chs. 8–14). In these chapters, he seeks to evaluate each text on its own terms and identify whether a given aspect of the kerygma is present or absent. After this lengthy targeted analysis of each text, he ends his volume with a concise synthesis of what a comparison and contrast of the various Gospels in early Christianity yields (chs. 15–16).

Gathercole's concluding claim is not that "the canonical Gospels are the only works to include *any* of the four principal elements of the kerygma" (p. 478). Rather, the New Testament Gospels are the only texts that contain *all* the distinct elements that mark apostolic preaching in the earliest churches. For example, some extracanonical Gospels include the death of Jesus but do not ascribe it any saving significance, nor do they include an account of his resurrection (e.g., the *Gospel of Judas*, pp. 438–43). Other texts include a detailed account of the resurrection but seem to deny that the body is raised in this miraculous event (e.g., the *Gospel of Philip*, pp. 410–25).

Similarly, Gathercole observes that one of the profound differences between canonical and noncanonical texts relates to the way messianic concepts are used alongside Scriptural intertexts. While they include some of the accounts and varying details of Jesus's death and resurrection, none of the noncanonical Gospels directly identify either event as the prophetic fulfillment of Scripture. Accordingly, "this theme constitutes a significant example of the distinctiveness of Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John vis-à-vis the others discussed here" (p. 478).

Taken as a whole, Gathercole's work is a rigorous and refreshing treatment of the distinctiveness of the canonical Gospels. Because his central claims are straightforward and meticulously supported, he has carved out a scholarly space in biblical studies for the assumption that the preaching of the apostles is coherent and organically connected to the texts of the New Testament. For those who recognize the apocryphal Gospels are significant in some way but are unsure how to approach them, Gathercole provides a set of tools that informs both the study of the canonical Gospels and the history of early Christianity.

Ched Spellman
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Jonathan Bernier. *Rethinking the Dates of the New Testament: Evidence for Early Composition*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2022. xvii + 318 pp. ISBN 978-1540961808. \$29.99

Jonathan Bernier is director of the Lonergan Research Institute and assistant professor of New Testament at Regis College of the University of Toronto. He authors *Rethinking the Dates of the New Testament: The Evidence for Early Composition* to address the problems of chronology in the study of Christian origins. This work constitutes a comprehensive reevaluation of the composition dates of the 27 books of the NT and four early extracanonical writings, 1 Clement, the Didache, the Epistle of Barnabas, and the Shepherd of Hermas. Bernier posits that the majority of the NT documents should be dated significantly earlier—pre-AD 70—than the contemporary consensus views permit. For several of these books though, the evidence allows only a range, which cannot be narrowed beyond forty years or so.

Bernier organizes the material into five equal parts bracketed by an introduction and conclusion. Each part contains two chapters, though the relationship between the two is inconsistent across the five parts. In some cases, the chapters are separated based on evaluative methodology (Parts 1 and 3), while other parts have chapters that cover different texts

(Parts 2, 4, and 5). Bernier makes a conscious effort to maintain the canonical order of the NT as he works through his analysis but breaks this order at points to better present the arguments. The most prominent break in the order occurs in the first two parts ("The Synoptic Gospels and Acts" and "The Johannine Tradition") where the Gospel of John is shifted from its canonical position and is consolidated with the remainder of the Johannine literature. The other three parts ("The Pauline Corpus," "Hebrews and the Letters of James, Peter, and Jude," and "Early Extracanonical Writings") all follow the expected order.

When challenging a consensus view, the challenger must avoid erecting easy targets that incumbents may use to summarily dismiss the challenge. Bernier crafts his introduction to accomplish just that. He addresses the history of scholarship on the topic of dating, situates *Rethinking the Dates* in relation to its predecessor, John A.T. Robinson's *Redating the New Testament* (1976), and establishes his own question. He then clearly articulates his methodology for developing both hypotheses and answers and defines his intent on the sources of the project. Overall, this introduction does yeoman's labor in setting the stage for the work which follows.

Bernier's clear communication in this opening salvo on the NT dates consensus is commendable and worthy of consideration. Although it is lamentable that he mentions his predecessor, Robinson, only cursorily in discussions on potential early (pre-AD 70) NT dates, this is understandable due to the issues surrounding Robinson's reasoning (e.g., arguments from silence and problems with methodology). Bernier effectively allays these issues, demonstrating that the case for the early dates can be made without the appeal to silence or the other errors that plagued Robinson.

Commentaries on and introductions to the texts of the New Testament frequently deal with the issue of composition date. This is one of the standard features of this kind of literature. Ideally, it would seem, the work Bernier does in *Rethinking the Dates* would be covered in one of the many volumes produced each year. However, the reality surrounding the publication of these works often limits the opportunity to do so in several ways. First, the interests of the commentary typically lie in providing comment on the text, not breaking ground in the realm of introduction. Second, the target audience for the introductory text would not include many who are primed for the extended and nuanced discussion found in a volume like *Rethinking the Dates*. And third, the economy of word count in each of these does not permit much more than a general survey of the contemporary consensus view and a passing nod to others along the way.

This is not the appropriate place to lament the limitations found in

such volumes—nor is that my goal. The limitations inherent in commentaries and introductions do, however, highlight the importance of books such as *Rethinking the Dates* for doing this very work. Bernier's monograph, whether one agrees with the conclusions or not, provides a real opportunity for engagement with the dating topic which is seemingly important enough for many commentaries and NT introduction to include. Further, what Bernier supplies the field is a resource that cannot be easily undermined—as Robinson's *Redating the NT* was in the relevant literature—by appeal to faulty logic or substandard scholarship. There are many widely held assumptions undergirding biblical studies that are long overdue for inspection. Hopefully, Bernier's work will spark interest in the kind of critical analysis needed to ensure the edifice meets code.

Hayden S. Fleming
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Mark DelCogliano, ed. *The Cambridge Edition of Early Christian Writings: Volume 4: Christ: Chalcedon and Beyond*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022. xlii + 666 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-1316511145. \$140.00.

This volume is the fourth of seven in the *Cambridge Edition of Early Christian Writings* series. To date, editors Andrew Radde-Gallwitz, Ellen Muehlberger, and Bradley K. Storin have produced works on God (vol. 1), Practice (vol. 2), and Christ through the Nestorian controversy (vol. 3). Now, Mark DelCogliano's *Christ: Chalcedon and Beyond* serves as a counterpart to volume 3, containing translations of texts related to the Council of Chalcedon and the controversial years thereafter, ending with selections from the corpus of John of Damascus. Brief but helpful introductions orient the reader to the motivation and contents of the series, and to the organizational schema of the work itself. Thereafter, volume 4 is organized into two parts: "The Council of Chalcedon and its Reception" and "Christological Perspectives After Constantinople II."

Part I begins with excerpts from the proceedings against Eutyches of Constantinople at the Home Synod of Constantinople (448) and ends with selections from the proceedings of Constantinople II (553). This section includes Eutyches's *Letter to Leo of Rome*, the (in)famous Tome of Leo, excerpts from the proceedings of the Council of Chalcedon (451), works from Timothy Aelrus, Emperor Zeno's *Henotikon, mémrè* (verse homilies) from the great poets Narsai and Jacob of Serugh, and a pick from Justinian's *Edict on the Orthodox Faith*.

Part II begins with Justin II's so-called *Second Henotikon* (571) and ends with a section from John of Damascus's *An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* (early 8th century). Included in this section are selections from the corpus of Gregory the Great, a pick from Babai the Great's *On the Union*, selections from Sophronius of Jerusalem's letters, Emperor Heraclius's *Ektthesis*, excerpts from the work of Maximus the Confessor, various selections from the proceedings of the Lateran Synod (649) and Constantinople III (680–681), and other works of John of Damascus.

There are many noteworthy features of this volume. For the sake of brevity, this review considers three. First, it makes many important texts available in one place. Moreover, some of these texts are translated into English for the first time here (like some poems of Narsai and Jacob of Serugh), thus expanding the sources available to readers on Chalcedon and its tumultuous wake.

Second, the book contains an assembly of diverse texts seldom read alongside one another. For instance, Leo of Rome, Pseudo-Dionysius, Narsai, and Jacob of Serugh are all featured in the first part. If works of these figures were instead organized according to categories such as "Chalcedonian," "non-Chalcedonian," and "non-Chalcedonian Dyophysite," their texts would mostly be arranged in separate sections. But by organizing these texts into one archive, the volume prompts readers to consider them in dialogue with one another. Additionally, while several Christological perspectives are arranged together, it also features texts written in diverse languages: Greek, Latin, and Syriac.

Third, in addition to making various texts available and accessible, this work presents itself as a valuable resource for instructors to teach the often-fraught post-Chalcedonian Christological disputes. The translations are clear and notes throughout provide helpful information for understanding the texts. Likewise, introductions accompanying each text are well-crafted, informative, and accessible. They enable the reader to contextualize each work within the various theological disputes and perspectives. Suggestions for reading near the end of the volume also assist those who want to dive deeper into post-Chalcedonian literature. Likewise, the "Catalogue of Heretics" at the end of the introduction provides helpful summaries of various early Christian "heretics" that instructors and students may reference.

DelCogliano notes in the introduction that "an anthology on the vast topic of 'Christ' is a fool's errand" (p. xix). Indeed, the editors of this series are clear it is not intended to be a comprehensive collection of early Christian works about Christ. However, it is evident that this volume is carefully and clearly organized. Its selections are judicious and effectively balance "go-to" post-Chalcedonian texts with those less read.

Also, resources for further exploration make up for texts it lacks (since it cannot include everything). For these reasons and more, this work will be of immense value to those who take up and read.

Andrew Tucker
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Rik van Nieuwenhove. *Thomas Aquinas and Contemplation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021. 220 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-0192895295. \$94.00

Thomas Aquinas and Contemplation fills a notable gap in the current literature on the angelic doctor's account of the nature and role of contemplation in the Christian life. The book serves as an in-depth treatment of Thomas Aquinas's view of contemplation in its various forms, with an eye on the connection between contemplation and its role in knowing and savoring the triune God in both this life and the life to come. The book is chock-full of interpretive insight and nuance regarding Aquinas's views of the nature of theology, philosophy, the gifts of the Holy Spirit in relation to contemplation, the beatific vision, the relationship between the active and contemplative lives, as well as how Aquinas the Dominican's views on each of these topics contrast with his Franciscan contemporaries (most notably, Bonaventure). Thus, a review of this length cannot possibly do justice to the richness and attention to textual detail Rik van Nieuwenhove gives to these vital and central areas of Aquinas's thought. Interestingly, Van Nieuwenhove notes that perhaps the widespread neglect of book-length treatments of Aquinas's view of contemplation stems from the hyper-specialization of contemporary scholarship on Aquinas. He points out that Aquinas's fully orbed account of contemplation incorporates a broad array of insights from theology, metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of mind, moral theology, and spirituality.

Following a helpful introductory chapter, the book is divided into three main parts: Epistemological and Metaphysical Foundations (part 1), The Dominican Setting (part 2), and Theology, the Christian Life, and Contemplation (part 3). Van Nieuwenhove weights the various parts of the book rather unevenly, devoting two chapters to part 1, one chapter to part 2, and five chapters to part 3. The book is densely argued, and the arguments draw upon a wide range of Aquinas's writings, including his very early commentary on Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, his commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and *Nicomachean Ethics*, his *Summa Contra Gentiles*, and his *Summa Theologiae*. As Van Nieuwenhove closely

tracks and weighs in on interpretive disputes in Aquinas's corpus, the reader comes away with a deeper understanding of the extant Thomistic scholarship on the nature of contemplation and related themes.

There are a host of theologically rich themes running throughout the book that will be of particular interest to readers of this journal. However, space limitations require engagement with what is perhaps the driving, innovative theme of this work. One of Van Nieuwenhove's overarching aims is to orient readers to the broad spectrum of ways that Aquinas speaks of contemplation, both in a narrow, speculative sense which includes philosophical and theological contemplation, as well as an inclusive or broad sense as "the consideration of truth" more generally, which he takes to be an integral part of the ordinary Christian life. Aquinas believes that the contemplative calling extends to every Christian, irrespective of philosophical or theological training or aptitude. In this way, Aquinas's notion of contemplation has a rather wide semantic range and is much more inclusive than the notion of contemplation (*theoria*) in terms of the purely speculative and theoretical consideration of philosophical truth put forward by Aristotle in his *Nicomachean Ethics*.

Drawing on insights from Aquinas's commentary on Lombard's *Sentences* as well as his *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Van Nieuwenhove points out that Aquinas distinguishes between *imperfect* and *perfect* contemplation, both of which are genuine sources of happiness in so far as they consist in the fulfillment of our natural intellectual capacities for truth (and ultimately truth about the highest object of the intellect, God). Imperfect contemplation is the contemplation of God through creatures (earthly contemplation), while perfect contemplation is the contemplation of God that awaits us in the beatific vision in the life to come.

Van Nieuwenhove takes a position in contrast to a prevalent twentieth-century interpretation that Aquinas restricts earthly contemplation to philosophical contemplation alone (advanced by Henri de Lubac, Rudi Te Velde, Colleen McCluskey, and others). Rather, Aquinas is of the opinion that imperfect (earthly) contemplation can take either the narrow, speculative form (whether philosophical *or* theological contemplation) or the broad form of the consideration of truth more generally that is part and parcel of the Christian life. Importantly, Aquinas maintains a close, organic connection between contemplation in this life (imperfect) and the next (perfect): Earthly contemplation in all its forms (whether narrow or broad) provides a *foretaste* of the heavenly beatitude and happiness that awaits us in the vision of God in the life to come. For Aquinas, all forms of earthly contemplation *here and now*—whether theological, philosophical, or in the broader ordinary sense—are transposed into an eschatological key as they aid in the fulfillment of the hu-

man *telos* to know and be transformed into the image and likeness of God. Earthly contemplation here and now, including theological contemplation, is itself a formative act that conforms us into the divine likeness; we begin to resemble what we lovingly behold and adore (see Ps 115:8; 2 Cor 3:18).

Aquinas's eschatological and transformative vision of earthly contemplation holds great promise for retrieving an element of the Christian life that has long been forgotten, as well as re-uniting what has been torn asunder in contemporary academic theology and philosophy, namely, the spiritually transformative power of theological and philosophical contemplation.

Ross D. Inman
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David L. Allen and Steve Lemke, eds. *Calvinism: A Biblical and Theological Critique*. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2022. 541 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-1087739892. \$39.99.

Calvinism: A Biblical and Theological Critique is a compilation of essays dealing with various aspects of a Calvinistic worldview. The book is divided into three parts. Part 1 has two main objectives. First, it breaks down the five points of Calvinism and how they are articulated by different types of Calvinists. Second, it provides a critique of their expositions of Scripture and a summary and critique of the theological implications. Part 2 focuses on historical issues, such as when the Calvinistic system originated and how others, within the Baptist and Wesleyan traditions, disagreed with it. The third and final part of the work deals with crucial biblical, theological, and ecclesiological issues within Calvinism. Matters discussed include but are not limited to implications for God's character, Calvinists' interpretation of Romans 9, their understanding of election, and the genuine offer of the gospel.

Within each chapter, the authors seek to do four things. First, they begin by stating key biblical texts and defining terms. Second, they build a reasonable and accurate argument for Calvinism. Third, they provide a critique of how Calvinism fails biblically, logically, or theologically. Last, the authors present a non-Calvinistic interpretation of the biblical data. The book concludes with a chapter dedicated to evangelicals' ability to work together in gospel ministry despite theological differences.

This work has two main strengths. First, the authors seek to argue against Calvinism, while recognizing its many variations. The authors account for the diversity of views within Calvinism by attempting to

accurately convey each argument and provide a comprehensive yet respectful critique of those positions. They include the best current and historical arguments for Calvinism. With that in mind, this compilation is a great resource for those seeking to wrestle through the biblical and theological issues of Calvinism while receiving a valid representation of its key points.

The second strength of this book is the theological and ecclesiological diversity of the contributors. It is not relegated to Baptists only, or one theological camp. Rather, the work demonstrates a good diversity of alternatives to Calvinism within various traditions. Furthermore, this assemblage displays the point of the final chapter, that despite significant theological differences, there can be unity and collaboration for furthering the gospel message. To clarify, the authors are not arguing against Calvinism as a false gospel. Rather, they are inviting Calvinists to join them in ministry.

This book has one main weakness. Several exegetical discussions are too brief. For example, David Allen's chapter on Limited Atonement seeks to deal with seventeen arguments for this doctrine, with biblical expositions. To cover that many arguments, Allen eschews robust exegesis in some cases for (too) short and concise expositions. At best, this will leave some readers wanting more, and at worst will leave others unconvinced.

Calvinism: A Biblical and Theological Critique is an excellent resource for anyone wanting to think deeply about Calvinism and its exegetical grounds and theological implications. This of course includes those who are not about to give up their Calvinistic convictions. It is comprehensive in its scope and provides arguments for Calvinism while revealing its deficiencies. This book helps the reader understand Calvinism and its issues while providing arguments for alternative positions. It will aid academics, pastors, and those who enjoy rich biblical and theological discussions.

Ben Zorn
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David Bentley Hart. *Tradition and Apocalypse: An Essay on the Future of Christian Belief*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2022. 208 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-0801039386. \$24.99.

Rarely do religious authorities view dissent as a godsend. More often, disagreements are quashed for the sake of fidelity to past standards. Dissenters, however, claim new insights. Change is inevitable, they say—

and so says David Bentley Hart. His recent book *Tradition and Apocalypse* is another installment of eloquent fulmination distinguishing much of his written work. In this monograph, he argues with spirited cogency that the church vainly attempts to preserve its past without a bright eye to the unseen future.

Hart compares the unity of tradition to the growth of a tree. A genetic code directs the development of organic life, even amid conditions that seek to divert its course. Like a seed growing toward its final form, tradition follows an encoded design. Tradition is not merely “a series of mechanical antecedents and consequences, taking random shape within a chaos of countervailing cultural, material, political, economic, religious, philosophical, and natural forces” (p. 24). Christian tradition is not bare history. Rather, tradition possesses an organic, living continuity over time—a real rational unity.

For Hart, approaching tradition as bare history imprisons the sacred power of the church’s past. What is this power? Hart employs the Aristotelian grammar of (fourfold) causation to explain the nature of tradition, especially in terms of final causality. In this sense, the fully mature tree acts as final cause in relation to the seed, instilling a “guiding rationale” which summons the seed to actualize its full potential (p. 29). The future reality empowers ongoing development. As a result, any valid interpretation of Christian history must give attention to the apocalyptic goal of tradition, and only in this end (*telos*) does tradition realize its full meaning.

Rather than appearing in plain sight, to be grasped with full assurance, the final meaning of tradition remains enigmatic, concealed under its contingent historical expressions. According to Hart, we must “trust in the reality of a vital and essential truth that transcends the forms it animates” (p. 104). Only a certain “hermeneutical piety” can mount up to perceive, tacitly, tradition’s invisible substrate (p. 142). Through a historical series of symbolic and provisional forms, the secret presence of the ultimate future prompts tradition’s forward development. In other words, the mature tree remains hidden throughout the seedling’s growth process. The final form of tradition grounds its continuity across the centuries, discreetly drawing tradition to its full apocalyptic apex.

The weakest chapter in the book, for this reviewer, was also the longest. In Chapter 3, Hart dialogues with two prominent interpreters of tradition, John Henry Newman, and Maurice Blondel. These two theologians of tradition enlist Hart in a rigorous but tedious deconstruction of the reigning Roman Catholic paradigm. Those firmly committed to this outlook should find several solemn opportunities for self-criticism though.

On the other hand, the most interesting chapter of the book will probably prove the most incendiary, not merely for Roman Catholics but for most Christian readers: Chapter 7 charts a more practical and provocative course for the author’s vision of Christian tradition. For Hart, the gospel perpetually reveals itself to be a fertile mystery containing undiscovered depths. He asserts, “in a sense change is not only the life but the very purpose of tradition as a concrete historical phenomenon” (p. 161). These changes include a new relationship of Christ to secular government. He believes the traditional approach of the imperial church yokes two unequal realms in a “failed and inherently defective fusion” (p. 174). Moreover, he avows that unthinking obedience to any institutional system, especially an ecclesial body traditionally in cahoots with political power and which bases its authority on its own authority, is tantamount to idolatry (p. 175). As an example, the past and present suppression of the doctrine of universal salvation, Hart argues, is one instance where tradition should exhibit its apocalyptic dynamism. It should resist the notion of a completed dogmatic synthesis imposed by church authorities upon a submissive laity.

Hart also bars no holds as to which stripe of Christian merits reproof: Protestant fundamentalists clinging to scriptural inerrancy; Catholic traditionalists maintaining papal infallibility; Orthodox traditionalists embracing patristic fundamentalism—all are deemed fideists claiming absolute certainty. That is an impossible position to hold while “living *in transitu*, moving toward a promised land not yet seen” (p. 179). Yet Hart’s critique here may have missed the mark inasmuch as he employs the overused and underdefined term “fundamentalist” to make his point. The argument stands, however, that Christians should never confidently assume fullness of truth lies conveniently at their fingertips.

Aside from Hart’s practical suggestions, his vision of tradition’s meaning—shrouded but ever present—should challenge readers to appreciate that, although history is mostly written by the victors, no one can claim that title yet. All perceive the mystery of Christ’s final revelation from a distance; all see through a “darkened glass” and thus must humbly walk by its light. Those willing to walk this path, especially those with philosophical and church-historical interests, should consider this essay and imagine with Hart the future of Christian belief.

Owen Kelly
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Luke Timothy Johnson. *The Mind in Another Place: My Life as a Scholar*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2022. 268 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-0802880116. \$27.99.

Luke Timothy Johnson hooked me the first time I read him. Intriguingly, he admits to resisting his assigned topic in his essay, “Does a Theology of the Canonical Gospels Make Sense?” in *The Nature of New Testament Theology* (Blackwell, 2006). Projecting it as a question, he asks “whether the topic even makes sense. I hope to show that it might, but my expectations are low, as yours should be as well” (p. 93). I found his wit and humor, creative approach to the topic, and evident care for the place of Scripture in the life of the church instantly attractive. Energized by his writing, I have subsequently discovered that while I don’t always agree with him, I can count on his work being well-thought out, delightfully written, and generally conservative. I thus purchased a copy of his book, *The Mind in Another Place: My Life as a Scholar*.

Johnson is the Robert W. Woodruff Professor Emeritus of New Testament and Christian Origins at Candler School of Theology, Emory University. He writes with the intention of giving the uninitiated a look into the life of an academic through the lens of his own life story. The first four chapters are on “becoming a scholar.” He discusses his upbringing, childhood, and young adulthood with an eye toward the circumstances that influenced him to become an academic. He discusses his family and spiritual background (a Roman Catholic from a small town in Wisconsin). He also describes his calling to the monastic life and how he eventually left it to marry while he pursued a PhD at Yale.

The next five chapters focus on “being a scholar.” They deal with the span of his life in which he served as a professional scholar at Yale, Indiana University, and Emory University. He wrote extensively during this period. His works include a two-volume commentary on Luke-Acts for the Sacra Pagina series (1990–1992), theological topics related to the life of the church (such as *Sharing Possessions* [1992] and *Scripture and Discernment* [1996]), a commentary on James in the Anchor Yale Bible series (1995), and the Anchor Yale Bible volume on 1 and 2 Timothy (2001). He has furthermore published a NT introduction, a book on the Historical Jesus, a recent two-volume work on Paul, and many others. He masterfully weaves a narrative that describes how his academic interests in areas such as literary approaches to the NT, Greco-Roman backgrounds, and religious experience developed and came to fruition, and how they intersected with his personal life.

The final two chapters cover “a scholar’s virtues.” Here, he reflects on the kind of character and habits that enable a person to be a good

scholar and illustrates them with examples from his own career. These are a must-read for those pursuing biblical scholarship.

This book is enlightening. Even in retirement, Johnson remains a thoughtful person and an excellent writer. His story will especially rivet readers familiar with the world of biblical scholarship. A couple of highlights follow.

First, his description of being a “scholar” is illuminating. The key phrase that he uses throughout the book is the idea of having one’s “mind in another place.” Scholars are

deeply and intensely engaged with an issue, question, problem, or conundrum that challenges their mind, and often their emotions and bodies as well—to such an extent that they can be said to have their mind in another place, not just momentarily but for extended periods of time. (p. 2)

He then clarifies what he means by a “scholar” by comparing it with an “intellectual.” An intellectual also has his mind in another place, but a scholar is an intellectual who is “focused and productive” (p. 3).

Second, he describes the various changes that have taken place over the course of his career (pp. 7–15 and *passim*). He started teaching at Yale in 1976 and retired from Emory in 2016. The net value of his account is to bridge the gap between the kind of scholarly life one reads about in history books and the kind experienced by contemporary academics.

Finally, he is transparent in describing how his personal and professional lives interacted. One comes to appreciate the way his ecclesial and family background affected his academic interests. Although Johnson is a conservative academic scholar, it is also apparent that his theological views are not as close to evangelical convictions as they sometimes appear.

In any event, one leaves *The Mind in Another Place* with a renewed appreciation for Johnson as an academic who takes his Christianity seriously, who aspired to live it out, and allowed it to diffuse his academic pursuits. Anyone interested in the academic study of Scripture will find his book invaluable.

Noah Warren Kelley
Franklinton, North Carolina

Elliot Clark. *Mission Affirmed: Recovering the Missionary Motivation of Paul*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2022. 253 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-1433573804. \$19.99.

Elliot Clark's book *Mission Affirmed* is an inspiring and helpful corrective to modern approaches to missions in the local church. The author claims the modern missions movement recruits "missionaries with urgency, not toward longevity" (p. 21). He later claims, "We tend to go fast, or we don't go at all. We invest untold material and personnel resources to help others in the short term but do so in ways that often hurt them in the long run" (p. 21). In other words, Clark sees global missions today threatened by the tyranny of the urgent and driven by the vision of "Mission Accomplished." In contrast, he advocates for "Mission Affirmed."

Convinced that modern missions need discernment, wise investment, and plans for better building, Clark believes seeking God's approval instead of man-made results can provide the necessary antidote to the problem. This sets up his thesis and goal "to explore together what faithful gospel ministry looks like when God's approval guides our ambition" (p. 31). To justify his claims, he looks at the missionary vision and methods of the apostle Paul.

Paul embodied a necessary zeal for the lost and utilized appropriate methods for missions that ultimately sought God's approval above all else. Clark believes Paul's vision and methods can be applied today so that "those entrusted with the on-time and secure delivery of the gospel have the possibility for great reward" (p. 217). To unpack his thesis, he summarizes major themes in Paul's work. These include seeking God's approval, suffering with Christ, sending and being sent, seeing the work of the Holy Spirit, speaking the truth sincerely, setting correct boundaries, sacrifice, and service.

Three major themes rise to the forefront, are interweaved throughout the book, and make a helpful contribution to modern missionary trends. First, Clark reshapes the identity of the missionary and the role of the local church in sending missionaries. He argues that just because a Christian has a heart to help and a plane ticket, it does not follow he or she is a missionary. Rather, a missionary is someone with a passion for gospel proclamation who has been tested, affirmed, and sent by the local church. With this definition, not everyone is considered a missionary: all people are not worthy of financial support. The emphasis on the local church is refreshing. The local church should look for those competent in the Scriptures, who demonstrate good character, and submit to the authority of godly leadership.

Second, he confronts current "methods of urgency" in favor of attending to the work of the Holy Spirit. Plans and strategy are not sinful but can be unhelpful if they carry the emphasis. He surmises that if he could ask the apostle Paul what contributed the most to his success in missions, it would be the Spirit, not his plans. Clark then uses this focus to press against so-called "Church Planting Movements" (CPMs). CPMs emphasize practicality, urgency, and results, whereas the Holy Spirit is concerned with character, theology, and appropriate pace. Growth, reproduction, and results should not be the central question in missions, but rather whether a mission was born of the Spirit.

Third, he speaks boldly about the importance of missionary character alongside the vital gospel message. Clark reemphasizes that Paul cared far more deeply about the character of missions than he did the results. And to the extent that "the self-described pattern of the apostle [was] set forward," it becomes the "self-conscious model for all Christian ministry" (p. 135). This involves not only speaking the truth but speaking the truth sincerely. Far too often missionaries are concerned with gaining access, instead of building credibility. However, there is simply no substitute for hours of character work to build trustworthiness as an ambassador of the gospel message. Credibility is essential because "people will trust our message only if they can trust its messenger" (p. 143).

Clark's book is inspiring to missionaries and a helpful corrective to those emphasizing "Mission Accomplished" over "Mission Affirmed." It is written with an eye towards pastoral application at a lay level and is especially valuable for churches seeking to prepare missionaries. (See for example the helpful appendix on "Questions for Churches to Ask a Missionary Candidate.") Readers must go elsewhere to gain a comprehensive look at the apostle Paul's approach to missions, such as Roland Allen's *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* or Eckhard Schnabel's *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies, and Methods*. Nonetheless, *Mission Affirmed* remains a valuable resource for local churches.

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Richard Langer and Joanne J. Jung. *The Call to Follow: Hearing Jesus in a Culture Obsessed with Leadership*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2022. 222 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-1433578038. \$16.99.

Richard Langer and Joanne Jung, colleagues at Biola University in California, echo the call of the Master in this gem of a book. Growing from conversations in a hallway, it effectively captures basic Christian

spirituality and discipleship. Yet its focus, in a context which has lost a biblical concept of leadership, makes it fresh and penetrating. Embracing a seldom-used word, followership, they assert, “We have no higher aspiration than to follow the author and perfecter of our faith” (p. 18). This has profound implications for leadership: “for those who receive a call to lead ... it is subsequent and subordinate to their call to follow” (p. 59).

The authors catch the reader’s attention with some striking statistics: As of mid-2021, published books on leadership already exceeded 4,000 *that year* (p. 52), a figure which correlates with 30,000 leadership titles published since 2010 (p. 16). However, contrasting this with the paucity of titles on followership, they lament that following is only given credence if “it is done for sake of making leaders.” They reject this categorization, believing “followership is something in its own right ... it is worth studying for its own sake” (p. 17). Quite simply, “Finding one’s position as a leader is not nearly as important as understanding one’s place as a follower within God’s kingdom” (p. 44). That is so because of Jesus: “Once your heart is won to Christ, it is lost to all else” (p. 67). Consequently, we long “to hear the words, ‘well done, thou good and faithful servant’ (Matt. 25:21 KJV) not ‘well done thou good and faithful leader’” (p. 76).

Langer and Jung convincingly establish the imperative of followership, but it cannot be passive. It carries weighty responsibilities. In their dynamite-laden Chapter 4 (“A Crisis of Followership”), they point to serious deficiencies in society and the church. They remind the (American) reader that “our government was doomed to fail if the citizens were not virtuous” (p. 80). Reflecting on recent political events, they quote the founding fathers to demonstrate that “bad leadership was to be expected if the citizenry (followership) was not exhibiting moral virtue in their public dealings and political expectations” (p. 82). And America today is basically immoral (p. 80).

Turning to the Scriptures (e.g., 1 Sam 8), Langer and Jung demonstrate that God judges people by giving them the leaders they deserve (p. 84). However, in a context of recently disgraced high-profile Christians, the authors’ guidelines for follower accountability in the church are especially valuable. In sum, “We need followers with the wisdom to identify good leaders and the courage to reject or remove bad leaders” (p. 88). Putting this into practice, followers should do six things: speak up when they see something untoward (pp. 89–90); insist on following an organization’s bylaws (since suspending the rules easily encourages leadership abuse, pp. 92–94); anchor themselves in (biblical) theology to “hold fast to the biblical mission and hold leaders or elected officials accountable

to it” (p. 97); face hard truths (especially when they are unwelcome, pp. 98–101); cultivate a sense of disenchantment with worldly success (pp. 102–03); and develop and follow a good moral conscience (pp. 104–5).

Considering the authors’ words on conscience, I have a small point of critique. They describe conscience as that which gives us the “sense of how we, as persons, stand before God: guilty or not guilty” (p. 104). While true, one wonders how this might apply in honor-shame oriented societies where communal values typically overshadow individual concerns (and guilt is downplayed). Langer and Jung rightly observe that an organization’s “unity of purpose does not assure unanimity of conscience. And it should be noted that this is a good thing not a bad thing” (p. 104). They relate this in a clearly Western context, where following God rather than man is all too rare. However, it would have helped if the authors had added a chapter in which they applied the demands of faithful followership to the challenges of a communal honor-shame society. I say this from a desire to see their invaluable principles more widely applied. It in no way detracts from their excellent book.

So, I highly recommend *The Call to Follow* and its wake-up call to the leadership obsessed. The bottom line is simple: “If you want to be a faithful follower, just be a faithful follower and let the celebrity chips fall where they may” (p. 123).

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