

Book Reviews

The Race Set Before Us: A Biblical Theology of Perseverance and Assurance. By Thomas R. Schreiner and Ardel B. Caneday. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2001, 344 pp., \$19.99 paper.

Almost every believer has faced the troubling situation of thumbing through the photograph directory of his congregation, only to see the faces of once vibrant Christians who have now abandoned the faith. For far too long, the typical evangelical response to this tragedy has been to shrug our shoulders with the reassurance that “once saved” means “always saved.” And yet, our consciences remain troubled when we move from the church directory to the New Testament, only to find repeated warnings that those who do not endure to the end will not inherit eternal life. This volume seeks to address this perplexing issue by calling the church to reconsider the implications of the “warning passages” of Scripture.

Schreiner and Caneday approach the subject with an inductive study of the admonitions and conditional promises of the New Testament, regarding the salvation of those who persevere in the faith. In so doing, the authors interact with and critique various contemporary models of understanding perseverance and assurance. They reject as unbiblical the Arminian view that genuinely regenerate believers may forfeit their salvation. They likewise oppose the popular “non-lordship salvation

view,” in which the warning passages refer only to a loss of rewards for “carnal Christians.” The authors do not, however, embrace the typical Reformed interpretation of the warning passages as applying simply to unregenerate, professing Christians within the community of the visible church. Instead, Schreiner and Caneday agree with Arminians that the warnings of Scripture, including the terrifying admonitions of the Book of Hebrews, are indeed addressed to genuine Christians. Nonetheless, they maintain that these warnings are a means that God uses to secure the perseverance of all authentic believers in Christ. The warnings, they argue, specify real conditions for entrance into the Kingdom of God—namely, a faith that endures to the end. But, they continue, those who have regenerate hearts always hear and always heed these warnings, due to the work of the Holy Spirit in preserving believers in the faith.

Schreiner and Caneday are not the first to propose this understanding of perseverance. Indeed, Baptist theologian E. Y. Mullins contended in his early twentieth-century treatment of systematic theology that the warning passages express “real dangers” to be taken seriously by believers. “Looked at from the standpoint of human weakness, they may occur,” Mullins wrote. “There is, however, another factor to be reckoned with, God’s grace” [*The Christian Religion in its Doctrinal Expression*, p. 435]. Schreiner and Caneday, however, do not sim-

ply leave this tension in the realm of paradox. Instead, they rightly recognize that the answer to many of these questions is found in relating individual redemption to God’s larger salvific purposes in the establishment of His Kingdom through the person and work of Jesus Christ. They appropriate for this investigation the theological resource of an emerging evangelical consensus on the nature of the Kingdom of God, a consensus that has been growing since the mid-century scholarship of George Eldon Ladd. The authors thereby rightly set forth the biblical teachings on perseverance and assurance by exploring the aspects of human salvation which are “already” present in the believer’s experience and those which are “not yet,” for which the believer longs for the consummation of this age. The authors correctly contend: “Much of the theological wrangling that has taken place between Calvinists and Arminians, between defenders of so-called lordship salvation and the self-designated advocates of free grace, has been due to a failure to take seriously and consistently the biblical evidence for the already-but-not-yet elements that fill the pages of the New Testament” [p. 44]. The recognition of the role of inaugurated eschatology in Scripture prevents Schreiner and Caneday from shackling individual texts on perseverance or assurance to the dangerous poles of legalism or antinomianism, perfectionism or libertinism. This comprehensive approach to the biblical

understanding of what it means to be “saved” is a major strength of this study.

Pastors and other church leaders will find in this volume a welcome example of the lost art of persuasion. Unlike much of what is found on the shelves of evangelical academic booksellers, the authors do not aim to offer theological ammunition for those who agree with their position to use in debates with their doctrinal opponents. Instead, Schreiner and Caneday seem to invite the reader to reconsider with them some of the thorniest questions in the history of the church. In the process, the authors carefully weigh and explain the viewpoints of those who disagree with them. Indeed, they seem to treat their theological interlocutors—such as Zane Hodges, Charles Stanley, or I. Howard Marshall—less as “opponents” on a debate platform and more as valued conversation partners discussing the Scriptures over coffee. At the same time, however, this study is less an academic discourse than a passionate plea for the churches to rediscover the gravity of this issue, a gravity borne out by the biblical warnings themselves. Even those who are not persuaded by the primary argument of this book can greatly benefit from a consideration of the magnitude of what is at stake in the discussion.

Among the few weaknesses of this volume is its failure to relate more fully the issues of perseverance and assurance to the New Testament doctrine of the church—a major stumbling point, especially for contemporary Southern Baptists. While

Schreiner and Caneday do discuss the role of church discipline in the perseverance of the saints, it would have been helpful to have looked more closely at the way in which the New Testament ties apostasy specifically to the abandonment of the local congregation (1 John 2:19). Contemporary evangelicals cannot be reminded enough that the writer of Hebrews’ admonition about “not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some” (Heb 10:25) does not come in the context of a discussion of better “follow-up” for “inactive members,” but instead in the context of one of the most somber of “warning passages” in all of Scripture (Heb 10:26-31).

Evangelical pastors, scholars and students will be well served to spend hours examining the compelling arguments of this book in light of Scripture. A serious reconsideration of these matters should not simply stimulate discussion, however. It should prompt a renewed sense of awe at the grace of God in Christ at work in His people “both to will and to work for His good pleasure” (Phil 2:13) in the race of the Christian journey to the coming Kingdom of Christ. Moreover, it should spur our churches to rekindle a Great Commission burden of prayer and evangelistic pleading for the souls of nominal “Christians” who love this present age more than Christ, who love the sidelines more than the finish line.

Russell D. Moore

The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism. Vol. 1 of Justification and

Variegated Nomism. Edited by D. A. Carson, Peter T. O’Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid. Tübingen/Grand Rapids: Mohr Siebeck/Baker, 2001, xiii + 619 pp., \$44.99 paper.

The massive book *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (1977) written by E. P. Sanders has exerted a tremendous influence on NT scholarship. Sanders opposed, by carefully scrutinizing Jewish literature from Qumran to Tannaitic Judaism, the oft-repeated claim that Judaism was legalistic and that Paul responded to such legalism. It is fair to say that the position argued by Sanders, though it has been qualified by various scholars, represents the new consensus. Most scholars would now agree that Judaism in the second temple period cannot fairly be identified as legalistic.

The work edited by Carson, O’Brien, and Seifrid represents a response to and an adjustment of the thesis argued by Sanders and others. Two volumes are planned, the first covers the literature of second temple Judaism, whereas the second will examine the Pauline writings. The first volume does not, of course, attempt to investigate the literature of second temple Judaism comprehensively. The respective authors concentrate on the soteriology of such writings—at the risk of distorting the main purpose and function of the works in question. Particularly, most of the essays ask whether the covenantal nomism of Sanders accurately portrays the authors or writings consulted.

The book contains sixteen chap-

ters. Carson wrote the introduction and the conclusion (which also contains his summaries of the various chapters). The remaining chapters examine various writings, authors, and types of literature in second Temple Judaism: "Prayers and Psalms" (Daniel Falk); "Scripture-Based Stories in the Pseudepigrapha" (Craig Evans); "Expansions of Scripture" (Peter Enns); "Didactic Stories" (Philip Davies); "Apocalypses" (Richard Bauckham); "Testaments" (Robert Kugler); "Wisdom" (Donald Gowan); "Josephus" (Paul Spilsbury); "Torah and Salvation in Tannaitic Literature" (Philip Alexander); "Some Targum Themes" (Martin McNamara); "Philo of Alexandria" (David Hay); "1QS and Salvation at Qumran" (Markus Bockmuehl); "Righteousness Language in the Hebrew Scriptures and Early Judaism" (Mark Seifrid) and "The Pharisees Between 'Judaisms' and 'Common Judaism'" (Roland Deines). One of the strengths of the book is that the authors of the various chapters are experts in the area studied. The contributors clearly do not have an agenda to "trash" the work of Sanders. Each contributor strives to understand the literature studied on its own terms, and they approach the literature sympathetically, trying to hear the voice and concerns of the various authors.

Space is lacking here to summarize the contributions of each author. The book as a whole argues that Sanders's view on covenantal nomism should be qualified. The Judaism of the second temple period is truly "variegated." Sometimes the emphasis is on

God's grace and in other instances the focus is on obedience to the law. Explaining the relationship between "covenant" and "nomism" is often difficult, because the Jewish authors themselves do not explain systematically how these two strands should be explicated. Some of the writings lean in a more legalistic direction (e.g., Josephus, 2 Enoch, 4 Ezra, 2 Baruch), while others emphasize God's grace (e.g., Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach, penitential psalms and prayers, 1 Enoch).

What would E. P. Sanders think of this work and its impact on his own study? I cannot, of course, say with certainty. But if I were Sanders, I would be rather pleased with this study that advertises itself as a "a fresh appraisal of Paul and second temple Judaism." A number of the authors actually agree that covenantal nomism accurately represents the literature they investigate. Others nuance Sanders in various ways, but do not substantially call into question his major thesis. Still others argue that the emphasis on nomism and the keeping of the law is greater than Sanders perceived, that Sanders over-emphasizes the covenant and underplays the role of nomism in some writings. Even in these latter instances, I wondered if Sanders might argue that the specific purpose of the writing in question placed the focus on nomism, but such an emphasis does not rule out the priority of God's covenant. For instance, in reading the NT one would probably not place the same emphasis on God's grace if we only read James and Jude and did not have the

Pauline letters. Finally, Sanders himself agrees that in some cases we do have legalism (4 Ezra), but sees legalism here as exceptional.

How should we assess this volume as a whole? The contributors can be commended for striving to study the literature objectively and sympathetically. They also demonstrate that Sanders's rubric "covenantal nomism" does not account well for the diversity of second temple Jewish literature. On the other hand, Sanders attempted to come up with a synthetic view of Judaism, a coherent Judaism (while acknowledging that the rabbis did not always attempt to show how everything cohered). Most of the scholars in this volume approach each piece of literature disparately. They are specialists in various realms of second temple literature who would probably not attempt to enunciate an overarching view of second temple Judaism. Hence, some of them spy out problems in the synthesis proposed by Sanders when they analyze a particular piece of literature. And yet it seems that Sanders's synthetic Palestinian Judaism, with some nuancing, is not far from the conclusions of most of the contributors. At the very least, I could see Sanders arguing that the evidence presented could be interpreted in a way that fits with his synthesis.

The next proposed volume will examine Paul's writings. The first volume does not clearly show, in my estimation, that the thesis proposed by Sanders seriously distorts Jewish literature. And yet I, for one, am convinced that Paul engages in a polemic

against Jewish legalism. How do we explain this? Does Paul distort Jewish theology to advance his own agenda? Or, should we read Paul in a new way as Tom Wright and James Dunn propose? I would suggest that this volume actually helps us see what the answer is. The contributors detect the emphasis on nomism but they also perceive an emphasis on God's grace. The evidence taken as a whole is ambiguous. One can sustain Sanders's thesis if the literature is examined from a sympathetic and insider point of view. Many of the scholars contributing to this work come close to the view of Sanders precisely because they are attempting to view the literature from the inside.

On the other hand, the emphasis on nomism can be construed differently. It may also indicate a role for obedience that is rightly described as legalistic. In essence, such a view sees obedience as the basis of or contributing to one's justification. The latter, in my judgment, was Paul's view of the Judaism of his day. The volume compiled here also demonstrates that such a view of Judaism does not entail distortion since nomism was also central in Judaism. Which view is more defensible? We are not merely neutral readers who occupy the Archimedean standpoint from which to assess all of reality. We confess that an authoritative and accurate word has been vouchsafed to us in the scriptures. When we compare the perspective of Qumran and Paul on the law, we gladly and rightly embrace Paul.

Thomas R. Schreiner

Recovering the Scandal of the Cross: Atonement in New Testament and Contemporary Contexts. By Joel B. Green and Mark D. Baker. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000, 232 pp., \$15.99 paper.

Anytime books are written to help the church think through the meaning and significance of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ for us today, it is a good thing. This is especially noteworthy in light of the trend in current evangelicalism that seems consumed with anything else but the most important and central event in all of redemptive history—the death and resurrection of our Lord. We constantly need to capture afresh Paul's resolve "to know nothing except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor 2:2). Sadly, though, the recent work by Joel Green and Mark Baker, while raising very important and crucial questions in relation to our understanding and theologizing of the cross, in my view, does not live up to its goal of "recovering the scandal of the cross" either in the NT or in our contemporary world. Instead, it raises more questions than it solves and it has the overall effect of distorting and misrepresenting biblical material, historical formulations, and contemporary applications of the atonement to our present day.

Joel Green, professor of New Testament and dean of the school of theology at Asbury Theological Seminary and Mark Baker, assistant professor of mission and theology at Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, tell us that their goal in writing this work is to "recover the scandal

of the cross." Their thesis is that the cross has lost its NT enigma, and has become today merely a theological affirmation or slogan that has been divorced from its first century context. No doubt, there is much truth in this assertion and one would hope that the remainder of the book would help us "recover" the cross as described in Scripture. However, as one reads this book, it seems that what Green and Baker really have in mind is an all-out assault on the doctrine of penal substitution, which they believe has brought much harm to the church's understanding of the cross (see pp. 13, 23-27, 87-115, 146-152).

Throughout the work, they argue that Western theology has done two things that have led to the loss of the scandal of the cross. First, it has distorted the biblical testimony by viewing the cross only through the lens of one or two biblical themes at the expense of others. It is their contention that the biblical authors do *not* tie down with precision *how* Jesus' death was effective in bringing about the salvation of the world, as later Christian theology unfortunately attempts to do. Rather, in the NT the saving effect of Jesus' death is represented primarily through five images: the court of law (justification); the world of commerce (redemption); personal relationships (reconciliation); worship (sacrifice); and the battleground (triumph over evil). Furthermore, within these categories are clusters of terms, leading us to the conclusion that the portrait of Jesus' death *cannot* be painted with a single color. Instead, as they conclude, given

“the horizons of God’s purposes, the Scriptures of Israel, and Jesus’ life and ministry, and in relation to the life worlds of those for whom its significance was being explored, the death of Jesus proved capable of multiple interpretations” (p. 15). However, they lament, with the passing of time the multifaceted interpretative possibilities of Scripture have been reduced merely to one or two affirmations concerning the cross (p. 16).

Second, the authors are concerned that Western theology has not only been selective with the biblical material but that it has also re-interpreted the biblical data in terms of a Western, cultural view of justice, with its orientation toward guilt and the individual (see pp. 24-25). Thus, they argue, within a modernist, Western context, penal substitution has served to provide a “workable foundation” for the Reformation view of justification by faith with all of its individualistic and legal orientation (p. 25). However, the view of penal substitution is now unworkable, not only in non-Western contexts such as Japan (see pp. 153-170), but also in our postmodern Western society with its communal accounting of human nature, its denial of retributive justice, and the portrait of the human family within a more “cosmic” setting (p. 29). It is in this sense that Christian theologians must not continue to use penal substitution solely as the way of understanding and explaining the meaning of the cross for us today.

The charges that Green and Baker level against Western, evangelical theology are serious ones. And the questions they raise are important. Is

it the case that the doctrine of penal substitution is unfaithful to the teaching of Scripture? Does penal substitution locate the scandal of the cross in the wrong place and thus become susceptible to misunderstanding and caricatures? How much of our theology of the atonement has been simply the reflection of our culture and not Scripture? Is penal substitution merely a modernist understanding of the cross and thus irrelevant to other cultures including now our own post-modern culture?

Green and Baker are to be commended for tackling such important issues. We must admit that we are all in danger of cheapening the cross and distorting it according to our own expectations. That is why we always need a fresh examination of the biblical material so that Scripture ever transforms our theological reflections. Furthermore, this work is important in raising the crucial methodological questions of how we move faithfully from the biblical text to theological formulation; how we “do” a theology of the cross that does not rob it of its biblical content and power. Even the layout of the book is helpful in first examining the biblical data (chapters 2-4), before moving on to historical and theological reflection and contemporary application (chapters 5-9). But, as I have already stated, I do not believe that this book delivers on what it attempts to do both in its handling of biblical material and its application of that material to contemporary contexts. Specifically, I have three points of concern.

First, even though the authors seek

rightly to wrestle with the diversity of material in Scripture on the cross, repeatedly I find the authors reductionistic in their treatment of the biblical material and dismissive of any notions of the cross viewed as a payment for our sin. Here are five examples of this kind of reductionism, even though more could be given.

In the hands of Green and Baker, the language of “ransom” and “redemption” is merely that of “deliverance” devoid of any concept of the payment of a price (see pp. 41-42, 47, 99-102). Thus to interpret Christ’s death as a “ransom” does not mean that he died on our behalf, paying our price, and setting us free. How do they make their case? They rightly acknowledge that the backdrop for the “redemption” language of Scripture is the Exodus (pp. 42, 47). But then they conclude that “God ransoms Israel not by ‘paying someone off’ due to sin, but by delivering the people from slavery in Egypt (Exod 6:6; 16:13)” (p. 42). Hence, they argue, when this language is applied to the cross in the NT it carries with it *only* notions of deliverance, not payment of a price. But this will not do. Repeatedly, whether in the OT or NT, people, property, persons are all “redeemed” by the payment of a price (e.g. Exod 13:13; 34:20; Nu 18:14-17; Jer 32:6-8; Eph 1:7; Acts 20:28; Rev 5:9). Furthermore, what about the Passover event itself that is so central to the exodus? Surely, the tenth plague has within it *both* notions of deliverance *and* payment for sin. Part of what is going on in the Passover is the judgment of God coming upon

both Israel and Egypt and the only way the firstborn is to be delivered is through the shed blood of the lamb applied to the doorposts. But if this is the case, then as we move through redemptive history and this event is picked up in a typological fashion and applied to the cross of Christ, it is difficult not to interpret Christ's death, as our "redemption," as a payment for sin on our behalf.

In addition, the authors' treatment of the "sacrifice" theme is also found wanting (pp. 47-51). They rightly acknowledge that the backdrop of the sacrificial language is the sacrificial system of the OT. But once again, they try to appeal to the diversity of sacrifices as proof that they are not *primarily* concerned with the payment of a price for sin, and so when this language is applied to the cross it does not necessarily require a penal and substitutionary interpretation. They contend that many, indeed most, sacrifices had nothing to do with sinful activity consciously committed or with its consequences (p. 49). But is this the case? No doubt, the number and kinds of sacrifices are diverse in the OT. However, when one investigates how these sacrifices function within the covenant and the book of Leviticus much more needs to be said, especially in regard to the payment for sin. Certainly, at the heart of the sacrificial system is the issue of sin, guilt, uncleanness, God's judgment, and the need for a payment for sin for the covenant people of God. To downplay this element from the sacrificial system, and especially to de-emphasize how the sacrificial theme is developed in the NT, is sim-

ply not consistent with the relevant biblical texts (see e.g. Hebrews 9-10).

But this leads to a further point. In this last connection, the authors argue that "the Scriptures as a whole provide no ground for a portrait of an angry God needing to be appeased in atoning sacrifice" (p. 51). Interestingly, their grounding for this assertion is an appeal to Exodus 34:6-7. However, nowhere in their discussion of this text do they recognize the immediate context of the Golden Calf incident. If we read Exodus 32-34 carefully we do find the grace of God highlighted in a glorious fashion. However, God's grace is never presented apart from his provision of an atoning sacrifice. After all, at the heart of this incident is the interrelationship between the covenant, priesthood, and tabernacle. What is threatened in Exodus 33 is God dwelling in the midst of the people. But how can the holy God dwell in the midst of a stiff-necked and rebellious people? The answer is clear: God can only dwell with his covenant people by his own provision of the tabernacle, sacrificial system, and the priesthood to work it (see Exodus 25-31, 34-40). The holy God can only dwell with his people and the people can only approach him through his own provision of the tabernacle system. The fact that this incident is set in the heart of the book of Exodus shows how central the tabernacle and priesthood are to the covenant of Israel. It shows nothing less than the truth that God's covenant must be established in blood (cf. Exod 24:6-8) and that a sinful people may be acceptable to God only by the blood of the covenant, the

provision of his grace. But in the hands of our authors there is no mention of this at all.

Green and Baker attempt to argue that the wrath of God in Scripture has nothing to do with an emotion-laden God who comes against us as sinners (pp. 53-58), nor does it carry with it any notion of retributive punishment (see p. 147). No doubt, we must be careful in how we understand the wrath of God in Scripture. Yet to "de-personalize" it as Green and Baker attempt to do and to argue that "sinful activity is the result of God's letting us go our own way—and this 'letting us go our own way' constitutes God's wrath" (p. 55) will simply not do. Yes, part of God's judgment is to "let us go our own way" but it is certainly more than this. God as the personal, holy God is also presented as one who stands personally against sin and evil. In Scripture, God's wrath has a strong affective element to it. And it is this fact that is picked up in the language of "propitiation" as applied in the OT sacrificial system and the NT understanding of the cross (cf. Rom 3:25-36; Heb 2:17; 1 John 2:2; 4:10). Interestingly, however, the word "propitiation" is barely discussed in this work. Green and Baker translate the word as "mercy seat" but even here any notion of God's wrath and the need of payment for sin and the turning back of God's wrath in the cross is absent in their discussion. But as Leon Morris in his classic treatment, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, has convincingly demonstrated, this is not correct.

In the hands of Green and Baker,

“reconciliation” carries no notions that God is estranged from us (see pp. 58-59). But once again, this is not the case. Consider Leon Morris’s *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, pp. 214-250, where he clearly shows that “reconciliation” has a Godward focus so that the primary reference is to removal of enmity *on God’s part*. God, in his holiness and righteousness, is at enmity with us. And what is needed is for God’s hostility to be removed. This is accomplished, of course, in the cross of the Lord Jesus, who bears our sin, and dies on our behalf. To pit “reconciliation” against any notions of penal substitution is not correct.

Many more examples could be given. But suffice it to say that I am saddened by these authors’ treatment of Scripture. There is little interaction with the classic statements of these words and themes such as is found in works by Leon Morris and other biblical scholars, and often a reductionistic handling of the scriptural material.

Second, I am concerned with how these authors move from biblical text to theological formulation and application. They rightly appreciate the need to respect the integrity of the NT writings, “accepting their invitations to enter into their worlds and to adopt a perspective from within those writings” (p. 110). However, they then conclude that “this does not mean that we lose ourselves in the various NT documents” (p. 110). What do they mean by this? It seems that Green and Baker do *not* want us “simply to read their words and metaphors into our contemporary

world” (p. 110). Rather they want us to see how the NT authors have adopted and adapted first century language and metaphors to suit their needs, a task that we must likewise do ourselves as we seek to communicate to the twenty-first century.

No doubt, there is something right about this, but in the hands of Green and Baker, it seems that repeatedly they leave behind the very categories and structures of biblical revelation. This is borne out in chapters 6-8, where we see their methodology applied to a variety of contemporary issues and contexts, for example the culture of Japan. It is here that we are told that we can no longer speak of “guilt” but only “shame” since Japanese culture has not adopted our Western forms of justice. Hence the cross must be understood within a relational framework, and not a legal one. The problem with this approach, however, is twofold: first, as I have already argued, I am not convinced of their treatment of the biblical material. How can one eliminate, or at least downplay, the notion of retributive justice, guilt, the need for God’s provision of a Savior who will pay our penal obligation from the Scripture? Secondly, if we are not careful with this approach, we tend to jettison the meaning of the cross from its biblical moorings, and thus re-interpret it in such a way that is not faithful to Scripture. In our application of the Word to the world, we must first be careful that we are working from within the categories and structures of Scripture itself and remain faithful to those categories as we apply Scripture to contemporary

contexts. Inevitably, this must lead us to a worldview conflict—a biblical worldview set over against other worldviews. There is little discussion of this in Green and Baker. They seem not to recognize that our task as theologians is not to adapt the biblical revelation to other cultural standards but to bring a biblical worldview to bear on contrary ones.

Lastly, the authors’ treatment of the doctrine of penal substitution is nothing less than a caricature. Throughout the work the authors appeal to various criticisms of penal substitution ranging from feminist to postmodern concerns (see pp. 23-27, 90-97, 142-150). In particular they criticize Charles Hodge’s presentation of the doctrine. They argue that Hodge reads the Bible “through the lens of the criminal justice system of his era” (p. 146) and that he imports an “extrabiblical foundation” that “distorts biblical words and phrases to the point that they are no longer recognizable in their biblical contexts” (p. 147). They appeal to a concept of justice that they find to be more biblical than a retributive view, namely a “covenantal and relational view” (p. 147). However, they do not present a reasoned case for this “covenantal and relational view,” associated with the so-called “new perspective on Paul,” but merely assume that it is already a given. Newer studies on Paul are calling such assumptions seriously into question. In addition, they contend that Hodge has “one member of the Trinity punishing another member” and that within his model, “God’s ability to love and relate to humans

is circumscribed by something outside of God—that is, an abstract concept of justice instructs God as to how God must behave” (p. 147).

The problem with this kind of argumentation is that it is a caricature of Hodge or any presentation of penal substitution. In addition, what is noticeably lacking from their discussion of penal substitution is any interaction with John Stott’s, *The Cross of Christ*, which takes on these kind of specific charges and answers them quite ably. One would have liked to see a fairer presentation of the view, given its importance in Christian thought, as well as engagement with more contemporary presentations of it.

Overall, I am disappointed by this work. The issues the authors raise are of critical importance and they need to be addressed afresh. However, for my money I would encourage people to return to books that have already been written on the subject, especially the classics by Leon Morris and John Stott. It is in these works that one will find a more responsible treatment of Scripture and its application to our contemporary world.

Stephen J. Wellum

Five Women of the English Reformation. By Paul F. M. Zahl. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001, viii + 120 pp., \$18.00.

Amid the spate of women’s books that inundate the Christian book market, here is a remarkable little treasure. Zahl, Dean of the Cathedral Church of the Advent in Birmingham, AL, has penned a volume

that details the theological orientation and devotional life of five important women in sixteenth-century England. The women in Zahl’s book all had several things in common. First, they were all educated women—Lady Jane Grey was sometimes found reading Plato in Greek at the age of twelve. Second, they were all theologically astute. As the author puts it, “They talked theology. Their inner circles of court ladies were twenty-four-hours-a-day Bible studies” (p. 5). Third, they were all passionately committed to furthering the Reformed Religion. This volume details short biographies of each woman with some fascinating narratives of their struggles to maintain their convictions, identifies the texts which they have left behind to show their Protestant commitments, and offers salient analysis of the theological contribution of each subject. In so doing, Zahl shows that some of the best theology of the period was being executed by English women.

Anne Boleyn, second wife of Henry VIII, was a committed follower of Tyndale’s theology, which was essentially Lutheran in orientation. She was committed to the material principle of the Reformation, salvation by grace through faith, and the formal principle, *sola Scriptura*. Her one goal as Queen was “to get rid of the externals that support the *opposite* material principle, the principle of gaining God’s affirmation by deeds of veneration and visible devotion” (23). She was marginally successful. She herself was executed on charges of adultery trumped up by Thomas Cromwell, but she dem-

onstrated great courage and faith in Christ as she faced the axe.

The other four women represented in the book, Anne Askew, Katherine Parr, Jane Grey, and Catherine Willoughby, formed a circle of friends who knew each other intimately and constituted a sort of distaff version of the colloquium at the White Horse Inn which brought together Latimer, Ridley, Cranmer, Tyndale, and other key figures of the English Reform. Jane Grey and Anne Askew, lady-in-waiting to Katherine Parr, moved beyond Anne Boleyn’s theology to reflection on the implications of the doctrine of *sola fide* and so rejected the Mass and its coordinate doctrine of transubstantiation. Catherine Willoughby is representative of the third phase of the English Reform, with its focus on predestination as the most characteristic distillation of *sola gratia*, and with a commitment to the theological purity of the church (86). These women’s “thinking together” parallels the developments in theology that were to be found throughout Europe at the time (92).

There are a couple of errors in the book, the most glaring on page 29 where Zahl, giving an analogy to the intimidation used by the court against Anne Askew, suggests a similarity with the importation of the “Mafioso’s mother flown in from Sicily to the congressional hearing” in the film *Godfather II*. Those who know the movie will recall that it was the *brother*, not the *mother*, of the Mafia leader in question who was brought to the hearing. This in no way detracts from the little volume’s value.

This is a fascinating account of a group of women who were passionate for God, reflective about their theological convictions, and courageous in the face of threat. In many ways (though perhaps not all) they stand as exemplars for women of God in our world today. In contrast to all of the cotton-candy Christian books about and for women being sold by the thousands in book stores today, here is one with meat on its bones. Every woman seminary student ought to read it, and every pastor ought to buy a copy for his wife. Then he ought to read it for himself.

Chad Owen Brand

Interpreting the New Testament: Essays on Methods and Issues. Edited by David Alan Black and David S. Dockery. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2001, x + 565 pp., \$29.99 paper.

David Alan Black (D.Theol., Univ. of Basel) is Professor of New Testament and Greek at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, and is a highly respected and widely published New Testament scholar. David S. Dockery (Ph.D., Univ. of Texas), President and Professor of Christian Studies at Union University, has written and edited numerous works in Biblical, historical, and theological studies.

The editors' purpose is to enhance the teaching and preaching of New Testament interpreters by offering useful overviews relating to important issues and methodologies of New Testament studies and by providing a basis and stimulus for further study. The book is a revision and

expansion of *New Testament Criticism and Interpretation* (1991). The target audience is college and seminary students, pastors, and lay people interested in the careful study New Testament.

The book is divided into three parts and has twenty-two chapters. Part I, "Introduction," covers two introductory matters, "Authority, Hermeneutics, and Criticism" and "New Testament Interpretation: A Historical Survey." Part II is "Basic Methods in New Testament Interpretation," and treats textual, source, form, redaction, literary, and sociological criticisms. Part III, "Special Issues in New Testament Interpretation," deals with background studies, use of the Old Testament in the New, the study of Greek in the light of linguistics, discourse analysis, New Testament literary genres, interpretation of the various divisions of the New Testament, New Testament theology, and preaching. Indexes of names and Scripture are included.

The definitional and historical reviews in Part I provide context for understanding the authority of the Bible and its place in the life of the church. By learning how the matters of authority, hermeneutics, and canon have been handled historically and how the interpretation of the New Testament developed historically, the reader is better equipped to enter the realm of current New Testament interpretation. The essays in Part II introducing crucial critical methodologies are especially instructive. Each effectively presents the development of the method and its major practitioners, but goes on to demon-

strate the value of the method for conservatives. The faulty assumptions and presuppositions of some critical scholars may preclude them from realizing the greatest benefit from their own scholarship, having denied in advance the possibility of the supernatural. But we may gain insight and see even more clearly at times the implications of their work, greatly enriching our study of the Scriptures. The excellent essay in Part III on Discourse Analysis properly belongs in Part II, as this method should indeed become a standard part of exegesis.

Part III is diverse in its content, the remaining matters lumped together, rather than further subdividing the book. The essays supplement the basic methodologies with corollary pursuits as well as introducing areas of theoretical and academic interest. The guidelines for studying Old Testament quotations in the New Testament and the rest of that chapter offer instruction seldom seen but very important to sound use of the New Testament. The chapters on Pseudonymity and the study of New Testament Greek, while not especially practical, still alert the reader to important matters. The overview of the history of linguistics is of special interest because of the genesis of linguistics among the Greek philosophers. The argument that study of the Greek New Testament needs to involve linguistics is persuasive. The introduction to literary genres in the New Testament by Craig Blomberg is well written, as is the essay on New Testament Theology. The chapters on the interpretation of the Synoptics,

Gospel of John, Acts, Paulines, General Epistles, and Revelation are all very useful, and alert the reader to the necessity of handling each portion of the New Testament on its own terms. The closing chapter, "New Testament Interpretation and Preaching," is practical and outstanding, tying the elements of New Testament study together and demonstrating their use in preaching. If the book has been studied well, this chapter will lead the preacher into greater pulpit effectiveness.

As a matter of editorial design, the bibliographies accompanying the chapters are brief. This is unfortunate, as more thorough bibliographies would make the book even more useful. No notes are used in the chapter on Greek, but thorough documentation, with many of the notes annotated, is provided in all the other chapters.

The editors are to be thanked for making this material available in a single volume. The book is highly recommended to professors as a text in hermeneutics and exegesis classes, and to students, pastors, and teachers for individual use.

Charles W. Draper

Ephesians. Founders Study Guide Commentary. By Curtis Vaughan. Cape Coral: Founders Press, 2002, 138 pp., \$9.99 paper.

Founders Press has done faithful expositors a wonderful service with its plan to reprint commentaries by Curtis Vaughan, New Testament scholar for many years at South-

western Baptist Theological Seminary. These commentaries initially appeared in the Study Guide Series published by Zondervan. Now these superb works will be available to a new generation of preachers who desire to rightly divide the Word of Truth.

The first reprint is Dr. Vaughan's commentary on Ephesians. Curtis Vaughan has a rare and exquisite gift when it comes to economy of words. I believe he can say more in fewer words than virtually any commentator I have ever read. As a student at Southwestern and a young minister, I purchased each of the commentaries he penned and devoured them. In a real sense, I learned how to exegete and expound a biblical text by following the model of Curtis Vaughan.

His commentary on Ephesians is a must purchase, especially for the busy pastor. He will receive a clear, crisp and faithful analysis of the text that will indeed guide him as he proclaims the truth of that text to his people. Dr. Vaughan's treatment contains an excellent balance of the exegetical and theological. In short, I am thrilled this book is back in print and I urge anyone who investigates the precious truth of Ephesians to put this commentary at the top of their reading list. They will not be disappointed.

Daniel L. Akin

The Historical Jesus in the Twentieth Century: 1900-1950. By Walter P. Weaver. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999, 449 pp., \$30.00 paper.

In the preface to the sixth edition of his famous work *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, Albert Schweitzer commented that he would do no further revisions of the book, and left it to others to update new scholarly findings regarding the life of Jesus. In *The Historical Jesus in the Twentieth Century: 1900-1950*, Walter Weaver, Emeritus Professor of Religion at Florida Southern College, takes up this challenge. Weaver's book is the first of three works that will attempt to update the status of research into the historical Jesus. A second volume, authored by Ernst Baasland, will cover the years 1951-1980, and a third volume, by James H. Charlesworth, will examine the contributions from 1981 through the end of the century.

Weaver's title is slightly misleading if it suggests that the historical Jesus is its principal topic. The book is actually more about the historians of Jesus than it is about Jesus Himself. Weaver not only continues and updates Schweitzer's project through the mid-twentieth century, but he also provides a helpful summary of modern views of New Testament criticism. *The Historical Jesus in the Twentieth Century* is a valuable reference tool for scholars to be aware of the history of ideas on the historicity of Jesus. Methodologically, Weaver is much more international and comprehensive than Schweitzer, avoiding the Germanic ethnocentrism of the earlier scholar. Weaver includes contributions from the Anglo-American scholarly community, as well as Jewish and Catholic scholars. Over 60 scholars are given a separate section in the text that describes their specific

scholarly contributions on the life of Jesus. Weaver's work provides helpful biographical sketches of over 130 prominent authors, identifying their places of study, places of service, and major contributions. The book also has thorough and helpful bibliographical references and indexes. However, in chronicling the overview of the life of Jesus depicted by each scholar, he intentionally keeps footnoted references to a minimum. While this aids readability, it does make it difficult at points to trace the specific reference in his sources.

The most significant shortcoming of this book is its lack of systematic analysis. First, there is a paucity of reflection on philosophy of history and historiographical method. Weaver provides the scholar's conclusions without explaining how they reached these conclusions. Second, Weaver sacrifices depth in order to achieve breadth. By examining so many scholars, Weaver necessarily can only provide a brief summary of the contribution of each thinker. These broad overviews do not permit careful examination of the specific details of any one account. Third, the grouping of the scholars in chapters is inconsistent. Some are grouped chronologically by the decade in which they lived, while Jewish, Catholic, and popular writers are treated in different chapters. Fourth, Weaver unfortunately does not categorize the various thinkers into movements, schools, or approaches. The focus is rather atomistically on each individual thinker's contribution; there is little effort to group various schools of thought together and

trace their development. Fifth, Weaver provides no architectonic by which to compare and contrast the various lives of Jesus. A brief narrative of each thinker's life of Jesus is included, but it is not structured in a way to invite contrast and comparison with those of others. These many dozens of accounts of the lives of Jesus are uneven in that they address different events in Jesus' life. A more helpful approach would have been for Weaver to identify eight or nine of the most significant issues that differentiate the accounts of the life of Jesus, and identify how each scholar dealt with those issues. Without the application of more analytic structure through subheadings or some other such organizational tool, the reader can be excused for not grasping significant differences between the dozens of narrative accounts.

Notwithstanding the lack of analysis, Weaver does provide a helpful summary and updating of the history of Jesus research in the first half of the twentieth century, and in so doing an excellent summary of New Testament criticism in that important era. This book and its companion volumes will be a valuable reference resource on these issues.

Steve W. Lemke
New Orleans Baptist
Theological Seminary

A Reformation Reader: Primary Texts with Introductions. Edited by Denis R. Janz. Minneapolis: Augsburg/Fortress Press, 1999, xi + 386 pp., \$29.00 paper.

This is a welcome volume from a

respected Reformation scholar. It is, as the title indicates, a collection of primary texts with very brief introductions, designed to introduce students to the Reformation via the writings of those who participated in the Reformation.

It is divided into six chapters: The Late Medieval Background, Martin Luther, Zwingli and the Radical Reformation, John Calvin, The Reformation in England, and The Counter/Catholic Reformation. Altogether, ninety-seven readings are included. They vary in length from a paragraph to ten or more pages, and in type from personal letters to formal theological writings, with the latter being predominant. As the editor states, "The choice of texts for this reader is heavily theological. This reflects my view that the Reformation was not, in the first instance, an economic or political or even social movement. . . it was precisely religion that was the bone of contention" (p. 1).

The strength of the book is undoubtedly its breadth. Few anthologies include background documents such as Thomas à Kempis or Gabriel Biel. Many also slight the Radical Reformation, English Reformation or the Counter or Catholic Reformation. This one touches all the bases, while reserving the longest chapters for Luther and Calvin.

Another strength, in the opinion of this reviewer, is the emphasis on theology. While personal letters and other documents are interesting, the inclusion of numerous confessions of faith and other explicitly theological writings is imperative if one is to understand the heart of the Reforma-

tion. Further, I appreciate the editor's reticence. Introductory remarks are kept to a bare minimum, allowing the primary texts to speak for themselves.

Of course, there are always questions that can be raised about the choice of selections. I was surprised that nothing from Luther's "Babylonian Captivity of the Church" was included, nor his debate with Erasmus over the freedom/bondage of the will. On the other hand, I thought his excerpts from Calvin's *Institutes* were very well chosen, and appreciated the variety of sources throughout. He could have suggested secondary sources for further study, but that was not his purpose. This is really a fine volume that I will use when I teach courses on the Reformation.

John S. Hammett
Southeastern Baptist
Theological Seminary

God—The World's Future: Systematic Theology for a New Era. Second edition. By Ted Peters. Minneapolis: Augsburg/Fortress Press, 2000. xviii + 403 pp., \$25.00 paper.

The 1992 release of *God—The World's Future: Systematic Theology for a Postmodern Era* by Ted Peters was met with great fanfare. Luminaries such as George Lindbeck, James McClen- don, and Philip Hefner hailed it as the first consciously postmodern systematic theology in mostly glowing terms. The late Southwestern seminary professor John Newport com- mended the book as a guide for

conservative Christians who needed help in entering the postmodern world of holism and postcritical reconstruction. The release of a second edition, with a slightly changed subtitle, is therefore something that many contemporary systematic theo- logians will note with interest.

Upon examination one finds both that there are no new chapters and that none of the original chapters has been deleted. The second edition is a scant 19 pages longer than its prede- cessor. Furthermore, Peters's theol- ogy retains its proleptic focus. So what *is* different between the origi- nal and the second edition? In form, not much has changed—but in con- tent, quite a bit has. Two changes are significant. First, Peters is now fully aware that there are two competing types of postmodernism—the holis- tic and the deconstructive. His origi- nal work was a systematic theology for a (holistic) postmodern era. His new offering takes stock of decon- struction, and thus understands postmodernism differently, and as a result offers a more thorough discus- sion of the impact of arising post- modern consciousness on Christian theology. That his allegiance lies with *holistic* postmodernism, rather than its overly critical cousin, becomes clear when he writes:

On one point, however, I find I must simply depart from deconstructionist postmodern- ism, namely, I pursue construc- tion of a universal vision of reality. I work with certain assumptions: theology seeks to be rooted in truth. For the truth to be truth, it must be more than the subjective projection of an individual from his or her

social location; it must be rooted in objective reality as well as subjective perspective. This means, finally, that the truth must be one, and it must be encompassing. Otherwise, it is less than the truth (xvi).

The second difference is Peters's deeper reflection upon, and appro- priation of, feminist theological lan- guage, symbols, and thought. This is seen in his treatment of the person and work of Christ. To his earlier tri- partite structure of Prophet, Priest, and King, he adds a fourth category, namely, "Jesus, Wisdom Incarnate" (192-93). Yet Peters rejects the (fairly common feminist) approach of "add- ing" feminine symbols (modeled upon feminine experience) to parallel (or replace) the traditional masculine symbols, preferring instead to "bring to light previously ignored biblical symbols" (193). This is consistent with his belief that the biblical symbols must be the norm for Christian theol- ogy. After considering the other alter- native he boldly declares:

If the task of theology is not conceived as interpreting scrip- ture—if we conceive of theol- ogy as beginning with human experience and imagination in- dependent from scripture— then we have no way of know- ing whether or not we are speaking about the God of Israel who raised Jesus from the dead and fired the faith of the first Christians. Hence, I believe Christian theology must remain hermeneutical theology—that is, remain rooted in the task of interpreting the originary bib- lical symbols (46).

There are many things to like about this book. The prose is very good. The method is clearly stated

and, for the most part, followed. Peters insists that systematic theology must be hermeneutical—i.e., it must be based upon a proper interpretation of the biblical symbols, which are the criterial norm for Christian theology (55-67). It is well organized. Furthermore, he moves on from biblical exegesis and systematic construction to discuss ethics and what is surely one of the most important theological issues of our day, the status of other world religions. Peters rightly sees John Hick's pluralism for what it is, namely, one more confessional position within a plurality of positions concerning salvation, and not a precondition that all must accept in order for dialogue to take place (366).

Yet there are significant things that this reviewer finds troubling. Two are worth mentioning. The first is that his doctrine of Scripture, while consistently Lutheran (the tradition within which Peters stands), leaves at least one basic question unresolved. Peters notes that the early church did not use inspiration as a criterion for canonicity, preferring instead to determine canonicity upon the recognition of trustworthiness. Unfortunately, other factors that contributed to a book being recognized as canonical are entirely overlooked. Furthermore, and more significantly, Peters mistakes epistemology for ontology. He discusses the process of canonical recognition (epistemology), but apparently fails to grasp that those who argue for plenary verbal inspiration are concerned with what Scripture is (ontology). In other words, should one accept that the primary criterion for canonicity was trustworthiness,

one is still faced with the question, Why is this book trustworthy?

A second concern is that after rejecting Hick's pluralism, Peters hypothesizes a type of universalism, based upon an optimistic interpretation of *sola gratia*, that goes beyond even Karl Barth's position. One significant problem with his proposal (not a conclusion) is that in order to propose it, he simply notes that there seem to be three irreconcilable types of biblical themes on this issue (366-68). Having said this, he abandons hermeneutics and turns instead to conjecture. While this may soothe one's sensibilities, it is a rejection of his position that systematic theology must be hermeneutical.

God—The World's Future is an above average systematic theology by a respected theologian. It should prove useful as a parallel, but not primary, text in Southern Baptist systematic theology classes, or as a text for an elective in theological method or eschatology. Its use will likely depend upon one's position on Scripture, feminine imagery, and the question of world religions.

Robert B. Stewart
New Orleans Baptist
Theological Seminary

This We Believe: The Good News of Jesus Christ for the World. Edited by Akers, J.K., John H. Armstrong, and John D. Woodbridge. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000, 160 pp., \$14.99 paper.

Writing a book review is generally a simple task. The reviewer explains the strengths and weaknesses of the

book and provides an opinion. However, writing a book review of *This We Believe* involves reviewing a book *and* the foundational statement.

The book, *This We Believe*, is actually a devotional commentary on the statement by the same name. "This We Believe: An Evangelical Celebration," created with the help of "Christianity Today" and the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and endorsed by dozens of evangelical leaders, is a series of declarations intended to describe the common beliefs of evangelicals.

The book does not address the controversy generated by the statement, but the book cannot be rightly reviewed without mentioning such. The statement has generated significant debate, particularly in the pages of "Christianity Today" and its scholarly sister publication, "Books and Culture."

However, this is not a review of the statement, it is a review of the book. The book is *about* the statement, but with a devotional approach intended for personal or small group study. A different author writes each chapter from his personal experience, but each has great value. For example, the chapter by Lee Strobel addresses the statement on evangelism, but it is basically a strategy for personal witnessing. The chapter by Maxie Dunnam on sanctification is a wonderful journey through the Wesleyan holiness tradition and its application for the believer today.

At the end of the book, there is a page to "embrace the declaration." I did, and so will the typical evangelical. Furthermore, evangelicals will

embrace the style of this book—an excellent resource for personal or small group study. Those wishing to engage the theological debates will need to look other places. However, those wishing to celebrate the declaration will find this to be a strong resource.

Ed Stetzer
North American Mission Board

Holman Christian Standard Bible, New Testament. Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2000, various prices, various formats.

The *Holman Christian Standard Bible* was initiated to fill the gap between accurate translations that may be hard to understand and readable translations that may not be as accurate. An international translation team of ninety scholars from various denominations was assembled. The translation base for the New Testament was NA27/UBS4. The New Testament is available now and the Old Testament is due in 2004.

The goals of the translators were: to make an accurate, readable Bible in contemporary, idiomatic English; to provide an accurate Bible for serious study, private devotions, or memorization; to produce a Bible neither too high nor too low on a reading scale; to affirm the authority of Scripture as God's inerrant Word, and to guard its absolutes against cultural changes. High standards of Biblical scholarship and English style were maintained, in order to become a standard of accuracy and usability. The HCSB sought to be as up to date

as possible, without compromising the integrity of Scriptural revelation.

Translation philosophy has been a major issue in evangelical circles of late and the HCSB is positioned in this regard. Formal equivalence in Bible translation acknowledges that the words of Scripture are the words of God, and should be translated accurately, seeking a formal equivalent for every word. Dynamic equivalence is tilted more toward the receptor language and seeks to translate the thoughts of Scripture, meaning for meaning, seeking to impact the receiving language reader as the original readers were impacted. The HCSB follows a mediating option called optimal equivalence. Because thoughts are always expressed in words, a literal translation is used wherever it is clearly understandable. Where a literal rendering is unclear, a more dynamic translation is used.

The HCSB retains some terms of traditional theological vocabulary, such as "sanctification," "redemption," "justification," as no adequate dynamic equivalents convey their meaning. Traditional spelling for many words is retained for compatibility with Bible study reference works. Pronouns referring to any member of the Trinity are capitalized, and the words of Christ are in red. Old Testament quotations in the New are set in bold type, and quotations of two or more lines are block indented. The text is paragraphed, and dynamic prose is block indented (e.g., 1 Corinthians 13; Rom 8:31-39). Series of persons or items are formatted as lists and block indented (e.g., Matt 1:2-16, Matt 10:2-4, Rev 21:19-

20). Inscriptions are placed in a box and centered on the page (Matt 27:37; Rev 17:5).

As is to be expected in an early printing of a new translation, consistency is not always achieved. The word *sozo*, "to save, rescue, or deliver," is not handled consistently (Matt 10:22, 24:30; Mark 13:13, 20; Acts 27:20, 31). Translation of *Christos* also varies between "Messiah" and "Christ." Scattered throughout is a mixture of numerals (e.g., "30 pieces of silver," "12 years old") and written numbers ("After three days," "two denarii") used without apparent consistency (e.g., Mark 3:14, 16). Contractions are used frequently, and not only in dialogue, but again there is no consistency (e.g., Luke 12:22-49; James 2:12-3:2).

A few translational matters are of concern, beginning with John 1:18. The NA27/UBS4 at this variant, in agreement with the vast majority of scholars and textual critics, reads *monogenes theos*, "only begotten God" (NASB), or "unique God," or "God the one and only" (NIV). The HCSB, "only Son," follows the *Textus Receptus* reading underlying the King James Version, *monogenes huios*. For whatever reason, the *Textus Receptus* is followed at other places as well. At Ephesians 1:5, *eudokian*, "good pleasure," is weakened by being translated "favor," though it is translated correctly at Ephesians 1:9. In 1 Peter 1:3, *anagennesas hemas*, "having regenerated us," is poorly translated, "gave us a new birth," significantly weakening its force. The NASB, "has caused us to be born again," is far more accurate. Romans 8:28 also

follows the KJV, “all things work together for good,” rather than, “God works all things together,” as in the NASB and NIV. One hopes subsequent printings will reflect positive change with regard to textual and translational concerns.

The HCSB is a highly accurate and highly readable translation. Often it invites, almost compels, the reader to continue, drawing one deeply into God’s Word. In many portions of the New Testament the translations are magnificent. It is a welcome change from the NIV, which claims to have the same objective, but more often than the HCSB, leans strongly to dynamic equivalence. This translation is much closer to the more literal NASB than it is to the NIV, and is therefore closer to the Greek text of the New Testament. All translation work may involve inevitably some interpretation, but interpretation is not the objective of translation. Interpretation is the work of the studious believer, and of the teachers and preachers who minister the Word. When interpretation overly affects translation, the result is no more reliable or infallible than is the interpreter who “translated” it.

The Holman Christian Standard Bible is highly recommended to lay people, clergy, and all serious students of God’s Word.

Charles W. Draper

The Great Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa^a): A New Edition. Edited by Donald W. Parry and Elisha Qimron. Leiden: Brill, 1999, xxv + 109 pp., \$78.00.

This edition of the Great Isaiah Scroll from Qumran Cave 1 is entirely new in two ways. First, the photographs of columns 1-14; 23-38, and 40-54 were created (date unknown) by S. J. Schweig, of Jerusalem and have never before appeared in print. The photographs of columns 15-22 and 39 were published previously in both black and white in Millar Burrows, ed., with the assistance of John C. Trever and William H. Brownlee, *The Dead Sea Scrolls of St. Mark’s Monastery*, vol. 1: *The Isaiah Manuscript and the Habakkuk Commentary* (New Haven, CT: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1951) and in color in Frank Moore Cross, David Noel Freedman and James A. Sanders, eds., *Scrolls from Qumran Cave I: The Great Isaiah Scroll, the Order of the Community, the Peshet to Habakkuk, from Photographs by J. C. Trever* (Jerusalem: Albright Institute of Archaeological Research, The Shrine of the Book, 1972). Second, entirely fresh transcriptions are provided based upon examination of the leather scroll itself and upon three different sets of photographs as well as computer enhanced images of the John C. Trever negatives.

The new (black and white) photographs are superior, and even in the columns of photographs previously published the images are improved in clarity and contrast. The format of the transcriptions follows fairly standard symbols noting deletions and lacunae as well as readings probable or uncertain. Smaller font sizes indicate emendations by different scribes; an apparatus clarifies matters difficult to make out from the photo-

graphs or interprets the intention(s) of the scribe. Spacing (only where intended by the scribe) and special division signs in the manuscript are indicated. No attempt is made to reproduce visually supralinear or vertical writing. The transcriptions do not seek to supplant the photographs themselves.

Although no attempt was made by this reviewer to systematically check the transcriptions against either the photographs or other transcriptions, casual use did bring to light an error in 58:14 where the transcription is *bmwtv* and the photograph clearly has *bmnty*. Doubtless the edition is an accurate one, but the reader should always check the photographs themselves.

A bibliography is supplied which is not exhaustive, but certainly useful. We are greatly indebted to Parry and Qimron for providing a much improved edition of this most important of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Peter J. Gentry

Jesus & the Rise of Early Christianity: A History of New Testament Times. By Paul Barnett. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1999, 448 pp., \$24.99 paper.

Barnett is an evangelical scholar from Australia. He serves as the Anglican Bishop of North Sydney and visiting fellow in ancient history at Macquarie University, Sydney. He has written a significant commentary on 2 Corinthians for the New International Commentary series and a smaller volume on the same epistle in the

Bible Speaks Today series. He has published a work called *Jesus and the Logic of History*, as well as, a small volume on New Testament history entitled, *Behind the Scenes of the New Testament*.

Barnett's principal thesis in this work is that the historical Jesus is the "engine" that drives early Christianity. He substantiates his thesis by synthesizing the biblical and historical data and presenting it in a stimulating and compelling manner.

He begins his work with chapters on historical methodology (chapter one) and the pervasiveness of the claims of Jesus as the Christ from the early thirties to the end of the first century (chapter two). He follows these chapters with successive chapters surveying the Intertestamental period and the Herodian dynasty, Jesus' birth and boyhood, Jesus' Galilean and Perea milieu, a lengthy chapter on Jesus' ministry, which highlights Jesus' messianic consciousness, and concludes his presentation of Jesus' ministry with discussions of Jesus' resurrection, exaltation, and the sending of the Holy Spirit. He argues for the historicity of each of these momentous events.

Chapter ten begins Barnett's discussion of the early church and the spread of the gospel. In this chapter he chronicles the events surrounding the formation of the church, including an excursus on the use of Acts 1-5 for historical reconstruction. In chapter eleven he details the scattering of the early believers and the conversion of Saul, which he dates in A.D. 34/35. Barnett then delineates

the ministry of Peter (chapter twelve) and the missionary ministry and early letters of Paul (chapters thirteen and fourteen). He devotes the following chapter to the ministries of "James, Cephas, and John," as well as a discussion of their writings. He argues for Petrine authorship of 1 and 2 Peter, suggesting the stylistic differences can be attributed to different amanuenses. Paul's ministry from 50-65 is summarized in one chapter (chapter sixteen), making only brief comments on the remainder of the Pauline corpus.

Chapter seventeen is a treatment on "Churches and Evangelists" proceeding geographically from Jerusalem outward. Barnett, building on the work of E. Earl Ellis, discusses the development of the Four Gospels in chapter eighteen. He suggests an early date for M, L, and Q, dates the Gospel of Mark sometime between the mid-forties and the fifties, and understands each of the canonical Gospels to be associated with one of the four major branches of the early church: Matthew with James, Mark with Peter, Luke with Paul, and the Fourth Gospel with the apostle John. The volume concludes with a discussion of the conditions surrounding the writing of Revelation.

In a work of this size minor differences of interpretation can be easily noted. To mention just a few: he dates Jesus' ministry from A.D. 29-33 without providing the reader a better understanding of the evidence supporting a crucifixion date of A.D. 30. Some will certainly question his interpretation of Luke's reference to the census in Luke 2:1 as being

"before" Quirinius was governor in A.D. 6; however, this was the position of F. F. Bruce. Other minor issues that could be debated are: an early dating of Galatians, his suggestion that Luke may have been Paul's amanuensis for the Pastoral Epistles, and that Hebrews was written to Jerusalem rather than Rome. As a whole his presentation and reading of the evidence on debatable issues is fair and judicious. A stylistic and editorial matter is the author's knack for repeating the details of some events over and over and in some cases over again (i.e. the Jerusalem conference).

The strengths of the volume far outweigh any minor differences of interpretation. Barnett has assembled a remarkable amount of information. He demonstrates a tremendous grasp of the biblical and historical data, often bringing out interesting and sometimes overlooked details. One of the volume's most notable strengths is that in an age of reductionistic approaches in Jesus' studies, Barnett does not drive a wedge between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith.

Another strength of this work, especially for seminary and college students is the fourteen excursuses dealing with a wide range of historical and theological topics. These brief studies will help students wade into the waters of New Testament historiography. To specify just a few examples of the issues explored: New Testament History, History and Myth, The Search for the Historical Pontius Pilate, The Criterion of Dissimilarity, Did Jesus make claims to deity? The volume will also aid seminary and

upper level college students to get an introduction to the world of New Testament history. Scholars will find the endnotes especially helpful since they are essentially content oriented and engage contemporary issues.

Bill Cook

Pocket Dictionary for the Study of New Testament Greek. By Matthew S. DeMoss. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2001, 139 pp., \$7.99 paper.

Periodically an idea comes along that is so obvious it is hard to believe no one thought of it before. Clearly InterVarsity Press found such an idea in the award winning series of dictionaries they have produced in recent years. Now they have found another one, initiating a series of pocket dictionaries. This new franchise will no doubt be equally, if not more, successful.

The *Pocket Dictionary for the Study of New Testament Greek* could perhaps have a better title, covering not only the study of the language, but also Textual Criticism, Exegetical Method, and New Testament Criticism of many stripes, rhetoric, entry level linguistics, plus some entries that are versatile and transcategorical. Over seventeen hundred terms from *ablaut* to *zeugma* are defined in plain language. In addition to the alphabetical entries, there is a thorough and useful list explaining common abbreviations, expressions, and sigla.

The author delineated his boundaries by avoiding things readily available in other reference works. The design is superb and the volume is

exceptionally easy to use, accessible to users without much expertise in the fields covered. The definitions of technical terms are, for the most part, clearly and concisely written in non-technical language. Some explanations may be over the head of the uninitiated, but the ones they need can be understood. The serious student and the scholar will also find new information from areas of study they may not use frequently.

This is one time it is not a cliché to say that everyone interested in the serious study of the New Testament *really should* have this book. If it is a fair sample, I will one day own all the volumes issued in this series.

Charles W. Draper

The Story of Christian Theology: Twenty Centuries of Tradition and Reform. By Roger E. Olson. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1999, 656 pp., \$34.99.

In this work Roger Olson provides a panoramic view of Christian theology from the second century through the end of the twentieth century. Setting up his text as a story, Olson divides the thirty-five chapters into nine parts, with each part focusing upon a particular period of theological controversy. Northern Africa, Europe, and North America (with a nod toward South America) provide the settings for this survey.

Unlike most introductions to historical theology, Olson uses a narrative style in retelling the story of the development of Christian beliefs. The intended audience of the book is

comprised of "the untutored Christian layperson or student as well as for the interested Christian pastor who wants a 'refresher course' in historical theology" (14). The book is premised upon five basic assumptions: 1. "beliefs matter," 2. "sometimes beliefs matter too much," 3. "valid Christian beliefs . . . are not all on the same level of importance," 4. "there does exist a line of influential Christian thinkers and ideas between the New Testament and today," and 5. "God works in mysterious ways to establish his people in truth and to reform theology when needed" (16-22).

Olson's work profits from several strengths. The story is presented in a clear, readable, and engaging manner; it is well-organized, and it proceeds logically. The introduction helpfully provides a foundational understanding of both the author's goal and his assumptions. The body of the work reveals a writer who can tell a good story, making even technical theological issues accessible to the non-specialist. For example, Olson uses Anthony Meredith's "whats" and "whos" to help explain the development of the doctrines of the Trinity and of the hypostatic union of Christ (194-195).

Olson not only writes well, he also covers a massive amount of material in a single, albeit large, volume. He distills concepts and movements to their most essential parts and shapes those concepts and movements to challenge certain longstanding doctrines of the Church. Olson provides a worthwhile, even if ultimately unconvincing, challenge to doctrines

such as the immutability, impassibility, and incomprehensibility of God, as well as to the historically-pervasive monergistic view of God's bestowal of salvation.

Olson also aptly relates ancient heresies and critics to modern ones. Second-century Gnosticism finds contemporary resurrection as twentieth (and now, twenty-first)-century New Age Christianity (29-31). Montanism is related to the Kansas City Fellowship (33), and Celsus is contemporized in Bertrand Russell (35).

Olson convincingly argues that the thread of salvation runs through the fabric of the story of Christian theology and, consequently, uses that doctrine, along with related ones, as the common concern of each chapter. The church fathers dealt with the doctrines of the Trinity and the hypostatic union of Christ because of their vital soteriological import, not because of detached, philosophical speculation. Likewise, Luther's and Calvin's view of God's sovereignty is related to their understanding of how God saves sinners.

The book, though, suffers from a number of problems. To begin with, Olson often makes assertions without providing documentation or proof. The following examples reveal this failure throughout the book. The author maintains that "when Montanus's followers began founding separate congregations rivaling the bishops throughout the Roman Empire, the latter reacted swiftly and severely. Perhaps too severely" (32). In what way and according to whose standard did the bishops act too severely? Olson fails to say. Olson,

ever disposed to defend synergism, claims that synergism, so the followers of John Cassian believed, "was the ancient faith of the church, and they were almost certainly right" (281). Once again, Olson fails to provide either documentation or proof to support his claim. How were they "almost certainly right"? Olson writes that the theology of Gregory I "was clearly influenced by Greek (Platonic) ideas" (287). Olson offers neither support nor documentation, either of which would have proved extremely helpful. Curiously, Olson writes, "according to Menno, children are born without guilt and need neither conversion nor baptism until they reach the age of moral discretion, *which is what later Baptists came to refer to as the age of accountability*" (424; emphasis added). Which later Baptists held this belief, and during what period? While the statement may very well be true, no support or documentation is offered. Olson later claims that "some scholars have suggested that Arminius changed his mind [concerning Calvinism] during" the 1590s: "Their assumption is that he had once been a 'high Calvinist' if not a supralapsarian himself" (461). Who are "some scholars"? What is their reason for this view? Olson assumes the role of amateur psychologist in diagnosing Kierkegaard's confirmed bachelorhood. He writes, "Perhaps because of an internalized fear of his father's alleged curse, young Kierkegaard broke off his engagement to Regine Olson without explanation and never married" (573). Again, Olson provides no documentation or support. While he

may claim that he is simply telling a good story, here he has inserted the perspective of a novelist, not a historian. A final example is Olson's statement that Barth equally rejected any attempt to deny valid knowledge of God. If revelation means anything, it must mean that God has actually shown himself as he truly is. God's revelation and God's being cannot be separated. *In this the twentieth-century Swiss theologian disagreed with Luther.* Barth left no room in his theology for some 'hidden God' behind Jesus Christ, *as if God might actually be other than he appears to be in his own Word*" (583; emphasis added).

How does this differ from Luther? Did Luther teach that God varied from "the Word"? Olson gives the reader no help.

A second major problem with Olson's work is his prejudicing his audience with the use of pejorative terms. He writes, "Augustine based his doctrine of original sin as universal inherited guilt on *a proof text* in Paul's Epistle to the Romans (5:12)" (272; emphasis added). The use of "a proof text" denigrates Augustine's thought. Was this the only verse which Augustine used? Is Olson's argument colored by his own distaste for monergism? Olson goes on to ask, "Why did Augustine define free will in such a *counterintuitive* way?" (273; emphasis added). Counterintuitive according to whom? Olson further claims that "Luther responded [to Erasmus] with a *harsh* book entitled *On the Bondage of the Will* in which he reaffirmed his monergism and accused Erasmus of falling into Semi-Pelagianism if not outright Pelagian

heresy" (365; emphasis added). How was Luther's book "harsh"? Olson does not say. Luther was certainly no more harsh than the Apostle Paul in Galatians 1. On the other hand, the synergist Erasmus is quoted with approval in his telling both the Roman church's hierarchy and Luther to "'tone down the filthy brawling of your insane quarrels.' He [Erasmus] tried to reach a middle ground with regard to salvation by affirming both free will and human cooperation on the one hand and the absolute necessity of grace and faith as sheer gifts on the other hand" (366). Readers discover that "Beza and certain other Calvinists were *obsessed* with the doctrine of predestination more than Calvin himself ever had been" (457; emphasis added). Olson could have simply pointed out that perhaps Beza and others emphasized the doctrine more than Calvin had. The author denigrates Dutch Calvinists by writing that "Arminius's *rigid* Calvinist opponents in Amsterdam and elsewhere quickly *sniffed out* the *dreaded error* of synergism in his preaching and teaching . . . Arminius's supralapsarian opponents *seethed with resentment* and determined to *undermine* him in whatever way possible" (462; emphasis added). Of twentieth-century American fundamentalism, Olson preaches: "Out of Protestant orthodoxy arose a *militant theology of reaction* against liberal theology and modern thought in general that came to be called fundamentalism. . . . Anyone who questioned even one point of fundamentalist Protestant doctrinal system could be accused of heresy if not apostasy. This was char-

acteristic of *extreme fundamentalism's overreaction* to liberal theology's doctrinal relativism" (554-555; emphasis added). Again, the reader is prejudiced without a judicious presentation of the facts. Olson's dislike of Charles Hodge is evident in the following: "Hodge *inflated* the doctrine of Scripture to a role of prominence *unparalleled before his time*" (559; emphasis added). Such a claim is historically unsustainable. He then adds, "So *harsh* is Hodge's criticism of Schleiermacher and his theology that it amounts to condemnation. It *drove* him to treat Christianity primarily as *assent* to a system of supernaturally revealed truths virtually devoid of any ambiguity or need of correction" (558; emphasis added).

The author's bias is evident in many ways. His description of Luther's understanding of the Word of God is consistent with neo-orthodox or left-wing evangelical theology, and so is likely anachronistic: "Luther did not simply equate God's Word with the Bible. On the other hand, he did not relegate the Bible to some lesser or unimportant status either" (385). Olson's bias leads him to portray Luther's doctrine of God in a negative light:

Even sympathetic Luther scholars such as Paul Althaus are dismayed that Luther held so tenaciously to the hidden God when his commitment to the gospel should have revolutionized even the doctrine of the divine being. Instead of God's power being subordinated to God's love—as the gospel would indicate—Luther's hidden God concept seems to imply either a *sheer conflict between divine love and power* or

else subordination of love to power (389; emphasis added).

Who is Olson to determine that God's power should be subordinated to God's love? Is the love of God the sole supreme divine characteristic? Whatever happened to the holiness of God? How does Olson not know that Luther's understanding of God may reveal a *greater* exhibition of God's love than Olson's desired scheme?

His bias against John Calvin is apparent as well. Calvin receives only five pages compared to Zwingli's nine, though it seems clear that Calvin had the greater impact. Commenting on Calvin's justification of double predestination, Olson writes, "Calvin's opponents and critics can hardly be blamed if they are not persuaded by this answer. It appears to contain a *sheer logical contradiction* in light of Calvin's clear rejection of any distinction between divine will and divine permission" (411-412; emphasis added). Incredibly, Olson maintains that "all of these Protestant traditions [Presbyterianism, Swiss, French, and Dutch Reformed churches, Puritanism, Congregationalism, and Particular Baptists] looked back to Calvin more than to Zwingli or any other Protestant Reformer, *even though to a large extent all Calvin did was mediate Zwingli's Reformed theology to the rest of the world*" (413; emphasis added). Wendel, in his classic work on Calvin, noted to the contrary that the Geneva Reformer had a very low opinion of the theological acumen of Zwingli, often directing specific critiques of

the Zurich Reformer's writings, and that his "borrowings," such as they were, came more from Bucer and Augustine. Richard Muller has weighed in on this debate as well. While Muller sees more reliance by Calvin upon Zwingli than does Wendel, he also cautions readers against concluding that Calvin borrowed anything substantial from Zwingli. Olson's characterization of Calvin's sources is at best an overstatement, at worst a distortion.

A glaring problem with Olson's book is its lack of criteria for determining whether a specific theological position is consistently Christian or not. For instance, how is the neo-orthodox view of the Bible consistent with the Bible's claims for itself? Olson states that neo-orthodox theologians seek a thoroughly modern form of Protestant theology that is consistent with the New Testament gospel and the great themes of the Reformers Luther, Zwingli and Calvin. . . . They all refuse to identify 'God's Word' with the words and propositions of Scripture while holding the Bible in high regard as the special witness to and instrument of God's Word, which is itself always event. . . . It [the Bible] is a thoroughly human book with all the marks and characteristics of the human authors. It is historical, fallible and culturally conditioned at every point (586-587).

Olson defends this understanding. But is such a view legitimately *Christian*? Carl F. H. Henry has argued that such a position is self-referentially defeating, and, even more importantly, it is not the view that Jesus himself had of Scripture.

One's view of the nature of the Bible is a Christological issue, with the neo-orthodox position coming up short. While Christ Jesus is certainly the living Word, the Scriptures comprise the written Word. Can a lower view of the Bible actually be consistently *Christian*?

Olson's evaluation of process theology is another case in point. While he recognizes that "Whitehead was not a Christian in any traditional sense of the word" (601), he does allow that "process theology represents an attempt on the part of some contemporary Christian thinkers to reconstruct the doctrine of God and all of Christian theology to be more in tune with modern beliefs about the nature of the world" (599). So process theology can be a Christian theology? What makes these thinkers and their thought *Christian*? Curiously, Olson fails to deal specifically with open theism, a focus of debate even among evangelicals, a position which denies that God is impassible, immutable, omniscient, and omnipotent. Whether Olson embraces such a deviant view of God or not, he does appear favorable toward it. For instance, he provides this telling assessment of Thomas Aquinas:

What Aquinas did was nail down classical Christian theism, which had already evolved from the apologists on through Augustine and Anselm. *But this portrait of God seems quite foreign to the God of the scriptural narrative, who genuinely grieves and sorrows and even repents (relents) when people pray.* All these characteristics and emotions of God have been dismissed as mere anthropomorphisms by defenders of the classical theist

view, *but one has to wonder what kind of God it is who loves (not an anthropomorphism) but does not genuinely feel compassion, mercy, sorrow and grief when his creatures suffer or rebel* (342; emphasis added).

Throughout the book, Olson attributes classical beliefs about God primarily to Greek philosophy, without recounting how orthodox theologians based their doctrines upon the Scriptures. The unwitting reader is consequently unprepared to refute the avowals of open theists. Similarly, liberation theologies and eschatological theology are presented as falling within the parameters of Christian theology. Olson would better serve his readers, especially those untutored laymen, with a concrete declaration of what makes a theology specifically *Christian*.

Two suggestions would improve the target audience's comprehension of the concepts presented in the text as well as the book's readability. A glossary of key people and terms would save the reader a great deal of time by providing a ready place to look up the unfamiliar. In addition, quotes should be introduced with their source for the sake of clarity (for instance, see 395, 399, 456, 525, 526, 527). Too often one must access the endnotes in order to find the source of a quote, thus breaking the flow of one's reading.

Is this a book which one would wish to use as a text for "untutored," interested laymen and students? Those interested in teaching the development of Christian orthodoxy would have to question the book's desirability for such an audience.

Assertions are often made without either documentation or support. Pejorative language is used which cannot help but prejudice the reader. While well-written and well-organized, the book suffers from the unannounced bias of the author toward an “inclusive” Christianity with fuzzy parameters which allows, evidently, for even process theology, open theism, and liberation theologies. Readers without the requisite background necessary to discern the biases of the author and his unsupported assertions will be at the least bewildered and at most deceived concerning certain sects and movements designated *Christian*, as well as by the denigration of generally-recognized stalwarts of the faith, such as Calvin and the Princeton theologians. Perhaps a more accurate title for Olson’s effort would be *My Story of Christianity*.

William G. Moore
A. J. Smith

Meetings That Work: A Guide to Effective Elder’s Meetings. By Alexander Strauch. Littleton, CO: Lewis and Roth, 2001, 87 pp., \$8.99 paper.

Subtitled as “a guide to effective leaders’ meetings,” Pastor Elder Alexander Strauch attempts to show us how we can actually have leadership meetings that are biblical, spiritual, and effective. In large part I believe he succeeds. As one who believes less is best when it comes to meetings, I was skeptical before I picked up the book, despite its brevity. Once I

began reading, however, I appreciated the simple and basic wisdom I encountered. The book divides into three parts: 1) The importance of elders’ meetings (quite brief, pp. 5-15), 2) Helps for achieving effective elders’ meetings, and 3) Questions and Assignments (also quite brief, pages 65-68.) There are also three appendices, endnotes, and a general and scripture index. The book concludes with seventeen points to remember before a meeting. They summarize well the gist of the book. The counsel that is shared is practical and helpful. Starting on time, beginning with prayer, having an agenda, focusing on the Word of God, practicing confidentiality, delegating, keeping good minutes, and stopping on time are essentials to building a great team and maximizing time spent in planning and leading a local church.

Short and simple, this is a solid little book that would be a valuable addition to any minister’s library, especially if he will read it and follow it!

Daniel L. Akin

Preaching with Conviction: Connecting with Postmodern Listeners. By Kenton C. Anderson. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2001, 160 pp., \$10.99 paper.

How to preach to postmoderns is a hot topic among preachers today. It seems someone has changed all the rules of the game and those who stand up to preach the Word missed the meeting where this was explained. Now we are playing catch-

up as the postmodern rulebook (an oxymoron if there ever was one!) imposes its heavy demands on us.

Anderson, Dean and Assistant Professor of Applied Theology at ACTS Seminaries (Northwest) and a member of EHS (Evangelical Homiletics Society) tries to bring us up to speed in a creative and interesting manner. He uses a fictional story (a nice postmodern strategy) about a preacher named Jack Newman who is himself struggling with a postmodern cold. He is sick, but as we learn, his condition is not fatal. Through this narrative Anderson weaves in and throughout the book his strategy for how we can preach and connect with “po-mos!” Four stages of sermon prep are given: discovery, construction, assimilation, and delivery. 1) Discovery asks 4 questions: What is the story (experience of text)? What is the point (explanation of text)? What is the problem (explanation of today)? What is the difference (experience of today)? 2) Construction is filtered through a 4-fold grid: *So what?* (tell the story); *What is what?* (make the point); *Yeah but ...* (engage the problem); *Now what?* (imagine the difference). 3) Assimilation deals with the mystery of “unction” as Spirit, Word and Life intersect. 4) Delivery is that “unique moment” in time when people hear from God.

The book is worthwhile study, and the works cited and consulted (pp. 153-155) show that Anderson is familiar with the playing field of hermeneutical and homiletical action. His insights are helpful if one does not too quickly overstate the postmodern

dilemma and, as a result, move too hastily away from clear, consistent, and compelling exposition of the biblical text. Men and women are still sinners in need of a Word from God about a Savior. The Word from God is the Bible. The Savior is Jesus. My colleague Hershael York and I believe that a model of “expositional application” is a healthy antidote to the malaise that has descended upon too many preachers and congregations. Telling our people what God wants them to know (the then) and what God wants them to do (the now) through faithful, careful exposition, coupled with engaging and dynamic delivery empowered by the Holy Spirit is what our churches desperately need. This is preaching that will connect and this is preaching that will convert. Anderson looks in the right direction, I’m just not sure he gets us safely home.

Daniel L. Akin

The Enemy Within: Straight Talk about the Power and Defeat of Sin. By Kris Lundgaard. Phillipsburg, PA: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1998, 157 pp., \$9.99 paper.

The Puritans are back. Over the past 20 years, a significant movement has arisen within the Christian publishing industry consisting entirely of the republishing of classic works of the Puritans, making widely available today a treasure chest of theological and devotional material that had been stored in evangelicalism’s attic.

However, many contemporary Christians are put off by the archaic

English and complex, Latinate writing style of the Puritans. The present book is an extremely readable, popular condensation of two justly well-known works by John Owen on an important element in the Christian life, the mortification of sin. Yet, aside from their common theology, unless one knows the simplifying goal of this book, it will be impossible to see the connection between the current work and its sources, so simple, engaging (at times humorous), and anecdotal is Lundgaard’s book. And that with a topic which would seem intrinsically unappealing: the putting of sin to death.

Those familiar with Owen’s work know his treatment of the subject is the most thorough in the English language. Owen may have been the most brilliant of the English Puritans (as well as the most Latinate!), and reading him has often been left to scholars (with many others reading him as perhaps a Puritan form of penance, itself assisting in the process of mortification!). But Lundgaard’s is a work that can be read by most any Christian with ease. He uses personal experiences, historical allusions, contemporary cultural icons, powerful metaphors, and some poetry here and there to bring this fundamental task of the Christian life home and into the everyday life of the believer.

Using what we might call stealth theology, he confronts the reader with the deadly power and persuasive deception of his or her sin without leaving the reader feeling assaulted. Throughout, he firmly but gently challenges the reader to get about the business of reducing the power of the

flesh through meditation on God’s beauty and Christ’s death, as well as on the perversity and destructiveness of sin. Particularly in an age when even many Christians get skittish about talk of sin, righteousness, and judgment, such a book as this should be welcomed and widely read in the Church.

Yet this book isn’t for everyone. Wisdom draws us to draw others to read what they most need at particular times in their life. Severely depressed people will likely find even this book to be too much dark-colored medicine at one time. Some people need to fill up with lots of healing grace before they handle the kind of introspection God calls his people to in their developing spiritual maturity. Discerning brothers and sisters will want to give what their siblings most need. But for those who can handle it, such self-reflection as this book encourages will help to lead believers to a deeper, more humble walk with their God.

Eric Johnson

I Still Do. By David Boehi. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2000, 173 pp., \$14.99.

Subtitled *Stories of Lifelong Love and Marriage*, this book contains the honest and inspiring stories of 14 couples who have remained true to their marriage covenant through thick and thin, ups and downs, good times and bad times. The book has a wonderful introduction from Dennis Rainey who shares openly about his marriage with his wife, Barbara. This sets

the stage for the remaining contributors. The testimonies are built around the marriage vows of “for better, for worse,” “for richer, for poorer,” “in sickness and in health,” “to have and to hold,” “from this day forward,” “‘til death do us part.” The closing story of Robertson and Muriel McQuilkin, he being the former president of then Columbia Bible College, who resigned to care for his wife when Alzheimer’s disease struck her, is truly one of the most inspiring testimonies of love I have ever read.

The couples who share their stories are not perfect by their own willing admission. They have, however, found the grace of God perfect and sufficient. They also have discovered His will to be perfect, even when they did not understand it all. Pastors will find some wonderful illustrations in this book. They will, along with their wives, be challenged and encouraged to keep those sacred vows they pledged before God and witnesses, and to one another, when they said “I do.” “I do” is good. “I still do” is even better. All will be blessed who venture into the stories contained in the pages of this little book.

Daniel L. Akin