

Book Reviews

God under Fire: Modern Scholarship Reinvents God. Edited by Douglas S. Huffman and Eric L. Johnson. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002, 325 pp., \$21.99.

It is a privilege to review and recommend a volume edited by two scholars for whom I have the deepest personal and professional respect. Professors Huffman (of Northwestern College) and Johnson (of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary) have assembled an impressive group of scholars broadly representative of the Christian tradition to defend the God of “historic Christian theism” against the “imposters” put forward by revisionist, pluralist, liberation, feminist, process, and openness theologians. In short, *God Under Fire* is a challenging yet accessible volume that makes a significant contribution to contemporary discussions about the nature and attributes of God. Insisting that “there is far more overall continuity among those who adhere to historic Christian views of God . . . than discontinuity,” its twelve contributors set out “to provide a corrective to the major alternative Christian versions of God being offered in our day and to present, as best [they] can, the God of the Bible and of historic Christianity: at once the most beautiful and attractive Being in the universe, yet also the most awesome, even terrifying; a God who is supremely relational and supremely sovereign, the absolutely transcendent lover of our

souls.”

Of all the possible ways to assess *God Under Fire*, perhaps the best is to see it positively as an impassioned plea for enduring faithfulness to the “living tradition” of historic Christian orthodoxy, and negatively as an extended critique of theological hubris in many of its contemporary manifestations. Of particular concern to the authors of *God Under Fire* are those progressive theologies that can be grouped roughly into “constructivist” and “developmentalist” camps. While constructivist theologies are beholden in one way or another to the Enlightenment skepticism of Immanuel Kant and thus insist that “a new Christian God more appropriate for contemporary culture” must be “imagined” due to our inability to know God as he is in himself, developmentalist theologies are “less skeptical about our ability to know God” yet still claim that the God of historic Christian orthodoxy must be abandoned. Since they are convinced that God is in time and as such “is undergoing constant development as he interacts with humans and reacts to human actions, creativity, and cultural progress,” developmentalists conclude that classical theism must be rejected or at least significantly revised because it fails to take both time and development seriously. They suggest that in so doing classical theism reduces the God of Scripture to an essentially impersonal being that is “distant and remote from humans,” and who as a consequence is incapable of relating to his creatures

in a genuinely loving fashion. If the contributors to *God Under Fire* establish anything in response to the leading representatives of these two theological camps, it is, first, that although God’s ways and thoughts are higher than our ways and thoughts, in fact he has made himself known in a way that humans can understand, and second, that the classical tradition is rich enough to handle the kinds of questions and concerns that are encouraging more progressive thinkers to jettison the historic Christian understanding of God.

This confidence in the truth and integrity of the classical tradition is reflected in the basic structure and substance of the book. Following an impressive introduction in which the editors survey the living tradition of historic Christian theism along with alternatives being proposed by more progressive Christian thinkers, *God Under Fire* is divided into two sections that are related to one another as a superstructure is related to its foundation. In section one, which in many respects is the most important section of the book, Mark R. Talbot, Eric L. Johnson, and Gerald L. Bray outline the theological, philosophical, and historical foundations for challenging the unrestrained arrogance of those who, having accommodated to the intellectual milieu of the modern age, would remake God in their own image. Talbot begins the volume by arguing that “doubts about the God of classical Christian theism” often reveal little more than a profound lack of confi-

dence in “the historic Christian view of the Scriptures.” Talbot therefore defends both the authority and the “perfect errorlessness and fundamental self-consistency” of Scripture and contends that truthful discourse about God is possible when it is grounded in God’s necessary, sufficient, clear, and inerrant revelation of himself in the words of the Bible. Johnson then affirms “the realism of orthodox Christianity and the necessity of logic for knowing anything about God, but he maintains that the finite capacities of human reason cannot be allowed to determine what we think God’s nature is or to legitimate the reinterpretation of some Scripture that appears to contradict other ‘preferred’ Scripture.” Suggesting that mature thinkers appreciate paradoxical truths because they recognize “the limits of human reason,” Johnson challenges the “unvirtuous use of logic” that leads many progressives to arrogantly suppose that their minds establish the standards of what can and cannot be. Finally, Bray concludes the first section by defending the classical tradition against the charge that it was corrupted by Greek philosophy. Finding the key to the classical tradition in the doctrine of the Trinity, Bray insists that although many of the words classical theists use “come from one pagan Greek philosophical source or another,” such dependence is not *ipso facto* evidence that the classical tradition is a compromised tradition, for the early church redefined these borrowed expressions in terms that were consistent with “the pattern of Christian truth” revealed in Scripture. As such, the early church “cannot be

accurately characterized as simply synthesizing Greek and Roman thought with biblical teaching. . . . Rather, though undoubtedly influenced by their intellectual climate, the early church leaders decisively challenged the fundamental assumptions and thinking of pagan thought and profoundly reoriented Western intellectual life toward the revelation of God.”

In the second section of the book the remaining contributors then establish that the classical view of God remains untarnished despite the attacks of progressive scholarship in its many contemporary manifestations. While all of the chapters demonstrate that the view of God championed by the classical tradition is vigorous enough to withstand the assaults of its major detractors, the means by which the various contributors do this varies from chapter to chapter. To vastly oversimplify the matter, whereas Paul Helm, R. Douglas Geivett, James S. Spiegel, Patrick Lee, Bruce A. Ware, and D. A. Carson offer fresh yet relatively conventional discussions of God’s timelessness, his relationship to evil, his providence, his impassibility, his Trinitarian nature, and his love respectively, William Lane Craig and Charles E. Gutenson offer thoroughly orthodox yet still more innovative discussions of God’s foreknowledge and his immutability. Gutenson, for example, affirms divine immutability while rejecting divine eternity, i.e., while insisting that God is present to, rather than outside of, time. What each contributor makes abundantly clear, among other things, is that because the resources of the

classical tradition are virtually without measure, contemporary challenges to the traditional understanding of God ought not be regarded as occasions for mourning, but rather as opportunities for a compelling articulation of a view of God that squares with the God of historic Christianity and of Scripture.

A number of years ago the editors of *Christianity Today* challenged classical theists to interact thoughtfully with the questions being raised by thinkers who could no longer accept many of the established assumptions about the God of historic Christian orthodoxy. That *God Under Fire* represents a deliberate response to this challenge is evidenced by the format of the book. The title of each chapter takes the form of a question that is then answered in the discussion that follows. Contributors interact with a range of critical views and then defend the classical view of the doctrine being attacked in a fashion that demonstrates that the critiques are ultimately without merit. *God Under Fire* is a serious, substantive volume that demands a serious, substantive response. One can only hope that progressives who are clamoring for their voices to be heard will be open minded enough to engage the arguments presented in this fine volume.

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The Forgotten God: Perspectives in Biblical Theology. Essays in Honor of Paul J. Achtemeier on the Occasion of His Seventy-fifth Birthday. Edited by A. Andrew Das and Frank J. Matera.

Louisville/London: Westminster/John Knox, 2002, xv + 300 pp., \$25.95 paper.

Andrew Das and Frank Matera, former Ph.D. students of Paul Achtemeier, have edited a number of essays focusing on the doctrine of God to honor their Ph.D. supervisor. Probably the best way to capture the scope of the book is to list the essays and authors: "In Appreciation of Paul J. Achtemeier" by Leander Keck; "Introducing the Forgotten God" by Andrew Das and Frank Matera; "The God Who Creates and Governs" by Dean McBride, Jr.; "The God Who Reigns: The Book of Psalms" by James Luther Mays; "Slow to Anger": The God of the Prophets" by Patrick Miller; "The God Who Makes People Wise: The Wisdom Literature" by Richard Clifford; "'God' within the Narrative World of Mark" by Jack Kingsbury; "The God of Israel and the Salvation of the Nations: The Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles" by John Carroll; "Telling God's Story" by Francis Moloney; "The God of Mercy Who Rescues Us from the Present Evil Age: Romans and Galatians" by Richard Hays; "God's Power in Human Weakness: Paul Teaches the Corinthians about God" by Pheme Perkins; "All the Fullness of God: Concepts of Deity in Colossians and Ephesians" by David Hay; "The Savior God: The Pastoral Epistles" by Joseph Fitzmyer; "God in Hebrews: Urging Children to Heavenly Glory" by Harold Attridge; "God Ever New, Ever the Same: The Witness of James and Peter" by Luke Timothy Johnson; "God and Time in the Apoca-

lypse of John" by David Aune; "Preaching and Ministry in the Service of the God of the Bible" by Elizabeth Achtemeier. The listing of names indicates that the contributors are well-known for their work in biblical studies.

Many honorary volumes solicit essays on a topic of interest to the contributor, but this volume pursues one topic in biblical theology, i.e., biblical teaching about God. Furthermore, "God" is studied from the standpoint of the canon as a whole, so that soundings are taken from various corpora in the Scriptures. Each of the authors explicates the particular contribution of the writer(s) in question to delineate what is taught about God. One of the advantages of biblical theology surfaces in such an approach, for each contributor attempts to discern the particular angle or perspective of God in the literature under consideration. As readers we see the multifaceted nature of God's revelation of himself.

It is impossible in a short review to include the diversity of insights found in this volume. Patrick Miller's essay could be interpreted to provide ammunition for those defending God's openness. Open theism should certainly be rejected, but we can still glean insight from Miller's article, for his essay points clearly to a God who relates to his creatures—the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and not the abstract God of some philosophers. On the other hand, the sovereignty of God is featured in the essays on the Psalms and the wisdom literature, and we can conclude from this that the entire canon of Scripture must be consulted to form our doctrine of God. I

cannot resist saying that readers should consult the outstanding work of John Frame in this regard, *The Doctrine of God* (Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co.).

Jack Kingsbury's fine work in narrative theology is put to good service in his stimulating essay on "God" in Mark. Kingsbury demonstrates that liberalism and even redaction criticism failed to read Mark on its own terms. He forges well the connection between "theology" and "Christology" in Markan thought. We are not surprised to see that Richard Hays traces out the story of God's saving work in his article on Romans and Galatians. Joseph Fitzmyer rightly attunes us to God and Christ as Savior in the Pastorals, bringing to center stage a theme that is particularly emphasized in these letters. Luke Johnson locates the doctrine of God in both James and 1 Peter in their pastoral witness, arguing that moral exhortation in both letters cannot be separated from theological grounding. Johnson rightly argues that the Christology of James is quite high when all the clues of the letter are rightly assessed. Finally, one of the best essays in the volume is the concluding chapter by Elizabeth Achtemeier. She reminds preachers that we are to proclaim the work of God in Christ instead of moralizing. The storyline of the Bible is to be the subject of our preaching, especially in a day when so many are ignorant of the redemptive account found in the Scriptures. The advice in this chapter is a goldmine and every preacher ought to read it. No one will agree with everything contained in this

work, but insights abound for students, teachers, ministers, and preachers.

Thomas R. Schreiner

Pastoral Leadership For Manhood And Womanhood. Edited by Wayne Grudem and Dennis Rainey. Wheaton: Crossway, 2002, 300 pp., \$15.00 paper.

This book grew out of a conference that took place in Dallas, Texas, in 2002 called "Building Strong Families In Your Church." The conference was jointly sponsored by FamilyLife Ministries and The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. All the contributors to the book affirm a complementarian view of the roles of men and women, and most are also known for their strong advocacy of marriage and family. In addition to the editors, those who contributed to the work include R. Kent Hughes, Paige Patterson, C.J. Mahaney, David Powlison, and H.B. London, Jr. (Focus on the Family). The book is broken down into three sections with a total of fifteen chapters. There are endnotes at the end of the chapters and there is a Scripture and General Index.

Each of the chapters contains information and insight that will encourage the building of strong biblical marriage and families. Particular chapters that will be especially helpful include: "The Pastor's Marriage" (R. Kent Hughes); "The Pastor's Responsibility For Romance In His Congregation And Marriage" (Dennis Rainey); "The Little Things That Build

Or Destroy Marriage" (Danny Akin); "Cultivating A Man-Friendly Church" (H.B. London, Jr.); "How To Encourage Husbands To Lead And Wives To Follow" (C.J. Mahaney); "Someone I Love Is Gay: Church Ministry To Family And Friends" (Bob Davies) and "Standing Courageously In Your Home, Church And Community" (Paige Patterson). There are also two chapters dealing specifically with single adults, that large untapped reservoir of potential servants in too many of our churches.

This is a solid work that will benefit families and the church alike. Building families is a great way to spread the gospel. This book will contribute, I believe, to that end.

Daniel L. Akin

Rebuilding the Matrix: Science and Faith in the 21st Century. By Denis Alexander. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003, 510 pp., \$29.99.

Alexander is a fellow at St. Edmund's College, Cambridge, and serves as chairman of the molecular immunology program at the Babraham Institute. He also serves as editor of *Science and Christian Belief*. This book is a collection of his essays. His premise is that science and religion have been improperly set in conflict. The great "silent majority" of working scientists are tired of radical rhetoric on both sides, he says. Dialog should reveal fresh perspectives that can rebuild a theistic framework for science.

This dialog gives no comfort to creationists, however. Alexander con-

siders biological evolution to be utterly devoid of any religious significance. Darwinian evolution, according to Alexander, is the only viable theory of biological diversity, and when we recognize that moral and ethical implications do not flow from evolutionary theory, we should have no reason to oppose it. Alexander finds it incredible that so many in the USA actually disbelieve evolution. He never mentions any of the evidences offered for a young earth; he simply considers this a non-issue. He never discusses the systematic gaps in the fossil record that should not be there if gradual transformism were correct. He considers "instant speciation" (whatever that means) to be utterly vacuous. He seemingly misunderstands the proposal creationists offer regarding a distinction between primary and secondary causes (the former no longer operating). Nor does he mention the fact that mutations do not increase genetic complexity, nor the problem of believing that randomness is the source of genetic codes, or that natural selection seemingly will work to prevent change even if it is "upward" change unless the change is fully complete and stable (a true macro-mutation).

Alexander sees Genesis 1 as a theological essay that effectively refutes all pagan myths but that contains no science at all. Perhaps fideistic affirmations are sufficient for Alexander's audience, but it is not clear how a pagan myth is actually refuted simply by a statement of another point of view, no matter how effectively it is presented. I am in full agreement with Alexander's reading of the polemic in

Genesis 1, but I remain convinced that coherence alone is inadequate as a basis for a truth claim. It might help if Alexander would interact with some of the actual arguments creationists offer, but he won't do this because he finds any suggestion of Genesis 1 as a historical narrative to be "bizarre."

I am putting too much emphasis on this one section of the book, however. Alexander claims to be strongly opposed to evolutionary naturalism. He provides a good survey of the importance of theism as an essential element in the rise and development of modern science. He sincerely seeks a theistic science that is more humanizing and less mechanistic. Most of us can benefit from much of the material Alexander includes in this book. It could serve as an excellent supplemental reading in a seminar on science and faith.

I cannot really recommend the book, however. There are better sources in almost every area of the discussion. In his section on the history of science, almost any of his noted sources do a better job in their survey than he does (see pp. 478–9), and he does not even mention Christopher Kaiser. Alexander seems to be aware of Morris and Gish (though he only refers to their definition of science on p. 306 and then immediately proceeds to refute his misunderstanding of their view). Based on secondary sources he does refer to *The Genesis Flood*, but he never quotes from it directly. Oddly, he initially mentions the authors by saying: "a lecturer . . . called Henry Morris . . ." and a "young theologian called John Whitcomb" (300). He does not introduce other people with the

term "called." Is this an example of stylistic disdain? More importantly, however, I could find no reference at all (no footnotes, no index references) to Phillip Johnson, William Dembski, Michael Behe, Michael Denton, J.P. Moreland, or in fact any well-known proponent of intelligent design. Evangelical writers are notably absent from his footnotes. Obviously we simply do not measure up to his research standards (or could it be that we raise questions with which he prefers not to deal?). A large, carefully written text of over 500 pages that fails to take note of the most significant alternate point of view in the contemporary debate is either woefully out of date or willfully ignorant (and I would not want to come down on the latter alternative). It is probably simply another example of British disdain for an American and an Australian debate. But the issues are not regional; they are real, and it is unfortunate that Alexander has chosen to ignore them.

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Separation of Church and State. By Philip Hamburger. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002, 514 pp., \$52.00.

Few issues are more intrinsic to the American republican experiment than the Founding era's refusal to set up a government empowered to settle theological disputes. At the same time, few issues are more heated in the current "culture wars" environment than that of the "sepa-

ration of church and state"—whatever that phrase means. It is the ambiguity of the phrase that is both the genius and the failure of this ambitious new analysis of the history of church/state relations in the United States.

In this volume, Hamburger, John P. Wilson Professor of Law at the University of Chicago, surveys the debate over church/state separation from Thomas Jefferson's famous "wall of separation" letter to the Danbury Baptist Association to recent judicial skirmishes over school prayer, tuition tax credits, and Native American ceremonial peyote use. Americans of all traditions will be interested in this groundbreaking scholarship, but Baptists should pay particular attention to his argument. Baptist history and theology are, from start to finish, the virtual subtext of Hamburger's project. The book is interwoven with detailed interactions with the thought of such diverse Baptist figures as John Leland, Isaac Backus, E.Y. Mullins, George Truett, and J.M. Dawson. He takes into account the history of Southern Baptist Convention resolutions as well as the activism of groups such as the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

The primary strength of Hamburger's volume comes in the exhaustively researched case he has made for his central thesis. The separation of church and state, Hamburger contends, has always been a contested issue and it has always involved much more than simply a legal argument. In Hamburger's treatment of Jefferson's letter to the Danbury Baptists, he demonstrates the way in which this letter has served as a grid through

which twentieth-century jurisprudence has interpreted the establishment clause. Hamburger points away from what Jefferson said, however, to what the Danbury Baptists did *not* say in response. Hamburger posits that Jefferson did indeed hold to exactly the kind of “strict separation” envisioned by some on the American left today. But, he contends, Jefferson was a minority among the Founders—and his secularized vision of the public square was not what Baptists meant by religious liberty. Hamburger further argues persuasively that much of the impetus behind the church/state vision of groups such as Americans United for Separation of Church and State and the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs have their roots in a brutally nativist anti-Catholicism. He illustrates this phenomenon in the career of Southern Baptist Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black, a one-time member of the Ku Klux Klan. Moving from Black to a series of individuals and groups, Hamburger shows the twentieth century overlap between nativist ideology and strict separation—a connection that would prove undoubtedly embarrassing to the self-described progressives who now carry the banner of strict separation.

Hamburger’s book, however, falters in that he leaves “separation of church and state” practically undefined. Or, rather, Hamburger allows the phrase to be defined by contemporary *amicus* briefs of the American Civil Liberties Union rather than by the theological and confessional traditions from which the concept initially was drawn. Thus, Hamburger concludes that “the principle of separa-

ration between church and state may be valuable even though it lacks a historical foundation in the Constitution” since “churches and their clergy often have good reason to separate themselves from partisan politics.” And yet, Hamburger never defends this definitional assumption that the separation of church and state means the separation of clergy and politics. The book might have been greatly strengthened by more attention, not just to Baptist pronouncements on establishment and free exercise, but also to the theological underpinnings of these pronouncements—especially in terms of commitment to a regenerate church membership and liberty of conscience. Also, while Hamburger is right about the nativist bigotry behind some of the “separation” movements of American history, the volume could also have explored much more the very real basis behind Baptist fears about Catholic and Anglican establishmentarianism and religious persecution, fears based in the rough and tumble of the history of the Free churches.

Despite a lingering caricature, Southern Baptist conservatives still hold to religious liberty and church/state separation. As a matter of fact, we learned it from Baptist conservatives such as Isaac Backus, John Leland, and George W. Truett—who all held these commitments in a larger confessional framework that also included the inerrancy of Scripture, the exclusivity of Christ, and the centrality of the local congregation. The next generation of Southern Baptists faces the challenge of reclaiming terms such as “separation of church and

state” and “religious liberty” from revisionist groups that equate them with hostility to religious claims in the public arena. This will mean careful attention to Scripture, theology, political theory, American history, and constitutional law. In this, Hamburger’s admirable project has started an extremely profitable conversation.

Russell D. Moore

It’s All In How You Tell It. By Haddon W. Robinson and Torrey W. Robinson. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003, 143 pp., \$12.99 paper.

Haddon Robinson and his son Torrey want to challenge those committed to a high view of biblical inspiration and expository preaching to consider the merits of “first-person expository messages.” In seven concise and well-written chapters they make their argument (pp. 7-76). The book is almost equally balanced with eight appendices (77-134), seven of which are examples of first person sermons. Appendix Eight provides a bibliography of resources for first-person preaching.

The Robinsons’s challenge is worth our careful consideration. Doing expository preaching should not be monolithic in style. Variety in approach and delivery will stretch the preacher and engage more effectively the congregation we address week after week. Our authors wisely do not suggest this style should supplant the more “traditional method” which has dominated our pulpits. Rather it can serve as a complement. With this proposition I certainly agree. They

carefully lay out for us different approaches to first-person preaching and how we can be effective at doing it. Their advice is helpful for anyone who wishes to be an effective communicator.

A couple of concerns do need to be noted. First, the “traditional approach” criticized on page 10 is a straw man. What the Robinsons criticize here is not traditional expository preaching but bad preaching, period. Second, appealing to Fred Craddock (21) and his book *As One Without Authority* carries little weight for those who believe in the inerrancy of Scripture. Craddock is an engaging communicator, to be sure, but his method has not grown healthy and vibrant congregations who know their Bible and theology. Third, first-person preaching does not seem to be a “good fit” when it comes to genres such as law, proverbs, psalms and epistolary type material. Though Appendices Three (Prov. 4:23) and Seven (Gal. 1:1-2:10) make a hearty attempt to do this, I am not sure they succeed. This type of material must be addressed, I would argue, in the same manner it was given. In other words, Scripture has the right to dictate both the form and content of our preaching. I doubt the Robinsons would disagree with this; I simply point it out to maintain a balance in our preaching.

This is a valuable contribution to the proclamation of God’s holy Word. I believe the Robinsons have hit upon something that those who love God’s Word should consider putting into practice.

Daniel L. Akin

Reading the Bible Wisely. By Richard Briggs. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003, 118 pp., \$12.99 paper.

As a teacher of introductory hermeneutics classes, I am always looking for a succinct, engaging, and accurate textbook that discusses issues of biblical interpretation. Richard Briggs’s recent book, *Reading the Bible Wisely*, is both brief and readable, but fails to deliver in the most critical area for a hermeneutics text—accuracy.

Briggs, Lecturer in New Testament and Hermeneutics at All Nations Christian College in Hertfordshire, England, has written a text that is worthy of emulation in its structure and style. Rather than supplying chapters filled with esoteric terms and mind-numbing lists of “principles for interpreting the genre of _____,” Briggs focuses on a limited selection of texts per chapter (usually one major passage) and is thus able to provide a running expositional commentary with hermeneutical musings. Each chapter discusses one or two key areas of hermeneutics, such as the clarity of Scripture, the inspiration of Scripture, canon, the authority and application of Scripture, etc. At times Briggs’s attention to the details of the text is admirable, as is his call for a careful, reflective, Spirit-led reading.

Unfortunately, this book has significant underlying weaknesses. Most noteworthy, Briggs subtly but repeatedly draws a contrast between a conservative, doctrinally-oriented reading of the text and the “wise” approach that he endorses. At one point, Briggs compares the concern of inerrantists to defend the historical

accuracy of Luke’s account with nit-picky Pharaism (30). Briggs says that when we read the Bible wisely, it “allows Scripture to come alive for us and capture something of the ferocious creative energy of the Word of God.” (111). This is true. God’s Word is “living and active, sharper than any double-edged sword” (Heb. 4:12). The dynamism of God’s Word, however, is not in opposition to the inerrancy or doctrinal propositions of Scripture.

Briggs lauds the subjective elements of interpretation at the expense of the objective. Although Briggs does not embrace a full-fledged post-modern, reader-response approach to Scripture, he makes a number of comments that appear receptive to a reading of Scripture that is unmoored from authorial intent. For example, in suggesting a chiasm for the structure of Luke’s Emmaus Road story, Briggs says that ultimately it does not matter if the author intended that chiasm or not. He writes, “Of course there is a certain creative act of judgment in seeing a chiasm in the text: not all interpreters of the New Testament will agree on whether it is ‘really’ there, but perhaps this is not as significant as one might think at first” (15). Elsewhere, Briggs writes, “Many people find themselves wondering . . . how we can be sure that we are not imposing our own patterns on the text. The simple answer is that we can never be sure of this . . .” (48). Although an interpreter should admit his biases and limitations, must he *always* remain in the realm of epistemological uncertainty?

The chapter on “The Difficulty and Clarity of Scripture” should be titled more accurately “The Difficulty and

Incomprehensibility of Scripture,” for Briggs seems intent on presenting numerous texts in Romans as unsolvable conundrums (e.g., Rom 1:5, 16-17; 9:5; 15:16). According to Briggs, scholars will have different opinions on these passages, and no one can ever really be sure on most of them.

One must, of course, acknowledge the difficult texts in Scripture (cf. 2 Peter 3:15-16), but Briggs’s pessimism begins to sound more like modern scholarship infected with relativism than the humility of man before God’s Word. Part of Briggs’s uncertainty, in my opinion, stems from his adoption of a number of questionable scholarly constructs (e.g., E. P. Sanders’s view of first-century Pharasaism [29, 57-58, 67] and Richard Hays’s contention that *pistis Christou/Iēsou* should sometimes be translated “the faithfulness of Christ/Jesus” [63]). One should not shun the challenges and insights of critical scholarship, but neither should one adopt them unreflectively.

On page 74, Briggs makes the puzzling proposal that later copies of the Biblical manuscripts (with variants) must be included within our understanding of God’s inspiration of the Biblical text. Thus, not only are the autographs “inspired,” but also later changes. If I understand Briggs correctly, this is a most unusual approach to inspiration!

One egregious linguistic error must be mentioned. On page 18, in reference to the word “interpreted” (*diermēneusen*) in Luke 24:27, Briggs writes, “The *di-* prefix simply indicates [the verb’s] particular tense” This assertion is patently false, for the prefix *di-* is simply a prepositional prefix

of a compound verb (The *di-* is analogous to the ‘up-’ in English ‘uphold’). The prefix has nothing to do with the tense of the verb. At a number of other places, Briggs’s handling of the Greek text is awkward to the point of inaccuracy (54, 56, 61, 65, 71, 73).

In summary, this book is written in an engaging style and is organized well. It occasionally offers insightful expositional reflections on individual Biblical texts and provides a needed call for a worshipful, meditative approach to interpretation. Unfortunately, this book’s weaknesses outweigh its strengths. Because of the errors and questionable assumptions mentioned above, *Reading the Bible Wisely* will leave the beginning hermeneutics student confused over the clarity, inspiration, interpretation, and authority of Scripture.

Robert L. Plummer

Two Views of Hell: A Biblical & Theological Dialogue. By Edward William Fudge & Robert A. Peterson. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000, 228 pp., \$14.00 paper.

Two authors who have already contributed significant works on hell square off in a debate in this volume. Edward Fudge previously defended annihilationism (he prefers the term “conditionalism” for conditional immortality) in *The Fire That Consumes: The Biblical Case for Conditional Immortality* (Paternoster), whereas Robert Peterson supported the traditional view of hell in his *Hell on Trial: The Case for Eternal Punishment* (Presbyterian & Reformed). Annihilationists argue

that the wicked, after being raised from the dead, are destroyed by God’s consuming fire and hence cease to exist. Traditionalists, on the other hand, maintain that those whom God punishes in hell suffer conscious torment forever. The format of the book is quite simple. After a brief introduction to the topic, each author defends his view, and then a rebuttal from the other author ensues.

The most important arguments supporting annihilationism are as follows. The judgments in the OT involve destruction and perishing. Nothing is said about torment that is permanent and conscious. The image of fire that is often used for the judgment signifies destruction, not that sinners will be punished forever. Many believers derive their concept that hell is everlasting punishment from the immortality of the soul, but, says Fudge, that notion stems from Greek philosophy and is unbiblical. The word “destroy” (*apōleia, apollymi*) is often used in the Scriptures for the future judgment, but this word indicates, says Fudge, that unbelievers will be destroyed in the sense that they will no longer exist. But how does annihilationism explain texts like Matt 25:46 which speak of eternal punishment? The author argues that the punishment will last forever in the sense that those who are blotted out of existence will be gone forever. Fudge is unsure that Rev 14:9-11 even refers to future punishment, and argues that in any case the imagery in the verses should be interpreted in light of the OT to refer to destruction, not conscious torment. Similarly, he maintains that the verses about the punishment of the devil, the false

prophet, and the beast (Rev 19:20; 20:7-10) cannot be used to support the traditional view, for the false prophet and beast may represent institutions rather than individuals, and we should interpret the lake of fire as involving annihilation.

Peterson defends the traditional view that hell involves everlasting conscious torment. He supports his view from eleven figures of church history, by appealing to ten crucial texts in the Scriptures, and by presenting three arguments from systematic theology. Since this review is necessarily a brief one, I can only state that Peterson is far more convincing than Fudge. He rightly notes that a view that has been the consensus for church history and that embraces ecclesiastical traditions from Roman Catholic to Baptist must be clearly refuted before being rejected. Most significantly, Peterson demonstrates that Fudge's exegesis of crucial texts is faulty. As Peterson shows, Fudge often departs from the context in explaining crucial verses, and he resorts to a method of word study that has been discredited. For space reasons I will mention three crucial texts adduced by Peterson to note the weakness of Fudge's exegesis: Matt 25:46; Rev 14:9-11 and Rev 19:20; 20:7-10. The parallel between eternal life and eternal punishment in Matt 25:46 only stands if one holds the traditional view. It strains the natural meaning of the text to see eternal life as the conscious enjoyment of eternal life forever, but eternal punishment to mean that unbelievers cease to exist forever. The parallel indicates that both refer to a conscious state that lasts forever, and that one will enjoy either

eternal bliss or eternal torment. The texts in Rev 14:9-11 and 19:20 and 20:7-10 are also crucial. The language of being tormented forever and the statement that there is "no rest day or night" in Rev 14:9-11 clearly refers to an everlasting hell. Similarly, Peterson notes that the eternal punishment of the devil (Rev 20:10) indicates that personal beings are subjected to an everlasting punishment. Peterson's argumentation is clear and forceful and is a model of sound exegesis.

It is astonishing that Fudge uses the main portion of his rebuttal to defend the notion that the soul is not immortal, for Peterson does not make this the cornerstone of his case, and argues that immortality is not native to human beings but granted to them by God. Fudge interacts only briefly with Peterson's exegesis, claiming that his previous study of the text has already demonstrated the credibility of his view. His failure to respond to Peterson's pointed exegetical arguments is a serious deficiency, and functions as confirming evidence of the cogency of Peterson's view. On the other hand, Peterson's rebuttal of Fudge is pointed and compelling, interacting specifically with arguments presented by the latter. Finally, Fudge consistently solves problems in NT texts by appealing to the OT. He fails to see that the historical judgments in the OT function as types of the eternal judgment to come.

Thomas R. Schreiner

The Legacy of Sovereign Joy: God's Triumphant Grace in the Lives of Augustine, Luther, and Calvin. The Swans Are

Not Silent, Volume One. By John Piper. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2000, 158 pp., \$17.99.

John Piper is senior pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church and a prolific author, whose books include *Desiring God*, *The Supremacy of God in Preaching*, *A Godward Life*, and *Let the Nations be Glad: The Supremacy of God in Missions*.

The Legacy of Sovereign Joy is the first volume in a series entitled *The Swans Are Not Silent*, a title taken from the event when the great theologian Augustine turned over the leadership of his church to his assistant, Eraclius in A.D. 430. Standing to preach with Augustine seated behind him, Eraclius declared, "The cricket chirps, the swan is silent" (p. 9). Taken from biographical messages given by Piper each year at the Bethlehem Conference for Pastors, this series reminds us that God has not allowed the voice of Augustine or other "swans" in the history of the church to be silenced.

In this volume, Piper traces the "legacy of sovereign joy" from Augustine to Luther and Calvin. Augustine discovered God as the soul's true joy, who replaces the "fruitless joys" which he had once pursued. Luther found the key to unlocking the truth of God's grace, and thus the discovery of true joy, through the study of God's Word, over against human wisdom and tradition. Calvin was driven by the majesty of God, as seen in Scripture, to proclaim it by the faithful preaching of God's Word, drawing others into a discovery of God's grace and true joy.

Piper highlights the tremendous gifts of these three great theologians,

as leaders, preachers, and writers, whom God has used mightily to accomplish his purposes. Yet he points out that they are flawed saints, which demonstrates God's grace in accomplishing his purposes not *because* of their strengths, but rather *in spite* of their flaws. It thus also serves to challenge God's people not to be paralyzed by inadequacies, but to rely on God's grace to work through them. This book, therefore, is not so much about these great theologians as it is about "God's triumphant grace." Piper offers their stories not merely so that the reader can learn of their lives, but that through their lives we can "peer through the imperfections of their faith and behold the beauty of their God" (17).

Biographers have the difficult task of deciding what must be said, and saying it in an interesting way. The challenge is even greater when combining three biographies of immensely important figures—all in a small book. As a result, we only get a glimpse into each of these lives. In addition, the connection of "Sovereign Joy" in the work of Luther and Calvin could be made more evident (though it is clear in Piper's use of Luther and Calvin). But these are not so much weaknesses as appetizers. This is an excellent book, and it should be read by pastors and lay persons alike. It presents the lives of three giants of the faith in an engaging way, and it will stir anew a passion for God, and gratefulness for God's grace in the lives of his servants who, though flawed, may be used to glorify God and edify his people.

K.T. Magnuson

The Parables of Jesus: A Commentary. By Arland J. Hultgren. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000, xxix + 522 pp., \$35.00.

This volume appears in a new series being published by Eerdmans entitled "The Bible in Its World." Hultgren is professor of NT at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, and is well-known for his other scholarly publications. In this work he provides a commentary on thirty-eight parables in the Synoptic Gospels. The book begins with an introduction to the parables. Hultgren then divides the parables into seven different categories, with chapters that explain the parables that fit under the category under discussion. The parables are classified as follows: those that reveal God, exemplary parables, parables of wisdom, parables of life before God, parables of final judgment, allegorical parables, and parables of the kingdom. In some cases I question whether a parable is placed in the best category, but in every case the decisions Hultgren makes are defensible and his classification is useful and even heuristic. After the chapters on the various kinds of parables, two chapters on the evangelists as interpreters of the parables and parables in the Gospel of Thomas are included. Three appendices are added on various features of the parables.

This volume should prove to be very helpful for students and pastors. In the commentary section Hultgren translates the parable in question, adds some technical notes on text and translation, analyzes the parable with

an exegetical commentary, summarizes the text with an exposition, and concludes with a bibliography. The author has the knack for including what is important, and his writing is beautifully lucid. The book is stocked with fresh insights and even pastoral wisdom about the meaning of the parables. Hultgren has read widely in the literature (the bibliography for each parable alone is almost worth the price of the book), and yet he retains his own independence as a commentator. I was struck by how often he casts light upon the parables by appealing to the culture of Jesus' day. The book also displays evidence of independent research. For instance, there are a number of occasions where the meaning of a word in Greco-Roman authors is adduced as support for the interpretation offered.

Parables, of course, are approached from many different angles today. Happily, Hultgren rejects a reader-response hermeneutic in which the parables are interpreted subjectively. The parables are studied from the standpoint of historical criticism, and the original intention of the text is investigated. At times the author sees the redactional work of the evangelist where authenticity is to be preferred, but on the whole the author has a conservative view of the reliability of the tradition. Even where evangelicals would disagree, we can profit significantly from his study of the parable in question.

I have already mentioned the pastoral wisdom that shines through the book. Hence, the book not only stretches the mind but enlarges the heart. The emphasis on God's grace

in the parables of Jesus shines through powerfully in Hultgren's expositions. The Lutheran theology of the author is evident at a number of points, but I would argue that this is mainly positive. The Lutheran emphasis on God's grace, after all, is rooted in the teaching of Jesus.

On the other hand, at some points I think the Lutheran emphasis on grace tones down the meaning of the text. For example, in the parable of the prodigal son Hultgren argues that forgiveness is granted without the need for repentance. He remarks that our repentance is never perfect in any case. I think Hultgren is incorrect in maintaining that the prodigal did not truly repent, for "coming to himself" (Luke 15:17) and the words spoken signify repentance (see the MT of 2 Chron 6:37-38), the necessity of repentance is a common Lukan theme (Acts 2:38: 3:19). He is even right in saying that our repentance and sorrow for sin are always imperfect. But he over psychologizes the text here, for the biblical narrative is not interested in whether our repentance is flawless but in the need to turn to God for forgiveness. He falls into the same error in the parable of the Pharisee and tax collector, saying that nothing is indicated about a change of life and Jesus did not demand repayment, which is necessary if repentance is demanded. But in this case he demands that the parable say more than is reasonable. And if the words of the tax collector are not repentance, I don't know what is. Hultgren's legitimate concern about human works is resolved if we apply his own insight. Even repentance is a gift granted by God (Acts

5:31; 2 Tim 2:25). If we applied the same principle to the parable of the Good Samaritan that Hultgren uses in interpreting the parable of the prodigal son, we would lose the edge of the parable. We could simply argue that we never truly and perfectly love our neighbor. Self-regard stains all that we do. True enough! No human being perfectly loves another. But the point of the parable is that those who know God will not draw boundaries in extending their love to others (as Hultgren himself agrees). The same issue emerges in the parable of the unforgiving slave (Matt 18:23-35). It seems to me that the necessity of forgiving to be forgiven by God is lessened in Hultgren's exegesis. He rightly says that God's forgiveness is fundamental, primary, and the only basis upon which we can forgive others. The prevenient grace of God, which the author rightly trumpets, is so powerful, however, that it leads to a changed life, even though not a perfect one. I should not end on a negative note. This book represents scholarship at its best, and is one of the best books on the parables I have ever read.

Thomas R. Schreiner

Romans: Exposition of Chapter 13: Life in Two Kingdoms. By D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2003, 323 pp., \$33.99.

Sometimes books make such a profound influence on you that you remember years later just what you were doing and thinking at the time in relation to the impact that book

made on your life. When I was twenty years old, I read through the sixty sermons found in *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount* by D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones. I was immediately amazed at the profound depth of expositional theology in those pages and saw more clearly than ever the possibilities of teaching truth from the pulpit. Back at the bookstore a few days later I discovered that Lloyd-Jones had also done a series of expositions on Romans and that those volumes were appearing one by one. I have read through all of those volumes over the years, and am happy to announce that the expositions on chapter thirteen of Paul's great letter have now been made available.

This is a timely volume, since matters of church-state relations and the role of government are on the front burner these days. Lloyd-Jones makes it clear that the Bible cannot be used to support either a church-over-state (such as prevailed during the years of Roman Catholic hegemony in Europe) or a state-over-church (such as in either Lutheran or Anglican forms of Erastianism) model. In the course of the expositions he berates Catholic and Reformer alike for their unbiblical approach to the relationship between church and state and instead gives a nod (though a tempered one) to the Anabaptists for their willingness to take the Reformation to its logical conclusion in this area. On the other hand, he withdraws some of his accolades to the Radical Reformers by arguing that many of them were wrong in their views of the relationship of Christians to the magistracy. The British pastor of Westminster

Chapel proceeds to argue for a strong support of the government, a willingness to defy secular powers if need be to do the will of God, and a congregational independency from the powers of the state on the part of the church. Almost, the “Blessed Doctor” becomes a Baptist.

For those of us who ground the lenses of our theological vision, at least in part, on the expositions of this prince of British expositors, this volume provides another opportunity to see things more clearly. I always tell students that it would probably not be best to copy Lloyd-Jones’s style of exposition (it took him fourteen years to work through Romans in his church—on Friday evenings—and he never finished before retirement), but he is wonderful to read to see how expositional theology can be done. Here is another giant on whose shoulders we can stand.

Chad Owen Brand

The Keepers: An Introduction to the History and Culture of the Samaritans. Robert T. Anderson and Terry Giles. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Press, 2002, xvi + 165 pp., \$29.95.

The Samaritans have long fascinated western culture. The Good Samaritan parable is familiar to most westerners, but the history of the Samaritans tends to be diminished. Now the story of this unique group of people is available to scholars and the general reader. *The Keepers* does the modern Samaritan community justice by documenting the long and mysterious history of the Samaritans. This

small group still practices a Passover ritual sacrifice of a lamb that is similar to the Old Testament account, which is fascinating to most travelers to the Holy Land.

The book is basically an historical account of the Samaritans with additional chapters that discuss the religion and culture. Six chapters discussing the origins and history of the Samaritans follow the introductory chapter. Three chapters provide an historical analysis based on the biblical text. The next three chapters discuss the history from the Byzantine to the modern era. These chapters are based on historical analyses of various documents and accounts of travelers. In addition to the historical survey, the authors provide three chapters discussing the Samaritan Pentateuch, current religious practices and beliefs of the community, and a summary of the Samaritan artifacts in the Chamberlain-Warren Collection at Michigan State University. The authors write with a clear style and provide succinct summaries of each major historical period. One of the drawbacks is that the book contains few illustrations.

This book fills a gap in biblical studies. In addition to being an enjoyable story concerning the Samaritans, it is a valuable resource documenting an ethnic group that is near extinction. The authors have done a service to the scholarly community. *The Keepers* provides an ending to a story that is familiar to our culture. It is a unique book and provides a much-needed chapter in the history of the people of the Holy Land.

Steven M. Ortiz
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The Purpose Driven Life. By Rick Warren. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002, 334 pp., \$19.99.

This book should be read by every seminary and Christian college teacher. Why? Because thousands of pastors and several million others have. To be exact, the number stood at 4.5 million as of July 21, 2003 (*USA Today*, 1D). Further, it spent 23 weeks on *The New York Times* advice best-seller list, several weeks as No.1, and months on *USA Today’s* Best Selling Books list. It was also named book of the year by the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association for 2003. Finally, it is a fine book that will bless and strengthen the body of Christ.

The book seeks to answer one overarching question: “What on earth am I here for?” Structured for 40 days of devotional reading, Warren provides a 5-fold answer to his question:

Purpose #1—You Were Planned For God’s Pleasure

Purpose #2—You Were Formed For God’s Family

Purpose #3—You Were Created To Become Like Christ

Purpose #4—Your Were Shaped For Serving God

Purpose #5—You Were Made For A Mission

The book is excellently written, wonderfully devotional, and spiritually enriching. It is simple, clear and relationally-oriented. Chapter 33 entitled “How Real Servants Act” is worth the price of the book. My only

critique is that there are a few too many clichés for my taste. This is, however, an excellent work. My own church will be working through it, and I know, without a doubt, we will be a better and stronger body as a result. I commend Rick Warren for providing the church a valuable tool that will assist us in accomplishing the plan God has for us.

Daniel L. Akin

Triumph of the Lamb: A Commentary on Revelation. By Dennis E. Johnson. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Co., 2001, 384 pp., \$24.99.

This is a superb commentary on the book of Revelation. Johnson, a pastor and professor at Westminster Theological Seminary in California, provides a clear, very readable and theologically-aware exposition of this complex book.

The commentary opens with a chapter aptly entitled, "A Strategy for Seeing." This is not a discussion of schools of interpretation (Johnson intentionally holds such discussion for the conclusion), but a discussion of seven key principles emerging from the genre of the book and its historical setting which must inform and shape our interpretations. This discussion alone will be a great value for students and preachers.

Chapter two then discusses the structure of Revelation, another important and debated topic in the interpretation of the book. The discussion is well done, drawing from the wells of academic research but with a

very engaging presentation demonstrating the relevance for interpretation.

Chapters three through fourteen expound the text of Revelation. Here one does not get the detail one might in some other larger commentaries, but there is substantial discussion of the text. Johnson is again engaging and, as Ralph Davis says, "not allergic to application."

The last chapter is entitled "What Should This Book Do to Us?", and it is worth the price of the book. In the opinion of this reviewer, anyone studying Revelation ought to read this chapter. Even the wording of the chapter title is excellent. So often studies of Revelation get sidetracked in areas of debate, forgetting that the book (like the rest of Scripture) was intended to impact us, to "do" something "to" us. Johnson lists several ways we should respond to the message of the book, including seeing the true glory of our Savior, the true beauty of the Church and the repugnance and final destiny of the Lord's enemies. Johnson also highlights the call to patient endurance and the faithful bearing of witness in spite of persecution.

The commentary concludes with two appendixes. Appendix A is a helpful four-page overview of Revelation, and Appendix B is a useful overview of schools of interpretation. Johnson's commentary will now be one of my first recommendations to anyone teaching or preaching from the book of Revelation.

Ray Van Neste
Union University

Works of Love. International Kierkegaard Commentary, vol. 16. Edited by Robert L. Perkins. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1999, 378 pp., \$35.00.

The International Kierkegaard Commentary is an extensive project by Mercer University Press to address all of Kierkegaard's major works in nineteen volumes. The "commentary" nomenclature may be misleading to those familiar with biblical commentaries that provide a verse-by-verse analysis of the text. The IKC offers a collection of unpublished essays by some of the best Kierkegaardian scholars of our day, but these address the overarching themes addressed by Kierkegaard in that work rather than a section-by-section analysis. Volume 16 addresses the *Works of Love*, Kierkegaard's extended exposition of Matt. 22:37-40. Robert Perkins of Stetson University, editor of the commentary series, is also editor of this volume.

Each of the thirteen essays in this collection makes its own unique contribution. Three articles deal in various ways with Kierkegaard's concept of redoubling. Martin Andic of the University of Massachusetts contributes an insightful article that establishes fine but important distinctions between the key concepts of repetition, reduplication, and redoubling in Kierkegaard's thought. Jesus commanded that we love each other *as ourselves*, and thus we must redouble our love for ourselves in loving others. But as fallen beings we are not capable of godly love, and therefore we love truly only as God loves us and

we redouble that love toward others. Anthony Burgess of the University of New Mexico addresses redoubling in relation to Luther's *simul justus et peccator* and the scriptural promise in 1 Peter 4:8 that love heals a multitude of sins (a key passage for Kierkegaard). Arnold Come of Graduate Theological Union surveys Kierkegaard's ontology of love and notes that the Kierkegaardian concept of love does not leave room for a Barthian doctrine of universalism because of the profound consequences of rejecting love.

The article by Paul Martens of Regent College contrasts Kant's more optimistic anthropology with Kierkegaard's greater awareness of human sinfulness and how each thinker addresses the paradox that although love is usually thought of as being freely given, Jesus commanded his disciples to love. Anthony Rudd of the University of Hertfordshire contributes a helpful article on Kierkegaard's epistemology in which he argues that the Climacus works are not merely ironist, as some have proposed, because the cynic who approaches everything with a hermeneutic of suspicion has no hope, and thus no love. This is a topic of some debate among Kierkegaardian scholars, Louis Pojman championing the view that Kierkegaard meant what he said and Louis Mackey supporting the view that Kierkegaard was merely an ironist poet.

Lee Barrett of Lancaster Theological Seminary, Louise Keeley of Assumption College, and M. J. Ferreira of the University of Virginia each contribute an article on the

public-private tension in Kierkegaard. All three authors reject the criticisms of Adorno and Buber that Kierkegaard was only focused on the inwardness of the individual to the exclusion of the social dimensions of life. In his insightful article, Barrett appeals to Kierkegaard's anticonsequentialism in which love is performed for its own sake, whether or not it actually alleviates human suffering.

Mark Dooley of University College in Dublin has an article that relates Kierkegaard to the contemporary postmodern thinkers such as Levinas and Derrida. While contemporary postmodernists love to take Kierkegaard hostage as an advocate of their position, it is difficult to do so without doing violence to Kierkegaard's intention and meaning. Michael Oppenheim of Concordia University compares Kierkegaard's view of the interhuman with Jewish thinkers Buber, Rosenzweig, and Levinas. Begonya Tajafuerce of the University of Copenhagen contributes an article on Kierkegaard's rhetoric, and Ronald Green and Theresa Ellis co-author an article on erotic and agapic love in Kierkegaard.

One of the most fascinating articles, authored by Eric Ziolkowski of Lafayette College, provides an interesting and original analysis of the child in Kierkegaard's thought. Ziolkowski argues that Kierkegaard's view of children falls somewhere between the optimistic Romantic innocence view of Rousseau and the pessimistic original sin perspective of Augustine (and later novelists such as William Golding, William March, and J. M. Barrie), or in biblical terms (as he

sees it) between Jesus' view of the innocent faith of children and Paul's depiction of the ignorance and immaturity of children.

Although uncharacteristic of other volumes in this series, there were a noticeable number of typographical errors in this volume on Kierkegaard's *Works of Love*. However, the book is well worth reading not only because of the insights on Kierkegaard's thought that it affords, but also (as Kierkegaard would have had it) because of the encouragement it offers to actually practice works of love in our daily lives.

Steve W. Lemke
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Theological Seminary

The Psalms: Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary. The Eerdmans Critical Commentary Series. By Samuel Terrien. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003, 971 pp., \$95.00.

There is no doubt that this is one of the most significant studies of the Psalms to appear recently. Not only was Terrien a well-qualified Hebrew scholar, but his years of teaching experience at Union (NY) enabled him to produce a volume that covers the scholarly bases while still speaking to the general reader. Terrien has not produced a volume that is comparable in style to the Word Biblical Commentary series. What he has done, however, is to offer a new translation based on recent linguistic research. He has essentially accepted the Masoretic consonants, and in most cases he has refrained from the

common practice of emending difficult texts. This to me is a great advance over previous practice, though I do not deny the possibility of an occasional scribal anomaly. My argument has been that the so-called “unknown” words often indicate a more ancient origin for the text than many have been willing to consider. Terrien does not make this point, as such, but he does try to translate the Psalms in the most accurate way possible.

Then Terrien analyzes the strophic structure of each poem. The translation incorporates this analysis using Roman numerals. I found this to be very helpful for proper reading of every Psalm. By proper reading, I am referring to literary and grammatical issues. The translator is not responsible for demonstrating or establishing a particular historical origin, and Terrien does not do that. His interest is primarily in literary structure.

Following each translation, a scholarly bibliography is provided for those who want to do further research. Most references are to journal articles. Few evangelicals are represented in the lists. Perhaps we are not publishing as much in this field as we should.

Next Terrien briefly discusses the form of the Psalm. For example, Psalm 109 is said to be unusual in that its strophic structure (with what he calls a “spectacular” symmetry) is usually indicative of a hymn, but its thematic content is that of a complaint. Without pause, Terrien announces that the final bicola did not belong to the original poem (the final substrophe has three bicola instead of the normal two as found in the earlier five stro-

phes). Verse 31 seems quite well integrated into the thought and meaning of the final strophe as I read it, but Terrien seemingly relies on structure to recognize the hand of his supposed “early copyist.” He does say that to him verse 31 reads like a third person reflection, and I can, of course, see the shift from “I” to “him,” but it sounds to me that the psalmist (“I”) is praising God not simply because the Lord will stand by the psalmist (“I”) but because the Lord will stand by any of his poor Israelites to save them from false condemnation. The original psalmist could well have chosen to end on this humble and less self-centered note. It is only speculation to think that an early copyist would have the sense of freedom to change an original source in this way. I do not say it could not have happened that way; I simply note that Terrien speculates just as some have done whom he rightly criticizes with regard to translation.

Each Psalm is then discussed in a “commentary” section that is divided not by verses but by strophes. These comments are generally helpful and meaningful to readers today. Interestingly, Terrien recognizes with regard to Psalm 109 that Jeremiah faced plots similar to those described in strophe four.

Finally, a section on date and theology concludes the material on each psalm. Terrien notes in Psalm 109 that the themes and “even the identity of vocabulary” show “remarkable affinities” to what he calls the “Jeremianic circle” and perhaps with Jeremiah himself. Terrien, in true scholarly fashion, immediately discounts the signifi-

cance of linguistic affinities, though he does suggest that the date of composition could “hardly be earlier” than those final years of the kingdom of Judah. But, as I have found, scholarly pressure today is not to make any claims about the historical origin of a Psalm no matter how illuminating it might be. In this case (Psalm 109), the possibility that this Psalm could be from Jeremiah would at least provide a context for understanding the imprecations. The traditional title moves this Psalm back to David (a source Terrien does not even consider). An attack on God’s anointed (David) might even help to explain strophes two and three. If the focus of the curse is not against one who attacked a messianic representative, then how could the apostles ever justify their use of these words? Terrien simply contrasts the whole thing with “Father, forgive them . . .” (Luke 23:34), and leaves it at that. His only kind word toward the psalmist is dependent on the final bicola where the psalmist identifies with the poor and thus, according to Terrien, appeals to divine mercy.

Nevertheless, I want to conclude on a positive note, and I want to affirm much that is good in Terrien’s work. The new translation is a great contribution. I continue to believe, however, that traditional date and authorship studies can shed light on the meaning of the text. Terrien is not going that way, but he does provide many helpful insights for all of us who love the Psalter.

L. Russ Bush
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Mysterium Ecclesiae: Images of the Church and its Members in Origen. Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologiarum Lovaniensium. By F. Ledegang. Leuven: Peeters, 2001, xvii + 848 pp., \$39.99 paper.

Ecclesiological questions are increasingly taking front and center stage. Major debates are waged between thinkers who disagree on whether ecclesiological considerations are to be construed as questions of the *esse* or the *bene esse* of the church. Naturally, the views of early Christian thinkers are very important to such conversations, and so this volume is a welcome addition to the literature.

Ledegang shows that Origen's favorite metaphor for explicating the church is Paul's use of the "body." The Alexandrian father makes extensive use of this image, even identifying some thirteen "body parts" within the church, including such unlikely components as cheeks, hair, and belly (64-96). He does not stop there, though, but also resorts to the many other images in Scripture, such as "people of God," "bride," and even "mountain." Here is a rich, though sometimes bizarre, discussion of biblical images for the church that can stand, as a historical study, alongside Minear's NT exegetical/theological work, *Images of the Church in the New Testament*.

Ledegang criticizes works on Patrology and the history of ecclesiology for leaving Origen out of the loop in their discussions of the historical development of the doctrine of the church. As a corrective, he offers what he calls a "Sketch of an Ecclesiology" (649-89). Origen contended for the

supercession of the Church over Israel (650-54). He made a distinction, more fully developed by Augustine with his concept of the church visible and invisible, between the church as first-fruits and as sanctified, with only the sanctified church being the true church (660-61). For the Alexandrian father, the notion of the church as bride is both corporate and individual, with the individual aspect pointing to the marriage between the Logos and the individual soul (661), certainly a legitimation of a mystical form of spirituality. Origen also held that the resurrection of Christ made way for the age of the Spirit, but, true perhaps to his synergistic approach to salvation, argued that men had to behave in a worthy manner in order to be indwelt by the Spirit (662). The gift of the Spirit then follows conversion, and is not made a reality in all who are converted.

The unity of the church was a major concern for Origen. This unity is threatened by persecution from without and heresy from within (667). It is of course a unity in diversity, as the discussion about "parts" of the body made clear. Origen seems to have made a strong case for the priesthood of all Christians and did not place a high premium on whether one was an ordained minister or not (669). Of course, his own personal situation may have contributed to that conviction. For him, priests and bishops (and he does distinguish between the two orders) ought to be taken from among the spiritually mature and charismatically gifted. The unholiness of the clergy was a blight on the church of his day (672-73), though doubtless the

problems were not so extreme as they would be in later centuries.

All in all this is a worthy example of historical ecclesiology. If it has any flaw it is that it is too lengthy for most pastors, or even theologians, to attempt to read. Perhaps at some point the author will produce a more conveniently-packaged version of a fine piece of research.

Chad Owen Brand

The Didache: A Commentary. By Kurt Niederwimmer. Translated by Linda M. Maloney and edited by Harold W. Attridge. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998, xxvii + 288 pp., \$52.00.

The Hermeneia series is well-known for its technical expertise in which the biblical text is examined critically and primary and secondary sources are referenced extensively. The Hermeneia series is also including commentaries on the Apostolic Fathers, and this volume represents the work of Kurt Niederwimmer on the *Didache*. Niederwimmer's introduction treats the following matters with reference to the *Didache*: its structure and genre, references to the work in other historical sources, the manuscript tradition, the early versions that translated the work, its relationship to the *Apostolic Constitutions*, the relationship between the *Didache* and the "Two Ways" tradition, and a reconstruction of the origin of the work. The discussions on these matters are technical and thorough and would be of significant interest to specialists. Two matters warrant comment here. Vir-

tually all scholars date the *Didache* very early, and Niederwimmer opts for a date between A.D. 110-120. Other scholars, however, date the document even earlier. J. P. Audet posits a date of A.D. 70, and Michael Holmes suspects that it was written by at least A.D. 80. Assigning a date is difficult since the *Didache* was stitched together from various sources. It is also clear that some portions of the work draw on gospel tradition, particularly the gospel of Matthew. The commentary examines the text carefully from a critical point of view, interacting with other interpretations. As with most volumes in the Hermeneia series, the theology of the document is not the focus of the commentary. If the reader desires a technical and thorough discussion of the text, then this volume will serve admirably.

Thomas R. Schreiner

Sticking Up For What I Believe: Answers To The Spiritual Questions Teenagers Ask. By Gwendolyn Mitchell Diaz. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2002, 171 pp., \$12.00 paper.

This is not a book for scholars, but it is one you might want to put in the hands of an inquisitive teenager who is beginning to think about the ultimate issues of life and is starting to ask some of the hard to answer questions. The book is written as a Q & A between a mother and her four sons. Here Diaz addresses eleven important questions teenagers often ask and for which they need answers. Questions like: "Can You Prove That There Is A God?"; "If There Is A God,

Why Does He Allow So Much Suffering?"; "Isn't It Narrow-Minded To Say That Jesus Is The Only Way To God?"; and "What About Those Who Have Never Heard About Jesus?" Diaz draws from authors like Ken Boa, Josh McDowell, Paul Little, Charles Colson, C.S. Lewis, John Gerstner and Peter Kreeft. She uses simple, easy to understand illustrations and writes out of her experience as an M.K., mother, wife and informed follower of Jesus Christ. I liked the book and will encourage others to read it as well. It can be a real help to our teens in helping them obey 1 Peter 3:15.

Daniel L. Akin

Holman Old Testament Commentary: Joshua. By Kenneth O. Gangel. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003, xiii + 327 pp., \$19.99.

This commentary on Joshua is part of the Holman Commentary Series. The commentary series is designed to present "a detailed interpretation" and to deliver "an essential understanding of the Old Testament with unsurpassed clarity and convenience." Gangel has written an excellent commentary addressing the second goal of the series. This is not a textbook; it is designed for pulpit and Sunday School ministry. A reader does not come away with a deeper or comprehensive understanding of the book of Joshua. The main emphasis of the book is to provide expository sermon and study outlines for each chapter. Gangel does an excellent job of staying true to the text and

message of Joshua.

The commentary consists of eighteen chapters, each focusing on one or two chapters of the book of Joshua in English. There is a brief four-page introduction to the book of Joshua, a one page glossary, and a brief bibliography. The commentary is designed so that each chapter follows the same outline: Introduction, Commentary, Conclusion, Life Application, Prayer, Deeper Discoveries, Teaching Outline, and Issues for Discussion.

Although one of the main goals is to provide a straightforward outline and expository approach to the text, the commentary needs a thorough discussion providing the background of the book. This would have been accomplished by a more detailed introduction discussing major literary themes, and a brief summary of archaeological and historical data. A detailed summary of the geographical dynamics of the land besides the two illustrations found in the book would also be beneficial to the commentary. To the author's credit, he does an excellent job of relating the book to the New Testament, particularly his discussion concerning Pauline theology in Ephesians. There is no vehicle to take the pastor to deeper levels within the text, and the discussions found in the "Deeper Discoveries" sections are superficial.

This book is not recommended for use as a textbook, except perhaps as a supplemental text for preaching from the Old Testament. The text is too superficial for an Old Testament course. Gangel provides good examples of how to preach and teach the laity, and he provides excellent ser-

mon outlines based on each chapter of Joshua as it is divided in the Bible. For a deeper study of the biblical text, I would suggest the New American Commentary series.

Steven M. Ortiz
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Warriors of the Lord: The Military Orders of Christendom. By Michael Walsh. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003, 208 pp., \$30.00.

Most church people are aware of the fact that various military orders arose in the Middle Ages, generally associated with the Crusades, and that some of these military orders have persisted in some form or other down even to modern times. But most do not know much more than that about the matter. Eerdmans has done Christians a service by producing what may be its first-ever coffee table book, a volume on the military orders of Christendom.

Michael Walsh, librarian at Heythrop College, University of London, begins his book with two chapters that set the stage for his exposition on the orders. These two chapters detail the evolution of the church's views on war and the historical and geographical context that brought Islam to dominate the Eastern Mediterranean. His explanations are crystal clear and generally free from rhetorical flourish. The rest of the volume is given to an explanation and short chronicling of the Crusades themselves, the Europeans' defense of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, and the subsequent

Reconquista. All along the way the author introduces his readers to first one and then another of the military orders, drawing out the parallels between these "holy" societies and the monastic orders that had gone before them—Benedictines, Augustinians, and Cluniacs, for instance. One learns, for instance, that the Hospitallers began as a religious order, taking the Augustinian rule, serving the hospital in Jerusalem, and only later became a military order, probably some time just before the fall of the Latin Kingdom. Others were military orders that eventually became clerical orders. The order of the Teutonic Knights, for instance, endured long after the Crusades, fighting against Lutherans in the Reformation and against the French in the Napoleonic Wars. But in 1923 a cleric was elected Grand Master, and since that time it has been a clerical order only.

This is a timely volume, since so much attention has turned to the Middle East and the conflict between the Islamic states and "Christian" nations. One will not find in this volume much help in sorting out the ideological conflicts that are central to the current impasse; but one will find, in a lavishly illustrated format, some of the key historical points of interest that will make it all more understandable. It is probably time for many of us to replace that old Norman Rockwell volume on the coffee table in the den anyway. Why not put in its place something that will educate the family about church history?

Chad Owen Brand

Jesus On Trial. By James Montgomery Boice and Philip Graham Ryken. Wheaton: Crossway, 125 pp., \$12.99.

This book is by the former and present senior ministers of Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia. The seven chapters were first preached as a series of sermons on seven Fridays leading up to Easter in 2000. Dr. Boice died just a few weeks after preaching the seventh and final message.

The book is a sermonical/devotional look at seven aspects of the trial(s) of Jesus. The issues of conspiracy, arrest, resistance, witnesses, verdict, sentence and execution are addressed. The book is devotional in tone, spiritually enriching and very easy to read. I especially appreciated the invitation to believe the gospel and trust Christ which was shared repeatedly throughout the book. Whether it was the authors' intent or not, this book could be placed in the hands of someone who is lost and in need of trusting Christ as Savior. That person would learn that Jesus is the only Savior whom we must trust to be saved, the Son of God promised in Old Testament prophecy, that he was wrongfully condemned and executed, and that all of this was the plan of God to accomplish the salvation of sinners by means of his perfect work of atonement on the cross.

Daniel L. Akin

A Jonathan Edwards Reader. Edited by John E. Smith, Harry S. Stout, and Kenneth P. Minkema. New Haven: Yale University Press/Nota Bene, 2003, 335 pp., \$16.95 paper.

Jonathan Edwards is one of the most original and influential thinkers in American history. Every theologian and philosopher should read Edwards, and this anthology provides a wonderful synopsis of his life and thought. This affordable paperback edition of an earlier Yale University Press publication provides not only an accessible introduction to Edwards' best known works, but also affords glimpses of his personality and character through his diary and personal correspondence.

The three editors, all associated with Yale University and participants in the *Works of Jonathan Edwards* series, provide a thoughtful and thorough introduction to this volume, and helpful explanations in footnotes to lesser-known persons referenced by Edwards. However, throughout the volume the editors let Edwards speak for himself with minimal editorial intrusion.

Edwards was the paradigmatic pastor-theologian. In works such as *On Being* and *The Mind*, Edwards demonstrates his facility with philosophical thinkers of his day such as Descartes, Hobbes, Berkeley, and Locke, while expressing his own modified Berkeleyan Idealism. Edwards's keen powers of scientific observation are evident in *The Spider Letter*, written when Edwards was just twenty years old. One can speculate that his youthful fascination with the spider may have contributed to his imagery in *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*, but clearly in *Images of Divine Things* he draws a number of analogies from nature to illustrate divine truth. Various items in creation become types of the Creator.

Edwards's typological hermeneutic is also evident in *Notes on the Apocalypse*.

As a key leader in the First Great Awakening, Edwards's *Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God* details not only his defense of the emotionalism of the Awakening, but also details five separate spiritual harvests over about a fifty year period dating back to the ministry of his grandfather Solomon Stoddard. It is heart warming to hear Edwards's description of the three hundred souls saved within a few months during his Northampton ministry. Three representative sermons (chosen out of his 1,200 sermon manuscripts) are included in this anthology to provide insight into Edwards's proclamation: *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*, *A Divine and Supernatural Light*, and *A History of the Work of Redemption*.

The human side of Edwards comes through in his *Miscellanies*, letters, diary, and resolutions. The inclusion of these more personal papers intended for a private audience enhances this anthology by providing insight to Edwards as a tender husband and father, as a slave owner, as an extraordinarily ambitious young man, and as an individual who struggled with his own spiritual commitment.

Edwards's primary doctrinal treatises were written later in his life, fifteen to twenty years after the Great Awakening. While perhaps not radically different conceptually from his earlier positions, these works are darker, more pessimistic, and more polemical than his earlier writing. This more somber tone may be suggested in his notes on *The Bad Book Case*

(1744), in which Edwards sought to bring discipline against several youth in the church. In *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections* (1746), Edwards reflects a growing disillusionment with not only his own religious experiences but also the effects of the earlier revivals. In *An Humble Inquiry into the Rules of the Word of God, Concerning the Qualifications Requisite to a Complete Standing in the Visible Christian Church* (1749), Edwards challenged the standards for church membership promulgated by his grandfather Stoddard, seeking to raise the qualifications for membership. These unpopular actions distanced Edwards from his flock and ultimately led the Northampton congregation to dismiss Edwards in 1750, led by many of the converts out of the Awakening. Edwards was left to serve as a somewhat embittered missionary to Mohawk and Mohican Indians. His subsequent works such as *A Careful and Strict Inquiry into the Modern Prevailing Notions of that Freedom of the Will, Which Is Supposed to be Essential to Moral Agency, Virtue and Vice, Reward and Punishment, Praise and Blame* (1754), *The Great Christian Doctrine of Original Sin Defended* (1758), and *The Nature of True Virtue* (1765), reflect a greater pessimism about human nature and religious experience than his earlier works. In these rather polemical works Edwards argues against Armenian ideas, but his attacks are unfortunately addressed not to the primary evangelical proponents of these positions, but to persons such as Thomas Chubb (an avowed deist) and Daniel Whitby (an Anglican apologist). Edwards's argument

against freedom of the will hinges on the rather thin semantic point that freedom properly belongs to the *person* and not the *will*, and thus the concept of “freedom of the will” is incoherent. Edwards does not address the more substantive issue of whether or not persons can determine their actions without being forced to do so by external causes, which is the real point of contention. However, Edwards’s arguments provide interesting and thought-provoking reading.

Edwards was one of the most creative minds in American history, a great evangelist, and a great pastor-theologian. This well-conceived anthology provides a concise introduction to Edwards’s thought, and is highly recommended reading for every Christian.

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Dimensions of Time: The Structures of the Time of Humans, of the World, and of God. Wolfgang Achtner, Stefan Kunz, and Thomas Walter. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002 [1998], 196 pp, \$30.00 paper.

Originally published in German, this volume originally arose from a study group called “Dialogue of Physicists and Theologians.” The authors participated in a year-long program theme on “Time in Physics” and then spent five more years working on the relation of all of these ideas to theology. The Templeton Foundation supported the English translation.

The study is so thorough that at

times it seemed tedious, especially at the beginning. We are introduced to some obscure quotations from Goethe that set up the authors’ tri-polar structure of time: exogenous (all forms of time in which humans relate to their environment); endogenous (all forms of time available to humans through their immediate inner experiences); and transcendent time (those phenomena best described as religious experiences of time). The first question is whether there is a biological basis for this three-fold structure, but the answer is less than fully obvious. Yes, of course, we experience sequence (day and night, breathing in and out), and this is our most basic experience of time. The authors want to acknowledge this (and they do at length), but they also want to move on to more helpful levels of analysis.

I found it absolutely fascinating to read the section in which they reviewed the history of western philosophy using the rubric of how each philosopher built their essential theories around assumptions they made about time. This was not only insightful but to me convincing. One does not fully understand western intellectual history until one has focused through this lens at least once. To me, this was the most helpful section of the book.

A few unexpected gems appear: for example, on p. 43 there is an interesting section on the Star of Bethlehem and its significance for dating and for interpreting the birth of Christ. Later sections of the book address physical theories of time, especially in light of contemporary relativity theory. Finally the authors enter the discussion of divine time and/or the nature

of eternity.

The laws of thermodynamics force us to accept an irreversibility in nature, and this forces us to re-evaluate all ancient theories of cyclical histories. The Jewish-Christian tradition of a creation, a linear history, and an eschatological end is seen to be far closer to the truth revealed by science than other alternatives, even though for God, time is no barrier or constraint. Only in biblical theology is there a truly transcendent time. Annual festivals of the Jews maintained the nearness of the past without denying the ancientness of the past. The New Testament kingdom is proclaimed as near and Christ is coming soon without ruling out the chronological expanse of time between then and now.

Clearly the authors advocate an openness to time because entropy only applies absolutely to a closed system, and God is clearly able to change the “inevitable” by adding His “outside” or transcendent presence to the picture. I could not find that the authors were aware of the so-called “openness” debate among American Evangelicals (where the issue isn’t so much the openness of time to an influence from eternity as it is the lack of God’s knowledge of the future).

This is not an easy read, but it is a sophisticated study of some very basic issues for theology. The authors seemed to think they were primarily addressing the lack of balance in human life. It is true that many of us seem to be experiencing mostly “accelerated” living. I found the more interesting parts, however, to be the discussions of the implications of this

three-fold theory of time for human history and destiny. This could be a very provocative text for a seminar in the philosophy of history.

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The Curse of Cain: The Violent Legacy of Monotheism. By Regina M. Schwartz. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997, xv + 211 pp., \$22.95.

Regina M. Schwartz has written a provocative book that would appear to be a new analysis of the Hebrew Bible but actually is a postmodern reading and evaluation of the use of the Hebrew Bible in western culture.

Schwartz's main premise is that scarcity provides the trajectory for the development of monotheism. She proposes that the "biblical myth of scarcity" is "encoded in the Bible as a principle of Oneness" (p. xi) and is foundational for the theme of exclusion which is the basis for violence in society. Her vision is to "produce an alternative Bible that subverts the dominant vision of violence and scarcity with an ideal of plentitude and its corollary ethical imperative of generosity. It would be a Bible embracing multiplicity instead of monotheism" (176). Schwartz attempts to provide a scholarly analysis of the interplay between violence and monotheism in the Hebrew Bible. She proposes that this is the foundation for western secularized forms of nationalism.

The book consists of six chapters. The first chapter, entitled, "Rebuilding Babel," is an introduction in which

she sets forth her primary thesis that it is not original sin, but the competition caused by scarcity that is at the center of monotheism. The next five chapters discuss her reinterpretation of major biblical themes (e.g. Covenants, Land, Kinship, Nations, and Memory). Schwartz never appeals to any biblical scholarship or analyses that would support her biblical criticism. Instead the work is a distortion of the biblical story, as she picks and chooses particular stories, ignoring the context of the story or deciding which stories were dominant (Cain and Abel vs. The Fall).

The chapters are illustrated with modern abuses of nation building and the incorporation of biblical themes into the western state (e.g. One Nation under God, Israeli Nationalism, etc.). The modern analysis is also weak. Most historians are aware of the abuses of men who use the biblical text to support any political position or exclusivism and racism within society. She does not provide any data to show that these tendencies are inherent in monotheism. The reader is constantly in a position of incredulous bewilderment as it is common knowledge that violence and society evils are common to polytheistic societies and atheistic societies. Her premise of violence being foundational to monotheism is never fully supported with any data or documentation.

Her premise would at least be entertained if she could show that Jews celebrate the murder of Abel or the conquest of the Land instead of the Exodus Event. It seems that an underlying goal is an analysis of contemporary and historical uses and abuses of

the Bible for various national identity structures. The book is neither a theology of liberation nor an analysis of major themes in the Bible. Instead, Schwartz attempts to provide a new postmodern interpretation of biblical themes. Schwartz states that she is an outsider when it comes to biblical studies—ironically, this is one of the few statements that is supported by the data presented in this work.

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