# Book Reviews

*Mapping Modern Theology: A Thematic and Historical Introduction*. Edited by Kelly M. Kapic and Bruce L. McCormack. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012, 421 pp., $34.99 paper.

This is a unique book and one that has been needed for a long time. It is a survey of recent theology, which for this book is generally the last two hundred years. In the introduction McCormack states that modern theology began in Germany with its development of scientific models of understanding just about everything, though the rise of modern theology was precipitated by the development of critical philosophy primarily by Hume and Kant (3). Hume's critique of natural religion and Kant's delimitation of knowledge to the realm of phenomenological appearances set the stage for Schleiermacher and a host of others who would alter the game in theology and introduce a variety of versions of liberalism, mediating theology, neoorthodoxy, postliberalism, postconservatism, postmodernism, and so forth. There are a number of books published in the last fifty years that chronicle this development, including books by Stan Grenz and Roger Olson, Alasdair Heron, and Hendrickus Berkhof, and a veritable library of volumes that examine individual figures or specific movements. What has not appeared, till now, is a thematic approach that looks at individual doctrines from the standard loci of systematic theology and surveys that development in somewhat brief overviews from an evangelical perspective. That is what makes this volume valuable.

A complete review would have to be a review article, but I do wish to summarize the outline of a few of the chapters and then to cite a few important points in the work. In the "Introduction" the author makes the point that the new approach to theology made its first inroads at the doctrine of creation (7). That is certainly understandable since the new understanding of science that grew out of the Enlightenment challenged many traditional claims of Christian theology.



*SBJT* 17.2 (2013): 84-101.

In chapter two, Fred Sanders takes up the doctrine of the Trinity. Taking up first the point to the Trinity and history, he surveys the manner in which Hegel, Moltmann, Pannenberg, and Jenson have provided new lenses through which to understand the relationship of the Trinity to finite reality. He then has a section on the Trinity and experience, examining such thinkers as Schleiermacher, LaCugna, and Rahner. Then under the heading of the Trinity and retrieval, examining Barth as a renewed trinitarian theologian over against his detractors, such as Tillich. This essay really is a historical and theological treat.

Katherine Sonderegger penned chapter five, which deals with creation. She does a fine job of displaying the titanic battle between traditional interpretations of creation, held by Hodge and Warfield (she deals mainly with Hodge) and the new interpretations provoked by modern science put forth by Hegel, Schleiermacher, Rahner, and others. She notes that this conflict really was rooted in Hume's metaphysical skepticism, but that it took new theories about origins to cause a fundamental break.

Kevin Vanhoozer takes on the doctrine of the atonement in chapter eight. He indicates that it was the turn to the subjective in Romanticism that drove Schleiermacher's atonement theology (178). Ritschl rejected that subjectivism and put forgiveness and reconciliation at one point of the theological ellipse and the kingdom of God at the other point (179). He then examines a series of thinkers in the Reformed and Evangelical tradition who have moved from a penal substitution position, and have attempted to form mediating theologies: Edward Irving, Donald Macleod Campbell, T. F. Torrance, and Scot McKnight (180-85). This is a very helpful section of the essay. Then he takes on the "bloodless" proponents, such as Girard and Heim, moves to detail the return of Christus Victor, and then takes on the critics of penal substitution. He offers helpful critiques on those criticisms and seems at the end to come out defending the traditional view.

The chapter on providence by John Webster was, characteristically, dense and yet helpful. I recently wrote a chapter on creation and providence for another book due out next year and wish I had had this essay to use when I wrote that. Telford Work on pneumatology sagely walks through the twists and turns that doctrine has undergone in the last two centuries. Aside from creation, perhaps pneumatology has undergone more twists and turns than any doctrine.

The book concludes, helpfully, with two chapters that do not explore the loci, but take a look at how these things impinge on ethics and practical theology, and then the two final chapters are on ecclesiology and eschatology.

I found this to be a very helpful work that I will return to time and again in trying to understand this period. I teach a Ph.D. seminar on nineteenth-century Protestant theology—I already know what one of the new textbooks is going to be.

Chad Brand
Professor of Christian Theology
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

*Journey to Joy: The Psalms of Ascent.* By Josh Moody. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013, 192 pp., $14.99 paper.

Josh Moody (Ph.D., University of Cambridge) serves as senior pastor of College Church in Wheaton, Illinois, where Journey to Joy began as a sermon series in early 2011. Moody put forth these sermons, and this book, with the conviction that "there is a crying need for people to believe the Bible to feel it" (13). The Psalms are especially suited to stir up the affections, a "God-designed tool to help us feel truly the truth," particularly Psalms 120-134, the psalms of ascent (15). Moody mentions the four primary literary-historical-interpretive

approaches to these psalms, adopting the view that these compositions are "pilgrim psalms," tied to Israel's three great pilgrimages to Jerusalem (14-15). He encourages readers to approach these psalms as those beginning a journey to God (16). The theme of the journey of life binds (somewhat loosely) the chapters together.

Moody uses the psalms of ascent to address a variety of emotions that characterize the life journeys of Christian (and non-Christians): hostility, insecurity, injustice, suffering, and other "various difficulties and trials" which might prevent or hinder one's journey to God (15). Each chapter generally addresses one theme arising from the text of a psalm. Throughout, Moody is careful to anchor his observations to the text he is considering, allowing scripture to define the problem and the remedy. One of the book's unarticulated but recurring themes is the adoption of a biblically informed piety.

Moody describes prayer as genuine communication with God (22) and encourages Christians to pray for mercy, both for themselves and for others (56). He understands prayer to be a daily task requiring discipline, not merely a formal matter (82-83). By encouraging readers to focus on God's attributes, Moody suggests that a genuinely theocentric perspective shapes one's worldview (33) and revitalizes even potentially mundane tasks and relationships (87ff). God's people rejoice and true joy comes from being restored by God (78), and genuine blessing comes from fearing God (100). Authentic godliness consists of humility, which "is not inadequacy or low self-esteem but being focused on God and so becoming who you were made to be" (142). Moody's treatment of humility from Psalm 131 is one of the highlights of the book as he anchors his definition in a balanced biblical understanding of the "heart" as the root of both too low and too high self-estimations (137).

True spirituality engages difficult texts and hard truths, such as those of the mildly imprecatory Psalm 129. How might Christians use such texts that call upon God to judge the psalmist's enemies? Moody believes that Christians can neither ignore such texts nor try to mitigate their bite; rather, believers ought to read these passages in light of the cross-purchased redemption of Jesus (120).

Moody's observations that Christians need to feel the truth of scripture and his conviction that the psalter is the best avenue for making this affective connection are on target. The psalms do encompass the scope of human emotional experience, and the psalms of ascent present a variety of these experiences, sometimes in shocking language (16). Moody's desire that Christians would be deeply affected by the message of the psalms is the book's unstated thesis. Without knowing that these chapters appeared originally as sermons (and they appear to retain the form of sermons for publication) the book at first appears to lack coherence beyond the inclusion of each of the fifteen ascent psalms. But when the reader approaches the chapters as sermons, united with the theme of a journey toward communion with God, the structure becomes clearer. Now, treating the chapters as sermons, readers may quibble with some of Moody's uses of the texts, such as a watering down of injustice (54) or stretching the text of Psalm 127 to include "spiritual" children, but such instances are rare. The medium of print is more accessible but perhaps somewhat less effective than that of the pulpit for capturing the power and grittiness of these messages concerning the pains and balms of the Christian pilgrimage, but Moody's Journey to Joy addresses these issues powerfully nevertheless—and from the profound perspective of the heart.

Joe Harrod
Ph.D. Candidate
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

*Johnson, Timothy Jay. Now My Eyes See You: Unveiling an Apocalyptic Job*. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2009, 212 pp., $85.00 paper.

This study of the book of Job is based in Johnson's Ph.D. dissertation at Marquette University completed in 2004 under the direction of John J. Schmitt. Essentially, Johnson argues that Job is an early example of apocalyptic literature and that this insight goes far in clearing up confusion about the meaning and message of the book. He asserts that the common attempt to make sense of the book as an example of wisdom literature is doomed to fail.

First, a matter of disclosure: Johnson mentions in his preface that I piqued his interest in this topic in a series of lectures that I gave at Bethel Seminary in 1998 (vii). But Johnson's work is no exposition or expansion of my views on Job. His research is original, and the views he expresses arise from his own considerable skill as an interpreter of the Hebrew Bible.

Johnson structures his book in a logical order and presents his argumentation in a clear and direct manner. In his introduction to the problem of Job (1-14), he examines the problem of defining the term "genre" and of applying a particular genre to a given book of the Old Testament. Here, as everywhere else in this study, Johnson's demonstrates a thorough knowledge of the secondary literature, and he interacts with it skillfully. Although aware of the problems attendant to genre classification, he considers genre to be a valid concept and heuristically helpful, and in particular he follows E. D. Hirsch in asserting that verbal meaning is genre-bound and that the primary task of the interpreter is to determine the author's intended meaning.

In chapter 1 (15-38), Johnson examines the history of research into Job, focusing especially on scholarly attempts to assign the book to a genre. He naturally gives much attention to the standard view that Job is "wisdom," but he also describes an array of other proposals. Among these are claims that Job is an imitation of Greek tragedy, that it is a dramatized lament, that it is a parody of wisdom, and that it is simply sui generis. He treats scholars fairly and presents their views clearly, but he also pointedly deflates each theory in turn.

In chapter 2 (39-77), Johnson examines various proposals for defining or describing apocalyptic literature. He focuses especially on the "Master Paradigm" of an apocalyptic text developed by the SBL Genre Project, but he does not claim this or any definition to be the last word on the subject. He does show, however, that one can reasonably and honestly claim that Job meets the various criteria scholars have proposed for classifying a text as apocalyptic. An especially important aspect of apocalyptic is that the hero of the text has a series of visions or heavenly journeys; these are often mediated by a heavenly guide. Johnson identifies three apocalyptic visions in Job: Eliphaz's account of an encounter with a "spirit" in 4:12-21, the wisdom poem of 28:1-28, and of course the appearance of YHWH to Job in 38:1-41:34. It is especially noteworthy that Johnson considers Job 28 to be an account of a vision given to Job. Readers may balk at this, but he makes a good case (see especially vv. 20-27, which are rich with apocalyptic material).

Chapter 3 (78-105) takes an unexpected turn. Johnson examines ancient interpretations of Job and demonstrates that they tended to view it as an eschatological or apocalyptic text. He examines the biblical allusions to Job (Ezek 14:14, 20; James 5:1-11) as well the LXX of Job, the paleo-Hebrew Joban fragments from Qumran, rabbinical lore, the Targums, the Testament of Job, and other sources. Early readers were far from classifying Job as wisdom literature.

Chapter 4 (106-158) is almost a mini-commentary on Job. Johnson works through the entire book and shows that recognition of its apocalyptic genre allows one to make sense of its flow and argument. Readers will appreciate

his many insightful comments. I felt that his treatment of the Elihu speeches (Job 32-35) were particularly helpful. He demonstrates that Elihu essentially supports Satan's position. This is in contrast to many modern evangelical readers, who regard Elihu's argument as a profoundly wise precursor to YHWH's speech. Ancient interpreters, Johnson notes, considered Elihu to be a satanic figure.

Chapter 5 (159-176) describes the further ramifications of this study. In particular, Johnson argues that Gerhard von Rad, who famously sought to demonstrate that apocalyptic literature grew out of wisdom literature rather than prophecy, would have done well to have treated Job as apocalyptic. Johnson regards Job as an exilic text written to encourage the Jewish exiles in Babylon to persevere in the face of their suffering. In a brief conclusion (177-180), he summarizes his study and its results.

Many readers will disagree with various specific proposals Johnson makes, but few will be able to claim that he has not made a strong case for reading Job as an apocalyptic text. At the very least, readers will benefit from many of his insights and will be aware of apocalyptic elements within Job. His book is also a marvelous window into contemporary interpretations of Job in Old Testament scholarship. He surveys the field carefully and clearly, and his book is essential reading for anyone doing a serious study of Job.

Duane Garrett
John R. Sampey Professor of
Old Testament Interpretation
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

*Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection in the Epistle to the Hebrews.* By David M. Moffitt. Novum Testamentum Supplements, Vol. 141. Leiden: Brill, 2011, 338 pp., $166.00.

Scholars of the epistle to the Hebrews have long concluded that the bodily resurrection of Christ is largely (or entirely) absent from the letter. The reasons for this absence vary among scholars, but it is generally assumed that if the author affirms the resurrection at all, it is not an important part of his larger purpose in writing. Instead the author chooses to emphasize the themes of Jesus' death and subsequent exaltation, either ignoring or conflating the idea of resurrection. David Moffitt, assistant professor of New Testament and Greek at Campbell University Divinity School, seeks to reconsider this "riddle" (1) through a thorough examination both of the text of Hebrews and other primary sources. He contends that scholars who minimize the role of the resurrection in Hebrews are mistaken—not only is the resurrection of Christ affirmed in the epistle, it is essential to understanding the author's emphases on the high priestly role of Christ and his offering of atonement.

Moffitt makes his argument through four chapters and a brief conclusion. First, he offers a survey and review of the various views of the resurrection in Hebrews. Some scholars argue that the author affirmed the resurrection, as seen in texts such as Hebrews 13:20, but chose not to focus on it. Others favor the idea of "spiritual ascension," contending that Jesus' spirit ascended to heaven immediately following his death where he presented his offering of atonement and then returned to his body at the resurrection, which is not mentioned in the epistle. Others argue that the author conflated the idea of the resurrection with the exaltation of Christ, but placed his focus on the exaltation. Some are agnostic on the issue, contending that there are simply too many inconsistencies throughout the epistle to

know how the author conceived of the resurrection. Finally, some outright deny that the resurrection is referred to or acknowledged at all in the epistle. After a brief evaluation of these views, Moffitt notes that all share the conclusion that the resurrection, if present in Hebrews, does not receive much emphasis. In contrast, he argues that the author does indeed affirm the resurrection and that it is important to his argument. He summarizes his position succinctly: "This study argues that the writer of Hebrews identifies Jesus' death as the moment that puts into motion a sequence of events that ultimately results in his exaltation to the throne at God's right hand. These events are the resurrection of Jesus' human body, his ascension into heaven, his presentation of his atoning offering—that is, his very life—and his session at God's right hand" (42).

Moffitt begins his argument by discussing the contrast made between Jesus and the angels in Hebrews 1-2. He contends that the oikumene in Hebrews 1-2 refers to the heavenly rather than the earthly realm. Further, Moffitt argues that Jesus is said to be greater than the angels in this heavenly realm because he is a human being: "God always intended that the world be ruled by humanity. The author's exposition of Psalm 8 therefore enables him to claim that the oikumene was subjected to the rule of the Son precisely because he became a human being" (119). Thus it is important for the author to conceive of the resurrection of Christ, because only then can he possess this requisite human body to be exalted in this manner. Moffitt explains: "That is to say, in order for the Son to be the one elevated to the heavenly throne at God's right hand, he had to have his humanity, i.e., his flesh and blood, with him in heaven" (143).

Next, Moffitt turns to various Second Temple writings to demonstrate that first century Judaism could conceive of a human body entering heaven in this manner. He argues that Jesus' resurrection "marks the point at which he came into possession of this glorified humanity—a human body fit to enter heaven and dwell in God's presence" (146). Based on accounts of the ascension of both Moses and Enoch, he notes that Second Temple texts detail the bodily ascension of these characters, usually in conjunction with their glorification. Similarly, Jesus' resurrection grants him the "indestructible life" (Heb 7:16) to stand before God in order to make his high-priestly offering. Moffitt then turns to various passages in Hebrews itself to demonstrate the presence of the resurrection in the letter. He notes several places that acknowledge this affirmation. Resurrection is listed as some of the basic doctrines (i.e., "milk") in 6:1-2. Abraham supposed that God could raise the dead when he sacrificed Isaac (11:17-19). There is a "better resurrection" than the mere resuscitation of a human body, as seen in a woman who receives back her dead (11:35). Moffitt concludes the chapter by examining the theme of perfection throughout Hebrews: "Perfection is not something inclusive of Jesus' priestly ministry and heavenly exaltation to the throne at God's right hand. It is something he first had to possess in order to then become the heavenly high priest who, after making a cleansing for sin, was invited to sit on the throne at God's right hand" (195). Accordingly, Moffitt contends that Jesus received this perfection once his sufferings were completed at the cross. Only then was he fit to serve as an eternal high priest before God. "Every high priest, according to the author, is called by God and can sympathize with those for whom they minister (5:1-2). What makes Jesus different, and fit for a different priesthood, is the fact that, unlike the other priests, he is no longer subject to mortality; rather, like Melchizedek, he 'remains' and 'lives' (7:3, 8)" (197).

Finally, Moffitt turns his attention to an examination of the Old Testament backgrounds to the argument of Hebrews. Specifically, Moffitt challenges the assumption that Jesus' death effected atonement for sins. "In the author's schema, Jesus' death is therefore

necessary, though not by itself sufficient, for the atonement he procured" (285). The reasons for this are two-fold. First, the author always envisions heaven as the place of Jesus' offering of atonement, rather than earth. Second, Levitical sacrifices were not focused on the death of the animal but on the presentation of its blood (258). Moffitt argues that the blood connotes life rather than death. Thus when Jesus offers his blood before God in heaven, he is offering his resurrected and perfected life. He writes: "In keeping with the emphasis in Leviticus on the offering of blood as the presentation of life to God, the unifying point behind each of these terms is the indestructible life Jesus came to possess after the crucifixion. Jesus' indestructible, human life is what he brings into God's presence and offers as his sacrifice" (218). Thus Jesus' death on the cross "fits in a larger process" (293). "The argument of this study is that he does not conflate that event with the atoning moment. Rather, he locates Jesus' death at the front end of a process that culminates in the atoning moment" (293). Without the resurrection, then, there is no atonement for sins. Therefore, far from being unimportant for the author, "Jesus' resurrection holds a central place in the explanation of Jesus' atoning work in Hebrews" (296).

Though Moffitt's thesis is directly opposed to virtually all modern scholarship on Hebrews, he presents his arguments both forcefully and convincingly. The seeming absence of such an important doctrine as the resurrection in Hebrews is puzzling, especially for evangelical scholars who wish to demonstrate the consistency of scripture. Moffitt's work is an important contribution in that it establishes not only the presence, but also the necessity of the resurrection in the argument of Hebrews. While there is much to commend his thesis, some of his conclusions raise some important and potentially problematic questions and issues for larger areas of theology.

Positively, Moffitt presents his arguments clearly and persuasively. His discussion in chapter 2 of the comparison of Jesus and the angels presents a fresh take on a difficult text. The text of Hebrews 1:6 reads, "And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, 'Let all God's angels worship him'" (ESV). This text has been interpreted to say that once Jesus entered the world (via incarnation), the angels worshipped him, perhaps echoing Luke 2:13-14. However, Moffitt shows convincingly that the "world" (*oikoumenē*) of v. 6 is not earth, but heaven. Thus, when Jesus entered heaven (via ascension), all God's angels worshipped him. But why? Many have assumed that it is because of Jesus' divine nature. After all, v. 3 contains such a lofty description of the Son, "He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power." However, Moffitt again bucks the traditional understanding. He contends that it is the humanity of Jesus that makes him superior to the angels, rather than his divinity (50).

While this may seem counterintuitive, his analysis makes sense with the rest of the passage. Hebrews 1:3 does contain a high christology, but the following verse begins, "having become as much superior to angels" (emphasis added), implying that he was not always viewed as superior to the angels. Of course, ontologically Jesus as the second person of the Trinity is superior to all of his creation, but the emphasis here is on exaltation. Further, the author's quotation of Psalm 8 in 2:5-8 is striking, as the psalmist describes one "made ... for a little while lower than the angels" (v. 7). This quotation would further suggest that the author is describing a time before Jesus is worshipped as superior to the angels. Given that Psalm 8 originally was a reference to mankind in general, Moffitt argues that it is therefore the humanity of Jesus that grants him this exalted status in heaven. If Jesus were

not bodily resurrected at his presentation in heaven (as in the "spiritual ascension" view described above), he would have no claim to be greater than the angels, since he would be a pneuma like them. Moffitt's comparisons to Second Temple accounts of the ascension of Moses and Enoch show a similar pattern. The human being, once glorified in some way by God, is acknowledged as worthy and receives the praise of the angels.

This robust anthropology accords well with the larger teaching of scripture. Paul writes that humans will "judge angels" (1 Cor 6:3), implying along with Psalm 8 that while mankind is made for "a little while" lower than the angels, they will not always be so. Multiple passages teach that humanity will reign with Christ. 1 Timothy 2:2 states, "if we endure, we will also reign with him." Revelation 5:10 says that mankind "shall reign on the earth," and Revelation 22:5 promises that mankind will reign "forever."

However, while the motif of mankind as the intended rulers of the earth is surely accurate, Moffitt perhaps places too much emphasis on this point. If he is correct in saying that Jesus' divinity is not cause for the angels to worship him, is it correct to say that God the Son never received worship from the angels until his resurrection from the dead and bodily ascension into heaven? How is it that the one who is "the radiance of the glory of God" was not worthy of the worship of the angels until he was presented before them in flesh and blood? Further, why then would the seraphim in Isaiah's vision cry out "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts" (Isa 6:4)? God the Father, after all, is pneuma. While Moffitt's argument is helpful in emphasizing the humanity of Christ, his conclusions do not give ample weight to his divinity.

Second, and more important, is his main conclusion regarding the presence and importance of the resurrection in Hebrews. Moffitt's main thesis has two elements. First, the author of Hebrews acknowledges and refers to the bodily resurrection of Christ. Second, the resurrection plays a critical role in Jesus' high-priestly ministry in effecting atonement. The first point can be celebrated and embraced by evangelical scholars puzzled by the apparent lack of emphasis Hebrews places on the resurrection. The second point is both well supported and logically sound. However, some of the implications of this view can be problematic. By emphasizing that the act of atonement occurred in heaven after the resurrection, Moffitt implies (and explicitly states) that the death of Christ does not bring about atonement, but rather is merely "at the front end of a process that culminates in the atoning moment" (293).

Moffitt's proposal flows from his insistence on the importance of the resurrection for the argument of Hebrews and is well supported in Levitical sacrifice. Moffitt argues that sacrifices as prescribed under the Old Covenant required an animal to die; but more important than simply the death of the victim was the presentation of its blood in the Holy of Holies. He further insists that the blood of the animal did not indicate its death, but its life. Thus when the author of Hebrews emphasizes the sacrifice of Jesus' blood, it should not be viewed as a reference to the cross, but the presentation of Jesus' resurrected life before God in heaven. By entering the *oikoumenē* with his perfected and glorified body as a result of the resurrection, Jesus was able to provide atonement for the world. Therefore what should receive the emphasis for the act of atonement is not Jesus' death, Moffitt argues, but his resurrection and ascension to heaven. The cross then becomes a starting point—a necessary event but not an efficacious one.

Regardless of the internal consistency and the parallels to Levitical sacrifice, this is a startling conclusion. No evangelical scholar would wish to diminish the importance of the resurrection, but to shift the focus of atonement entirely off the cross is an unscriptural development. The implications for biblical theology are significant. Does

not such a view exclude a penal and substitutionary view of atonement? If the death of Christ did not actually make atonement, is it proper to speak even of the imputation of sin to Christ?

Further, how is such a conclusion consistent with the rest of scripture, particularly with Paul's writings? While it is not fair to force the theology of Hebrews to fit the Pauline mold, how are they not inconsistent, if Moffitt is correct? Paul considered it of "first importance" that "Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures" (1 Cor 15:3). Especially given the widespread belief that this particular passage of 1 Corinthians reflects a very early church creed, the emphasis that Christ died for sins is important to note. Also, Paul states, "we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son" (Rom 5:10, emphasis added). In Galatians, the apostle argues that "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us," linking this act of sacrifice with being "hanged on a tree" (Gal 3:13). Paul is not alone in this emphasis, as Peter also states, "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree … By his wounds you have been healed" (1 Pet 2:24).

Moffitt attempts to explain these objections by appealing to passages such as 1 Corinthians 15:17, "And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins" (292, n. 159). However, Paul's point is not that the resurrection plays no role in atonement, but that the death of Christ on the cross is the moment where atonement is secured rather than after the resurrection in heaven. The resurrection is of course crucial to atonement because by it Christ conquered sin and death and broke their power over the human race. Therefore those that are "in Christ" can share this same power over sin by virtue of his victory both on the cross and in his resurrection. Paul emphasizes the critical nature of the resurrection without displacing the atoning work of the cross.

Moffitt also points to Romans 4:25 for support, where Paul states the Christ was "delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification." This passage, too, cannot bear the weight placed upon it. The parallel nature of the text argues against seeing the latter phrase as support for Moffitt's thesis. By interpreting the last half of the verse (dia tēn dikaiōsin hēmōn) to mean that Christ's resurrection resulted or effected justification would imply that the first half (dia tēn paraptōma hēmōn) means that Christ's being "delivered up" resulted in or effected trespasses. Surely Moffitt would not argue along such a line. Though he does not explicitly say so, one would assume he would interpret the former clause to mean "because of our trespasses." However, it would be very unlikely for Paul to use an identical and parallel construction and intend such different meanings.

Moffitt's proposal is an intriguing one and, within the context of Hebrews, is largely persuasive. However, it is not clear that the text of Hebrews can bear the weight of Moffitt's logic. By seeking to establish the primacy of the resurrection by inferring it from other themes explicitly stated in the epistle, Moffitt has difficulty establishing such a bold thesis. In addition, by bringing a commendable emphasis on the resurrection, he has deemphasized the equally important doctrine of the cross. In seeking to patch an alleged hole in the theology of Hebrews, Moffitt has made the hole larger—he has only shifted the problem from one doctrine to another.

David Moffitt has delivered an important and groundbreaking contribution to the field of scholarship in Hebrews. His thesis for the presence and importance of the resurrection in the epistle is well formed and provides clarity to many difficult passages. Even the objections raised in this review are a testament to the soundness of much of his argumentation, given that they are mostly concerned with the implications of his conclusions to texts and authors outside of Hebrews. Nevertheless, the proposal that Moffitt raises should be a cause for reexamination of the crucial doctrines of the atonement, the cross, and the resurrection. By offering a clear and convincing proposal for the theology of the author of Hebrews, Moffitt brings to light an important and often neglected theme. For that his work should be welcomed by all.

Chris Byrley
Ph.D. candidate
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

*Rediscovering the Church Fathers: Who They Were and How They Shaped the Church*. By Michael A. G. Haykin. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011, 176 pp., $16.99 paper.

In recent years there seems to be a renewed interest in Patristic literature. Developing creeds, modeling astute theological thinking, dwelling in community, and more, the Patristic fathers offer the modern church insight into early Christian thought, piety, hermeneutics, and more. Michael Haykin, professor of Church History and Biblical Spirituality at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, successfully serves as an evangelist for the study of Patristics by calling the modern reader to take great interest in the early church fathers. In Rediscovering the Church Fathers, Haykin whets the appetite of Christian readers and demonstrates the courage, the intellectual abilities, and the faithful suffering of selected fathers with winsome prose and an ability to navigate the boundless waters of stimulating and complex ancient ideas.

Haykin sets out with a five reasons for taking interest in Patristic literature: (1) Reading the Church Fathers for Freedom and Wisdom (17–18), (2) Reading the Church Fathers So As to Understand the New Testament (19–20), (3) Reading the Church Fathers Because of Bad Press about the Fathers (20–22), (4) Reading the Church Fathers as an Aid in Defending the Faith (22– 27), and (5) Reading the Church Fathers for Spiritual Nurture (27–28).

Haykin does not cover nor discuss the whole range of Patristic literature or of early church fathers. Rather, he provides a snapshot of various kinds of fathers within the Patristic tradition. He focuses on Ignatius, who is rich for understanding Christianity after the apostles; the Letter to Diognetus, which contains an early form of apologetics; Origen, who still shapes hermeneutical discussions today; Cyprian and Ambrose, who give us insight into the Latin Fathers; Basil of Caesarea, who has more extant material than any other father during early Christendom besides Augustine and who has shaped pneumatological discussions; and finally, Patrick, who was a British Christian captured by Irishmen and served as a great missionary to Ireland.

One particularly helpful portion of this book is Haykin's interaction with Origen. Origen was a man of stature and was a "pioneer of biblical studies." The Hexapla, still valuable for linguistic studies, involved extraordinary learning and labor to produce. It places the Hebrew Old Testament, its Greek transliteration, and four Greek translations of the Hebrew in parallel columns. Furthermore, Origen wrote a plethora of commentaries on the Bible as well: thirteen volumes on Genesis, thirty-six on Isaiah, twenty-five on Ezekiel, twenty-five on the Minor Prophets, thirty-five on the Psalms, three on Proverbs, ten on Song of Songs, five on Lamentations, and close to three hundred volumes of commentaries in all (77).

Modern interpreters of Origen frequently dismiss his hermeneutics without careful analysis. Emphasis on single-meaning and negative reactions to allegory have created an environment prejudicial to Origen's ideas. Influenced by Alexandria's intellectual milieu, he employed allegorization when interpreting the scriptures in ways similar to Hellenistic Jews. However, that is not the only method he uses. Historical "passages which are historically true are far more numerous than those which are composed with purely spiritual meanings" (Origen, *On First Principles, 4.3.4*). Therefore, allegorical interpretation is not primary nor the majority of Origen's foci. For Origen, unlike pagan allegorists, saw real value in literal interpretation: (1) The Bible contains true and important history; (2) there are "simple" believers in the church edified by

literal interpretation; (3) it has apologetical value (84–85). Rabbinic interpretation, Origen thought, with its emphasis on "literalism," would lead to unbelief (88).

Haykin helpfully explains Origen's threefold principles for interpretation. First, all scripture has a present meaning and application. Second, scripture should be interpreted within the "rule of faith." There are other men interpreting the scriptures by means of an indwelling Spirit and he wants to live within the bounds of theological community. Lastly, any exegete must be indwelt by the Holy Spirit to understand the scriptures (85–86). Ultimately, Origen's hermeneutics are shaped by three different types of interpreters: the simple, who interpret the text literally; the more advanced; and, the perfect (89). But all interpretation "had the goal of spiritual formation" (90).

Haykin accomplished what he set out to do—to captivate and interest of the reader in early Patristic thought. It is necessarily a limited sampling. His final chapter, "Walking with the Church Fathers: My First Steps on a Lifelong Journey," is a powerful inducement to delve deeper into the writings of the early church fathers.

Whether you are a layperson, a student, or a pastor, if you are intrigued by Patristic literature, I heartily encourage you to read this book, follow the recommended reading list of early church literature, and begin exploring. Its readability, winsome prose, and erudite insights captivate the mind and heart of the reader to read more and to read profitably among the early church fathers.

Shawn Wilhite
Ph.D. candidate
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

*The Didache: A Window on the Earliest Christians.* By Thomas O'Loughlin. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010, xvii + 185 pp., $24.99 paper.

The Didache is an early Christian document that is rich with ethical direction, affords ecclesiological insights into the early church, and provides continuity with primitive Christian apocalypticism. Thomas O'Loughlin, professor of historical theology at the University of Nottingham, presents a wonderful contribution to Didache literature after twenty-five years of academic teaching and study of its contents. This introduction provides a fresh discussion of important issues concerning the Didache, such as the history and discovery of the extant manuscripts, why the absence of evidence of the Didache throughout church history, types of ecclesiastical groups hostile to the Didache (both Catholic or Protestant), the importance of the Didache, in addition to the place, date, and theological issues. Though he is reluctant to suggest a geographical locale for the Didache's origins (24–27), O'Loughlin dates the Didache between AD 50 and AD 80. He suggests however that the synoptic gospels antedated the Didache (47).

Chapters two through seven focus upon the theological message of the book. O'Loughlin masterfully provides a quaint backdrop of biblical imagery to set the stage of the Didachist's message. For example, a brief yet quite informative, retelling of Lukan table-meal theology directs the reader's frame of reference to a communal, discipleship framework of Christian meals. By providing a cultural description of meals and the Eucharist, he creates a helpful history of interpretation, illustrates early church practice, and brings the Didache into a historical perspective congruent with early church orthodoxy. Each chapter is similar in form when describing the bifurcating "two-ways" ethic, prayer and fasting, communal gatherings and

meals, ecclesiology, and the brief apocalypse of the Didache. O'Loughlin concludes with his translation of the Didache (161–71).

This volume is very well done. Unfortunately no footnotes and endnotes are provided, hindering readers from consulting O'Loughlin's sources and pursuing related subject matter. The discussion at times lacks cohesion. For example in chapter three on baptism only the last three of twenty pages discuss baptism in the Didache, whereas the first seventeen pages are secondary to the overall argument.

O'Loughlin has provided a valuable contribution to Didache scholarship, carefully attending to the book's background and theological message while neglecting scholastic jargon. This book is accessible to students while simultaneously satisfying the needs of scholars.

Shawn Wilhite
Ph.D. candidate
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

*Synopsis of the Pauline Letters in Greek and English.* By James P. Ware. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010, 352 pp., $49.99.

In James P. Ware's Synopsis of the Pauline Letters in Greek and English, the reader is presented with a helpful resource for the study of the Pauline texts. The author claims that he has provided a resource that will allow a "fuller" and "richer understanding" of the writings of the apostle Paul (xiv). He further asserts that the way in which the Pauline texts are presented will "almost always yield fresh insights, new connections, and an enriched grasp of Paul's thought as a whole" (xiv). James P. Ware is a graduate of Yale University, and he holds the title of Associate Professor of Religion at the University of Evansville in Evansville, Indiana. He is also the author of The Mission of the Church in Paul's Letter to the Philippians.

In this work, the Greek and English texts are placed on opposite pages, with the Greek text on the left page and the English text on the right. The Greek text employed is the Nestle-Aland 27th edition, and the English version used is the New Revised Standard Version. The work also includes a condensed textual apparatus that can be used to evaluate major textual variants. The body of the text is arranged around 177 groups of related passages. The synopsis includes all of Paul's epistles, both disputed and undisputed, as well as passages in Acts that contain his teaching and ministry. The primary way in which these groups of passages are to be utilized is through the table of parallels, which enables the reader first to reference any passage and then find a section number, leading to the particular passage and its parallels grouped together under a specific topic label. Secondarily, the reader may look up an individual topic or theme in the table of topics.

In comparison to the other major works of this type (Walter T. Wilson's Pauline Parallels: A Comprehensive Guide and Patricia Elyse Terrell's Paul's Parallels: An Echoes Synopsis), Ware's book is unique in that it is the only one to include the Greek text in addition to the English. Further, his work arranges the parallels thematically, whereas Wilson and Terrell organize them book by book. One advantage of these similar works is that they not only gather the parallels within the Pauline corpus and Acts, but they also catalog instances from the Old Testament and extra-biblical texts that parallel Paul's epistles. However, although Ware's book is not as comprehensive, it has an advantage over the comparable works in that he includes the Greek text, which, as Ware notes, allows recognition of parallels that may not be obvious in English translations (xiii).

A critique of this work is that the categories selected by the author are in part theologically derived and are thus, to some extent, subjective. Ware admits that there is a level of subjectivity in his grouping and labeling of topics (xii), but he asserts that, as much as possible, these groups of topics reflect Paul's categories of thought as suggested by modern Pauline scholarship. One issue concerning this rationale is that the scholars who influenced Ware's categories reflect a certain theological stance that may not be upheld by all evangelical scholars. For instance, some of the scholars who influenced his thematic classifications include Richard B. Hays, N. T. Wright, J. D. G. Dunn, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Abraham J. Malherbe, among others. While these scholars have offered many helpful contributions to the field of Pauline studies, they also advance certain positions that are contested by others.

One example in which Ware's thematic categorization may be disputable is demonstrated in his theme, "The Revelation of God's Righteousness." In this section, he groups together several passages that may not fit within the spectrum of his label. While many of the passages may use a form of the Greek word dikaiosune, they do not necessarily relate to category title. For instance, he lists Galatians 2:15-21, in which righteousness is not clearly connected with God, but rather seems to be more about one being made righteous or being justified through faith in Jesus Christ as opposed to the law. This is also the case in other passages in this section: 1 Corinthians 1:29-31 and Titus 3:4-7. Further, he even lists passages such as Ephesians 2:8-10 and Acts 13:38-39 which do not even contain a form of the word dikaiosune. Thus, it seems as though the grouping of these passages has more to do with a theological than thematic understanding. By grouping these passages with texts like Romans 3:21-31, it appears he may be insinuating that God's righteousness has more to do with the revelation of Jesus Christ than the perfect standard of God, which could lead to a nontraditional way of reading such texts.

Since the intent of this work is to be a tool for theological and exegetical purposes, as opposed to a monograph designed to convince the reader of a certain theological position, it is important for readers to be aware of this as they use this book in their studies. Nonetheless, James P. Ware's Synopsis of the Pauline Letters in Greek and English is a much needed contribution, and it has filled a gap in Pauline studies in many ways. Thus, although there is need for some caution when employing this work, it is certain that all students of scripture would greatly benefit from its use in their study of the Pauline texts.

Michael T. Graham Jr.
Ph.D. candidate
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

*Was America Founded as a Christian Nation? A Historical Introduction.* By John Fea. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2011, 287 pp., $30.00 paper.

John Fea, associate professor and chair of the history department at Messiah College, examines the historical evidence for the claim that America was founded as a Christian nation. He concludes that the modern advocates of the notion that America was founded as a Christian nation are partly right, and so are the advocates of the view that America was founded as a secular nation. He rightly portrays the modern advocates of a Christian America as frequently muddled and inaccurate in their historical judgments. At the same time however he correctly argues that in many respects America was founded as Christian nation. Fea does an excellent job uncovering the historical complexity of this issue.

Fea's main arguments reflect the complexity of the real history and represent the mixed character of his assessment of the issue. Fea's main points are: 1) Americans have generally taken it for granted that the United States is a Christian nation. 2) The leaders of the American Revolution were not motivated by specifically Christian arguments and the war was not in fact justified from the standpoint of Christian morality. 3) The Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution were not Christian documents but most state constitutions on the other hand were. 4) The founders were professed Christians whose faith and practice varied from orthodox to heterodox, but who all agreed that Christianity was necessary to sustain the nation.

The book has three distinct sections. The first part looks at how Americans throughout their history have viewed the matter of the nation's Christian identity. The second addresses the question of whether the movement for American independence was Christian. The third examines the religious beliefs of seven of the founders.

The first part is in some respects the most interesting and illuminating section of the book, and contributes significantly to this discussion. Fea argues that for the first one hundred years of the nation's existence, most Americans took it for granted that theirs was a Christian nation. If it is true that the United States was not founded on the Christian religion, Fea argues, then "someone forgot to tell the American people" (4). "The idea that the United States was a 'Christian nation,'" Fea explains, "was central to American identity in the years between the Revolution and the Civil War" (4). Americans based the notion on three basic premises: 1) God's providential care of the nation demonstrated that he had chosen the nation for special purposes; 2) the founders of the nation were Christians; and 3) the founding documents and character of the government were rooted in Christian ideas.

Fea demonstrates also that from the Civil War until the late twentieth century most Americans maintained their belief in the Christian identity of the nation. America's Christian identity however seemed increasingly in peril as many Americans drifted from Christian values and commitments, and as such forces as immigration and communism seemed to many Americans to threaten the nation's religion and morality.

Fea insightfully explains between the Civil War and the 1920s liberal Protestants defended the idea of Christian America with greater zeal than fundamentalists. Liberal Christians sought the "complete Christianization of all life" (37). At the organization of the Federal Council of Churches in 1908, one leader summarized well one of the council's leading objects: "The essential spirit of our nation is thus that of Jesus Christ, and it is the duty of the American churches to make that spirit more Christian" (38). Liberal church leaders urged Woodrow Wilson to abandon his peace platform and enter World War I in order to advance the cause of Christian civilization.

In chapter four Fea helpfully explains the main arguments and ideas of such current defenders of Christian America as David Barton, Peter Marshall, and Gary DeMar, who argue that the rejection of the nation's Christian identity is destroying its moral fabric, weakening education, fostering a rise in crime, and undermining social progress and prosperity. A recognition of the Christian identity of the nation's founding, the Christian America advocates argue, would provide the only sound basis for solving our nation's social problems.

Fea also explains some of the peculiarities of the arguments of the modern Christian America advocates: They ignore or misconstrue the vices of Puritan New England; they recast the colonial history into a simple story of the growth of American freedom and virtue

in order to create by God's clear and evident choosing the American nation, interpreted through the grid of the Revolutionary War; and they argue that the founders intended the First Amendment to provide for a general establishment of the Christian religion while prohibiting the establishing of only one denomination as the national church.

Fea's second part, chapters five through ten, examines the Christian character of the orgins and founding of the United States. In chapter five Fea argues that the origins of the American nation were anything but a golden age of Christian society. The colonists at Jamestown exhibited more greed and selfishness than Christian piety, and finally achieved stability and prosperity only when enriched by slave-labor tobacco. And the Puritan-governed society in Massachusetts, Fea argued, was soon populated by a majority of lukewarm adherents. Few achieved the standards required for full membership and full civil rights, and dissenters from the Puritan orthodoxy received harsh treatment. Many of the Indians in New England furthermore suffered death or displacement as a result of their interaction with the Puritan colonies.

Fea correctly judges New England Puritans for their unchristian treatment of Roger Williams and the Baptists, and of Anne Hutchinson and other heterodox persons, and of their unjust treatment of the Indians in many instances. It does not however help his case or human understanding that the book oversimplifies and at times misrepresents the character of the disputes and difficulties between the Puritan leaders and these groups.

In chapter six Fea argues correctly that Americans based their resistance to British tyranny on the colonists' traditional rights under English law and not on appeals to the Bible. The real issue however is whether or not colonial resistance to the Stamp Act, the Townshend Acts, and the Coercive Acts was morally justifiable for Christians. Fea suggests that the resistance was not justified, since the real tyranny was the mob violence and destruction of property perpetrated by patriots. "The mobs responded to a mild Parliamentary revenue-raising scheme with violence that was well out of proportion to the tax levied against them" (100). He suggests further that the Coercive Acts equitably punished the people of Boston for the violence and destruction of property in the tea party matter, and that the real motivation behind the destruction of the tea was economic rather than concern to defend civil liberty (105).

Liberty and economics are inextricably linked however. The British closure of the Boston port was designed to smash the economy and impoverish the citizens sufficiently to make them submit to parliament's right to rule them directly without the benefit representation in the colonial assembly or parliament. Indeed, the British government had revoked all the Townshend duties except the tax on tea, retaining it against the wishes of the East India Company specifically to assert parliament's right to tax the colonies directly. (It is beside the point to ask whether a "coercive act" designed to bring economic ruin to an entire population was an equitable and proportional response to the destruction of tea by a small group of men.)

The principal concern of the colonists remained the same from their resistance to the enforcement of the Stamp Act to their resistance to the Coercive Acts—the defense of their rights and liberties, which protected their lives and property, and which had been established by constitution, royal charter, and long usage. The British government now abolished these rights. Resistance to the loss of such fundamental rights was unscriptural only if the right to resist injustice is unscriptural.

In chapter seven Fea argues that Romans 13 and 1 Peter 2 required Christian colonists to submit to the king and to the loss of their rights. But if the king must always be obeyed, then

surely the rebellion against James II in 1688 was unscriptural and Christians owed their obedience to the lineage of the Stuart monarchs, and not to the Hanoverian kings who ruled in succession to the rebels William and Mary. But more pointedly, Fea's analysis ignores the question of determining Christian duty when the ruling authorities themselves are divided. The colonists' legislative assemblies had long exercised governing authority—they ruled by divine appointment no less than the king did. The king refused to recognize the authority of the colonial legislatures and they ultimately refused to recognize his. Which authority should colonial Christians have obeyed? Fea makes no argument for why they should submit to the authority of the king rather than to the authority of their colonial governments.

Fea's argument means of course that when Americans resisted the king's claims, they rebelled against God. He suggests that the patriotic clergy went astray in supporting the rebellion because they followed John Locke rather than the Bible (119). Fea argues that by contrast Martin Luther and John Calvin represented the biblical view, for they prohibited rebellion against even the worst tyrants. The Protestant tradition therefore offered little support for the American Revolution (118).

This however is a misreading of Luther and Calvin. Luther and Calvin indeed taught that individuals sinned if they rebelled against the governing authority. In part this was because anarchy produced greater evils than tyranny. Luther nevertheless urged the German people in 1531 to disobey their emperor, Charles V, in support of their princes in the Schmalkald league's resistance to the emperor's commands. Calvin taught that Christians had no right to rebel against unjust rulers, and that their duty in that case was only to obey and suffer. But, he said, "I am speaking all the while of private individuals." In many nations, Calvin explained, other magistrates, such as the "three estates," (representative assemblies), stood appointed "to restrain the willfulness of kings." They had a duty to resist the "fierce licentiousness of kings," for they were appointed "by God's ordinance" to protect the people (Institutes, iv.xx.31).

Fea argues also that taking up arms against the British government contradicted Christian just war theory. The war was not a last resort, Fea suggests, and the taxes did not justify "military rebellion against the government," and English government provided the greatest freedom in Europe and could not be justly deemed "tyrannical" (120).

This argument presumes that the colonists decided from the start that they would resist the unjust levies by a violent overthrow of the government. In actual fact their object was continued union on the basis of a just and peaceful resolution of differences. The men who concluded in favor of independence at the Second Continental Congress in 1776 did not aim at independence when the controversy with England began in 1765. The colonists in the 1760s did not appeal to rebellion and military force but resisted by the lawful means of petitions, resolutions, and boycotts. When the government dispatched soldiers and warships to coerce the colonists into submission by the threat of violence, the colonists faced the awful decision of whether or not they must resist violent coercion by appeal to arms. Most finally judged that if England intended to coerce the colonists by violence to submit to the loss of their liberties, then solemn duty required their legislatures protect the people and to resist the king. Most Americans judged it their duty to submit to their legislatures rather than to the king.

Chapters eight through ten make the point that Christian character of the nation's early constitutions presented a mixed picture. The Declaration of Independence and the federal constitution were consistent with Christian beliefs but were not in any substantive sense

Christian. That is, they did not establish Christianity, they did not appeal to Christ or the Bible, and they prohibited religious tests for federal offices. At the same time, however, the constitutions of the most of the state governments either established the Christian church in some way, or required office holders to hold explicitly Christian beliefs, or declared that their government was a Christian government.

The book's third part examines the religious beliefs and practices of seven influential founders. George Washington, Fea concludes, was a devout Christian who nevertheless was no evangelical—he was uninterested "in the divinity of Jesus Christ or his salvific death for humankind" (190), and he pointedly refused to participate in the Lord's Supper. His religion was for producing morality in individuals, and for strengthening the virtue of the nation in order to secure America's free government. John Adams, Fea concludes, was a devout Unitarian Christian. Thomas Jefferson was a heterodox and inconsistent "follower of Jesus" (205). Benjamin Franklin, even more than Jefferson, was heterodox and inconsistent. Finally, John Witherspoon, John Jay, and Samuel Adams were devout and orthodox Christians. Despite their manifold differences, all believed one thing in common: Christianity should be promoted because of its power to produce moral character among the people, for morality was necessary to sustain the American nation.

In a peculiar turn, Fea claims that none of them were deists because they all believed in the providence of God. He asserts that deists did not believe "that God intervened in the lives of human beings—God "did not perform miracles, answer prayer, or sustain the world by his providence" (175, 218). Fea does not indicate the sources upon which he based this definition, but it unhistorical. Many of the influential writers usually associated with deism, Lord Herbert of Cherbury and John Toland, for example, affirmed answered prayer, providence, and miracles.

It is also an unhelpful definition, for it misses the point of that historical movement of which deism was a prominent part—a movement toward a more "rational" or "natural" religion. Such "rational" Christians magnified the reasonableness of Christianity in order to provide a basis for uniting the various Protestant groups, for discrediting dogmatic and superstitious Catholicism, marginalizing dogmatic and "enthusiastic" Protestantism, and preventing violence spurred by religious differences. Some rational Christians magnified rationalism to the point of undermining everything distinctively Christian and so rejected prayer, miracles, and providence, but many who magnified rational religion did not reject these.

Despite my disagreements with parts of Fea's argument, this book makes it plain that the plea for Christian America has too often been an unscriptural plea because it rests on an unscriptural definition of Christianity. It is satisfied with a Christianity that affirms religion in its outward forms—in official declarations and constitutions, in mottoes and pledges, in membership rolls and service attendance—but without any power to produce the religion of the heart that alone can please God. And so the agenda of the promoters of Christian America has generally aimed to establish outward forms of Christianity in symbols, sayings, and ceremonies.

Fea is correct that the Christian origins of America are of a mixed and complex character. What consensus there was stood for the establishment of a nation whose Christianity was a civil religion. This of course was the sense in which so many of the founders promoted Christianity. They valued it because it would serve powerfully to bolster the laws and government of the new American republic. A free and democratic nation could survive only if its citizens were moral, and religion alone

could sustain the morality of the citizens, and Christianity above all produced moral citizens. Christianity, most of the leading founders held, was for making good citizens. It was a civil religion.

And that seems to be precisely what many of the contemporary advocates of Christian American in the religious right today seek. For if we can reestablish America as a Christian nation, we will save our nation from its civil woes.

Christ did not commission his church to establish a civil religion. He did not suffer on the cross to redeem us from the perils of communism, crime, and national malaise. When sinners respond to gospel preaching in repentance and faith, and follow Christ, it transforms culture powerfully. But if we promote Christianity for the purpose of having a more agreeable society in which to live, we corrupt the gospel itself and so overturn the very religion that we claim to promote.

Fea's volume has its shortcomings, but this is an excellent introduction to the main issues at stake in discussions of the Christian origins and Christian character of the United States. For breadth of treatment and insight, it has few rivals.

Gregory A. Wills
Professor of Church History
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary