

Book Reviews

The Theology of Jonathan Edwards. By Michael J. McClymond and Gerald McDermott. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012, 757 pp., \$65.00, cloth.

One of the most important principles of Protestantism is that the human conscience must give consent only to the revealed truth of God present now as a deposit of truth in the sixty-six books of the canonical Scripture. One disadvantage, or perhaps an abuse, of this principle is that ministers and laity alike might fail to invest sufficient time in mastering the systems of worthy gifted expositors of biblical truth. Advantages of this principle are many, including the openness to correction of faulty systems, a freedom exemplified preeminently in the Reformation. Another is the suppleness with which a profound thinker thoroughly committed to biblical truth can engage contemporary ideas with examination and, if needed, critique, from the foundation of a biblical standard. Another is the invitation from God for an incessant probing of the biblical data to understand

both him and his world with the realization that reception of that invitation to delight can never be exhausted. Another is the ever-present watchfulness of a confident laity that all our ideas must arise from a “Thus saith the Lord.”

Somehow the massive upsurge in the study of Edwards in the past half-century has tapped in on both disadvantages and advantages of the Protestant ideal. While we have no official tradition that constitutes an accepted authority for theological formation, some thinkers have emerged that cause the rest of us to make more rapid and more thorough progress in the faith with them than we would without them. In the short list of such Protestant instructors is Jonathan Edwards. This book illustrates why this is so. As transcendently great as Edwards has proven to be, he was not immune from the rejection of a laity that felt he had overstepped biblical boundaries. By divine providence, however, that lay confidence led to a period of consolidated labors for Edwards that allowed him to complete much of the theological project that had been arranging itself in his mind throughout his

years of Christian ministry.

McClymond and McDermott have written a discussion of this Edwardsean project in a way that highlights the inventive, but truly conservative, genius of Jonathan Edwards. In order to give the greatest opportunity for Edwards's entire system of thought to come to life, they have divided the book into three "Parts" consisting of forty-five chapters. The middle "Part" has four sections that systematize Edwards's theology, ethics, aesthetics, apologetics, and philosophy. Part One gives an introduction to the "Historical, Cultural, and Social Contexts" of Edwards thought. Part Two focuses on: I. Methods and Strategies, II. "The Triune God, the Angels, and Heaven," III. "Theological Anthropology and Divine Grace," IV. "Church, Ethics, Eschatology, and Society." Part Three looks at "Legacies and Affinities: Edwards's Disciples and Interpreters." That shows the immediate impact of Edwards on the subsequent generation and the present recovery of Edwards's ideas in an increasingly ecumenical context. The middle part is by far the largest covering five-hundred pages. The good elements of this book are so good, and the caveat-worthy parts so isolated, that the overall and enthusiastic recommendation is buy it and make it a regular part of your reading, right alongside the sermons and other writings of Edwards that constantly inform the text and texture of this study of his theology.

The authors give a helpful analogy (an Edwardsean pedagogical approach), commendably working to make Edwards accessible to all interested readers, in previewing the variety of ways that Edwards is appreciated and employed in contemporary discussions. They compare his thought to an orchestra with five sections, each section creating its impression based on the proximity to the observer in interest or situation. The size and detailed variety of Edwards's writing make each of these five areas substantial and sufficiently nuanced to form a discrete area of interest capable of being systematized in some detail. The first is "Trinitarian communication," the propensity within God

for an overflowing of himself, an overflowing that constitutes the Trinity and is fundamental to the purpose of creation. Edwards's focus on beauty as the driving energy behind God's propensity to communicate himself the authors note as a singular thought in Edwards. "Beauty is the first principle of being, the first of God's perfections, the key to his doctrine of the Trinity. It is also what most distinguished Edwards from other thinkers in the history of Christian thought" (5). The second constituent element is called "creaturely participation." God's intrinsic communicative quality, his delight in his own beautiful perfections, necessarily embraces other rational beings in the enjoyment of his beauty. He created beings in His own image that they might participate in His joy and forever be ravished by His beauty. Third, the authors point to "necessitarian dispositionalism" as a major aspect of the Edwardsean symphony. This idea indeed permeates all of Edwards thought and can be seen as implicit within the two earlier categories. His views in *Religious Affections*, as well as in *Freedom of the Will* and *Original Sin*, plus other discussions in Edwards sermons and "Miscellanies" focus on the idea of disposition. God Himself is a dispositional being and thus all of reality functions on the basis of disposition, or propensity or inclination. Disposition is of the essence of things and thus reality is dynamic, never static, never still, never neutral or in a state of absolute equilibrium. So it is with God, though he is immutable, and so it is with all living forms, non-living forms, sub-rational living forms, rational living forms both men and angels—disposition is the source of all activity and no time exists when disposition is not operative in some way. As the authors state, "Edwards held that the essence of all being—even that of God—consisted in disposition or habit. Disposition is not a quality possessed by a thing but is the *essence* of the thing" (5). The fourth section they call "theocentric voluntarism." This means that in the ultimate sense all things exist simply as a matter of the divine will, immediately and intuitively perceived, and conceived, by him in their proper sphere and mode of existence as he intends them

to be, bringing them into existence by fiat creation and maintaining each, whether event or thing, in its orderly connections to all other things by the same will. “Nothing exists apart from God’s continual recreation of it, and the substance of every existent thing is God’s knowing and willing of that thing” (6). Edwards seems to be completely untempted by the attraction of dualism. The fifth element of the Edwardsean thought network is “harmonious constitutionalism.” This provides what Edwards conceived as the interconnected and rational structure of all things. One thing is willed as a rational outcome of another thing that is willed. Reality is truly a network, not detached anomalous objects or events, but all connected and either immediately or remotely dependent on the tension and strengths of each cord of the net. This is most obvious in salvation but true of everything, as explained by the authors: “In Edwards’s thinking, salvation is less like a chain of beads than like a net in which each part of the net holds the rest in place. All aspects of salvation are interrelated because all are willed together in God’s eternity and according to God’s decree (Miscellany 29)” (6).

In addition to this broadly developed scheme as to how to conceive the inter-relations of the Edwards project, the authors offer a richly synthesized discussion of large number of individual topics. They give a brief but very helpful biography centered on the progressive development of his theological ideas. They deal with his intellectual context—the immediate ecclesiastical dynamic, Puritanism, broader Protestantism, a variety of heresies, and enlightenment provocations and challenges—as well as his own spirituality and the question of his personal theological development. Overall, they identify “turns” in Edwards’s thinking that indicate his was a dynamic and progressive view of the discovery of what is true, an ever-increasing approximation of fullness in understanding what is real. They denote Edwards as an “open rather than closed-system thinker. This meant that he was not seeking to create a system of timeless truths. Instead he engaged in

prolonged reflection on a set of central issues, and as he did so he advanced further in his ideas and insights” (88).

Not only does the reader enjoy the synthesis of the broader context and development of Edwards’s inner life, but his treatment of individual topics is laid out in a coherent and progressive way beginning with God as Trinity. A penultimate chapter on eschatology gives way to a discussion of “Christianity and Other Religions” (a favorite idea of the authors that punctuates discussion throughout). In between are issues of human sin, divine grace, and the individual elements of salvation. Each chapter focuses on a major writing or sermons that give the clearest definition of the subject at hand, but brings in relevant material from many other places, the rich source of “Miscellanies” included, of both published and as yet unpublished material. An utterly charming and elevating chapter on “The Angels in the Plan of Salvation” is synthesized from a number of miscellanies and expands the general Protestant discussion of angels significantly, placing their concerns squarely within the divine purpose of human redemption (290-91). The abundance of references to the Yale edition of Edwards *Works* serves as a reading guide for all of the matters they isolate for exposition. The interweaving of texts highlights how Edwards held within his perceptions the entirety of his developing system as he moved from one idea to another. Settled issues remain constant but are constantly elaborated as the symphony progresses and as complementary themes fill out the large framework of ideas.

As helpful as it is impressive, the use of secondary literature on Edwards keeps the reader informed on the relation between text and interpretation of the text throughout the Edwards corpus. The writers commandeer a massive number of dissertations on different aspects of Edwards thought as well as the unremitting flow of monographs on the wide range of subjects on which Edwards provokes thought. Their contributions enter the discussion in a natural way enhancing

the overall clarity of explanation either by foil or ornamentation. The purpose always remains the exegesis of Edwards, and the secondary literature pops in where it is fit for that purpose.

Another enhancing feature of this treatment is the setting of the flow of Edwards's ideas within historical theology. One would expect heavy doses of Augustine, Calvin, Continental Protestant scholasticism, and Puritanism, but the connections to Roman Catholic Scholasticism, particularly Thomist thought and continuities with Orthodox thought—whether evidence exists that Edwards had read them or not (413)—gives a new twist to the rich variety of Edwards's inventive massaging of ideas. The final section that documents the corruption, decline, and recovery of Edwardsean theology shows how Edwards himself has entered with a vengeance into the flow of historical theology as a formative and, now perhaps, a monumental figure. One of the saddest, and also most helpful, chapters is thirty-seven that describes the rapid corruption of Edwards through those that sought to copy him but could not maintain all of his ideas in proper equilibrium. They concluded this chapter with the important observation:

Finally, it should be clear that [Nathaniel W.] Taylor redirected—or, some may say, derailed—the Edwardsean tradition.... Taylor's student Edwards Amasa Park and Park's student Frank Hugh Foster portrayed Taylor as the culmination and essence of Edwardseanism. Yet Taylor's "power to the contrary" was hard to distinguish from the Arminianism that Edwards had so vigorously refuted. While Taylor and Finney sounded Edwardsean themes in their theologies, they repudiated the Calvinist and Edwardsean principle of moral inability apart from grace. The lasting split between Taylor and [Bennet] Tyler proved disastrous during the decades after the Civil War. Edwardseanism's divided house could not stand (624).

Postbellum reactions to Edwards (chapter

38), including those of the Princetonians and the Southern Presbyterians and the claims of the Andover theologians only increased the conflicted observations about Edwards's truly orthodox Protestant credentials and led finally to neglect and revulsion. Princeton thought he was too speculative, Andover butchered him mercilessly thinking that they carried on his spirit if not his content, and the liberals and humanists found him too severe about human sin and too God-centered in his understanding of the world.

Fear not, though, for the resurgence of fascination with Edwards makes our authors think that he is far too large merely to be America's theologian, but should be the central figure bringing together serious thinkers from all traditions—Orthodox to Pentecostal—and "a point of reference for theological interchange and dialogue" (728). Though they do not suggest it at this point, their implication throughout is that theologians of Jewish, Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist, and indigenous African religions along with a variety of historic heathen religions could find a conceptual framework within Edwards to engage the discussion in a profitable way. I do not dismiss the legitimacy of this possibility entirely, but do not think that the engagement would be quite as congenial as our authors indicate it could be (595-96). In the context of their exuberant recommendation of Edwards, McClymond and McDermott give a helpful comparison between Edwards and Barth as an attractive candidate successfully to convene such a world-wide discussion (726-27).

The writers also help from time to time with historical contextualization of language. For example, when Edwards wrote of regeneration as a "physical infusion," they explain that this word in theological discussion of the 1600s and 1700s did not refer to "tangible, material realities, but rather to the change of nature (Greek, *phusis*) that came about through the agency of the Spirit." The concept of physical infusion was argued in opposition to mere moral suasion. Regeneration comes not as the result of a persuasion of the human will

in its fallen nature, but consisted of the infusion of a new nature by the presence of the Spirit himself that effected “an alteration of dispositions and thus a change in the direction of the will” (270). Also, the discussion of “deification” and “divinization” as construed historically in theological and philosophical discussion helps give precision to that concept.

Given all that is good—extraordinarily good, a kind of good that we are likely to see duplicated with an extremely low degree of frequency—the reader must consider some recurrent ideas with a bit of serious reservation and detachment before embracing. In my opinion, the writers push Edwards’s views of justification too confidently toward Roman Catholic transformational views. As a representation of many places that they mention the subject, most largely in chapter twenty-five, they state in their discussion of Edwards vis-à-vis Catholicism and Orthodoxy: “Though Edwards did not use the term ‘merit,’ his use of the notion of fitness showed resemblances to Thomistic notions of ‘congruent merit.’ From the standpoint of Reformation theology, Edwards seems to have rejected or significantly qualified *sola fide* ... though not the principle of *sola gratia*” (696). They make this point also in their discussion on pages 398-404, and similarly on 411 (under “divinization”) they approve Thomas Schafer’s conclusion that in Edwards “the concept of ‘faith alone’ has been considerably enlarged—and hence practically eliminated.” They go on to judge that “the stress on actual union rather than legal imputation, the relative de-emphasis on faith per se, and the presentation of love and obedience as intrinsic to faith established an affinity between Edwards’s teaching on justification and that of Roman Catholic and Orthodox theologies.”

I believe they are far wide of the mark in interpreting Edwards here. Elements that Edwards saw as discrete aspects of a wholistic salvation, they have pressed toward collapse into a single concept. While Edwards maintained a clear distinction between justification and the other graces

endemic to salvation and necessarily following on faith, they have inferred unnecessarily that the train of graces flowing from the grace-wrought disposition from which faith also flows (411) gives justification an indistinct presence in the overall concept of salvation. Edwards, however, is most insistent on distinguishing faith as a “condition” of justification from all the other things that might be called in some sense “conditions” of justification. He wrote: “But in this sense faith is not the only condition of salvation or justification; for there are many things that accompany and flow from faith, with which justification shall be, and without which it will not be, and therefore are found to be put in Scripture in conditional propositions with justification and salvation, in multitudes of places.” He said this, not to minimize the uniqueness of faith as a condition, but to show the ambiguity of the word “condition.” He also mentions the concept of “instrument” as being an “obscure way of speaking.” Edwards then shows that faith is that action on the part of the sinner by which he comes to or receives Christ; it is the act of union on our part that renders it suitable that God declare us righteous. This suitability in God’s declaring the sinner just arises, not from a moral fitness or excellence in the faith of the sinner, but from the rational act of seeking union with Christ particularly for the benefits of justification. “Faith, or receiving the gospel salvation, is nothing but the suitability of the heart to the gospel salvation, exercised in an actually according and consenting of the soul to it” (Edwards, *Works* 13:473f). Faith does not establish a moral fitness, but a natural fitness, for our union with Christ. “God, in requiring this in order to an union with Christ as one of his people, treats men as reasonable creatures, capable of act and choice; and hence sees it fit that they only who are one with Christ by their own act, should be looked upon as one *in law*. What is *real* in the union between Christ and his people, is the foundation of what is *legal*.” (Edwards, *Banner of Truth* edition, 1:636). The union with Christ, granted because of faith,

gains for the one united with Christ in just such a way the same judgment that Christ has achieved. “He should accept the satisfaction and merits of the one for the other, as if these were their own satisfaction and merits” (ibid.). Edwards plainly denied that any other grace has the same relation to justification that faith does. The moral excellencies of other graces, while necessary, fall short of the absolute obedience and merit demanded by the law. The legal benefit of union with Christ by faith is precisely justification, and nothing else is. In one of his miscellanies Edwards wrote: “We are justified by Christ’s active obedience thus: his active obedience was one thing that God saw to be needful in order to retrieve the honor of his law, as well as his suffering for the breach of it. That the eternal Son of God should subject himself to that law which man had broken, and become obedient to it, was what greatly honored the law and the authority that established it. So that we are saved by that as well as his death” (Edwards, *Works* 13:368). Edwards also argued against any kind of relaxation of obedience to the law as constituting justification. Richard Baxter’s view was completely senseless and self-contradictory as Edwards perceived it, and so it would be with any kind of justification built on the partial obedience, or partial holiness, or incomplete righteousness of the sinner. Although a disposition toward holiness and love of the divine excellence and beauty is necessary to salvation and necessarily connected with justification in that no faith could exist apart from such a perception in the soul, it does not constitute justification or the kind of union by which the declaration of righteousness is made. Edwards argued this unambiguously in the sermon on justification and in several miscellanies (e.g. 412 and 416): “And thus it is that we are said to be justified by faith alone: that is, we are justified only because our souls close and join with Christ the Savior, his salvation, and the way of it, and not because of the excellency or loveliness of any of our dispositions or actions that moves God to it” (Edwards, *Works* 13:476). A holy disposition in a sinner does not

constitute righteousness for it is not the same as an unexceptionable obedience to the divine law, for the holy sinner still does not have an entire life without transgression, nor does such a disposition constitute satisfaction to the divine honor and justice for the law that has been broken. In Miscellany 322 Edwards stated: “Now if the sinner, after his sin was satisfied for, had eternal life bestowed upon [him] without active righteousness, the honor of His law would not be sufficiently vindicated.” If the sinner has eternal life bestowed on him, only on the basis of a payment of the debt for disobedience, “without performing that condition of obedience, then God would recede from his law and would give the promised reward, and his law never have respect and honor shown to it in that way, in being obeyed” (Edwards *Works* 13:403). Only Christ has done that and faith alone establishes union with him in a way that is naturally fit for the gaining of those benefits that constitute justification. His death procures forgiveness, and his life procures the judgment of righteous. The writers unnecessarily represent Edwards as ambiguous on this issue.

A second point that is mentioned frequently is the possibility of salvation for the heathen on an Edwardsean foundation. Edwards’s openness to primal revelatory truth, from Adam or Noah or through contact with Hebrew revelatory pronouncements, still existing among pagan people [see especially Miscellany 350 on this point], his view of the typological power of nature [see Miscellany 362], and his view of dispositional soteriology, prepare, according to the authors, for a way of assuming that the heathen, apart from hearing the gospel may be saved (580ff, 597). They take hints and “cryptic comments” (595) as evidence that Edwards, becoming more acquainted with world religions, moved toward an acceptance of genuine saving elements in the knowledge possessed by people in non-Christian contexts. Their judgment seems more reserved than their desires for Edwards on this point, for, given every hint they can manage to squeeze out of the Edwardsean

corpus, they are left with this: “But if he believed Cornelius was already regenerate before he had heard the gospel, what of heathen who lived before Christ and had never heard the gospel? Since infants without conscious knowledge of Christ could be saved by Christ’s sovereign work—as well as Old and New Testament saints without explicit knowledge of Christ—then Edwards may have toyed with the remote but real possibility that some of the heathen may have been regenerate and come to salvation” (596). Again they express some hope for Edwards’s larger hope, but maintain a textually-driven reserve: “So Edwards acknowledged that God gave religious truth to non-Christians, and even to wicked non-Christians. On the general question of the salvation of pagans, he raised the *possibility* that some of the heathen could be saved, and yet never spoke in the expansively optimistic terms of [several Christian thinkers]. So while he built the theological foundations upon which a more hopeful doctrine of salvation might have been erected, Edwards himself never chose to do so” (598). Their extrapolation from some Edwardsean principles has rendered the judgment of this remote possibility.

The reader should consider that many more clearly established principles and more immediately deducible propositions render even this remote hope a nullity. While it is true that Edwards did not conceive of any society totally devoid of any influence of divine revelation, he also believed that these traces, more considerable in some cultures than in others, were immediately corrupted as to any saving value. His book on *Original Sin* means that the preponderant presupposition must be the perfect culpability of every individual in the world, including infants, and God’s intrinsic goodness does not obligate him in any sense to save any of them. Each person immediately corrupts every common grace, including residual revelation, into an endless variety of sins from gross immorality and viciousness to an aloof self-righteousness, or from rampant idolatry to a snobbish agnosticism or atheism. As highly exalted as their virtue may appear, given the nature

of true virtue in Edwards’s estimation, and its consisting of primarily of love to God, it is extremely doubtful that any heathen has achieved a proper conception of it, or been brought to repentance by an acknowledgement of having fallen short of it. Though the new birth is the immediate operation of the Spirit, it is not done in absence of revelation, particularly gospel revelation, properly apprehended. According to *A Divine and Supernatural Light*, the new birth involves a “due apprehension of the same truths that are revealed in the Word of God; and therefore it is not given without the Word. The gospel is made use of in this affair: this light is the ‘light of the glorious gospel of Christ’ (II Cor. 4:4).” The authors point to Miscellanies 27b and 39 as indicating that the “inner disposition is the only thing necessary for salvation. No particular act, even the act of receiving Christ through faith, is strictly necessary” (590). They recognize that Edwards was indicating that the persons in question had at some point expressed faith in Christ, or a redeemer, but might not at every point of their life, or even at death be in conscious expression of such faith. They seem to press this too far, however, in abstracting the disposition from specific content believing that Edwards in principle has set the groundwork for the conclusion that “heathen persons who have the proper dispositions might be saints before they are converted to Christ” for they could be in “the initial stages of regeneration and justification, which may have been completed in glory” (593). They acknowledge that “Edwards never reached this explicit conclusion in his published writings or private notebooks,” nor did he say “in so many words that these heathen persons were saved,” but still “his theology laid the groundwork for such an interpretation” (593). There is a good reason that Edwards never reached the conclusions that they seek from him. His own view of “disposition” was not an abstracted entity but a consent of mind based on an apprehension of the excellence of the things revealed about God and redemption. In Edwards, faith involves two things and may be manifest either separately or both together. Faith

is the consent of heart to the excellence of the gospel. The consent of heart is the settled disposition of approval and conformity. The excellence of the gospel is revealed truth, both about us, the sinners, and about God manifest in his redemptive love. One may have genuine faith and only be living in the awareness of the excellence of the gospel and not at all be aware that he is believing, or exerting any act of coming to Christ or receiving Christ, when, in fact, the disposition contains within it that very thing. Such a disposition, however, is impossible to be abstracted from certain truths of revelation concerning human sin, worthiness of punishment, the divine prerogative of punishment or forgiveness, and that redemption comes at the cost of a sacrifice that we have no power to effect. The disposition cannot exist apart from the mind's and heart's conformity to those gospel contours. In line with what the authors have termed "harmonious constitutionalism," we would say that where God wills salvation, he also wills the hearing and believing of the revealed gospel.

Another caveat or two could be raised. The raising of caveats does not at all indicate that the objector feels that he could construct a superior discussion of the subject, but only that an issue of such importance has been set forth in such a provocative way that he feels compelled to enter the discussion with the hope of gaining light for himself. But even with these, the thoroughness of the authors' knowledge of Edwards, the congenial character of the style, the fervency of their commitment to the relevance of Edwards, their ability to summarize and synthesize the big ideas and theological underpinnings make this work absolutely essential for any study of Edwards in today's burgeoning scholarship on the American Colossus of experimental theology.

Tom J. Nettles
Professor of Historical Theology
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

The Faith That Saves: The Nature of Faith in the New Testament. By Fred Chay and John P. Correia. Haysville, N.C.: Schoettle Publishing Company, 2008, 170 pp., \$15.00 paper.

The Faith That Saves: The Nature of Faith in the New Testament bears a secondary subtitle: *An Exegetical and Theological Analysis of the Nature of New Testament Faith*. The book presents itself as a monograph that has the appearance of a photocopied master's degree thesis with unjustified right margins and segmental divisions rather than chapters. The secondary subtitle tends to inflate a reader's expectations beyond what the authors might deliver. A reader who keeps anticipating a fully developed exegetical and theological analysis of the nature of faith in the New Testament will discover in the first footnote of the book's conclusion that "the present study is not meant to be a [*sic*] primarily a theological study. It is in fact meant to be more focused on the lexical, semantic and exegetical study of the nature of faith in the New Testament" (n. 274, p. 149). Nevertheless, the book leaves no reader guessing with regard to the authors' shared theological view of "saving faith." Their belief that saving faith is a solitary, singular, and momentary assent to the truth of the gospel, an act that has no inherent continuous quality, controls their argument throughout the book.

Fred Chay, Associate Professor of Theology and Biblical Studies at Phoenix Seminary, and John Correia, Senior Pastor of West Greenway Bible Church, Glendale, Arizona (M.Div., Phoenix Seminary), situate their work against the backdrop of advances in linguistics, semantics, lexicography, and discourse analysis within the realm of biblical studies during the past fifty years. The stated purpose of their study is to provide analysis and critical evaluation of methodology that they believe some scholars use to handle the biblical "linguistic evidence concerning the nature of faith in the New Testament" (11). The book's objective is "to follow proper procedure within a literal-grammatical-historical hermeneutic" in order to assess the bibli-

cal evidence concerning saving faith's nature with their stated goal "to align our theology with the biblical evidence" (12). The authors' ultimate mission is to isolate "the definition of faith that most closely aligns with the biblical evidence" (12).

As they proceed toward their conclusion, Chay and Correia develop their case within five sections: (1) Theological Consensus; (2) Lexicography; (3) Syntactical Issues; (4) Grammatical Issues; and (5) Textual Usage.

By "theological consensus" the authors refer to the prevailing evangelical view of "saving faith" which they seek to correct. Chay and Correia are pleased that those who hold the predominant view insist that faith is "an acknowledgement that the statements of the Bible are true." The authors are troubled, however, that this is not all that the predominating view affirms concerning saving faith. They are troubled with the belief that saving faith "involves obedience to the commands of the Savior in whom faith is placed." To them, this is not only wrong but dangerous and deadly for the "eternal destiny of millions of men and women" (11). The authors want readers to understand that the theological error they endeavor to correct derives from linguistic blunders made by advocates who uncritically accept the meanings and definitions of *πιστεύω* and *πίστις* that unsophisticated and linguistically naïve writers and editors have offered in dictionaries and lexicons that predate and even follow the 1961 withering critiques by James Barr in *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (13).

Thus, as they situate the theological error which they intend to correct at the linguistic and lexicographical level, Chay and Correia, suggest that whatever gains the Reformation brought to the definition of "saving faith" have been diminished and compromised by many who advocate a "new working definition of 'saving faith,'" among whom are Norman Shepherd, Daniel Fuller, John Piper, Thomas Schreiner, and Paul Rainbow. Surprisingly, however, Chay and Correia nowhere in this segment of the book actually engage any of these alleged culprits; they summarily pass over them

with a single footnote that refers readers to an unpublished and therefore inaccessible research project that critiques these five scholars (n. 5, p. 11). So, instead of addressing the above named scholars, the authors turn to challenge others, such as Robert Stein, who portrays the kind of response that receives God's salvation offered in the gospel. Unsurprisingly, Stein argues that a prominent "description of the necessary response is 'to believe.'" Yet, to the dismay of Chay and Correia, Stein proceeds to affirm that God's offer of salvation in Christ (1) requires repentance, expressed in a variety of ways, including "bearing of fruit befitting repentance," (2) finds frequent association with baptism, (3) links to confessing Christ, (4) calls for taking up a cross, (5) demands following Christ, (6) associated with keeping commandments, (7) requires hearing and keeping God's word, and (8) calls for being obedient to God (17-18). The extended quote from Stein's commentary (*Luke*, Nashville, 2001) prompts Chay and Correia to inquire, "Are all of these ideas contained within the meaning of the words 'faith' and 'believe'?" Because Chay and Correia fail to recognize that Stein shows that Scripture describes saving faith by portraying it first with numerous other words and concepts that describe simultaneous action but also with metaphorical imageries so that saving faith is active and accompanied by multifaceted qualities, they make the mistake of assuming that he is engaging in illegitimate totality transfer, a charge they raise more than once against those who advocate a doctrine concerning "saving faith" with whom they disagree. Stein sketches a full, rich, multidimensional, and multi-colored portrayal of what accompanies the kind of faith that he is persuaded the gospel requires for salvation. Chay and Correia reject his comprehensive portrayal with its dynamic imagery and replace it with a flat, solitary, one-dimensional, and monochromatic dot.

Against this so-called "Lordship salvation" theological formulation concerning the human response called for by the gospel, Chay and Cor-

reia appeal to proponents of what they call “Free Grace.” They marshal to their cause three champions of their position—Charles Bing, David Anderson, and Robert Wilkin. They contend that unlike “Lordship salvation” advocates who feature “the quality of the faith of the individual,” “Free Grace” proponents point “to the object of the faith as salvific or non-salvific.” Accordingly, (1) the New Testament knows nothing of a faith in Christ “that does not save,” (2) “nothing more than understanding and acceptance (or assent) are required for eternal life” within John’s Gospel, and (3) the biblical “definition of faith must carefully exclude any *evidence* of faith,” for obedience is no part of faith.

On the premise that Stein and other scholars have committed a range of word fallacies with regard to the meanings of two New Testament words, πίστις and πιστεύω, especially charging them with overloading the words with extraneous elements, Chay and Correia proceed to offer a lexicographical assessment of the claims made by their theological challengers as they build toward grammatical and syntactical considerations.

Chay and Correia premise their lexicographical comments upon the notion that because advocates of the theological view they challenge (1) commit an etymological fallacy by locating their definitions of πίστις and πιστεύω in the stem πειθ- with the basic meaning “trust” with overtones of “obey,” they also (2) commit the fallacy of “illegitimate totality transfer” by loading up πίστις and πιστεύω with theological baggage, especially the concept of “obedience” derived from πειθ- words which, according to the authors, bear the sense of “obey” only four times in the New Testament (23). The authors suggest that proponents of the view they reject defer to, if not implicitly trust, the lexicographical experts, such as Walter Bauer and Frederick Danker, who allegedly commit word fallacies with relative frequency by providing meanings for Greek words that they overload with theological concepts from their own presuppositions (24-26).

Thus begins Chay and Correia’s frequent

dependence upon J. E. Botha (“The Meanings of pisteuō in the Greek New Testament: A Semitic-Lexicographical Study,” *Neotestamentica* 21 [1987]: 225-240) whose essay itself entails overly zealous correctives to perceived errors that call for qualifications and corrections. The authors uncritically accept Botha’s overly zealous censuring of standard Greek dictionaries and lexicons, as though their entries provide no distinction between lexical *meanings* of words (denotations) and nuanced *uses* of words (connotations). Thus, while proponents of the view they oppose may occasionally commit a word fallacy here or there, though not necessarily demonstrated as such by Chay and Correia but merely referred to in footnotes, they fall under lexicographical censure when they attempt to bring together into a cohesive and consistent whole the diverse elements of the New Testament portrayal of all that accompanies “saving faith” including obedience as integral with faith. Again, there are footnote references to Daniel Fuller and to John Piper, but there is no engagement or analysis of their arguments here, only a directive to one of Fred Chay’s inaccessible research projects that remains unpublished (see n. 61, p. 33).

Chay and Correia conclude their lexicographical segment, which tends to focus upon the Septuagint, by contending that use of πιστεύω in the Septuagint provides no support to take the word to indicate “continuing belief or obedience” (39). Instead, they claim that πιστεύω, reflecting various Hebrew words including יָדַע, “require the semantic value of the word to stay constrained to simply trust or confidence, with no durative force inherent in the term” (39). They unwittingly fuse *contextual usages* listed (connotations) with *lexicographical meaning* (denotation) in such a manner that they restrict *contextual usages*, which entails connotations and nuances derived from contextualization with other words that fill out the nature of faith, to the most basic and simple lexicographical meaning entered for πιστεύω.

The third segment of the book, which consists

of only five pages, focuses upon uses of πιστεύω in John's Gospel concerning syntactical issues. Here the authors remind readers, "Words only acquire meaning as they are used in context" (40). Indeed, words acquire their meanings only by way of their usage within contexts with other words. Chay and Correia correctly endorse Botha's criticism of the oft-discussed but linguistically naïve notion that πιστεύω εἰς bears a certain meaning that is distinct from πιστεύω ἐν, πιστεύω ὅτι, or πιστεύω ἐπί. However, the fact that the authors easily cite published examples of linguistic naiveté by some who are not Greek scholars does not strengthen their case, for they do not engage the best representatives of the view they reject, namely, New Testament scholars who have distinguished themselves in linguistic competence so as not to impute special significance to such phrases. Readers who know scholars such as Daniel B. Wallace, Rudolf Schnakenburg, and Leon Morris, whom Chay and Correia cite favorably as agreeing with Botha's criticism, will readily recognize that they hardly share the authors' theological beliefs concerning the nature of saving faith, a point they acknowledge in the case of Morris which they relegate to a footnote (n. 77, p. 43). Even as Chay and Correia build their case by citing these scholars who distinguish themselves from those whose linguistic skills concerning πιστεύω phrases are less reliable, the confidence with which they hold their own theological conclusions and with which they repudiate the alleged theological error of those they oppose is not mitigated.

The fourth section of the book, also quite brief, consisting of nine pages but bears enormous significance for the book's argument, takes on grammatical issues, particularly challenging how "Lordship salvation" proponents understand the aspect of the verb πιστεύω to portray sustained believing. They hang their case upon the substantival participle, πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων, in John 3:16. In order to build their case concerning verbal aspect to validate their theological viewpoint concerning the nature of saving faith, Chay and Correia

depend heavily upon the linguistic and grammatical works of scholars with whom they fundamentally disagree theologically. At times they lift from commentators an instructive linguistic comment that integrally leads to exegetical and theological conclusions with which they profoundly disagree but they simply ignore, for to mention those conclusions may discredit their repurposed use of what they have lifted (e.g., n. 137, p. 77).

In their effort to build a case against understanding the durative aspect of πιστεύω in the present tense as "continue to believe" a puzzling paragraph intrudes: "Exegetes should have learned their lesson from the issue of the 'abused aorist' brought to the forefront by Frank Stagg years ago. His grammatical analysis corrected an effort of exegesis in the overuse of misapplication of its tense.... Unfortunately, modern exegetes seem to have forgotten the lesson that Stagg brought, or at least have failed to grasp the significance of his analysis for tenses other than the aorist" (46). The point they intend to make is too cryptic.

Yet, immediately following this paragraph, while attempting to suppress the durative aspect or nature of present tense verbs, the authors actually have to admit that "the *default* aspect of the present tense is durative or imperfective" (46-47). Nevertheless, they promptly try to mitigate what they admit by attributing the following reflexive thinking to virtually all advocates of the view they reject: "The unfortunate result in some exegesis is that when one sees the present tense it causes a reflex reaction that concludes that it must mean, or normally means, that for the action to be actual or genuine it must be continual because of the 'meaning of the present tense'" (47). Because they may find this clouded reasoning in some exegetes, though they do not document their claim, Chay and Correia suggest that this is the "misuse of grammar" that "leads to the theological interpretation that states that when a person truly believes the gospel, the faith that is biblical or saving is the faith that continues. Hence if a person's faith does not continue it is, by the assumed definition of the

tense, non-saving faith or spurious faith” (47).

The seven remaining pages of the section challenge Daniel B. Wallace’s explanation of various present tense participles. Central to their case, Chay and Correia dispute Wallace’s observation that πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων, “everyone who believes” (John 3:16), “seems to be both gnomic and continual” (49). They draw upon Botha to claim that “Wallace seems to violate the principle of single meaning in describing the use of the present participle in John 3:16 as both gnomic and continual.” Thus, they insist that it “cannot be both gnomic and continual. It must be either one or the other; by trying to make it mean both, Wallace has committed the illegitimate totality transfer” (49).

Given Wallace’s discussion of the gnomic present tense (*Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 523-524), the charge may seem plausible. However, Wallace does not quite make the claim attributed to him. When Wallace suggests that the “*idea* seems to be both gnomic and continual” (emphasis added), he is speaking of the connotative *function* or *usage* of the present participle within its contextual placement in John 3:16; he is not speaking of the lexical *meaning* of πιστεύω, which is Botha’s concern. The criticism Chay and Correia level against Wallace seems to disclose two proclivities: (1) a premature leveling of accusations of the illegitimate totality transfer fallacy, and (2) a rigidified categorical approach for identifying grammatical functions of verbs that are ipso facto singular without multivalent connotations, as though the functions of words derive from some encoding within words themselves and not from their contextual usage. Would it be more tolerable if Wallace had suggested that the gnomic quality of the verse does not derive from the present participle, per se, but from the axiomatic nature of the whole saying?

Because John’s Gospel uses the aorist form of πιστεύω three times (4:39, 41; 17:8) Chay and Correia claim, “If John saw continual belief as necessary we would not expect to find instances in his writing that do not necessitate this” (50). Care-

ful consideration of this claim suggests that the authors seem to have lapsed momentarily into the “abused aorist” fallacy which they mention earlier, namely, that the aorist indicates punctiliar, solitary, even “once for all” action over against “continuing action.” Of course the three mentioned uses of πιστεύω should not be translated to accent the durative nature of belief because in these passages the Evangelist chooses to use the aoristic aspect because he wants to portray belief in Christ perfectly rather than as durative since he is simply offering a report of what took place. The fact that he uses the aoristic or perfective aspect provides no warrant at all to suggest that the kind of faith he portrays could have been momentary belief that laid hold of salvation and then ceased, which is the idea that Chay and Correia are eager to find in the Fourth Gospel, in particular, and in Scripture, generally.

Chay and Correia give the impression that they surmise that advocates of the view that saving faith inherently and invariably entails a persevering quality, which they reject, derive this conviction from naïve word fallacies concerning uses of πιστεύω. Here they use Daniel B. Wallace, a respected grammarian, as representative of others who share his theological view of faith. So when they put his work under scrutiny, they lift a flawed and reductionist syllogism from a reviewer of Wallace’s grammar to characterize his reasoning with regard to πιστεύω and label it “a classic case of special pleading” (51-52).

Major Premise: Both aorist and present participles depict believers.

Minor Premise: Present participles are more common (statistically) for πιστεύω.

Conclusion: Therefore, believing is necessarily continuous action.

This caricature of Wallace’s reasoning easily succumbs to the authors’ torch as they appeal to his discussions of other uses of aorist and pres-

ent participles within his grammar as proof of his inconsistency. Their caricature, driven by their theological commitment to the proposition that saving faith is not necessarily continuous in nature but a solitary act of assent, accounts for their derogatory reminder: “Continual belief is no more in the mind in John 3:16 than continual baptizing is in view in Mark 6:14” (52), where the participle ὁ βαπτίζων is an appellation, John the Baptist. A fair reading of Wallace’s grammar shows that their borrowed syllogism disfigures his grammatical and theological reasoning which is much more careful and attentive than portrayed, even if clarity is sometimes sacrificed for brevity, which often is the case in reference grammars.

Despite Wallace’s care to discuss a wide range of uses of the present tense verbs and participles, Chay and Correia claim what is easily demonstrated to be exaggerated and distorted when they reprimand Wallace by stating that “it becomes clear that it is dangerous indeed to assume that the normative use of the word πιστεύω is always continuous action” (52).

The authors conclude, “We have seen that syntactically we cannot constrict salvific belief to a given construction” (53). With this any syntactically and grammatically informed individual who affirms the persevering nature of faith agrees. So convinced that faith has no inherent continuous quality but is a solitary act of assent, Chay and Correia insist, “We have further seen that grammatical considerations militate against finding continual belief in instances such as substantial participles in John 3:16” (53). No responsible grammarian, preacher, and theologian, including Wallace, hangs the case for the persevering nature of saving faith exclusively or even primarily upon the frequency of the present tense of πιστεύω in the Greek New Testament including the participles of John 3:16. More than anything else, the New Testament’s numerous and diverse metaphorical portrayals of saving faith and use of πιστεύω within contexts with other words and concepts that depict qualities and actions that accompany

saving belief render the conclusion inescapable that the faith that brings one into saving union with Christ Jesus is belief that perseveres, as richly portrayed with the imagery of the branch remaining or abiding in the vine, who is Christ, the source of eternal life.

The book’s fifth and disproportionately longest segment consists of ninety-four pages of commentary on selected portions of Scripture (Acts 8:9-24; John 2:23-25; 3:36; 8:30-32; 12:42-43; Rom 1:5; 4:1-25; Rom 10:9-10; Gal 5:6; Eph 2:8-9; Heb 10:38-39; Jas 2:14-26). Compelled by their doctrine of saving faith as solitary assent to the truth of the gospel, the authors rework the historic and prevailing theological understanding among Evangelicals concerning each of these passages. Because they are persuaded that use of either πίστις or πιστεύω invariably signals genuine saving faith, Chay and Correia insist that Simon Magus’s faith was authentic saving faith, that the Jews to whom Jesus would not entrust himself (John 2:23-25) and the Jews who protest that they are Abraham’s descendents by birth (8:30-32) were regenerate believers, that the classic Christian confession—Jesus is Lord (Rom. 10:9-10)—is not about submitting to the lordship of Jesus to be delivered from the coming eternal wrath of God but about the blessing of Israel, and that the faith associated with works portrayed in James 2:14-26 cannot be the faith that brings eternal salvation, for it is a bare assent of faith that actually saves entirely disconnected from works. Chay and Correia seem oblivious to the fact that they contend that the kind of faith that brings eternal salvation is the kind of faith James readily attributes to demons: “Even the demons believe and shudder” (2:19). Their comments on each of their many selected passages scream for attention with rejoinders. Engagement with their comments on the first three of these many passages must suffice.

The authors use the following to govern their commentary: “Those who hold to Lordship salvation argue repeatedly that there are two kinds of faith in the New Testament: saving faith and

non-saving faith. Does the New Testament validate that *a priori* assumption?” (54). The bias of this controlling proposition shows no mitigation even though early in the book Chay and Correia approvingly quote an advocate of their theological position when he asserts, “We do not take issue with the assertion that some expressions of faith in the New Testament are not saving faith, that is, do not involve believing salvific content” (20).

They begin their commentary segment by insisting that Simon Magus was a genuine believer. Immediately after they selectively cite Peter’s rebuke of Simon for his wicked request—that his heart “is not right before God” (they skip over 8:22 altogether) and that “you are ... in the bond of iniquity”—they insist that despite the severity of the apostle’s reproach, “it is crucial to the interpretation of this passage to observe that the text says Simon believed (aorist active indicative ἐπίστευσεν) just as the other Samaritans believed (aorist active indicative ἐπίστευσαν).” They continue by confidently affirming, “There are no qualifiers within the text itself that indicate that Simon’s experience was any different than the other Samaritans, and therefore it seems unwise to evaluate his faith as anything other than genuine” (56). Evidently the kind of qualifiers Chay and Correia are looking for are explicit statements such as, “Even Simon believed and was baptized *but his faith was not genuine.*” For them, Peter’s multifaceted stern rebuke to Simon Magus does not suffice—(1) May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money; (2) You have neither part nor lot in this matter, (3) your heart is not right before God; (4) Repent therefore, of this wickedness of yours, (5) and pray to the Lord that if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you; (6) For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity” (Acts 8:20-23). Given the clarity and intensity of the apostle’s sharp admonition, it seems reasonable to suggest that Chay and Correia engage in special pleading when they claim that there are no “qualifiers within the text

itself” to indicate the fraudulent nature of Simon Magus’ faith which Luke reports. Thus, without any trepidation Chay and Correia insist, “It is only theological bias, not exegetical detail, which concludes” that Simon Magus “had less-than-salvific faith. Luke tells us that we will see Simon Magus some day in heaven” (58). This is quite an extruded extrapolation given all that Luke reports concerning the Magician.

How Chay and Correia handle John 2:23-25 and 3:36 is eye-catching given their earlier segments where they critically charge others with linguistic, lexicographical, syntactical, and grammatical malpractice as they take strong exception to the work of acclaimed scholars. These portions cry out for some response.

Concerning John’s reporting that many Jews “believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing, but as for Jesus, he did not entrust himself to them because he knew all people and he had no need for anyone to testify concerning mankind, for he knew what was in each person” (John 2:23-25), Chay and Correia reject the prevailing conclusion to which commentators arrive, namely, that the belief John depicts is spurious. But why?

They explain, “These people are said to have believed (aorist indicative—normally simply occurrence at a point in time), and this should engender caution against evaluating how genuine their faith is” (64). Chay and Correia seem to fall into the “abused aorist” fallacy not only because they read the aorist as punctiliar, referring to a simple and singular act of faith that took place in a moment, but also because they mistake the aorist verb as referring to the act of belief itself. They commit the linguistic mistakes for which they criticize others in earlier segments of the book. The fact that the Evangelist uses the aoristic or perfective aspect to depict this belief of these Jews means only that he chooses to portray it as perfected action without adding any further elaboration. The aorist offers nothing as to the genuineness of their faith. Again, after they had earlier rightly criticized others who over-interpret πιστεύω εἰς,

Chay and Correia insist that πιστεύω εἰς in John's Gospel invariably signals saving faith so that the faith of the Jews as described in 2:23 is saving faith (64). They insist, additionally, that "nothing in the text" suggests "that the experience of the people in 2:23 is any different than the disciples in 2:11, nor anything different than the promise of God that John makes in 1:12" (65).

Chay and Correia censure others who conclude that Jesus' response to the Jews who believed signals that their faith was defective, thus spurious. For them, unless the text explicitly explains that the Jews *seemed to believe* or that they *spoke the right words to profess faith*, there is no reason to take "they believed in his name" to indicate anything other than authentic saving faith. After all, they reason, Jesus could hardly be fooled by appearances. Therefore, the faith of the Jews was definitely not spurious (63).

So, what about Jesus' response to these Jews? The authors find their explanation in the imperfect tense verb, "Jesus did not entrust himself to them" (οὐκ ἐπίστευεν), which they conclude bears inceptive or ingressive force, by which they mean that Jesus' initial response to their faith was not to entrust himself to them, but there "is no reason to say that this was a permanent state of mind; all the text tells us is that Jesus was not yet ready to commit Himself to their care" (69). Even if they correctly identify the semantic element of the verb as ingressive, besides drawing an incorrect conclusion from Daniel B. Wallace's comments concerning the ingressive imperfect when they claim that "The imperfect most often carries [*sic*] an inceptive force," Chay and Correia also draw an unwarranted inference contrary to what Wallace and other grammarians take to be implied by an ingressive imperfect, which is to emphasize the beginning of a sustained action, not an initial action that may later reverse itself, as Chay and Correia argue. Thus, they create out of whole cloth, relative to the imperfect tense verb, the notion that Jesus may have subsequently altered his response to these Jews. Such a notion is not at all implied in

an ingressive imperfect.

Despite valiant efforts to insist that the Jews' belief is authentic and not spurious, in the end the text compels Chay and Correia to concede that Jesus' refusal to entrust himself to the Jews signals something *defective* about their belief. So, even though they do not agree with the prevailing exegesis that the defect is that the Jews' faith was spurious, they do state, "It seems apparent that Jesus was not entrusting himself" to these Jews "because their faith was infantile and weak" (69). They explain, "It was not the kind of faith that was mature enough to be trustworthy yet, but this does not mean it was not genuine faith" (69-70). Thus, because these "believers ... had not yet matured to the point of being trustworthy... Jesus was not yet ready to entrust Himself to them" (70). So, even Chay and Correia acknowledge that the text does indicate that the Jews' faith was defective, their theological system does not permit them to say that it was spurious; it allows them to admit only that it was immature. To use an oft-repeated criticism the authors put upon those with whom they disagree, the novelty of their over-interpretation of the passage betrays special pleading.

Another example from the commentary portion of the book is noteworthy. It is John 3:36 which states, "The one who believes in the Son has eternal life, but the one who disobeys the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him." At issue is the juxtaposition of "the one who believes" (ὁ πιστεύων) with "the one who disobeys" (ὁ ἀπειθῶν). Chay and Correia assume without documentation and therefore simply assert that those whose theological affirmations they oppose take this passage to insinuate an overlap of belief with obedience but also of disbelief with disobedience because they commit a word fallacy by taking ἀπειθέω to mean "disobey" derived from the alleged notion that πιστεύω and πείθω share a common root, πιθ-. Against this, they insist that the context makes it clear that ὁ ἀπειθῶν should be rendered "the one who disbelieves." Yet, in the end they equivocate and com-

mit the “word fallacy” they have leveled against others, for they state, “Context indicates ... that the disobedience in mind in 3:36 is a refusal to be persuaded to believe.... Thus they are unbelievers, with the supreme disobedience being unbelief. John 3:36, then, is best viewed as describing ‘the obedience that is faith’ or ‘the obedience required is to obey the command to believe’ rather than ‘faith means obedience’” (72).

This amounts to little more than captious quibbling, for consider D. A. Carson’s comments on John 3:36 which the authors do not cite but which are typical among commentaries: “But whoever disobeys the Son (that is what the verb means...) will not see life.... If faith in the Son is the only way to inherit eternal life, and is commanded by God himself, then failure to trust him is as much disobedience as unbelief” (*The Gospel according to John*, 214). Though it is true that they engage in petty faultfinding and equivocation, it is crucial to observe what they affirm and do not affirm. In John 3:36 and in other passages, such as Romans 1:5, Chay and Correia are willing to accept an overlapping or synonymy of faith with obedience which they describe as “the obedience that is faith.” This is theologically acceptable to them because in this statement faith qualifies obedience so that the obedience in view is entirely subsumed into their concept of saving faith as singular and solitary assent. But they repudiate the inverse description, “the faith that is obedience,” because then obedience qualifies faith, and obedience implies works. Neither their view of faith as solitary assent nor their theological system can abide such simultaneity or proximity of faith and obedience or of faith and works.

More could be said, for example, of how Chay and Correia tell readers that the form of πιστεύω in both Romans 4:3 and Genesis 15:6 (LXX) is the aorist active indicative “and therefore is no indication of whether or not Abraham’s faith will persevere. They insist upon the punctiliar or point action nature of Abraham’s faith despite the apostle Paul’s portrayal of Abraham’s faith as sustained

and enduring: “In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, ‘So shall your offspring be.’ He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah’s womb. No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. This is why his faith was ‘counted to him as righteousness’” (Rom. 4:18-21 ESV). Paul’s portrayal of Abraham’s faith seems to make no impression upon Chay and Correia. They seem stuck in their confusion of a singular lexical meaning of πιστεύω/πίστις and contextual descriptions that enlarge upon the faith that saves. This is why they insist that “The clear emphasis of Paul in Romans 4 is upon the simple [singular, solitary, punctiliar] trust of Abraham. . . . To add obedience and perseverance to the semantic range of πιστεύω in Romans 4 is to shred the very fabric of Paul’s argument and make his point nonsensical” (89). They presume that others who read Romans 4 wrongfully import extraneous ideas into the lexical meanings of πίστις and πιστεύω. Yet, the error is due to their own confusion, for they fail to distinguish between Paul’s expositional commentary upon Abraham’s justifying and saving faith wherein he describes his faith as not weakening but enduring, even growing strong, and possible singular lexical meanings of the words πίστις and πιστεύω. Consequently, anyone who repeats what the apostle Paul says concerning Abraham’s faith falls under Chay and Correia’s zealous indictment while the indictors suppose they are defending the apostle’s gospel.

The book’s conclusion is an apt capstone. For here the depth and intransigence of the authors’ turbid, distorted, and inadequate grasp of the affirmations of so many whom they engage looms large. As they comment upon Canon 11 on the Sixth Session of the Council of Trent in John Calvin’s *Antidote to the Canons of the Council of Trent*

they borrow criticisms and conclusions from an unpublished D.Min. dissertation. Against Trent Calvin states, “I wish the reader to understand that as often as we mention faith alone in this question, we are not thinking of a dead faith, which worketh not by love, but holding faith to be the only cause of justification. (Gal 5:6; Rom 3:22.) It is therefore faith alone which justifies, and yet the faith which justifies is not alone: just as it is the heat alone of the sun which warms the earth, and yet in the sun it is not alone, because it is constantly conjoined with light. Wherefore we do not separate the whole grace of regeneration from faith, but claim the power and faculty of justifying entirely for faith, as we ought.” Rather than assume that they are at fault for failing to understand what John Calvin, a major church Reformer, has written, with temerity they accuse him of engaging in logical contradiction in a momentous historic document which clarifies one of the most crucial distinctions between the message of the Protestant Reformers and that of the Counter-Reformers of the Roman Catholic Church. Thus, despite Calvin’s vivid and clarifying analogy of heat as distinct from but always unified with and inseparable from light as the sun’s warming feature, Chay and Correia exhibit the depth and magnitude of their theological bias as they respond, “If we are to articulate that we are saved by faith alone and then stipulate by definition that the faith that saves is never alone, it seems difficult to then pronounce that we are saved by faith alone, since by definition faith is never alone. The law of non-contradiction refuses to yield to the ‘sleep of reason’ for it can only bring forth monsters—both philosophical and theological” (150).

Against the prevailing teaching of the Protestant faith, against John Calvin, and against the Reformation cry of *sola fide*, Chay and Correia reduce “saving faith” to a solitary act of naked assent and insist that this solitary assent of faith need not continue, yet this solitary assent still brings salvation and eternal life. They fail to apprehend that Calvin carefully distinguishes the kind of faith that brings

justification, which is forgiveness of sins, versus a dead faith that does not justify anyone before God who is righteous. They take *sola* (alone) in the Protestant motto, *sola fide*, “justified by faith alone,” as an adjective that describes *faith* itself as solitary faith. Thus, within their theological system, *faith in its solitariness apart from all other graces but especially works*, justifies. Besides opposing the historic Protestant understanding of *sola fide* which takes *sola, alone*, as an adverb to describe *how we are justified* rather than as an adjective describing *faith as solitary, severed from deeds*, Chay and Correia set themselves against the teaching of James 2:14-26. To avoid mistaking *alone* as an adjective describing faith—of which James writes, “faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead” (Jas 2:17)—John Calvin explains *sola fide*: “It is therefore faith alone [adverbial] which justifies, and yet the faith which justifies is not alone [adjectival].” Clearly, Calvin means, “We are *justified only* by faith, but a naked or dead faith does not justify anyone” (Jas 2:17).

The air of erudition the book projects with its academic thesis format and appearance is disappointing. Every page of *The Faith that Saves* cries out for a rigorous editor to flag flawed understanding of others whose works the authors engage, to question faulty reasoning by the authors, and to catch numerous typos present throughout the book as well as other glaring mistakes that call into question the book’s integrity. These qualities plus the photocopied appearance of a manuscript with ragged right margins which detract aesthetically give the perpetual impression that one is reading a first-draft of a master’s degree thesis. The unexpected appeal to Vladimir Lenin’s *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back* is entirely obtuse (10). Readers will marvel that the authors attribute “Fourscore and seven years ago” to Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation (n. 3, p. 10). Missing characters in Greek words are frequent (e.g., p. 7). Some Greek words are entirely indecipherable (e.g., p. 134). Surprisingly, sometimes whole sentences are lifted from other published works without any proper indication or attribution (e.g., pp. 50-52).

The argument throughout the book assumes the truthfulness of its thesis, thus perpetually committing the logical fallacy of begging the question. Consequently, it heavily and uncritically uses extensive quotations from resources favorable to the authors' beliefs. Some of these resources are inaccessible because they are unpublished theses or dissertations. Other resources are published without the benefit of rigorous independent editors or published in non-juried journals that manifestly exhibit a theological bias and agenda. In several large and significant segments where the authors critique the position with which they fundamentally disagree they do not engage with the best representatives of that theological position. Resources by widely published and accomplished scholars, whose works concerning salvation and the nature of saving faith are well attested, widely received, and have become standard resources in discussions elsewhere, if even mentioned in the book, are relegated to footnotes with mere bibliographical data indicated. Instead of engaging the best representatives of the view contrary to their own, Chay and Correia often challenge obscure materials that are not readily accessible to readers, such as unpublished theses and dissertations. They show no engagement with several significant and widely published contributions by established scholars. Consequently, those who already agree with the authors will likely read the book uncritically and be persuaded as they fail to notice its countless defects that discredit the argument, some of which are indicated above. If others happen upon the book and read it, they will likely not be persuaded, especially those who have been trained to think critically about linguistics, syntax, grammar, and theological argument.

Ardel B. Caneday
Professor of New Testament Studies
and Biblical Theology
Northwestern College

The Perfect Rule of the Christian Religion: A History of Sandemanianism in the Eighteenth Century. By John Howard Smith. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2008. ix+ 236pp., \$70 cloth; \$24.95 paper.

Historians of the Baptist tradition encounter a number of lesser known sects that intersect Baptist life down through the four centuries of our existence. These secondary groups are important areas for expanded study as we seek to understand the Baptist theological battles in their context. Some of these movements were quite small and isolated, fading as quickly as they arose, yet they left a lasting impact on Baptist theology because of those who argued against them.

One such movement is Sandemanianism, or the Glasite movement, that arose in Scotland through the influence of John Glas (1695-1773). It was transplanted to North America by his better known son-in-law, Robert Sandeman (1714-1771). While its impact was on the fringes of Baptist life, its influence was felt among some of our most recognizable names. Christmas Evans, the tireless Welsh Baptist evangelist, spoke of the Sandemanian influence in Wales and its chilling effect on his own spiritual journey. Among the Baptist worthies that contended with the teachings of Glas and Sandeman were the eminent British Baptist Andrew Fuller (*Strictures against Sandemanianism*) and the equally distinguished Isaac Backus (*True Faith Will Produce Good Works*, [1767]).

Yet the student of eighteenth-century Baptist life up until now was hard pressed to find sufficient material to study Sandemanianism in depth. John Howard Smith has rectified this neglect with a carefully researched and well-written history of this movement, focusing for the most part on its American connections but giving significant detail to satisfy the most curious among us of this now distant sect, its origins, and its impact.

The story begins with John Glas's break with Scottish Presbyterianism in October of 1727 and takes the reader on a journey through the devel-

oping chronicle of how the Glasites, via Robert Sandeman, came to find a more welcoming environment for the propagation of their particular theology in North America. Along the way, Smith introduces the reader to the important literature of the movement and places in proper order those theological antagonists who opposed it.

In addition to showing the history of the movement, which died out by 1830, Smith also gives the reader an introduction into some of the salient doctrinal particularities that made it the object of opprobrium among theologically minded Baptists. Although both Sandemanianism and Baptists claimed to be “back to the Bible” movements, the view that created the greatest consternation between them was the Sandemanian view that salvation came through “bare belief in the bare gospel.” “Sandeman opposed any preaching that advocated any duty or activity that could be construed as merits of salvation on the part of the individual” (72). This makes the study of Sandemanianism germane to anyone interested in the more recent gospel wars that have raged in the latter part of the twentieth century in American evangelicalism over the so-called “lordship salvation.” Many today seek to separate faith and repentance, believing that repentance is a *de facto* work. So a careful study of Sandemanianism and its decline may be useful in answering more recent similar objections.

The student of Sandemanianism is further helped by Smith’s comprehensive bibliography and detailed index. In sum, Smith is to be thanked for bringing to life an obscure but still relevant sect, important in the study of Baptist history and evangelical theological debate, through this fine treatment.

Jeffrey P. Straub
Professor of Historical and
Systematic Theology
Central Baptist Theological Seminary,
Minneapolis, MN

Practicing Theological Interpretation: Engaging Biblical Texts for Faith and Formation. By Joel B. Green. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011, 160 pp., \$21.99 cloth.

In *Practicing Theological Interpretation: Engaging Biblical Texts for Faith and Formation*, Joel Green, Associate Dean for the Center for Advanced Theological Studies and Professor of New Testament Interpretation at Fuller Theological Seminary, has provided a valuable introduction into the growing field of theological interpretation of scripture. Green rightly exposes the chasm that developed among biblical scholars and theologians as a result of the preeminence of the historical-critical method of interpretation since the eighteenth century. He explains that “the rise of various forms of scientific exegesis from the eighteenth century forward has had a general effect of segregating professional biblical studies from the everyday interpretive practices characteristic of the church, and of disconnecting not only biblical scholarship but often the Bible itself from the theological enterprise” (4).

In response to this segregation, Green hopes to advance theological hermeneutics that understand the role that Christian scripture plays in the “faith and formation of persons and ecclesial communities” (4). He argues that biblical interpreters need not only to take the Bible seriously as a historical and a literary document but also as a source of “divine revelation and an essential partner in the task of theological reflection” (5).

Green organizes his work into four chapters. He first addresses the relationship between theological exegesis and Christian formation. He postulates that the Christian community, in order rightly to interpret the scriptures, must understand that the Word of God is addressed to them. This lies in contrast to the typical historical-grammatical model of understanding scripture to be solely addressed to the original audience. Green accurately highlights that we need to be “model readers” who are willing not only to hear, but be

shaped and formed by the text (18).

Second, Green inquires about the role of history and historical criticism in theological interpretation. Destroying the dichotomy between faith versus fact Green demonstrates that there is no such thing as an unbiased interpreter. As Christians, Green says, we ought to refuse to reduce the Bible to merely a collection of historical and literary documents, but instead read it as divine revelation (44).

Third, Green explores the relationship between exegesis and the rule of faith. Green argues that theological interpretation of scripture helps the reader to read scripture through the prism of the creeds and in coherence with the rule of faith. Interpretive skeptics have argued that you can make the Bible say whatever you want it to say, and unfortunately there are numerous historical and contemporary examples to support their claim. Therefore, Green's exhortation to read Christian scripture in a way that is distinctly Christian is

needed as much today as ever.

Finally, Green points to John Wesley as an exemplar for reading the Bible theologically. He presents Wesley's biblical interpretation as a paradigmatic premodern interpretation of scripture. Wesley is probably not the perfect choice, since there seem to be better examples of precritical exegesis readily available. Green's examination of Wesley's interpretive model is nevertheless quite helpful in pointing a way forward for today's interpreters.

Green's efforts of providing a clear and understandable introduction to the theological interpretation of scripture are much appreciated. For the reader who is looking for an accessible and engaging introduction to the theological interpretation of scripture, Green's work will be greatly beneficial.

J. T. English
Ph.D. Candidate

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary