

Book Reviews

Paul and the Language of Faith. By Nijay K. Gupta. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020. 338 pp., \$34.99 paper.

Nijay Gupta, in his new book, *Paul and the Language of Faith*, makes an important contribution to the conversation surrounding faith language in Paul. Gupta serves as a professor of NT at Northern Seminary and is the author of numerous books, most recently, *A Beginner's Guide to New Testament Studies* and *Reading Philippians*. In *Paul and the Language of Faith*, Gupta adds to the rapidly growing discussion around πίστις language in Paul. He is not fully satisfied with recent discussion of faith language (both academic and popular) and seeks to go back to the Pauline sources to discover afresh what Paul meant by the term πίστις.

Gupta laments that often the popular definition of faith falls short of the essence of the NT word πίστις from which it is translated. Several popular connotations for faith include faith as mere opinion not grounded in any reasons; or faith is equated with doctrine, “like faith statements and faith traditions” (3). Faith is also often seen as mere passive reception of God’s grace. Moreover, English translations almost solely translate πίστις as faith, although the word carries a greater range of meaning than the English word faith. Gupta asserts that when we look at πίστις in its ancient context, one can see that the term carries a spectrum of meanings. Therefore, we should not see πίστις as a term that requires a single English rendering, but rather as a term that has a range of meanings and each use must be understood in light of its context: “Instead of thinking about the semantics of πίστις in zone terms, we must consider that his (Paul’s) meaning may modulate, moving across this spectrum according to his meaning” (12).

To that end, Gupta provides three categories which define πίστις. First, believing faith: “When πίστις is used in this way, the emphasis falls on the proper method of perception, which is at odds with worldly knowledge and mere human ways of seeing reality” (10). Despite the downplay of other scholars on this understanding of πίστις, Gupta sees a cognitive aspect to the term. In this way, faith means “seeing-with-something-other-than-eyes”

(103). The strange wisdom of salvation through the cross of Christ can only be grasped by faith. Second, πίστις can mean obeying faith. Here, it carries the sense of faithfulness. Gupta believes that there is a “more *active* nature of πίστις at least in some instances” (11). When Israel in the OT entered a covenant relationship, there was the expectation of “love, goodwill, mutuality, and loyalty from both sides” (10). The same goes for NT believers. Although not commonly translated as faithfulness or loyalty, πίστις carries this sense in much of Greco-Roman literature. Gupta asserts that, at times, the NT, in keeping with its Greco-Roman context, has πίστις mean the same. These first two definitions of πίστις can be seen as setting the two ends of the spectrum for the range of meaning of the term. In the middle is Gupta’s final definition: trusting faith. This last term is the one by which Paul may modulate between the first two. As Gupta explains: “There may be times ... where we must recognize a meaning of πίστις in Paul that tries to encapsulate both of these polarized values” (12). Trusting faith modulates between faith as mere cognition to faith as faithfulness or loyalty. This meaning of πίστις for Gupta comes out in Romans 1:16–17: “The point is not works or faith, nor is it faith versus faithfulness. For Paul the gospel does not summon believers either to *beliefs* or to *obedient actions* per se. Rather, it is a call for *trust*” (166).

Gupta’s research on πίστις also touches on many contemporary Pauline debates. Although he intentionally decides to avoid the πίστις χριστοῦ debate, he cannot ignore it entirely. Gupta sympathizes with what he calls a “third view” being proposed by Benjamin Schliesser and others. In this view, the emphasis is not on human faith nor Christ’s faithfulness, but rather “it points to ‘the event of salvation, God’s redemptive eschatological act’” (174). Πίστις is seen as associated with the gospel and participation in Christ. It “refers to the fact and experience of the Christ-relation” (174). The relational emphasis of this third view fits well with Gupta’s emphasis on the Christ-relation in πίστις.

Gupta’s work also touches on other contemporary issues in Paul. In the area of the New Perspective on Paul (NPP), Gupta seeks to correct some of the current consensus. Starting with E. P. Sanders’s insistence that the Judaism of Paul’s day functioned under “covenantal nomism,” where one is accepted into the covenant by grace but remains in it by works, many scholars see Paul functioning under the same framework. Gupta would like to correct this consensus by affirming that Paul did not function under covenantal nomism,

but covenantal *pistism*: “The radical step that Paul took was not to emphasize πίστις but to separate it from Torah works. Jews would naturally have believed that their covenantal relationship with God was based on trust and fidelity (πίστις), but all of this was mediated by and through Torah ... Paul argues that the mediation of Torah works conflicts with the relational agency of Christ, what I call the Christ-relation” (154). What is central now to the covenant relationship is not the works of the law but the Christ-relation. Furthermore, on issues of divine and human agency, Gupta wants to see both functioning. The covenant relationship requires participation from both sides.

Paul and the Language of Faith makes an important contribution to the conversation on faith language in Paul. This work has several strong points. First, Gupta is right to see modulation in the term πίστις. A small survey of the NT would show that there is not a unilateral meaning for the term. Matthew’s meaning of πίστις in 23:23 (“you ... have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and *faithfulness*” [ESV]) is not quite the same as Paul’s in Philippians 3:9 (“not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through *faith* in Christ”). Moreover, Jude 3 sheds another nuance on πίστις by referring to “the *faith* that was once for all delivered to the saints.” The English word faith does not capture this spectrum of meanings. Πίστις can range from faith to faithfulness. Gupta is right to call for translators to take each use of πίστις on its own terms and let context define what aspect of the term is being emphasized.

Second, Gupta’s covenantal *pistism* provides a helpful pushback to the NPP’s emphasis on covenantal nomism. Gupta rightly sees Paul moving away from the Torah as the center of the covenantal relation to God, but now centering on the Christ-relation. Christ is the mediator, not the law. Finally, Gupta’s work provides a *via media* for faith language in Paul. On the one hand, he rightly points out that πίστις does not mean mere passive reception. Often people think of faith as merely the passive reception of God’s grace. He rightly shows that, in its Greco-Roman context, πίστις often meant faithfulness or loyalty. Πίστις leads to action. On the other hand, Gupta still holds on to cognitive aspects of faith and rightly critiques works such as Teresa Morgan’s, *Roman Faith and Christian Faith*, for its softening of the cognitive aspects of faith in the NT.

One weakness of this book is its downplay of the faith/works dichotomy in Paul. Gupta asserts: “What is the problem with works? For Paul, the problem

with works is not that they are bad or too self-active, but simply that they do not constitute the core; the core is the Christ-relation” (185). He does not see faith and works as diametrically opposed in Paul, but rather, with the coming of Christ, works should not be the center of attention but Christ. The problem is a matter of focus, not the doing of the works themselves. It seems, however, that Paul has a bigger problem with the works of the law. He goes at length to show that no has ever been justified by works (Gal 2:16, Rom 4:1–12). The law was a temporary measure never meant to deliver righteousness (Gal 3:24). Many Jews in Paul’s day were seeking to be right before God by their adherence to the works of the law. Paul himself attempted to do this in his former religious life (Phil 3:4–6). Yet, he considered all his works of the law as “rubbish.” (Phil 3:8). It would be difficult to conclude after reading such passages that Paul merely thought the problem with works of the law was a matter of focus. Rather, his former life as one committed to works of the law is diametrically opposed to his one now by faith in Christ.

Nijay Gupta provides a stimulating work in *Paul and the Language of Faith*. He rightly shows that πίστις is not a one-size-fits-all term, but rather has a range of meanings from faith to faithfulness. We must understand each use of πίστις in its own context. It can range from a more cognitive aspect (faith) to something more like loyalty (faithfulness). Any person wanting to further understand how Paul uses faith language would be helped by this book, particularly those who are not satisfied with the polarized sides of the debate (faith vs. faithfulness). This book gives an insightful and fresh look at faith language in Paul.

Dalton Bowser, PhD Candidate
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

Food, Virtue, and the Shaping of Early Christianity. By Dana Robinson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020, 252 pp., \$84.00 hardcover.

One’s food practices—what, how, and with whom someone eats—are some of the more ubiquitous and consequential realities of physical life. But even in a culture with some concerning food issues (think of the prevalence of

obesity, the rise of eating disorders, and the continuous fad diet craze), food habits are not a common subject of Christian teaching. This is what makes Dana Robinson's published dissertation, *Food, Virtue, and the Shaping of Early Christianity* a fascinating and helpful study: it demonstrates early Christian teachers intentionally appropriating, engaging with, and seeking to influence the established food culture in which their people lived.

Dana Robinson received her PhD at Catholic University of America. *Food, Virtue, and the Shaping of Early Christianity* explores the role that Greco-Roman food culture and practices played in the efforts of Christian preachers to create common sense pictures of piety for the "ordinary" Christian (6). Arguing that food practices are "constitutive of an entire social and religious world," she approaches sermons and writings by John Chrysostom, Shenoute, and Paulinus through two lenses: the use of food metaphors in their teachings and their complex articulations of the ways Christians should behave in food spaces (225).

One of the central tools Robinson uses to analyze the food discourse of these figures is cognitive metaphor theory, which asserts that metaphors enable people to understand abstract ideas by associating them with concrete realities (10). Robinson demonstrates that Chrysostom, Shenoute and Paulinus intuitively understood the power of metaphor to take difficult concepts about piety and bring them to a level readily available to lay people. Chrysostom articulates a lay piety of moderation--a complex concept from Aristotelian ethics that involves living in the mean between two vices—by describing it as "true fasting" (23-25, 31, 42). Shenoute describes the features of spiritual growth, including the age-old Christian tension between God's sovereign acting in a believer and a believer's intentional acting for God, through the accessible images of fruit and farming (119-122, 126-132). Paulinus, in a surprising appropriation of the pagan practice of votive food sacrifices, gives moral instruction on the sacrificial lives believers should live (186-187, 189-196).

These figures also demonstrate a deep and complex concern with the physical spaces where Christians eat. Robinson's analysis of the way these figures spoke about eating spaces is dependent on theories of cultural geography that examine space and place as "socially constructed entities" (12). Chrysostom seeks to have his wealthy listeners turn their dining rooms (often places for the rigid social distinctions and pride evident in Greco-Roman culture) into little churches—places distinguished by their piety and

equality (105-106). Shenoute makes complex and sometimes contradictory arguments about what a truly Christian meal is, where Christians are allowed to partake of the Eucharist, and the economic factors in Christian eating (151,165-167,172). Paulinus communicates the sacrifice and joy of Christian worship by both mapping architectural space and human bodies onto each other and conflating the consumption of a sacrificial meal with worshipful speech to God (218-219).

From the analysis and interactions with these three figures, Robinson concludes that food metaphors and food practices are “fundamental building blocks for these influential models of Christian piety” (21). The “common sense wisdom” that food provides makes it an ideal tool for religious leaders and lay people to “negotiate the lived experience of religion in all of its complexity” (222).

As may already be evident, readers should be aware that *Food, Virtue and the Shaping of Early Christianity* is narrow in its focus, complex in its methodology, and technical in its analysis. Patristic scholars will appreciate Robinson’s thorough knowledge of fourth century food culture, her nuanced picture of fourth century Christianity’s relationship with food, space, and piety, and her treatment of the less well-known Shenoute. Non-specialists, on the other hand, will need to read carefully and thoroughly to grasp much of her argumentation.

One small criticism: Robinson does not significantly engage with these figures’ interpretation of the food metaphors in Scripture. Though she does mention Chrysostom’s image of “true fasting” in relationship to “the fast that [The Lord] chooses” in Isaiah 58:6, Robinson doesn’t address Chrysostom’s preaching or interpretation of any biblical food metaphors like John 6:35, “I am the bread of life.” Establishing a relationship between Chrysostom’s use of food metaphor with his interpretation of biblical food metaphors would have rounded out her argument and given readers more insight into the way he understood metaphor and food as communication tools.

Those things being said, this volume can be appreciated by a variety of audiences. Anyone interested in patristic engagement with Greco-Roman culture, the patristic use of metaphor and imagery, or patristic spirituality (particularly the tension between the ascetic ideal and what was expected of “ordinary” Christians) should consider reading this book. Additionally, pastors who want to improve their ability to communicate spiritual truths

in understandable ways to their audiences will benefit from exposure to these three figures' use of metaphor, particularly Shenoute's expansive use of farming and fruit to communicate fundamental realities of the spiritual life.

Finally, though it is a volume focused on the fourth century, *Food, Virtue, and the Shaping of Early Christianity* also has implications for the present and growing evangelical concern about bodily practice for Christian spirituality. Popular books such as *The Common Rule* by Justin Whitmel Early and more scholarly books like *Desiring the Kingdom* by James K. Smith have emphasized the powerful influence our bodily practices have on our spiritual lives. If food is anywhere near as consequential for Christian piety as Robinson appears to demonstrate, this book suggests a pressing need for Christian leaders to start articulating twenty-first century Christian piety both in terms of food and in relationship to our actual food practices.

Leland Brown, PhD Candidate
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

The Gospels as Stories: A Narrative Approach to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. By Jeannine K. Brown. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020, 198 pp., \$21.99 paper.

Jeannine Brown is professor of NT at Bethel Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota. As the interest in literary approaches to the NT continues to expand in biblical studies, Brown, in her new book *The Gospels as Stories*, seeks to consolidate and present a summary of the field—along with some of her own advances—of narrative criticism as applied to the four Gospels. There are six parts to the book, the middle four of which explain and explore a specific element of stories, namely the following: “plot and plotting” (part 2), “character and characterization” (part 3), “intertextuality” (part 4), and “narrative theology” (part 5). In each of these parts, there is a chapter of theoretical discussion, followed by a second chapter, which serves to illustrate the point with an extended example.

In the introductory first chapter (part 1), Brown locates narrative criticism in the broader landscape of approaches to the Gospels. She organizes such approaches into three main categories: scholars tend to “amalgamate” (such

as in gospel harmonies), “atomize” (extracting bits from the narrative), or “allegorize” (à la Augustine or many modern-day preachers). Brown’s alternative approach is narrative criticism, which has the distinct advantage of holding intact a gospel as an integrated whole. Narrative criticism, “in broadest terms . . . attends to the literary and storied qualities of a biblical narrative” (11). Brown continues with a discussion of concepts important to narrative criticism. There is a distinction between “story”—the simple collection of characters, settings, and plot points—and “discourse”—the way in which the author uses these elements to “communicate key messages” in the narrative (such as pacing, sequencing, and characterization; 12). Brown then explains what the “implied author” and “implied reader” are. She concludes this chapter by noting that narrative criticism as a discipline in biblical studies has come to include social-historical features of a narrative’s historical context. Also, readers can use narrative criticism in cooperation with other approaches, including feminist criticism and theological interpretation.

In part 2 (chaps. 2-3), “Plot and Plotting,” Brown defines a plot as a sequence of events that includes an element of causality and is composed of an exposition, rising action, climax, and a resolution. She discusses sequencing (how an author orders the episodes) and lists the following of its devices: the “primacy effect” (the first in narrative having emphasis), chiasm, intercalation, inclusio, prolepsis (“flash-forward”), and analepsis (“flashback”). In addition to sequencing, the Gospels each have an individual style (e.g., Mark’s “habit of narrating lengthy episodes with colorful details” [38]) and pacing to the shape of their narrative. Also, the simple selection of material—what an author includes/excludes in a Gospel—informs us of the writer’s storytelling and theological interests. The second chapter of part 2 (chapter 3) illustrates this framework in an examination of Luke’s gospel. For instance, Brown includes a full page-sized chart that matches themes to episodes, suggesting that Luke groups events by theme. Also, Luke seems to pair stories of men with stories of women in Jesus’ Galilean ministry (4:14-9:50); for example, after Jesus heals a demon-possessed man in 4:31-37, he heals Peter’s mother-in-law in vv. 38-39.

In part 3 (chaps. 4-5), “Characters and Characterization,” Brown begins by surveying some of the standard fare for treatments on character (e.g., Forster’s distinction between “flat” and “round” characters). However, unlike many takes on characterization, Brown organizes character traits around

relationships, rather than, say, types or topics. She examines characters in relation to: the narrator (an analysis which includes, among other things, a character's reliability from the perspective of the narrator), other characters, readers, setting, plot, and theme. For all these, Brown uses the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4 as an example. Chapter 4 of the book, "Matthew's Characterization of the Disciples," applies characterization to an analysis of the twelve disciples in Matthew. Brown's doctoral work is on the subject (xi), and indeed this may be her strongest chapter. The disciples, she argues, are, for the most part, taken as a group (88), and they are presented as Jesus' closest followers. On the other hand, they have a mixed performance in terms of (mis)understanding who Jesus is and what he teaches. Following her relationship-oriented taxonomy, Brown continues by comparing the disciples to other characters (the disciples have "little faith") as well as the narrative's setting, plot, and themes.

Part 4 (chaps. 6-7) treats intertextuality, a word "most often used to describe the varied ways the evangelists engage the Old Testament as well as the study of these connections" (107). The Gospels can have shared settings and events with OT stories, thus invoking them with textual resonances of one kind or another. For instance, the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4) evokes "similar scenes from Genesis of a man and a woman meeting at a well" (114). These resonances can be through citations, allusions, or echoes (following Hays' well-known classifications). This creates continuity with the OT—a "theological analogy" ("typology" [123])—and helps throw light on the characters. Intertextuality can influence the reader by reinforcing a teaching or warning and can add a measure of authority to the gospels. The illustrative next chapter, "Intertextuality in John," looks at John's use of allusions and echoes. Through intertextuality John presents Jesus as the Passover lamb and highlights the theme of the renewal of all things, namely through Jesus' incarnation, death, and resurrection.

Part 5 (chaps. 8-9), "Narrative Theology," asks how we interpreters can make the move from story to theology. Story does indeed "theologize," and Brown explores how. First, a narrative can maintain propositional tension between what seem to be competing ideas. For instance, Matthew holds in both hands "divine revelation" and "human reception" (150)—that is, divine and human will. Matthew does not engage in the project of subsuming one to the other. Second, narrative pulls us beyond abstract proposition (a tricky point to

illustrate in prose, a genre that presents ideas in abstract propositions). Brown continues by offering some diagnostic questions by which we may quarry theology from narrative. These include: “How does an evangelist’s plotting of his story contribute to his theology?” and “How does an evangelist develop his characters across the story, and how does this development contribute to his theology?” (136). Brown concludes the chapter with an example from John’s gospel: John weaves together settings such as the Jewish festivals to communicate who Jesus is. The subsequent illustration chapter, “The God of Mark’s Gospel,” examines Markan theology proper (what does Mark say about God the Father?). To summarize, Mark characterizes God as affirming and supporting the ministry of Jesus and the good news he brings.

In part 6—the final chapter—Brown concludes the book with a summary of how she understands the relationship between story, history, and theology. Story, she argues, is “the first point of entry” (184). Then, once also being informed by history, our knowledge can ascend to theological understanding.

Brown’s work here is as concise as it is helpful. As a handbook or introduction to narrative criticism of the gospels, Brown’s book delivers. Students will find it accessible, and scholars will find it a useful, at the very least as a reference to core concepts in the subject. Also, her unique contributions (such as in Matthew’s characterization of the disciples) are worthy of consideration for anyone interested in the field.

I have two broad criticisms. First, I would prefer that the material major more on what is particular to stories and storytelling. The parts on plot and character mostly accomplish this. However, the parts on intertextuality and “theologizing” can slide into discussions that do not tell us much about stories per se. Intertextuality illustrates this point: it is important but not exclusive to narrative; therefore, it seems questionable to me to make a whole part of the book center on it. Even if a part on intertextuality is necessary, I would expect it to focus on aspects of intertextuality that are exclusive to story. Unfortunately, I was unable to find much that could not also be said about the NT epistles or Revelation. To put the general point differently, what, exactly, are the advantages of placing this information in narrative form rather than prose? This is the question I would have loved to have seen answered more throughout the book.

Second, and in line with the previous point, one of the most notable features of narrative is its ability to shape the reader/listener in ways that prose

cannot. Brown devotes scarce attention to this (but see 103-104). A good hermeneutic of scripture, in my view, involves not merely interpretation but also transformation. How does a narrative transform us? I wonder if she could have devoted a whole part to this question (perhaps instead of intertextuality).

Despite these qualms, I am thankful for Brown's hard work, and I will likely recommend it to those who need a relatively short introduction on the subject in clear, unintimidating prose.

Scott Gregory, ThM Candidate, New Testament
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

Rejoice and Tremble: The Surprising Goods News of the Fear of the Lord.
By Michael Reeves. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021, 192 pp., \$19.99.

What if the cure for fear was actually . . . fear? As surprising as it sounds, that is precisely the answer Scripture gives. In his book *Rejoice and Tremble: The Surprising Good News of the Fear of the Lord*, Dr. Michael Reeves works like a caring physician of the soul to help his patients understand that the answer to alleviating their sinful fears is to grow in the fear of the Lord. Such fear, he argues, does not mean being afraid of God. Rather, as Reeves so elegantly shows, the gospel of Jesus Christ “frees us from our crippling fears, giving us instead a most delightful, happy, and wonderful fear (16).”

Reeves serves as the president and professor of theology at Union School of Theology in Bridgend and Oxford, United Kingdom. *Rejoice and Tremble* is the larger version of the companion book *What Does it Mean to Fear the Lord?* This new book series produced by Union seeks to equip ministry leaders with sound theological resources, while also providing believers access to the same tools in a more concise format.

Reeves makes several moves to establish his argument. He begins by showing how both the church and culture have misunderstood the fear of God. On the one hand, most Christians think of the fear of God as “the gloomy equivalent of eating your greens: something the theological health nuts binge on while everyone else enjoys tastier fare (16).” On the other hand, in its attempt to alleviate the problem of fear, Western culture has actually created a more conducive environment for fear's growth. Though

atheistic authors and scientists claim that mankind's knowledge has advanced far beyond the need for faith in a deity, the problem of fear has actually worsened over time (24).

Reeves makes his next move by lifting the lid off of the buried treasure of Reformed and Puritan piety, holding up the faith-filled lives of these saints in the light of Scripture to show that the fear of God is the pinnacle of true delight in God. Referencing men like Luther, Calvin, Flavel, Swinnock, Gurnall, and Bunyan, Reeves clarifies what godly fear is not and then paints a picture of right, godly fear. As he notes, sinful fear is the product of misunderstanding God's nature and character (33). If left unattended, it becomes "a festering sore that spews out an ooze of other toxic fears (37)."

True or godly fear, however, is a blessing of the new covenant (45). In fact, true fear of God is equal to love for God. It is the "intensity of the saints' love for and enjoyment of all that God is (52)." To love God with such intensity is to follow the example of the Messiah himself, whose delight is in the fear of the Lord (Isa 11:3). To be sure, the fear of God includes the experience of trembling and awe at the majesty and holiness of God. However, seen through the lens of Christ, the sinner comes to embrace this glorious God with, as Charles Spurgeon says, "a sacred delight (59)."

Fortunately for the reader, Reeves has a knack for distilling the thoughts of theologians such as Jonathan Edwards, John Owen, and John Calvin. Using Calvin's approach in his *Institutes*, Reeves shows that the fear of God begins with the knowledge of God the Creator (69). However, trembling at the Creator transitions to rejoicing with the knowledge of God the Redeemer in Christ (75). Apart from drawing near to God in Christ, the sinner is left with the sort of fear Reeves describes from the theology of Rudolf Otto, who focused almost exclusively on the fear of God the Creator (86). This, as theologian John Murray points out, results in the dread of coming judgment (89). As the church father Athanasius taught, it is by looking to the Son that people come to see the person of God the *Father*, not only the work of God the Creator (92). This same point was echoed by the Reformers, whose cry of *sola Scriptura* led to an emphasis on the grace of God the Redeemer, who has revealed himself through his Son (92).

Though Reeves devotes significant time and attention to unpacking biblical and historical theology in establishing his argument, in his final move, he gives great care to practical theology as well. He does so, first of all, by

showing that true delight in God leads to holiness, not licentiousness. As Spurgeon states, godly fear “leads us to dread anything which might cause our Father’s displeasure (102).” Thus, a right knowledge of God leads to a right fear of God, which becomes the driving force of our relationship with God and the pursuit of holiness (110).

Second, Reeves calls Christians in general and pastors in particular to assess their lives and teaching (125). As the church walks in the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:31), proclaiming the gospel with bold and joyful hearts, it testifies to the one thing that “can liberate us from the anxieties now flooding our increasingly post-Christian Western culture (150).” In the end, cultivating a heart that fears the Lord is about becoming who God created his people to be. For it is in the fear of the Lord that believers will worship and enjoy their God forever (163).

Rejoice and Tremble provides a much needed and user-friendly introduction to the often overlooked and misrepresented concept of the fear of the Lord. For those working in the field of Biblical Spirituality, Reeves’ concise but meaty work would serve as a delightful introduction to the heart of gospel-centered piety. Pastors and other ministry leaders would benefit immensely from reflecting on this work and taking inventory of the content and tone of their preaching and teaching. For believers in general, *Rejoice and Tremble* is an invitation to draw near to God through faith in Jesus Christ and to know the intense joy found in fearing the Lord.

Matthew Stewart, ThM Candidate
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

Thomas Aquinas, Great Thinkers. By K. Scott Oliphint. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2017, 157 pp., \$14.99 paper.

Protestantism has contended with the contributions of Thomas Aquinas for some 500 years. More recent books such as Norman Geisler’s *Thomas Aquinas* (Baker, 1991; reissued Wipf and Stock, 2003) and Manfred Svensson and David VanDrunen’s *Aquinas Among the Protestants* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2017) demonstrate a renewed desire among Protestants to utilize Thomas. However, others, while recognizing his positive contributions, still caution

against the uncritical acceptance of Thomas's theology, pointing to philosophical problems undergirding it.

One such figure is K. Scott Oliphint in *Thomas Aquinas*, whose academic background equips him well for addressing this project. He teaches apologetics and systematics at Westminster Theological Seminary. He has authored numerous books on apologetics and philosophy, including *Reasons for Faith* (P&R, 2006) and *Covenantal Apologetics* (Crossway, 2013), as well as contributing to *Four Views on Christianity and Philosophy* (Zondervan Academic, 2016).

Thomas Aquinas stretches across approximately 150 pages, examining questions concerning Thomas's views of knowledge and existence. Oliphint structures each of these subjects similarly, summarizing and then analyzing Thomas's positions. His treatment of Thomas's epistemology comprises an assessment of reason and revelation, including the light of natural reason; the problem of self-evidence; the epistemology- metaphysics relationship, including consideration of foundationalism; and the *praeambula fidei*. Oliphint's treatment of Thomas's ontology covers proofs for God's existence (the so-called *quinque viæ*) and who God is, including discussion of divine simplicity and possible worlds.

While each of these topics merit analysis, the issue of greatest intrigue regards Thomas's structure of knowledge. Thomas held to a "twofold truth of divine things" by which man may know some divine truths "by the light of natural reason" (philosophy) but requires divine revelation for other divine truths that "wholly surpass the capability of human reason" (theology). Oliphint explains that "significant and often strident debate [exists] among Thomists as to the proper structure of this distinction," which significantly implicates questions about man's epistemic capabilities and, thus, broader questions about apologetics (12).

Oliphint interprets the structure of Thomas's distinction such that natural reason forms the "foundational structure" or the "substructure" of man's epistemic capacity and revelation forms its "superstructure" (13, 78). This interpretation would mean that Thomas believed that the human intellect, by the light of natural reason, could ascertain some divine truths, like God's existence (11–17), through the *quinque viæ* (55–74), which may function as *praeambula fidei* (25–31). Also, this divine knowledge does not occur by intrinsic self-evidence but rather by empirical means that are independent of revelation (17–21).

Oliphint offers two important critiques of Thomas's account of natural

reason, which address the natures of revelation and sin. First, he challenges Thomas's distinction between knowledge by reason and knowledge by revelation, observing that they do not exist in the "same category" (31): *Reason* is a tool, and *revelation* content. Consequently, man does not know some things by reason and others by revelation. In contrast to Thomas, "the Reformers, following Calvin, understood that reality is exhaustively *revelational*," Oliphint explains. "There is no such as thing as the 'purely natural.' Since the heavens declare the glory of God (Ps 19:1), since God speaks through all that he has made (Rom 1:19–20), that which is 'natural' is, at the same time, the very 'supernatural' communication of God to his creatures" (79–80).

Additionally, Oliphint argues that Thomas "neglected to incorporate" the "radical effect that sin has on the mind of fallen man" into his theology (33). "[N]atural reason," states Oliphint, "is wholly unable to come to proper conclusions with respect to God and his existence" (34). He also affirms belief in man's intrinsic knowledge of God, which Thomas functionally denied, but, referencing Romans 1, says, "Our sin causes us to suppress the truth that God gives to us through his creation" (49). In sum reformational theology "rightly rejected" Thomas's paradigm (78).

Some interpreters have painted those who hold to positions different from their own as misrepresenting (one author even uses the word *maligning*) Thomas's views, as if the question is one of ignorance or dishonesty. However, such polemics are irresponsible (even misleading). A more responsible frame acknowledges that the division among Thomas's interpreters is an honest one, with serious scholars, both Roman Catholics and Protestants, who genuinely disagree about Thomas's position. Oliphint summarizes the two basic viewpoints as *traditional* and *new* (25). The spectrum of positions is more complicated, with some opting for a middle way (120n1), but Oliphint identifies the basic parameters.

Partly at issue is whether Thomas grounds theology in philosophy (traditional) or philosophy in theology (new). Under the former, man may know some divine truths by the light of natural reason and independent of divine revelation. By contrast, under the new view, man knows divine truth because of divine grace and revelation. The new view, says Oliphint, has "no room in the inn for the traditional notion of natural reason in Thomas" (28). Followers of this view include both Roman Catholics, such as Marie-Dominique Chenu, Étienne Gilson, and Henri de Lubac, as well as Protestants like Norman Geisler,

R. C. Sproul, and J. V. Fesko. While Reformed interpreters would undoubtedly appreciate this view's emphases on grace and revelation, adherents of the older view argue that it does not reflect Thomas's actual position.

The traditional view generally sees Thomas as holding that natural reason can grasp divine truths independent of divine revelation. Among others, these also include Roman Catholics, for instance Ralph McInerny, Steven Long, Lawrence Feingold, and Bernard Mulcahy, as well as Protestants such as Herman Dooyeweerd, Cornelius Van Til, Gordon Clark, Lesslie Newbigin, and Carl F. H. Henry. So, although some Roman Catholics and Protestants may agree on their interpretation of Thomas, they would disagree about its worth. Whereas Roman Catholics point to a "'natural reason' that can produce true knowledge of the true God," the Reformed insist that the "best that natural reason can do, since the fall, is to produce an idol, a god of [their] own imaginings" (53). For his part, McInerny reaffirmed "Thomas's commitment to natural reason" (12). He also criticized the new view for "virtually destroy[ing] any place for philosophy as its own discipline" (28), contended instead for an autonomous philosophy (*Praeambula Fidei*, Catholic University of America Press, 2006, 35),

By contrast, Oliphint identifies "a number of significant and serious issues at stake for anyone who is concerned to affirm a biblical, Reformed epistemology" (31). Thomas adopted "two ultimately incompatible *principia*": the "neutrality of natural reason" with the "truth of God's revelation" (126). Regrettably, Oliphint loses focus to mount an attack against Arminianism. Specifically, he argues, "these incompatible ideas are [also] adapted in Arminian theology" (121). However, his unnuanced statement is ill-conceived.

The Arminianism reflective of Jacobus Arminius, who ministered in the Dutch Reformed Church, also rejects belief in the neutrality of natural reason. Likewise, it confesses a radical depravity of natural reason that requires divine grace and revelation for rescue. Authors such as F. Leroy Forlines, *Classical Arminianism* (Randall House, 2011), and J. Matthew Pinson, *Arminian and Baptist* (Randall House, 2015), have given expression to this position, which points to the broader Reformed consensus existing prior to the Synod of Dort in its articulation of Reformed Arminianism. Thus Oliphint may follow a traditional interpretation of Thomas's epistemology and, consequently, reject "Reformed Thomism" (3). However, his loading Arminianism with the problems of Thomism lacks warrant,

because Reformed Arminianism rests upon the same epistemological bases as Reformed Calvinism.

Nevertheless, Oliphint's *Thomas Aquinas* is an overall enjoyable and worthwhile read. It is most appropriate for those people whose interests lie with Reformed and/or Thomistic epistemology. Even if the reader adopts the new perspective on Thomas and disagrees with Oliphint's traditional interpretation, they should appreciate that he does not simply dismiss out of hand alternative viewpoints but takes seriously the ever-present dispute concerning Thomas among his interpreters.

Matthew Steven Bracey, Vice Provost for Academic Administration
Welch College

Participating in Christ: Explorations in Paul's Theology and Spirituality.
By Michael J. Gorman. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2019,
294 pp., \$30.00 paper.

Michael Gorman is a leading voice among NT scholars. He is known for his work on Paul's cruciform spirituality, missional hermeneutics, and participation in Christ. *Participating in Christ* continues along these lines of inquiry by offering readers a set of "interconnected explorations" in the participatory theology and spirituality of Paul (xxvii). Although each chapter can be read as a stand-alone contribution, Gorman's aim for the book is to offer both the academy and the church a coherent reading of Paul through a participatory lens (xxiii). The author succeeds at demonstrating the necessity in bringing major Pauline themes together with participation in Christ.

Gorman opens the book with a concise orientation to the growing discussion around participation in Christ in Paul (xvii-xxii). Chapter 1 brings readers a general overview of the book by way of thirteen propositions. These function as the main arguments made in the book. As such, the reader is provided his primary conclusions on each topic in the opening chapter. Chapter 2 introduces several neologisms in arguing that the cross is a *Christophony* as well as a *theophany*, *ecclesiophany*, and *anthrophany* (30). In short, Gorman says the cross is a revelation of not only Christ's identity, but also the identity of God, the church, and humanity.

In chapter 3 Gorman answers some of his critics regarding his elevation of cruciformity in Paul's spirituality and theology. Pauline theology and spirituality, argues Gorman, places an emphasis on the cross that grants it a certain priority (55). Based upon exegesis of Philippians 2:5, in chapter 4, Gorman argues that participation and cruciformity better describes the spirituality of Paul in Philippians rather than imitation or mimesis (77).

Beginning with chapter 5, Gorman turns to Galatians. He says Paul's apocalyptic experience and apocalyptic theology are to be placed in a mutually informing relationship (97). Included alongside this apocalyptic dialectic are Paul's new covenant perspectives (98-100). This "apocalyptic new covenant" is demonstrated in the world as the church is an apocalypse of the apocalypse. In other words, the church is a living manifestation and exegesis of the new covenant (113).

Chapters 6–8 form a small unit within the book. Looking at Galatians 2:15-21 (ch. 6), 2 Corinthians 5:14-21 (ch. 7), and several texts from Romans (ch. 8), Gorman contends that justification in Paul is both participatory and transformative (115). While positioning himself over-against both a forensic view of justification and a covenant membership view, Gorman argues that Paul is a creative thinker and thus rethinks old concepts (i.e., *dikaioō*) in new ways (122). Chapter 9 returns to 2 Corinthians reinforcing his view that justification is transformative participation. As such, justification itself entails *theosis* or deification (209). In this way, Gorman picks up *theosis* language from the Christian tradition, and argues that it captures Paul's understanding well (212).

Chapter 10 shifts the book's focus to contemporary application. In imitation of Martin Luther King Jr., Gorman writes a letter in Paul's name to the church in North America. In addition to touching on themes from the book, Gorman highlights aspects of the church's witness and failures. The book ends in chapter 11 on the importance of the resurrection in preaching and contemporary Christian spirituality.

Gorman has a knack for seeing how disparate streams of Paul's thought come together. For instance, on the apocalyptic new covenant, Gorman weaves together Paul's theology, ethics, and mission (113).

While grounded in exegesis the author often moves from what is stated in Paul to what is implied (38, 40, 44, 62, 78, 136, 163, 167 n.51, 201, 221). This is demonstrative of Gorman's ability to think "theologically" with Paul. It also contributes to one of Gorman's aspirations, that is, to expound Paul

for the contemporary church.

In a far-ranging book like *Participating in Christ*, readers will likely diverge from the author. While Gorman makes a few conciliatory remarks about the forensic view of justification, his position ultimately undermines it without convincing argumentation. Proponents of forensic justification will maintain the relationship between justification and other theological/spiritual realities (as Gorman acknowledges). The key disagreement between a forensic view of justification and the one proposed by Gorman is the exact nature of the relationship between justification and other theological realities. For example, it is not clear why acknowledging that justification is “integral” to new life with the Messiah (i.e., participation) means we must abandon their distinction altogether (see 121). Gorman overstates the nature of the relationship by claiming justification to be identical with participation. Further, it does not seem he offers a convincing way forward by eschewing the different backgrounds of the *dikai-* family word group (Scriptural & Second Temple), and instead, suggests we imagine Paul rethinking everything (122).

For those interested in the contemporary debate around union with Christ, *theosis*, and justification, Gorman offers an informed take by a seasoned scholar. From a pastoral perspective, *Participating in Christ* will invite thoughtful reflection for the confessing church in a contemporary world.

Garrett Craig, PhD Candidate
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

The Trinity: An Introduction. By Scott R. Swain. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 154 pp., \$15.99 paper.

Scott Swain, an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church in America, serves as president and systematic theology professor at Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando, Florida. He has contributed to many works of theology, such as *Reformed Catholicity* (2015; co-author), *Christian Dogmatics* (2016; co-editor, chapter author), *Retrieving Eternal Generation* (2017; co-editor, chapter author), *New Studies in Dogmatics* (series co-editor), and *Oxford Handbook of Reformed Theology* (2020; co-editor). As the second entry in the Short Studies in Systematic Theology series, this book aims to provide

a simple—but not simplistic—introduction to the doctrine of the Trinity that is “attuned to both the Christian tradition and contemporary theology in order to equip the church to faithfully understand, love, teach, and apply what God has revealed in Scripture” about the subject (11). Swain also cites the 2016 trinitarian controversy (concerning eternal functional subordination [EFS]; a.k.a. eternal relations of authority and submission [ERAS]) among evangelicals as a proximate cause for the writing of this book (13).

Beyond the introduction, Swain executes his task in eight chapters, with chapters 1–2 devoted to scriptural teaching on the Trinity, chapters 3–6 to a biblical-theological treatment of God’s internal nature, and chapters 7–8 to a biblical-theological treatment of God’s external works. The book also features a short but helpful glossary and annotated “further reading” list. In chapter 1, Swain engages Matthew 28:19–20’s depiction of “scriptural trinitarianism” to articulate the “basic grammar” of the Trinity: one God, three persons, distinguished by mutual relations. The author expands upon this grammar in chapter 2 by surveying intra-trinitarian conversation texts, cosmic framework texts, and redemptive mission texts. The chapter concludes with a six-point summary of the biblical doctrine of the Trinity. In chapter 3, Swain engages the doctrine of divine simplicity, articulating its meaning and significance for the doctrine of the Trinity. The author devotes chapters 4, 5, and 6 to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, respectively, emphasizing the theme of “biblical naming.” Swain discusses the primacy, uniqueness, and transcendence of God’s *fatherhood*—characteristics shared by God’s *filiation* (the Son) and God’s *spiration* (the Spirit). He also addresses three theological errors concerning the Son: early-church modalism and subordinationism and contemporary EFS/ERAS. Finally, he treats the “double procession” of the Spirit (*filioque*), outlining several supports for, and benefits of, the position. In chapter 7, Swain covers the “shape” of God’s external operations (*viz., indivisible*) before discussing two applications thereof: appropriations of God’s inseparable activity to this or that divine person and the divine missions (or “sendings”) of the Son and the Spirit for us and our salvation. Swain concludes his work in chapter 8 by considering the ultimate end of the triune God’s work, the beneficiaries of his work, and how God communicates the benefits of such work to us.

The Trinity is a superb introductory text featuring simple, accessible—yet precise, descriptive—language for a wide-ranging readership. Swain limits technical jargon and abstract speculation. Chapter 3 on divine simplicity may

be the most challenging for beginners, but Swain writes as simply as possible given the transcendent and, therefore, challenging nature of the doctrine. The text is thoroughly biblical and doxological throughout, not just in the first two chapters on scriptural trinitarianism. I imagine Swain endeavors, on the one hand, to show the doctrine of the Trinity's *relevance* for daily Christian experience and, on the other hand, to respond to mid-twentieth-century critiques concerning the doctrine's *irrelevance* for Christian life. He accomplishes this goal well, evoking praise for the triune God at every turn. Further, the book is an excellent articulation and defense of classical (Latin) trinitarianism. Swain not only articulates various theological concepts (e.g., relations of origin, inseparable operations) but also explains why they matter and how they help us rightly understand and worship God's triune nature and works. Likewise, the author not only addresses various theological errors (e.g., modalism, tritheism) but also shows why they are so damaging and, thus, to be avoided. I specifically commend Swain for critiquing ERAS (84–87). He rightly and helpfully points out the problems with the position, shows its harmful effects upon God's personal properties and simple being, and criticizes biblicism's faulty theological method. Familiar readers *may* find the author overly critical of ERAS-proponent Bruce Ware; however, Swain correctly distinguishes between Ware's 2017 (better) and 2005 (worse) iterations of ERAS.

I have only quibbles with *The Trinity*, nothing more. The work evidences a few minor inconsistencies here and there. For example, the term "procession" does not appear until chapter 6, when it should have been introduced alongside "relations of origin" in chapter 1. Similarly, the language of "common" and "proper" predication, introduced in chapter 1, is missing from the discussion of "essential" and "personal" properties in chapter 3. Further, Swain could have better acknowledged his indebtedness to tradition (i.e., early creeds and confessions) in his theological method (18). Likely, however, he is trying to stress that orthodox trinitarian theology is ultimately grounded upon, and normed by, Scripture—"everything else is commentary" (27). I also found it interesting that Swain does not engage Johannine "sending" texts when exploring redemptive mission texts in chapter 2. Perhaps by examining Markan and Galatian texts, the author seeks to demonstrate that a Christology from "above" finds support beyond John's Gospel—the contrary of which is often the critique of those promoting a Christology from "below."

Despite these and other trivial matters, *The Trinity* is an overwhelming

success vis-à-vis the series' and author's aims. It's clear and concise biblical-theological treatment of classical trinitarian categories, unique emphasis on the divine names, well handling of theological errors old and new, prominent Christocentric and doxological features, and more make this volume a worthy, up-to-date alternative to Michael Reeves's *Delighting in the Trinity* (2012) and Fred Sanders's *The Deep Things of God* (2017). As Swain accurately explains, "This work is designed to serve beginning students of theology . . . , pastors seeking to review the main contours of Trinitarian teaching, and interested laypersons" (20). Though Swain is solidly Reformed, his work is suitable for the entire range of the evangelical Christian tradition.

Torey J. S. Teer, PhD Student
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

Tethered to the Cross: The Life and Preaching of C. H. Spurgeon. By Thomas Breimaier. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2020, 304 pp., \$28.99.

While there are tomes written about the life and preaching of Charles H. Spurgeon, works reflecting a thorough analysis of his interpretive methodology are virtually nonexistent, so Thomas Breimaier aims to "identify and analyze C. H. Spurgeon's approach to biblical hermeneutics" (3). Breimaier serves as tutor in Systematic Theology and History at Spurgeon's College, London UK, as well as a book review editor for the *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology*. This seminal work is the culmination of his dissertation, *The Cross in the Tabernacle: Charles Haddon Spurgeon and Biblical Hermeneutics* (PhD University of Edinburgh).

Spurgeon believed that a preacher that could deliver a sermon without speaking the name of Christ ought never to preach again (123) and if he could preach without speaking to sinners, then he really has no clue as how to preach (37). Breimaier attempts to understand the interpretive process behind such straightforward views. His purpose is to comprehend to what degree did the atonement (*crucicentrism*) and Spurgeon's passion for the lost (*conversionism*) contribute to how he dealt with Scripture. Breimaier

demonstrates this through an examination of “his conversion and early ministry, publications, addresses, sermons, and instruction to students” (19-20).

The book unfolds the development of the Spurgeon hermeneutic in thematic fashion. The *Introduction* contains a well-spring of Spurgeon scholarship. *Chapter One* details his youth, his interactions with the Word and theology in an environment of Nonconformity, his familial influences and how those began to form his *crucicentric* and *conversionistic* hermeneutic that would prove essential for his ensuing pastoral ministry (47). *Chapter Two* reveals further interpretive developments during the initial two decades of Spurgeon’s ministry in London. Breimaier examines ministry outside of the pulpit including heated correspondence between Spurgeon and a high Calvinist Baptist pastor, material in *The Sword and The Trowel*, devotionals, and discourses on the nature of the Bible.

Spurgeon’s interaction with the OT and the NT is the focus of *Chapters Three and Four*. His interpretive process was consistent no matter the passage or genre—Christ was present in each selected text and so, there was neither struggle nor impropriety in producing and proclaiming *crucicentric* and *conversionistic* sermons (121). *Chapter Five* surveys Spurgeon’s ministry reach outside the pulpit. Among these ministries and events were his publication *The Sword and The Trowel*, and the Downgrade Controversy; these and other ministries would supply a wide-ranging framework for Spurgeon to advance his *crucicentric* and *conversionistic* approach through interaction with current trends and scholarship (19). *Chapter Six* highlights Spurgeon’s efforts in education (e.g., the Pastor’s College and *Lectures to My Students*). For him the academic study of the Scriptures was to center on the cross of Christ (specifically the atonement) and the message of salvation (especially its free offer to sinners) (240). In the *Conclusion*, Breimaier offers an answer for Spurgeon’s immense success—1) his ability to communicate with the blue-collar lower middle class, 2) the fact he was well-read and engaged with works of higher criticism, and 3) his *crucicentric* and *conversionistic* focus (244-245).

The strength of this volume is that Breimaier answers his question—“To what *degree* did the atonement (*crucicentrism*) and his passion for the lost (*conversionism*) contribute to how Spurgeon dealt with Scripture?” His answer—to the *nth* *degree*! While true in a straightforward sense, Breimaier would insist that the Spurgeon hermeneutic is not as simple as “making a beeline to the cross.” Spurgeon did in fact have a unified approach to

biblical interpretation that followed a consistent two-fold emphasis. One, it was *crucicentric* in nature, Spurgeon felt a holy obligation to always preach Christ faithfully, no matter the text (104). Two, it was *conversionistic* in application, in that his sermon typically contained the free offer of the gospel. This two-fold emphasis often led to a penchant to interpret sermon texts with the sole aim of preaching the cross and calling for conversion (143). This interpretive approach reflected both his sermons and the entire landscape of his ministry.

Another highlight is the inclusion of Spurgeon's exchange with other pastors, scholars, commentators and commentaries. Breimaier details Spurgeon's interaction with notables such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge, David Strauss, Benjamin Jowett, F. C. Bauer and the schools of Göttingen and Tübingen; as well as Christmas Evans, Robert Murray M'Cheyne, Charles Hodge, John Nelson Darby, John Albrecht Bengel, D. L. Moody, and A. T. Pierson. Although Spurgeon was oft critical and the personal bane of liberalism, his academic perspective held that he was "not among those who throw away "the dry bones of criticism"—bones are as needful as meat, though not as nourishing" (135). Breimaier also juxtaposes Spurgeon's interpretations on selected texts (e.g., Num 21; Job 19:25; Mark 5) with other conservative contemporaries such as Alexander Maclaren, F. B. Meyer, Franz Delitzsch, Octavius Winslow, J. C. Ryle, and Horatius Bonar. Overall, they all held the same *crucicentric* perspective on chosen passages, but Spurgeon often, in the face of obvious exegetical evidence, chose *conversionistic* application regardless of text meaning or the varying interpretations of his conservative contemporaries (107).

Breimaier's meticulous documentation of Spurgeon's handling of the sacred text raises a question for further study. How was it that God so blessed Spurgeon, when Spurgeon so often took liberties with the text? It seems for Spurgeon, on occasion, the end (no matter how worthy) justified the means—any practice employed to preach the available nearness of salvation was hermeneutically appropriate (15-16) and Spurgeon insinuated exegetical and homiletical justification in his strained text interpretation because sinners came to Christ (164). Although the purpose of his hermeneutic was consistent (*crucicentric* and *conversionistic*) the means was sometimes subjective—Spurgeon indicated that his primary goal concerning biblical interpretation was the inclusion of express references to Christ and

conversion, even though those subjects were not immediately pertinent to the text of the sermon (79, 91, 122, 248).

Indeed, there are many volumes both *by* Spurgeon and *about* Spurgeon and still Thomas Breimaier pens his own edition within the Spurgeon canon that is in every way *sui generis*. Though many have read what Spurgeon preached, *Tethered to the Cross* breaks new ground, revealing his hermeneutical process. This work will prove beneficial for those interested in biblical interpretation, the history of preaching, and further study of the colossus Spurgeon. For an additional look at Spurgeon, one may read Tom Nettles' *Living by Revealed Truth: The Life and Pastoral Theology of Charles Haddon Spurgeon* (Mentor, revised 2013) or his forthcoming volume, *The Child is Father of the Man: C. H. Spurgeon* (Christian Focus, 2021). For fresher sermon offerings from the "Prince of Preachers" try Geoffrey Chang's *The Lost Sermons of C. H. Spurgeon Volume V: His Earliest Outlines and Sermons Between 1851 and 1854* (B&H Academic, 2021). The clarity and force of Spurgeon's hermeneutic should resonate within the heart of every true man of God, "We must have Christ in all our discourses, whatever else is in or not in them. There ought to be enough of the gospel in every sermon to save a soul" (78-79). May we, like Paul and Spurgeon decide "to know nothing among [us] except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor 2:2).

Tony A. Rogers, DMin

Senior Pastor, Southside Baptist Church, Bowie, TX